



Presbyterian Church of Victoria Safe Church Unit

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Facility Hire Advice

Safe Church obligations for outside bodies which use church premises on a regular basis.

Please contact the Safe Church Unit with any enquiries about this information

The assumption is that an “outside body” is a body that utilises the premises of a PCV church with the permission of the Session but solely operates on its own behalf and not on behalf of the Session. An example of this might be a children’s dance school that uses the church premises to conduct its business.

There are no Presbyterian Church Safe Church obligations that can be lawfully placed upon a body that solely operates on its own behalf and not on behalf of the Session. Any body permitted by Session to use church premises to conduct business on its own behalf and not on behalf of the Session is responsible itself to meet any legal or insurance requirements related to child safety needed to function lawfully in Victoria.

In contrast, a body operating on behalf of Session (such as a Presbyterian church youth group, another Presbyterian congregation or special interest congregation) as recorded in Session minutes, is naturally under the Presbyterian Church Safe Church obligations that apply across the denomination. These obligations rest upon the Session.

It is, however, prudent to recommend that Sessions and Boards require any outside body which uses church premises to provide services which involve or may be likely to involve children under 18, to commit in writing, (perhaps as part of the written agreement in place stating terms of the use and fee for use of church premises) that they will adhere to the law of Victoria in regards to child safety. Although a Session is under no legal obligation or duty in regards to compliance with the relevant child safety laws by an outside body, Session would do well to be mindful of the likely reputational impact on the church should it become known that an outside body operating from a Presbyterian church premises is not compliant in this area. Subject to the relevant circumstances, such potential impact may justify appropriate steps being taken by Session to revoke the outside body’s licence to use the premises or to limit its activities.

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