

Purpose

To describe the policy for ensuring safe ministry and upholding professional standards within the CMS fellowship.

Definition

Safe ministry refers to actions that promote a safe culture, mitigate risks, protect those at risk of abuse and respond well to those who have been abused.

Safeguarding Policy

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) is committed to the physical, emotional, and spiritual welfare and safety of people, particularly within its areas of activity.

CMS has zero tolerance for abuse and therefore to ensure the safety of children, youth, and vulnerable adults within our areas of activity, CMS will:

- carefully recruit and train its mission personnel, staff, and volunteers,
- adopt and encourage safe ministry practices by its mission personnel, staff, and volunteers,
- respond promptly to each concern raised about the behaviour of its mission personnel, staff, and volunteers,
- offer pastoral or other professional support to any person who has suffered abuse, and
- provide supervision of and pastoral accountability to any person known to have abused a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

Foundational to the policy are:

1. Codes of Conduct

The CMS Codes of Conduct serve as the standard for the behaviour and the practice of all CMS mission personnel, staff and volunteers within the Society of CMS. Due to the variety and uniqueness of the various CMS ministry settings there are three (3) Codes of Conduct, dependent on a person's role in CMS.

Adherence to the appropriate Code of Conduct is included as a requirement in agreements with mission personnel, staff, and volunteers. CMS mission personnel, staff and volunteers are responsible for being aware of and meeting the appropriate standards. Those in positions of authority are responsible for ensuring mission personnel, staff and volunteers are made aware of, and are committed to, the appropriate Code of Conduct.

Mission personnel, staff and volunteers not complying with the appropriate Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or service with CMS.

2. Fitness for Ministry

CMS will assess the fitness of mission personnel, staff and volunteers for the position or ministry they are to exercise and for the work they will be carrying out.

The Fitness for Ministry Procedure describes the process adopted in the assessment and appointment of:



- Mission personnel: includes missionaries, short term workers (STW), Student Elective Apprentices (SEA), Mentac apprentices and Co-Mission Partners (Branch)
- Staff exercising a pastoral ministry
- Staff who do not exercise a pastoral ministry
- Board/Council Committee volunteers
- Other volunteers

Particular procedures are in place to assess suitability for the appointment of any person who may have access to children, youth or vulnerable adults.

Records of fitness are retained in suitably secure and confidential files and will comply with relevant State and Federal legislation.

3. Mandatory Reporting

In Australia, if there is a reasonable suspicion that a child, youth or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm from abuse, all CMS mission personnel, staff and volunteers are required to report their concern to their supervisor and the relevant state or territory civil authority.

Outside of Australia, if there is a reasonable suspicion that an Australian child, youth or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or abuse: or if there is a reasonable suspicion that an Australian citizen or resident of Australia is perpetrating abuse, all CMS mission personnel, staff and volunteers must report their concern to their supervisor and to the Australian Federal Police. In addition, they must abide by the legal requirements relating to protection of children and vulnerable people in the local jurisdiction.

4. Complaint Handling

CMS takes complaints of misconduct very seriously and will ensure that complaints are handled:

- by staff and volunteers trained to deal appropriately with allegations,
- thoroughly and as quickly as practicable, and
- with due regard for natural justice and confidentiality for all parties.

The Codes of Conduct explain the procedure for reporting breaches of the Code. If the Code of Conduct has been breached in a way that might constitute a criminal offence it will be reported to the relevant State, Territory or Federal authority.

The CMS-A Board appoints an independent Professional Standards Director (PSD) with assigned responsibilities for handling complaints on behalf of CMS as well as to advise on safe ministry and professional standards matters.

CMS maintains a toll-free number and email address to the Professional Standards Director for receiving complaints or enquiries. This number and email address is publicised on the CMS website and on relevant materials for activities and events.

CMS has signed up to the National Redress Scheme to provide support to people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse in Australia.

CMS-A maintains a *Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme* for the pastoral care and assistance of a person who has experienced abuse or sexual misconduct by a CMS worker on location or staff/volunteer in a CMS-A activity for cases that are not covered by the National Redress Scheme.



CMS has developed a “Complaint Procedure” for complaints that do not fall within the purview of the PSD. The CMS Complaints Procedure can be accessed on the CMS Intranet and is available upon request from CMS.

Safe Ministry Framework

Related policies and procedures are available separately and listed in the Safe Ministry Framework available on the Intranet

Toll free number for complaints and professional standards inquiries:

Telephone: 1800 070 511, Email: helpline@safercommunities.net.au

Approval

This is a Fellowship Policy
Approved by CMS-A Board, October 2021

Review

Review date: October 2026