

Scots' Safe Church Policy Guidelines 2025



Safe Church - Scots' Church Policy Guidelines 2025

(Note: Underlines indicate hyperlinks)

Mandatory Reporting and Child Safety Requirements (Victorian & Australian Government Legislation)

- Religious ministries are required to report child abuse and criminal behaviour to the appropriate authorities.
- Religious ministries are required to report behaviour that falls under the category of reportable conduct as defined by the [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#) to the appropriate authorities.

(See Appendix A & B for reportable conduct.)

- All appointed leaders and staff within a religious organisation are required to have a valid [Working With Children Check](#) listing places of work.
- Religious organisations must show compliance with a reporting policy and leadership training policy.
- Current [Victorian Child Safety Standards](#) are required to be implemented under legislation.
- The Presbyterian Church of Victoria (PCV) has established safety and compliance policies and procedures, overseen by the [Safe Church Unit](#) (SCU), to which all associated with the church must adhere.

(See: [Safe Church PCV Policy Procedure & Practice Manual](#))

Reporting Process

- All reportable behaviour and any concerns of the Scots' and International Christian Church Congregations are to be brought to the attention of Session via the **Scots' Church Reporting Officer**.
- The Scots' Church Reporting Officer will take all reports to the PCV Safe Church Unit and [police](#) if necessary.
- Any child abuse will be reported to the police. Reportable conduct will be reported to the [Commission Of Children and Young People](#) and [Child Protection Services](#) as required.
- Any adult criminal behaviour will be reported to the police and to the Commission Of Children and Young People if relevant.
- The Safe Church Unit is always available for advice and clarification.
- Everyone is at liberty to report directly to the police, Safe Church Unit and external agencies.
- Any Safe Church Unit communications will be directed to the Scots' Church Reporting Officer, and the Safe Church Representatives.

Safe Church Compliance Requirements (Victorian & Australian Government Legislation)

- All PCV congregations are required to have a **Safe Church Representative**
- The role of the Safe Church Representative is to:
 - oversee compliance requirements
 - keep all Safe Church records
 - report records to the Safe Church Unit
 - display Safe Church material
 - promote Safe Church Training and Refresher Courses
- Records to be kept
 - Working With Children Checks
 - Documentation of Safe Church Training Completion
 - Volunteer and staff registration forms and information (ID, referees)
 - PCV transfer registration forms
 - Safe Church checks
 - Children's Ministry registration/permission forms
 - Children's Ministry medical/special needs management plans
 - Children's Ministry Records of Attendance
 - First Aid records
 - Camp Records of Attendance
- Compliance Audit Schedule - completed every 3 years by the Safe Church Representative, signed off by Session and submitted to the Safe Church Unit due 2023
- Working with Children checklist to be submitted yearly in November to the Safe Church Unit who submit it to the Safe Church Committee of Assembly.

Privacy Requirements

- All personal data must be kept private.
- Data collected for COVID cannot be used for church data collection.
- Church data can be collected via other means with consent.
- A PCV privacy collection notice must be included when collecting data.
- Photos/videos for use by the church require consent.

Safe Church Training Requirements (Victorian & Australian Government Legislation)

- Training is mandatory by law for all those who work in policy making and relational trust positions. A training course must be completed in person within 12 months of appointment. Yearly updates are completed online.
 - Basic Safe Church Training 2 hour course
 - ministers
 - elders
 - board of management members
 - ministry leaders

- music ministry leaders
 - choir members
 - bible study leaders
 - pastoral carers
 - Sunday school teachers
 - creche volunteers
 - camp committee leaders
 - Safe Church Representatives
- Advanced Safe Church Training 4 hour course
- ministers
 - elders
 - ministry leaders inc ICC core committee
 - music ministry leaders
 - bible study leaders
 - pastoral carers
 - Sunday school superintendent
- Yearly online refresher course
- for all above

Volunteer & Staff Approval Processes

- It is legally mandatory to screen all volunteers who work with, or make decisions about children.
- Any new volunteer in this category is required to have a Working With Children Check and to undergo the Safe Church Unit Volunteer Approval Process which requires proof of ID and referees.
- It is legally mandatory to screen all paid staff.
- Any new paid staff member is required to have a Working With Children Check and to undergo the Safe Church PCV Appointment Employment Process.
- ***A person can only commence in a role working with children under 18 in the PCV once the SCU has notified the congregation/organisation of the approval.***
- Volunteers for Adult Ministry Positions are required to fill in the Scots' Church Adult Ministry Volunteer form which includes a Safe Church Unit Due Diligence Check. Adult Ministry Volunteers are also required to have a valid Working With Children Check.
- A record of all volunteers and workers is to be held by Session
- Proposed PCA National Register - eventually all appointments will be placed on a national Presbyterian Church of Australia register for Australia wide reference.

Application for Membership of the Scots' Congregation

- **Leadership positions:**
 - A person who wishes to become a new member (by transferring from another church) and to hold a leadership position is required to fill out a PCV Safe Church Transfer Registration Form.
 - A person who wants previous training to be recognised by the PCV must submit a Safe Church Training Recognition Form.

- **Ordinary members:**
- The name of any person requesting to become a new member will be referred to the Safe Church Unit by the Scots' Church Reporting Officer for a Due Diligence Check prior to approval by Session.
- These processes are in addition to the normal transfer process prior to approval by Session.

The Choir

- Director of Music requirement: Working With Children Check
Basic Safe Church Training
Advanced Safe Church Training
Yearly online refresher course
- Choir member requirement:
 - Working With Children Checks are required for all current members (employee application for paid members to be reimbursed by Scots' Church, or volunteer application).
 - The choir has received a specially tailored Safe Church training programme and a legally compliant Scots' Choir Code of Conduct from the Safe Church Unit that will be reviewed on a regular basis.
 - All proposed new choir members must have a Working With Children Check and are to complete a Safe Church Registration form and be approved before appointment.
 - Temporary choir members require a Working With Children Check for Scots' Church and a Safe Church notification. This should be done in advance for members of the pool of temporary choir members who may be recruited at short notice.
 - Choir compliance is overseen by the Choir Safe Church Representative

Children's Ministry

- All Children's Ministry staff and volunteers must have Safe Church approval prior to commencement of the role
- Children's ministries will recognise and give effect to:
 - opportunities of children to engage and participate at Scots'
 - special needs of children
 - the provision of a culturally safe environment
- Children under 18 must be adequately supervised at all times
- Children's ministry permission/registration forms to be used and kept securely
- Adequate leader to children ratios must be maintained
- Records of attendance to be documented and kept
- Toileting procedures to be adhered to
- Safe Church Online and Smart Phone Usage Guidelines to be followed
- First Aid kits clearly identified and maintained.
- Leaders and volunteers to be able to implement and document medical management plans provided by parents
- Accurate First Aid records to be kept

- Any boundary breaches or concerns to be reported to Scots' Church Reporting Officer/Senior Minister/Safe Church Unit.

Congregational Camps

- All leaders to undergo Safe Church Approval prior to camp
- Adequate supervision and ratios to be maintained
- First Aid management and documentation process to be organised and overviewed before camp
- Camp records of attendance must be kept

International Christian Church (ICC) Congregation

- The ICC Safe Church Representative will oversee compliance requirements of staff, leaders and volunteers.
- Any reportable events or concerns are to be reported to the Scots' Church Reporting Officer.

Scots' Safe Church Office Holders 2025

- Scots' Church Reporting Officer: Dr Rosemary Fethers
- Safe Church Representative of the Scots' Congregation: Mr Jonathan North
- Safe Church Representative of the Scots' Choir: Ms Alex Hedt
- Safe Church Representative of the ICC Congregation: Ms Karla Tanu
- **Contact:** Scots' Church Office 03 9650 9903

Safe Church Unit Contact Details:

Reporting:

- Phone: 0499 090 449
- Email: safechurch@pvc.vic.org

PCV Safe Church Unit Compliance Officer: Mr Ashley Manly

- Phone 0435 417 283
- Email: scu.complanec@pcv.org.au

Safe Church Training Dates 2025:

- Dates and locations available on Safe Church website: www.safechurchpcv.org.au

Summary

Scots' Church has legal obligations of promoting child safety, reporting, checking and training.

All matters of concern from both the Scots' and ICC congregations are to be reported to the Scots' Church Reporting Officer.

All communications from the Safe Church Unit will be dealt with by the Scots' Church Reporting Officer and the Safe Church Representative.

All church staff, leaders and relational volunteers must have a current Working With Children Check and be registered with the Safe Church Unit.

All congregational leaders and relational volunteers must participate in Safe Church training.

Child Safety requirements are all legal requirements under Victorian and Australian Government Legislation including the Workers Screening Act 2020 and the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.

They are also requirements of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

In addition, all new congregation members and new relational volunteers will have a Safe Church Due Diligence check to provide extra care for our congregation.

Appendix A: Conduct or Crimes that will be reported to external authorities

- Indecent assault
- Sexual assault (including sex offences against children)
- Rape
- Threatening or enacting violence
- Illegal sexting
- Assaults
- Stalking
- Grooming - including online grooming of children, accessing and/or disseminating online child abuse material
- Reasonable belief of child abuse - sexual, physical, emotional or neglect
- Family or domestic violence where children are involved

Appendix B: Behaviour that should be reported

- Bullying
- Inappropriate relationships (as described by the PCV Safe Code of Conduct)
- Misuse or abuse of authority
- Professional misconduct
- Suspicion of grooming or stalking
- Family or domestic violence
- Spiritual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Elder abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Conduct, behaviour or speech that is sexually threatening or inappropriate
- Disclosure of past abusive behaviour

