



METRO Child Safety Manual

As with all organisations that work with children, we are mandated to adhere to the Victorian Child Safe Standards. We are eager to do this, knowing that Jesus himself recognised the vulnerability of children, and their value before God.

As METRO is a ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (PCV) we adhere to the PCV Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct. We report to and receive guidance from the PCV [Safe Church Unit](#) (contactable by email or phone: 0499 090 449). METRO adheres to the [Safe Church Policy Procedure and Practice Manual](#).

This METRO Child Safety Manual is for the use of the Committee and the purpose of this manual is to clearly set out the child safety procedures in relation to:

- Trainees aged under 18 years of age
- Adult Trainers approved and appointed to work with Trainees aged under 18 years of age
- Adult Trainees working with children in the church as part of their traineeship

A copy of this manual is provided to all Sessions who take part in METRO Traineeships.

This manual information is also included in the METRO, YouthMETRO & EquipMETRO Traineeship Manuals for both trainees and trainers.

Sessions and METRO responsibilities

METRO traineeships are a partnership between the METRO Committee and local churches.

METRO, on behalf of the PCV Assembly, facilitates the availability of the program by providing the process of coming into the program, the framework & training materials. There are three different kinds of traineeships: METRO, Equip and YouthMETRO.

Responsibilities - Under 18 years of age Trainees

YouthMETRO is a one-year traineeship focused on preparing and growing youth leaders in local churches. As well as accepting young adults 18 years and older, YouthMETRO accepts trainees who are aged 16-17 years of age, in the year of their traineeship. People who are aged 16-17 years of age cannot undertake METRO or EquipMETRO traineeships.

METRO are responsible for the safety of Trainees under 18 at:

- Orientation
- Graduation
- YouthMETRO Summer Intensive
- MTS Challenge

METRO is not responsible for the safety of Trainees under 18 years of age whilst the Trainees are in the local church setting and ministries. METRO are not responsible for the safety of trainees under 18 years of age in the one-to-one mentoring between the trainee and Trainer or any one-to-one ministries or activities undertaken as part of the Traineeship in the local church.

Applicants who are aged 16-17 years of age must, in addition to applying to METRO directly, also complete the Safe Church Volunteer Approval Process via the Safe Church Representative in their church. Session is also responsible to notify METRO once the Safe Church Unit approval to work with children notification email is received.

Responsibilities - Adult Trainees and Trainers

Sessions are responsible to ensure that all METRO Trainers and Trainees have completed the Safe Church Volunteer Approval Process via the Safe Church Representative in their church. Session is also responsible to notify METRO once the Safe Church Unit approval to work with children notification email is received.

Local church Sessions are responsible for the Trainer, the Trainees (both those who are adults and those who are under 18 years of age in YouthMETRO), child safe practices of the trainee/Trainer, their ministries, one-to-one meetings, and other ministries and activities within their church.

METRO cannot be responsible for the one-to-one mentoring and activities or ministries, as these occur within the local church context and METRO are unable to provide oversight and supervision.

The local church Session is aware of and will comply with:

- The requirements for a YouthMETRO Trainee.
- The PCV's "Safe Church" Policy, Procedures and Program and "Working with Children Check" requirements, including but not limited to, as the YouthMETRO Trainee works with children under 18.
- The responsibilities of the Session as outlined above.

Additional METRO Requirements

In addition to PCV Safe Church Policy, Code of Conduct & associated practices and procedures, the METRO Committee have implemented a number of METRO specific policies:

Parental/Guardian permission and communication

Parental or guardian consent must be given prior to a Trainee under the age of 18 years old being accepted into the YouthMETRO Traineeship. Consent is given via the Parent/Guardian completing the online YouthMETRO Parent/Guardian permission form.

In the online Trainee application form, Trainees give the contact details for a Parent/Guardian. METRO Admin will then email the nominated parent the link to the Parent/Guardian permission form. This form is not directly accessible on the METRO website, to ensure METRO has taken reasonable steps to ensure it is the Parent/Guardian completing the form, not the child.

If a trainee completes their application form for YouthMETRO before their 18th birthday, their Parent/Guardian must complete the Parent/Guardian permission form - even if the applicant turns 18 prior to Orientation day.

Parents/guardians of Trainees aged under 18 years of age must be informed of the name and contact details of the approved and appointed adult Trainer. If parents/guardians inform Session they are not comfortable with the appointed adult Trainer and do not wish their child to have the appointed adult Trainer, Sessions will immediately pause the traineeship and consult with METRO and the parents as to why the parents/guardians feel this way and seek advice from the Safe Church Unit. METRO and Session will consult together in order to find an alternative Trainer.

Gender Policy

Adult Trainers and Trainees under the age of 18 years must be of the same gender.

Additional Safe Church protocols and practices

For Trainees who are under the age of 18, there are additional protocols and practices which need to be adhered to throughout the traineeship by the Trainee, Trainer, church and METRO. This information must be provided to the Parents/Guardians via their Parent/Guardian YouthMETRO Information document so they are fully informed.

- All Trainers must be aged 18 years and above and be Safe Church compliant. A person can only be a Trainer once they have been approved to work with children in the PCV via completing the Safe Church Volunteer Approval Process. For more information on this process please visit www.safechurchpcv.org.au/volunteers.
- In the local church the Trainer and Trainees must comply with the Safe Church procedures in place as they conduct their ministry and activities as part of the traineeship.
- Communication from the Trainer, METRO Committee and METRO Admin Assistant to the Trainee MUST copy in their Parent/Guardian. Trainees will be instructed to immediately inform their Parents/Guardians if the Trainer, METRO Committee or METRO Admin Assistant communicates to them without copying in the Parent/Guardian.
- In line with the Safe Church Code of Conduct, Trainers must never drive an under 18 year old Trainee alone.
- Trainees under the age of 18 must not be left as the sole minder of children in any ministry or activity in the local church, as by definition, they themselves are “children”.

One-to-One mentoring and ministry

One-to-one meetings between the Trainer and the Trainee are a key part of the YouthMETRO traineeship and aim to facilitate the mentoring aspect of the traineeship. Sessions are responsible to ensure that the one-to-one mentoring meetings, and other one-to-one ministry within their church setting is conducted in a safe manner, via providing clear and consistent oversight of this aspect of the traineeship.

One-to-one meetings are conducted only within the boundaries of the Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct and safe ministry practice, as described below and in the Safe Church PCV guidelines found at www.safechurchpcv.org.au . The Trainers must adhere to the Safe Church Code of Conduct and comply with the Code in their ministry, conduct and activities with the Trainee.

The purpose of one-to-one meetings is to grow the Trainee in their faith, encourage them to follow Jesus Christ and grow in their ministry capability.

Relevant Boundaries:

- The meetings involve one-to-one Bible reading and prayer.
- A Parent/Guardian must be copied in on any online communications between the child and the mentor.
- Mentoring is not counselling and mentoring is not to be used to grow an intimate friendship or relationship between an adult and a child.
- Mentoring meetings only take place at pre-arranged dates/times/locations in public places/places or where Parent/Guardian oversight occurs. – i.e. a Parent/Guardian is present via being nearby and present. Parents/Guardians can give permission for another adult to be present instead of themselves – for example, an adult sibling or another Safe Church compliant leader. This permission must be recorded before the meeting via an email or text from the Parent/Guardian to the Trainer.
- Parents/Guardians must be informed of the date/time/locations of all one-to-one meetings, at least 24 hours before the meeting.
- Sessions must be kept informed by the Trainer of the date/time/locations via regular reporting to Session of these meetings.

Safe Church Requirements

All Trainees and Trainers regardless of age must:

- Complete the Safe Church Volunteer Approval Process via the Safe Church Representative in their church.
- Due to their leadership position within the church, complete Safe Church Basic Training as soon as possible (unless they have already completed Basic Training prior to applying).
- Trainees will have the opportunity to complete Safe Church Basic Training in the morning of Orientation day.
- Trainees under the age of 18 years will be required to complete Safe Church Basic Training (with parental permission, due to the sensitive nature of the content). Parental permission is given at the time of application to the traineeship, via the YouthMETRO under 18 Trainee Parental Permission Form.
- Complete the online Safe Church Refresher Training yearly.
- Hold a current Working With Children Check, registered with the PCV and the local church.

As an organisation, METRO is able to require under 18 year old Trainees to apply for a WWCC in line with our Safe Church requirements. The WWCC comes at no cost, as YouthMETRO Trainees can apply for the free Volunteer card.

Communication

In compliance with the PCV Safe Church policy, email communication with the trainee will be CC'd through their parents or guardians. These will be sent separately to bulk BCC emails, so the trainee can 'reply all' (parent & METRO) to ensure the parent is included in any replies. Should the trainee forget to 'reply all', METRO will add the parent back into the email thread.

During the application process, a METRO committee member of the same gender will conduct a phone interview with the applicant. The parent will have given consent for this phone call in the Parent Permission Form, and will receive email communication notifying them of the day this will occur.

Any video call communications will occur within a group. If a 1-1 video call must occur, a parent/guardian must be in the room with the child (and able to both see and hear the call), or join the video call themselves.

Concerns and Feedback

Parents/Guardians are to contact the local church Session in the first instance with any Safe Church related safe ministry practice concerns or issues related to their child in the METRO programme. Parents/Guardians can also contact the Safe Church Unit if preferred or if they are unable to satisfactorily resolve the concern/issue with the Session.

Parents/Guardians may also contact the Safe Church Unit with any concerns or issues relating to child safety (for example, allegations or concerns of inappropriate conduct, grooming or abuse-related concerns).

Trainees are also able to raise such concerns and issues either to the Session, METRO Committee or the Safe Church Unit, by speaking directly to the local church Session or contacting METRO Committee via pcvmetro@gmail.com or the Safe Church Unit via safechurch@pcv.org.au or mobile 0499 090 449.

Parents/Guardians and trainee feedback and input to the METRO programme is welcomed. Please contact the METRO Committee via pcvmetro@gmail.com. A Parent/Guardian survey and a Trainee survey is undertaken at the end of the traineeship.

Trainee and Trainer Safe Church Information

Relevant Safe Church information is included for Trainees and Trainers in the YouthMETRO Trainee and Trainer Manual.

Third Party Events

Six months before any Third Party event, METRO will communicate directly with the Third Party provider to confirm that the necessary child safety procedures are in place at the event.

Events will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, to ensure policies & procedures are tailored to the specific nature of each event.

Below are the current events and protocols that are in place:

PYV and METRO

[To be completed]

MTS

METRO is responsible for under 18 year old trainees at the MTS Challenge.

ENGAGE

Engage Leadership Conference is now only accepting attendees over the age of 18.