



A2A

CREATING SAFER CHURCHES Keeping Children & Vulnerable People Safe

Revision - June 2025

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines, developed by the A2A National Leadership Team (NLT), aim to strengthen both policy and practice in safeguarding children and vulnerable people across A2A churches and affiliated ministries.

They are to be read in conjunction with the A2A Ministry Manual and are designed to complement, but not override, the A2A Code of Conduct, Affiliation Policy, Credentialing Policy, and other relevant child safety guidelines.

The guidelines fall into two categories:

Mandatory (identified by “shall”): Legal, biblical, and moral imperatives that must be implemented.

Recommended (identified by the word “recommended”): Best practice principles that are strongly encouraged.

All A2A pastors and leaders must comply with their respective state or territory’s Working with Children legislation. In light of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, demonstrable compliance and accountability are essential. These guidelines reflect A2A’s commitment to proactively improving child safety practices.

While A2A refers to this document as Creating Safer Churches, we acknowledge that individual churches may use alternative titles such as Working with Children and Vulnerable People Policy or Child Protection Policy. Regardless of the title, these documents reflect the same core principles and requirements outlined in A2A’s policy and are intended to support safe, respectful, and protective environments for children and vulnerable people.

1. WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

All credentialed pastors shall submit a current Working with Children Check (WWCC), valid for their jurisdiction, as part of the annual credential renewal process. Refer to local legislation for specific requirements.

2. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

All credentialed ministers shall complete child protection training at least every three years.

A2A partners with **ChildSafe** to provide training via the e3Learning platform. Upon completion, a certificate is issued and recorded by A2A.

Recognition of prior learning is permitted for equivalent training, provided content, provider, and date can be verified. Regardless, training must be renewed every three years.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT OFFICER (RMO)

Each church shall appoint a Risk Management Officer (RMO) responsible for implementing child safety policies. The RMO need not be credentialed but serves as the designated point of contact for compliance and training.

Recommended:

- The RMO completes full ChildSafe Coordinator-level training.
- A second leader is appointed as an alternate contact in the case of a conflict of interest.

Note: Legal responsibility remains with the church board and credentialed pastors.

4. LOCAL CHURCH POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Churches **shall** maintain documented policies that include:

- A Statement of Commitment to safe, supportive environments
- A Code of Conduct for all leaders, staff, and volunteers
- Recruitment, Selection, and Training procedures ensuring safe leadership
- Processes for Reporting Disclosures or Suspicions of Harm
- Procedures for responding to Breaches of the Child Safety Strategy
- Risk Assessments for high-risk activities and events
- Compliance with applicable state and territory legislation
- Communication Strategies engaging all stakeholders, including children

A2A Recommends Basing Policy on One of These Approved Models:

- ANSVAR Insurance: Sample Prevention of Abuse Policy
- ChildSafe SP3: *Child Safety Policy* (if using the ChildSafe platform)

Churches shall submit a signed declaration to A2A confirming an active child protection policy. This may also be required by insurers.

5. REPORTING BREACHES

All breaches of a church's Working with Children Policy shall be reported in writing within **7 days** to the A2A RMO via email: info@a2a.org.au

6. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Churches shall ensure their insurance policies:

- **Include molestation/sexual abuse coverage** listed explicitly under public and products liability
- **Do not exclude known offenders** unless all reasonable preventive measures have been taken

Recommended:

- Seek expert insurance advice
- Maintain a **minimum of \$1,000,000** coverage per sexual abuse claim
- Participate in the Redress Scheme Insurance - The National Redress Scheme commenced on 1 July 2018, in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Royal Commission listened to thousands of survivors detail the abuse they experienced as children while in the care of an institution. The abuse happened in institutions such as orphanages, children's homes, schools, churches, sports clubs, hospitals, and foster care. A benefit for a named institution choosing to join the National Redress Scheme includes being released from any potential future civil claims relating to abuse for which they are found responsible by the Scheme and where the applicant has accepted the offer of redress. For more information: <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/institutions-landing>

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 10 CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Churches are encouraged to implement the Royal Commission's 10 Child Safe Standards, which include:

- Embedding child safety in leadership and culture
- Informing and empowering children
- Involving families and communities
- Respecting diversity and equity
- Ensuring suitable, supported personnel
- Child-focused complaints handling

- Ongoing education and training
- Creating safe environments (physical and online)
- Regular review and improvement
- Comprehensive documentation

8. FURTHER ROYAL COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Churches **should** also:

- Seek expert advice on child safety
- Ensure leader accountability through appropriate governance
- Manage conflicts of interest
- Provide child sexual abuse prevention education
- Involve families and publish safety policies
- Conduct annual performance appraisals for leaders
- Offer ongoing internal/external training
- Apply the Code of Conduct consistently
- Train all personnel to recognise and report abuse
- Conduct risk assessments upon receiving complaints
- Stand down accused leaders while complaints are investigated
- Use the balance of probabilities when assessing complaints
- Apply consistent standards across all cases
- Permanently remove any leader with a substantiated or proven offence
- Assess and manage risks posed by convicted persons attending services

Oversight and Compliance

- A2A **shall** maintain a register documenting child abuse incident reports
- The National Leadership Team **shall** review credential holders' compliance annually
- A2A-affiliated institutions (e.g., schools, childcare services) shall report on their adherence to the 10 Child Safe Standards