** St Mark’s Emerald**

**Child Safe Policy**

**Aim and purpose or Scope of Policy:**

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the parish, its staff, volunteers and members to child safety.

It was approved by parish council on 30th June 2017 and is due to be reviewed on 30th June 2019.

**A Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

As a Christian community, we affirm our commitment to ensuring the safety of each child who interacts with our community. The Bible tells us that all people are created equal and every person can be a child of God. We look to the Bible to learn how to love and serve everyone no matter what their age, colour, ethnicity, gender or nationality. We specifically seek to promote the cultural safety of vulnerable people including indigenous children, all those children who come from culturally or linguistically diverse background and any child with a disability.

**Children’s Rights to Safety**

The church should be a place where young people can come to know and experience the love of God through those who care for and work with them. To ensure that we meet the highest standards of child safety for each child who comes into our community, we have the following measures in place:

* Our organisational culture is one of child safety where, through effective leadership and clear lines of accountability, we ensure that all those in positions of power or influence with children are properly screened, supervised and trained.
* All those volunteering with children in the parish are required to have current Working with Children Checks and in some instances police records checks. All leaders are to undergo reference checks prior to beginning leadership positions.
* We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning.
* Our leaders are valued and fairly treated in a supportive and respectful atmosphere. Our leaders commit to a Code of Conduct which provides guidance to our staff and volunteers. All our leaders undergo regular training on child safety procedures and protocols and are encouraged to develop their skills through relevant training events.

**Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

If someone (leader, parent or observer) feel that a child’s safety may be or has been compromised by the actions or words of someone operating within our programs they should take one or more of the following options:

* Bring the concern to the ministry leader or nominated parish council representative.
* In the case of injuries or near misses, complete an incident report form found in our first aid kits.
* For serious concerns regarding child abuse or neglect, you are required by law to report directly to the police or Child Protection.

Additional information regarding the processes of responding to and reporting suspected child abuse is set out by the Anglican Diocese. Any concerns should be taken to the ministry team, or the Vicar, and they will discuss what further action should be taken. Concerns or complaints can also be raised with the Diocese directly.

A booklet entitled “Information for people thinking about making a complaint” published by the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne is available in the church and the main hall. The information is also available online from [www.melbourne.anglican.com.au](http://www.melbourne.anglican.com.au)