



PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF
VICTORIA



The value of clear communication

In Church Ministries

Clear communication helps prevent abuse because everyone involved is clear on how the ministry operates. In children's ministry keeping parents informed and providing leaders with information is an important part of making ministry safe. Indeed, it is better to "over-communicate" than assume other people know what you know. Don't assume everyone knows how the ministry operates – take the time to communicate this to people you minister to, and in the case of children under 18, their families.

- Sending a general letter to parents/carers at the start of each year is a great way to begin. The letter might include information about who the leaders are, pick up and drop off arrangements, the aim of the ministry, some information about what activities/events are planned and also state that the ministry operates within the Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct.
- It is important that people within the church know they can speak up with any concerns they have about abuse. Choosing a leader within the church people can speak to about concerns is a helpful approach. . Also communicating that anyone can call the SCU with concerns is important. Making sure the Safe Church brochures (Policy, Code of Conduct and Contact flyer) are prominently displayed at church also assists.
- Providing parents/carers with regular information about activities will allow for them to make informed decisions about their children. A newsletter (either paper or via email) or use of a website such as an open blog or open Facebook page can improve communication. Whatever means you use always ensure parents are aware of it and can access it too. If using a website where comments can be made remember a leader must moderate this which will involve regular checking of the website (daily). See the **Safe Church Online and Smart Phone Usage Guidelines** for more detail.
- Attendance lists, registration and permission forms and sign-in-sign-out sheets are essential for events such as crèche, kids' clubs, holiday clubs, camps and off-site events.
- Clearly communicate with parents how toileting of very young children and school aged children is managed. Communication about transportation is important too. The use of a consent form for these issues can assist with this.

This information is available at www.safechurchpcv.org.au/resources