



PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF  
VICTORIA



# Guidelines for visiting ministries

## Visiting children

*A child is a person under 18 years of age*

- Never be alone with a child in the course of your ministry role – there should always be other people nearby and within view.
- Always comply with the Safe Church Code of Conduct – see point 9 in particular.
- If your church Session is willing to allow “one-to-one” bible study and/or mentoring ministry by adults with children under 18 years of age (which may involve visiting them at their home, for example), this must be approved by Session and the boundaries of this ministry must be clearly documented and approved by Session.
- **Prior** to the commencement of any “one-to-one” ministry by adults with children under 18 years of age, a specific permission form **must be signed by the parents/guardians**. Contact the Safe Church Unit for this form.
- You must plan to meet at the young person’s home at a time when other family members are at home. Communicate clearly with the parents when you are planning to meet.
- If you cannot meet the young person in their home then either plan to meet in a café or another public place, for example, a library. You must take care to sit in a space where you can clearly be seen by other people. Again, you must inform the parents of the date, time and location of the meeting.
- If visiting a child in hospital or in a care facility, having sought permission from the parent/guardian first, always take another person with you and inform the parent/guardian when you intend to visit.

## Visiting an adult of the opposite gender

*For the purpose of this guidance, “adult” means an adult of the opposite gender*

- If visiting an adult at their home always take another person with you (this might be your spouse or a ministry co-leader).
- If visiting an adult in a hospital or care facility, best practice is to take another person with you (this might be your spouse or a ministry co-leader).
- If you are unable to take someone else with you then:
  1. Inform your ministry team or ministry co-leader that you will be visiting the adult and tell them which day and time you plan to visit.
  2. Put the visit in your diary and if you are married, inform your spouse.
  3. If you are visiting a care facility where there is a sign in-sign out system make sure you document your visit using this system.
  4. If possible, if you are visiting a care facility, meet the adult in a public location within it – such as a lounge or communal area.

5. If visiting in a hospital and the adult is in a single room, leave the door open and sit, if possible, where you can be easily seen by passers by.

*Note*

- These guidelines are in addition to your obligations under the Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Be especially mindful of Code of Conduct point 1.
- Additional guidance is found in Safe Church Basic Training and at the website Resources page (link below).
- If you begin to experience romantic feelings for a person whom you minister to in your role in your church:
  1. Inform your ministry leader or co-leader confidentially.
  2. Have another ministry team member take over from you in your role ministering to that person.
  3. If you are married or the person is married, put clear boundaries in place to minimise contact and bring clarity and certainty to the platonic nature of the relationship. Speak to your minister or another senior ministry leader and seek their guidance and assistance. You may also seek counselling assistance. The Safe Church Unit can provide a contact list for recommended counsellors.

*This information is available at [www.safechurchpcv.org.au/resources](http://www.safechurchpcv.org.au/resources)*