

SAFETY AGREEMENTS ...

“What are they?”

“When are they used?”

“Is excluding someone, when
it occurs, unchristian?”



WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Safe Place Services (Adventist Church)

Australia 1800 220 468 or New Zealand 0800 442 458 or website
www.safeplaceservices.org.au

ACT—Office for Children, Youth & Family Support 1300 556 729

NSW—Community Services 132 111

NT—Department of Health & Families 1800 700 250

NZ—Child, Youth & Families (CYFs New Zealand) 0508 326 459

QLD—Department of Child Safety 1800 811 810 (for details of nearest
Local Office) or 1800 177 135 (after hours)

SA—Families SA Child Abuse Report Line 131 478

TAS—Department of Health & Human Services Child Protection
Intake 1300 737 639

VIC—Department of Human Services 1300 650 172 or 131 278 after
hours

WA—Department of Child Protection 08 9222 2555 during office
hours; Perth after hours 08 9325 1111; Regional after hours 1800 199 008



Local Conference Safe-Place Coordinator:



Safety Agreements



**Seventh-day Adventist Churches
of Australia and New Zealand**

WHAT IS A SAFETY AGREEMENT?

A Safety Agreement is a list of safeguards that an applicant and the local Conference sign as a condition of the person's attendance at a specified local Church. The local Church must appoint monitors and endorse a Safety Agreement for it to commence. The Conference also seeks local Church input into the safeguards that form the Safety Agreement.

WHEN IS A 'SAFETY AGREEMENT' USED?

A Safety Agreement is used in situation such as:

1. A person is convicted for a sexual, violent, or pornographic offence against a child.
2. A person is found to have breached a code of conduct, in a sexual manner against a child, by a relevant Tribunal, Commission, or Registration body.
3. An allegation of child sexual abuse is found to be sustained—on the balance or probabilities—by the Church's internal investigation (coordinated by Safe Place Services).

A Safety Agreement might also be used in situations such as:

1. A person is awaiting or undergoing a trial or other investigation process to determine the validity of an allegation of sexually-related conduct against a child.
2. A person persistently breaches the local Church's Code of Conduct.

A Safety Agreement is used to manage situations of real or potential risk. It makes it clear what steps the Church and applicant are taking to keep the Church safe for everyone.

CAN THE 'SAFETY AGREEMENT' PROCESS EXCLUDE SOMEONE FROM CHURCH?

Yes, it can in some situations.

An applicant who has a conviction for a sexually related offence against a minor, who by their own choice refuses to enter into a Safety Agreement, will be issued with an exclusion notice not to be present on church property (facilities either owned, rented, held in trust, or otherwise used for worship and local church activities). If the applicant chooses to enter into a Safety Agreement, the exclusion notice is revoked so the applicant may attend.

Sometimes an applicant may have over-riding Parole, Court, Bail, Intervention, or Supervision orders that effectively prevent them from attending Church due to the presence of children under 16-years of age. A Safety Agreement might not be possible for the Conference to introduce in such circumstances, until the over-riding order expires.

The Conference will also not introduce a Safety Agreement if the risk, overall, of the applicant in the proposed situation is Medium or High. In some cases an applicant may be asked to undergo treatment to reduce their personal risk of reoffending. The Conference will assist the local Church develop a restoration plan to minister to an applicant in this situation. Such an applicant may attend home-based prayer meetings and small groups, and may attend certain meetings on Church property where only adults are expected to be in attendance.

IS EXCLUDING SOMEONE UN-CHRISTIAN?

For most people, involvement in weekly worship and Church life is a positive blessing. For a few people, however, it can be a source of temptation. It would be unwise to condone a person with an alcohol addiction to go to a local pub, or someone with a gambling addiction to go to the pokies. Likewise, for some people, attending Church—where there are lots of children and youth—can be a stumbling block of temptation.

Jesus spoke harsh words against those who offend against children (see Matthew 18). Yet, even those who sexually offend against children are not beyond God's grace and forgiveness. Excluding some applicants from a Safety Agreement (for a period of time) is redemptive in its intent (for the person who has offended) and upholds the Church's mission to provide a haven for kids to grow and flourish.

WHAT SORT OF CONDITIONS ARE IN A 'SAFETY AGREEMENT'?

Conditions vary on the situation, but usually a Safety Agreement outlines places where the applicant cannot go and people that they must not have contact with.

The Safety Agreement essentially restates the local Church's Code of Conduct. It is not punitive but a 'pledge' by the applicant to live a life of positive change with the help of God and the Church. It recognizes the need for accountability to others in living a non-offending life.