



# ST JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH CANBERRA

<b>Policy on</b>	Critical Incidents
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Responsible agency	Risk Advisory Committee
Electronic file name	Critical Incidents Policy.pdf
Repository	<a href="https://www.stjohnscanberra.org/documents">https://www.stjohnscanberra.org/documents</a>
First introduced	December 2017
Parish Council approvals	21 August 2019 16 March 2022 18 October 2023
Next revision due	May 2025

## LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

St John's mission is to 'bear public witness to Jesus Christ through Anglican worship and pastoral ministry, loving community and outward-facing mission.' This governs all we do as a Parish including policy development.

This policy is guided by The Master Policy of the parish and diocesan ordinances and polices, most notably the Governance of the Diocese Ordinance.

Relevant legislation and policy includes:

*The (Diocesan) Safe Communities of Faith Policy August 2015*, which provides for

- The clergy and Parish Council to be responsible for ensuring that: as far as is reasonably practicable, that all church workers and those accessing ministries conducted by the ministry unit comply with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.
- All reasonable and practicable steps are taken to avoid risks of physical and psychological harm to members of the church and wider community arising from their involvement in any ministry.
- *Taking action, as far as is reasonably practical, to address and reduce actual and reasonably likely risk of physical or psychological harm to members of the ministry unit or other persons accessing any ministry provided by the ministry unit.*

*Australian Government's Strategy for Protecting Crowded Places from Terrorism (2017)*. The Strategy refers to those who manage places such as churches as having primary responsibility to protecting people that work, use, or visit their sites from a range of foreseeable threats.

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. This is the national legislative framework to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces.

*Parish Emergency Incidents Policy 2022 including the Parish Emergency Procedures Guide*. Parish specific policies relating to ensuring a safe environment for worship and work.

## PRINCIPLES

St John's is firmly committed to a healthy and safe workplace. Parish Council aims to remove or reduce the risks to health, safety and wellbeing of all workers (clergy, employees, volunteers, and contractors), visitors, and anybody else who may be affected by our ministry and business operations. It also aims to ensure all work activities are undertaken in a safe manner.

This policy complements and should be read in conjunction with the St John's Work Health and Safety Policy, which is based on to the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn Work Health and Safety policy<sup>1</sup>

Critical incidents are those in which significant injury or damage is caused to a person or property; risks of such injury or damage are highlighted, or where an insurance claim may ultimately be needed. All critical incidents should be reported to via an Incident Form.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://anglicancg.org.au/ads/risk-and-compliance/safety/>

The Parish Council and the Risk Owner (supported by Control Owners) plan for and respond to critical incidents to reduce the likely risk of physical or psychological harm to members of the ministry unit and to any person accessing the St John's ministry unit in any of its forms as far as is reasonably practicable.

The Risk Owner will advise the Parish Council of the changing nature of Critical Incident risk.

Parish Council will assess the risks annually.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Preventative**

Parish Council will seek advice, as is helpful, from its Risk Advisory Committee as it also makes use of the skill-set of both the Parish Risk Owner and Control Owners, to provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, a measured response to any critical incident.

As needed, and at least annually, Parish Council will arrange for the distribution of a brochure 'Welcoming Church, Safe Church, Parish Guidelines for Critical Incidents' (Attachment A).

Across the Parish operations all volunteers and staff will be made aware, and encouraged to share their views, of risks that are part of our life as a member of our community.

Parishioners are reminded to be alert of their personal security in parish buildings and grounds. In any emergency there are a number of options to call for assistance such as: 000 in an emergency; 131 444 Police; and 0468 634 351 for The Rev'd Dave McLennan-

### **During Incidents**

The responsibility for Parish security during worship rests with the senior member of clergy at the service. Assistance is provided to the senior member of the clergy by other members of the Sanctuary Party and the sides persons. Guidelines in Attachment B provide suggested approaches to certain critical incidents.

### **Recovery**

The Rector will coordinate pastoral support to those who have been affected by the critical incident. Churchwardens will prepare a report for the Bishop and liaise with insurance and other bodies to ensure all aspects of compliance are met Any media request will be channelled through the Rector.

## Attachment A

### Welcoming Church, Safe Church Brochure

#### 5. Keeping children safe

No adult is ever to be intentionally alone with a solitary child or youth to whom they are not a parent/carer.

The parish follows all child protection guidelines developed by the Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn. For further information go to their website at: <https://anglicancg.org.au/safe-ministries/safe-ministry-unit/>

#### 6. Requests for money

Parishioners should not give money, goods or accommodation to strangers who approach them for assistance after services or in the grounds.

Homeless and needy people should be referred to St John's Care for assessment and help when the Centre is open. Outside these hours, the clergy may assist.

#### 7. Inappropriate behaviour by church leaders/members

The parish does not tolerate inappropriate sexual behaviour, physical, verbal abuse or bullying. The Diocesan Code of Good Practice provides a benchmark for acceptable conduct. This can be found on the Diocesan website.

#### Taking care of one another

St John's aims to be a welcoming, loving and safe community.

For churches, like all community facilities open to the public, this involves some elements of risk and the possibility of critical incidents.

As a community who follow Christ we are committed to showing compassion and care to others. While doing so, it is important to set reasonable limits and to work as a team to not expose ourselves and others to unnecessary risks.

Being observant and taking action when necessary, even if it is simply alerting someone else, is a vital part of living together in a loving and safe manner.

This information aims to help clergy, staff and parishioners to develop effective, consistent and compassionate responses to incidents and to ensure the security of all.

Many policies and guidelines have been developed by the Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn and are available on their website at: [www.anglicancg.org.au/ads](http://www.anglicancg.org.au/ads)

#### If you have any concerns about misconduct or abuse

please call the

**Diocesan Safe Ministry**

**Helpline on**

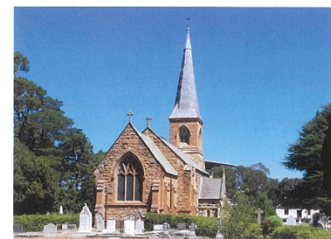
**1800 070 511**

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Telephone: (02) 6248 8399

Email: [admin@stjohnscanberra.org](mailto:admin@stjohnscanberra.org)  
Website: [www.stjohnscanberra.org](http://www.stjohnscanberra.org)

July 2023



**Welcoming Church,  
Safe Church**

**Parish Guidelines  
for Critical Incidents**

*Bearing public witness to Jesus Christ,  
the source of life.*

#### Critical incidents

These are:

- Situations in which injury or damage is caused to a person or property
- Situations which reveal risks to persons or property
- Situations which might later require engagement with an insurer.

All critical incidents should be reported to via an Incident Form ([www.anglicancg.org.au/ads/risk-and-compliance/safety/](http://www.anglicancg.org.au/ads/risk-and-compliance/safety/))

#### Other potential risks include:

- interruptions to a church service or activity
- intrusions into a parish building
- disruptive behaviour by people who may be disturbed or unwell
- inappropriate behaviour in the church grounds
- inappropriate requests for money or assistance
- camping in church grounds, etc.

All parishioners are encouraged to be vigilant about the health and safety of those around them, to assess when a situation needs attention and then to alert clergy and/or the parish office.

**In an emergency call 000**

**131 444 Police**

**0468 634 351 Rev'd David McLennan**

#### 1. Interruptions during a church service or activity

The responsibility for security during worship rests with the clergy and other adult members in the congregation. Sidespersons and other congregation members should follow directions from the clergy.

#### 2. Medical/Mental health emergencies

A parishioner close to the affected person should alert clergy conducting the service (or the person in charge of a parish activity) so they can assess the situation, call for an ambulance, arrange first aid, etc. In acute emergencies, the congregation may be asked to exit the church building.

#### 3. First aid kits

These are located in the sanctuary area of the Church, Vestry, Parish Office, Kitchen and St John's Care. There is a defibrillator located in the entry area of the Hall.

#### 4. Inappropriate behaviour in the grounds

Clergy and/or office staff should be advised of any dangerous activities or persons in or near the precinct so that proper action can be taken.

<https://anglicancg.org.au/safe-ministries/safe-ministry-unit/>

## Attachment B

### Suggested approaches to certain situations

The senior clergy or person in charge, is responsible for coordinating an appropriate response to a Critical Incident.

Should a person be disruptive:

- Don't be confrontational; that will often escalate the situation
- Don't touch or attempt to manhandle the person
- Speak to the person calmly
- As appropriate invite them outside, with at least one other person, to a neutral space, where a conversation can take place, possibly over tea or coffee.
- If a person becomes violent evacuate the area and call the police. People should be asked to move to the Assembly Point at the western side of St John's Care to ensure all are accounted for.

Dealing with people in this category is a sensitive matter; they respond better to a calm and measured approach rather than one which is confrontational.

Should a person be intent on inflicting harm:

- A first response in this situation is, if possible, to evacuate an area. If the perpetrator is on site, all areas should be locked down and the police called. People rostered on duty for parish activities are encouraged to install the free Emergency+ app on their smart phones.
- Accounting for the safety and well-being of all those on site is important. If at any stage a decision is taken to evacuate an area, and it is seen to be safe to do so, ask people to move to and remain at the Assembly Point. If not safe to do so, people could be asked to congregate in areas such as Constitution Avenue, Anzac Parade or Amaroo Street. As and where possible, the names of those who are safe should be recorded.
- Appropriate pastoral care and support needs to be offered to all involved in or affected by the critical incident.