



Safe Ministry Policy

for staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults

This Safe Ministry Policy is the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy of Salisbury Baptist Church (hereinafter referred to as “the Church”).

Relevant legislation

Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)
Working with Children Check Act 2000 (Qld)
Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld)
Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld)

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1 Purpose

The Church believes that every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and that every Child is precious and must be treated with dignity, respect, protection and care. The Church is committed to creating environments where Children are safe, welcomed, valued and able to participate in the life and ministries of the Church.

While this Policy has been developed primarily to support the safety and wellbeing of Children and to comply with the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*, the Church also recognises its responsibility to provide safe, respectful and supportive environments for Vulnerable Persons. The principles of dignity, respect, safeguarding, accountability and appropriate conduct reflected in this Policy are intended to guide interactions with all people who may be vulnerable due to age, disability, illness, trauma, dependence, social circumstances or other factors.

The Church recognises that safeguarding Children is both a biblical responsibility and a legal obligation. Child safety and wellbeing must be prioritised in all decisions, ministries, programs and activities involving Children. The Church is committed to protecting Children from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, grooming, discrimination, bullying and other forms of inappropriate conduct.

This Policy forms part of the Church's broader safeguarding framework and establishes the principles, expectations and responsibilities that guide the Church's approach to child safety and wellbeing. It is intended to assist the Church Executive Body, Pastoral Leaders, staff, volunteers, contractors, parents, carers and other stakeholders to understand and fulfil their responsibilities in protecting Children and promoting their wellbeing.

This Policy is to be read consistently with the Constitution and published doctrinal statements of the Church. Nothing in this policy should be interpreted or construed so as to conflict or deviate from the doctrines and tenets of faith of the Church as defined in these Statements. Nothing in the Constitution, a doctrinal statement or this Policy limits the Church's obligation to comply with the law, make a required report, or take reasonable action to protect a Child.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. provide a framework for safeguarding Children in all ministries, programs, activities and environments of the Church;
2. promote a culture in which child safety and wellbeing are embedded in the leadership, governance and everyday life of the Church;

3. prevent, identify, report and respond appropriately to Harm, Reportable Conduct and other child safety concerns;
4. support the participation, inclusion and wellbeing of all Children, recognising their diverse backgrounds, circumstances and needs;
5. establish clear expectations for behaviour, recruitment, supervision, training, risk management, complaints handling and record keeping; and
6. promote continuous improvement in safeguarding practices throughout the Church.

The Church acknowledges that Children have the right to be safe and to have their views heard and respected. The Church is committed to fostering a culture in which concerns regarding the safety or wellbeing of Children can be raised without fear of retaliation, where reports are responded to promptly and appropriately, and where the rights, dignity and best interests of Children are paramount.

The Church Executive Body is responsible for ensuring that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in the governance, leadership, culture and operations of the Church and that appropriate systems are in place to prevent harm, identify risks, respond to concerns, comply with reporting obligations and continually improve safeguarding practices.

2 Scope

This Policy is intended to protect all Children and guide safe ministry practices for Vulnerable Persons who participate in, attend, or are otherwise involved in Church ministries, programs, activities and services. This Policy applies to all Church-related activities involving Children, whether conducted:

- on Church property;
- at another location;
- in a private residence;
- during camps, excursions or special events; or
- through online platforms, electronic communications or social media.

Where an independent third party hires or uses Church property for its own child-related activity, the written hiring or use agreement must state that the third party is responsible for complying with applicable child-safety, Blue Card and reporting laws. The Church may require evidence of appropriate arrangements and may suspend or end access where a child-safety concern arises.

All persons to whom this Policy applies are expected to comply with this Policy and any associated safeguarding policies, procedures, guidelines and Codes of Conduct.

3 Definitions

Blue Card means a current blue card or exemption card issued under the *Working with Children Check Act 2000* (Qld), as applicable.

Child or Children means a person or persons under 18 years of age.

Child Safety Concern means any concern, suspicion, allegation, disclosure, complaint, incident or risk relating to the safety, wellbeing or protection of a Child.

Church Executive Body means the body appointed under the Church Constitution and By-laws that is responsible for the governance of the Church.

Harm has the meaning given in the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld).

Head of Entity means the Church Secretary or another person appointed by resolution of the Church Executive Body to fulfil the responsibilities of the Head of Entity under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Where the Church Secretary is unable to act, has a conflict of interest, or is the subject of a Reportable Conduct Matter, the Church Executive Body must appoint an alternate Head of Entity for that matter.

Junior Volunteer means a volunteer under 18 years of age who assists in a ministry, program or activity involving Children under the supervision of an adult Team Member or Ministry Leader.

Ministry Leader means a staff member or volunteer who is responsible for leading, coordinating or supervising a ministry, program or activity involving Children.

Person of Concern means a person whose known conduct, history, circumstances or current behaviour gives rise to a reasonable safeguarding concern requiring assessment or management.

Reportable Allegation means an allegation or other information that gives rise to a reasonable belief that a Worker has engaged in Reportable Conduct or misconduct that may involve Reportable Conduct, whether or not it occurred while the Worker was performing duties for the Church.

Reportable Conduct means:

- a child sexual offence;
- sexual misconduct in relation to, or in the presence of, a Child;
- ill-treatment of a Child;
- significant neglect of a Child;
- physical violence in relation to, or in the presence of, a Child; or
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a Child.

Reportable Conviction means a conviction of a Worker for an offence that may involve Reportable Conduct.

Safe Ministry Coordinator means the person appointed by the Church Executive Body to oversee the implementation of this Policy and associated safeguarding procedures.

Safe Ministry Contact means a person appointed by the Church Executive Body to receive Child Safety Concerns, safeguarding disclosures and complaints, and to support the implementation of this Policy.

Volunteer means a person who provides services to the Church without remuneration, including Ministry Leaders, Team Members and Junior Volunteers.

Vulnerable Person means an adult who may be unable to protect themselves from harm, exploitation or abuse because of age, disability, illness, trauma, dependence, social isolation, impaired decision-making capacity or other personal circumstances.

Worker or Team Member means any person who performs work of any kind for the Church, including an employee, volunteer, contractor, consultant, trainee, work-experience participant, member of the Church's management, minister, Pastoral Leader or Ministry Leader.

4 Statement of Commitment

The Church is committed to the safety and wellbeing of every Child and to fulfilling the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle set out in this Policy.

The Church also seeks to promote the safety, dignity and wellbeing of Vulnerable Persons and to ensure that all people participating in the life and ministries of the Church are treated with respect, care and compassion.

We believe that every Child is created in the image of God, is known and loved by Him, and is deserving of dignity, respect, protection and care. We are committed to creating environments where Children feel safe, valued, included and able to participate fully in the life and ministries of the Church.

The Church acknowledges that safeguarding Children is both a biblical responsibility and a legal obligation. We are committed to promoting a culture in which the safety and wellbeing of Children are prioritised above organisational reputation, convenience or personal interests.

The Church is committed to:

1. promoting the safety and wellbeing of Children;
2. providing safe, welcoming and inclusive environments for all Children;
3. listening to Children and taking their views, concerns and experiences seriously;

4. respecting and supporting the diverse backgrounds, needs and circumstances of Children and their families;
5. preventing Harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, grooming and Reportable Conduct;
6. responding promptly and appropriately to Child Safety Concerns;
7. complying with applicable safeguarding, child protection and reporting obligations;
8. recruiting, screening, training and supporting staff and volunteers appropriately;
9. maintaining systems that promote accountability, transparency and continuous improvement; and
10. fostering a culture in which concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation.

The Church does not tolerate child abuse, Reportable Conduct or conduct that places a Child at risk. Every concern will be taken seriously, acted on promptly and handled fairly in accordance with the law.

6 Policy Statements

6.1 Child Safe Standard 1: Leadership and Culture

The Church Executive Body is committed to fostering a culture in which the safety and wellbeing of Children are fundamental to the life, ministries and operations of the Church.

The Church recognises that effective safeguarding requires strong leadership, sound governance, clear accountability and a culture in which the safety and wellbeing of Children are prioritised above organisational reputation, convenience or personal interests.

The Church Executive Body is responsible for:

1. promoting and modelling a culture of child safety and wellbeing;
2. ensuring appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and systems are implemented and maintained;
3. monitoring compliance with legislative and safeguarding obligations;
4. ensuring Child Safety Concerns are responded to appropriately and without delay;
5. supporting the participation and inclusion of Children in the life of the Church;
6. allocating appropriate resources to safeguarding activities; and

All persons involved in the life and ministries of the Church share responsibility for promoting the safety, wellbeing and dignity of Children and for upholding the commitments set out in this Statement.

5 Safeguarding Responsibilities

Safeguarding Children and promoting the safety and dignity of Vulnerable Persons is a shared responsibility. All persons to whom this Policy applies are expected to:

1. act in the best interests of Children;
2. comply with this Policy and associated safeguarding procedures;
3. report Child Safety Concerns promptly;
4. participate in required training; and
5. contribute to a culture of safety, wellbeing and respect.

Specific responsibilities of the Church Executive Body, Head of Entity, Safe Ministry Coordinator, Ministry Leaders, Team Members and other stakeholders are set out throughout this policy and associated procedures.

7. regularly reviewing safeguarding risks, practices and outcomes to promote continuous improvement.

The Church acknowledges that safeguarding Children is a shared responsibility. All persons covered by this Policy are expected to contribute to a culture that is safe, respectful, inclusive and accountable.

The Church does not tolerate child abuse, Reportable Conduct or conduct that places a Child at risk. Every concern will be taken seriously, acted on promptly and handled fairly in accordance with the law.

The Church also expects all persons covered by this Policy to act with care, respect and appropriate boundaries when engaging with Vulnerable Persons.

6.2 Child Safe Standard 2: Voice of Children

The Church recognises that Children have the right to be heard, respected and taken seriously in matters affecting their safety, wellbeing and participation.

The Church will:

1. provide age-appropriate opportunities for Children to express their views and raise concerns;
2. encourage Children to participate in decisions that affect them;
3. provide information about their rights and available supports;
4. ensure concerns raised by Children are taken seriously and responded to appropriately; and

5. promote environments where Children feel safe to speak up without fear of retaliation.

The Church will seek to ensure that processes for participation and feedback are accessible and inclusive.

6.3 Child Safe Standard 3: Family and Community

The Church recognises that child safety is strengthened when families and communities are informed, engaged and involved.

The Church will:

1. make child safety information readily available;
2. encourage families and carers to participate in promoting child safety and wellbeing;
3. provide opportunities for feedback regarding safeguarding practices;
4. communicate safeguarding expectations clearly; and
5. seek to work collaboratively with families and communities to support the safety and wellbeing of Children.

6.4 Child Safe Standard 4: Equity and Diversity

The Church is committed to providing environments that are inclusive, respectful and responsive to the diverse needs of Children and their families.

The Church will:

1. treat all Children with dignity, respect and fairness;
2. promote equitable access to ministries, programs and activities;
3. support the inclusion of Children with disability and additional needs;
4. provide welcoming and inclusive environments;
5. recognise and respond appropriately to the diverse backgrounds, experiences and circumstances of Children; and
6. seek to remove barriers that may prevent Children from participating safely and fully.

6.5 Child Safe Standard 5: People

The Church recognises that the suitability, conduct and support of those who work with Children are essential to child safety.

The Church will:

1. recruit, screen and select staff and volunteers appropriately;
2. comply with all applicable Blue Card requirements;
3. ensure safeguarding responsibilities are communicated clearly;
4. provide induction, supervision and support;
5. maintain appropriate records relating to screening and engagement; and
6. require compliance with applicable Codes of Conduct.

All staff and volunteers working with Children must undertake safeguarding training and comply with this Policy and associated safeguarding procedures.

6.6 Child Safe Standard 6: Complaints and Concerns

The Church is committed to responding to Child Safety Concerns promptly, appropriately and in a manner that is child-focused, trauma-informed and respectful.

The Church will:

1. provide accessible avenues for raising concerns and complaints;
2. respond promptly to reports of Harm, Reportable Conduct or other Child Safety Concerns;
3. comply with applicable reporting obligations;
4. support Children and others affected by safeguarding concerns;
5. maintain confidentiality where appropriate; and
6. keep appropriate records of concerns, complaints and actions taken.

The Church will not tolerate victimisation or retaliation against any person who raises a Child Safety Concern in good faith.

6.7 Child Safe Standard 7: Knowledge and Skills

The Church is committed to ensuring that those who work with Children possess the knowledge, skills and awareness necessary to promote child safety and wellbeing.

The Church will:

1. provide safeguarding induction and ongoing training;
2. ensure staff and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities;
3. provide guidance on recognising and responding to Child Safety Concerns;
4. maintain records of safeguarding training and development.

6.8 Child Safe Standard 8: Physical and Online Environments

The Church is committed to providing physical and online environments that promote safety and wellbeing and minimise opportunities for Harm.

The Church will:

1. identify and manage safeguarding risks;
2. implement reasonable safeguards to protect Children;
3. promote safe use of technology and online communication;
4. encourage transparency and accountability in interactions with Children;
5. ensure appropriate supervision of activities involving Children; and
6. respond appropriately to incidents and emerging risks.
7. The Church will regularly assess environments, activities and practices to identify opportunities to strengthen safeguarding measures.

6.9 Child Safe Standard 9: Continuous Improvement

The Church is committed to continually improving its safeguarding practices.

The Church will:

1. regularly review safeguarding policies, procedures and practices;
2. consider feedback from Children, families, staff and volunteers;

3. analyse incidents, complaints and concerns to identify opportunities for improvement;
4. monitor compliance with safeguarding requirements; and
5. implement actions necessary to strengthen child safety and wellbeing.

The Church Executive Body will receive regular reports regarding safeguarding performance, risks and improvement activities.

6.10 Child Safe Standard 10: Policies and Procedures

The Church is committed to maintaining policies, procedures and practices that support child safety and wellbeing.

The Church will:

1. maintain safeguarding policies and procedures that are consistent with legislative requirements;
2. ensure safeguarding documents are accessible and communicated appropriately;
3. support consistent implementation across ministries and activities;
4. maintain appropriate records relating to safeguarding matters; and
5. review safeguarding documents regularly to ensure they remain effective and current.

All persons covered by this Policy are expected to comply with applicable safeguarding policies, procedures, guidelines and Codes of Conduct.

6.11 Universal Principle: Cultural Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

The Church believes that every Child is precious and created in the image of God.

In implementing each Child Safe Standard, the Church will provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children to cultural safety, so that they are welcomed, safe, valued, included and respected.

The Church will listen and respond reasonably to any cultural-safety need or concern raised by a Child or family and will have regard to applicable Queensland Family and Child Commission guidelines.

7 Procedures

7.1 Immediate response to safeguarding concerns

If any person has a concern about the safety or wellbeing of a Child or Vulnerable Person, they must:

1. **Act immediately if there is danger** – call 000 if a Child or Vulnerable Person is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical help.
2. **Listen and reassure** – stay calm, listen carefully, and reassure the person that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
3. **Do not investigate** – do not ask leading questions, confront the alleged person, or try to determine whether the concern is true.
4. **Record the concern** – write down what was seen, heard or disclosed as soon as possible, using the person's own words where possible.
5. **Report internally** – notify a Safe Ministry Contact as soon as practicable.
6. **Report externally if needed** – nothing prevents any person from reporting directly to police, Child Safety Services, Blue Card Services, the Queensland Family and Child Commission or another relevant authority.

7.2 Procedure for responding to reports of harm

Any person who becomes aware of, receives, witnesses or suspects a Child Safety Concern must take the matter seriously and act promptly. Where a concern relates to a Vulnerable Person, the Church will respond in a manner that prioritises that person's safety, dignity, wishes and wellbeing, while complying with any applicable legal obligations.

- A. If there is immediate danger or urgent medical need, the person who becomes aware of the concern must call 000 immediately.
- B. When receiving a disclosure or report, the person receiving the information must:
 - a. remain calm and listen carefully;
 - b. take the Child, Vulnerable Person or other person seriously;
 - c. reassure the person that they have done the right thing by speaking up;
 - d. avoid asking leading questions;
 - e. avoid making promises of confidentiality;
 - f. avoid confronting the alleged person or conducting their own investigation; and
 - g. make a written record as soon as possible.
- C. The written record should include:
 - a. the date, time and location of the concern or disclosure;
 - b. the name of the person making the report or disclosure;
 - c. the name of the Child or Vulnerable Person involved;
 - d. the words used by the person making the disclosure, as accurately as possible;
 - e. any immediate safety concerns;
 - f. any action already taken; and
 - g. the name of the person completing the record.
- D. The person receiving the report must notify a Safe Ministry Contact as soon as practicable.
- E. Where the report involves a Safe Ministry Contact, the matter must be reported directly to the Head of Entity or another member of the Church Executive Body.
- F. Upon receiving a report, the Safe Ministry Contact must:
 - a. assess whether immediate action is required to protect a Child or Vulnerable Person;
 - b. take reasonable steps to ensure the person is safe;
 - c. ensure the matter is documented;
 - d. notify the Safe Ministry Coordinator;
 - e. consult with the Head of Entity where the matter may involve Reportable Conduct, criminal conduct or external reporting obligations; and
 - f. ensure appropriate follow-up action is taken.
- G. The Church will comply with all applicable reporting obligations, including obligations relating to Child Safety Concerns, Reportable Conduct, criminal conduct and Blue Card matters.
- H. Nothing in this procedure prevents a person from making a report directly to police, Child Safety Services, the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Blue Card Services or another relevant authority where they believe it is appropriate to do so.
- I. The Church will not conduct an internal investigation in a manner that could compromise a police investigation, statutory investigation or other external process.

J. The Church will provide appropriate support to affected Children, Vulnerable Persons, families, staff and volunteers, taking into account the nature of the concern and the needs of those involved.

K. All reports, actions taken and outcomes must be recorded and retained in accordance with the Church's recordkeeping requirements.

L. The Church will treat all reports seriously and will not tolerate victimisation, retaliation or adverse treatment of any person who raises a concern in good faith.

A person who has a safeguarding concern should follow the appropriate pathway below.

Concern	Immediate action	Internal contact	External contact
Immediate danger or urgent medical need	Call 000	Notify Safe Ministry Contact when safe	Police or Ambulance
Suspected criminal conduct	Preserve safety and information; do not investigate	Head of Entity / Safe Ministry Contact	Queensland Police
Possible Reportable Conduct by a Worker	Report as soon as practicable	Head of Entity	QFCC through Head
Concern involving the Head of Entity	Do not report through the Head of Entity	Alternate Safe Ministry Contact may assist	Report directly to QFCC
Child may be in need of protection	Record facts; do not investigate	Safe Ministry Contact	Child Safety
Blue Card eligibility/status concern	Remove from regulated duties where required	Safe Ministry Coordinator	Blue Card Services
General complaint or Code breach	Record and assess child-safety implications	Safe Ministry Contact	External authority if threshold met

7.4 Child-Focused complaints and concerns

A Child, parent, carer, Worker or other person may raise a complaint or concern verbally, in writing or anonymously with a Ministry Leader, Safe Ministry Contact or other person identified in the Church's Contact Schedule. No special form is required.

A person receiving a complaint must:

1. listen respectfully and take the matter seriously;
2. assess whether immediate safety action or external reporting is required;
3. make an accurate record;
4. pass the matter promptly to a Safe Ministry Contact;
5. avoid requiring a Child to repeat their account unnecessarily; and
6. explain, in an age-appropriate way, what will happen next.

The Church will respond promptly, keep the complainant reasonably informed, advise them of the outcome where appropriate, protect privacy as far as reasonably possible and prohibit retaliation.

Complaints involving possible Harm, criminal conduct, Reportable Conduct or a Blue Card matter must also be handled under the relevant reporting procedure in this Policy.

7.5 Procedure for reportable conduct matters

Any person who becomes aware of information that may constitute Reportable Conduct must promptly notify a Safe Ministry Contact or the Head of Entity.

- A. For the purposes of this procedure, a Reportable Conduct Matter includes any allegation, suspicion, concern, disclosure or finding that may constitute Reportable Conduct.
- B. Where the allegation involves a Safe Ministry Coordinator, the matter must be reported directly to the Head of Entity.
- C. Where the allegation involves the Head of Entity, the matter must be reported directly to the Church Executive Body or a person nominated by the Church Executive Body.
- D. Upon becoming aware of a potential Reportable Conduct Matter, the Head of Entity must:
 - a. assess any immediate risks to Children;

- b. take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any affected Child;
- c. ensure the matter is appropriately documented;
- d. determine whether notification to an external authority is required; and
- e. comply with any obligations imposed under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, including notification, investigation and reporting obligations.

- E. Where a reportable allegation or reportable conviction is identified, the Head of Entity must ensure notification is made to the Queensland Family and Child Commission within the timeframe required by law, which is currently within **three business days of becoming aware of the matter**.
- F. Following notification of a reportable allegation or reportable conviction, the Head of Entity must ensure that the matter is investigated, or that an investigation is arranged, unless otherwise directed by police, the Queensland Family and Child Commission or another authorised authority.
- G. The Church may implement interim safeguarding measures while a matter is being assessed, investigated or managed. Such measures may include restricting duties, modifying responsibilities, suspending ministry activities or other actions necessary to protect Children.
- H. The Church will cooperate with police, statutory authorities, regulators and other authorised agencies and will not conduct an investigation in a manner that may compromise an external investigation.
- I. Any investigation undertaken by or on behalf of the Church must be conducted fairly, confidentially and with appropriate regard to the rights, wellbeing and safety of all persons involved.
- J. Following completion of the investigation, the Head of Entity must determine the findings of the matter, any disciplinary or safeguarding action to be taken, and ensure that any investigation updates, findings, outcomes and reports required under the Reportable Conduct Scheme are submitted to the Queensland Family and Child Commission within the timeframes required by law.
- K. The Head of Entity must ensure any investigation updates and outcome reports required under the Reportable Conduct Scheme are submitted within the timeframe required by law, which is currently within **30**

business days unless otherwise approved by the Queensland Family and Child Commission.

- L. Appropriate support will be offered to affected Children, families, staff and volunteers, taking into account the nature of the allegation and the needs of those involved.
- M. Records relating to Reportable Conduct Matters must be maintained securely and retained in accordance with the Church's recordkeeping requirements and applicable legislative obligations.
- N. The Church will treat all Reportable Conduct Matters seriously and will not tolerate victimisation, retaliation or adverse treatment of any person who reports a concern in good faith.
- 7. Nothing in this procedure prevents a person from making a report directly to police, the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Child Safety Services, Blue Card Services or another relevant authority where they believe it is appropriate to do so.

7.6 Procedure for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers involved in ministries with Children must successfully complete the Church's approved onboarding and screening process before commencing duties.

- A. Screening will be conducted through the Safe Ministry Check online system or another process approved by the Church Executive Body.
- B. The screening process must include, where applicable:
 - a. completion of referee checks;
 - b. verification of any required qualifications, licences or credentials;
 - c. Blue Card verification; and
 - d. acknowledgement of the Church's safeguarding requirements and applicable Code of Conduct.
- C. Referee checks must include:
 - a. at least one referee from within the Church or a church previously attended by the applicant; and
 - b. at least one referee external to the Church who is able to comment on the applicant's character, suitability and conduct.

- D. Where a person has attended the Church for less than six months, the Church may require additional referee checks or supporting information before approving their involvement in ministries involving Children.
- E. All staff and volunteers must be provided with:
 - a. the Safe Ministry Policy;
 - b. the applicable Code of Conduct; and
 - c. information regarding their safeguarding responsibilities.
- F. No person may commence duties involving Children until all required screening and onboarding requirements have been completed and approved.
- G. Records of screening, onboarding and referee checks must be maintained in accordance with the Church's recordkeeping requirements.

7.7 Procedure for compliance with blue card requirements

As a matter of Church policy, all volunteers and staff must hold a valid Blue Card or Exemption Card before commencing duties, unless the Church Executive Body determines that an exemption or exception is appropriate. This requirement applies even where a statutory exemption may otherwise be available.

- A. Prior to commencement:
 - a. the Blue Card must be sighted;
 - b. the individual's identity must be verified;
 - c. the Blue Card details must be recorded; and
 - d. the individual must be linked to the Church through the Blue Card Services portal.
- B. The Safe Ministry Coordinator must maintain a current Blue Card Register.
- C. Individuals must immediately notify the Safe Ministry Coordinator if:
 - a. their Blue Card is suspended, cancelled or expires;
 - b. they receive a negative notice;
 - c. they are charged with, convicted of, or investigated for a relevant offence; or
 - d. any other matter arises that may affect their eligibility.
- D. Any person who ceases to hold a valid Blue Card must immediately cease duties involving Children.

7.8 Procedure for training and support of staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers working with Children must complete safeguarding induction training before commencing duties.

- A. Safeguarding training will ordinarily be completed through the Safe Ministry Check online system or another training platform approved by the Church Executive Body.
- B. Staff and volunteers working with Children must complete refresher safeguarding training at least every three years, or more frequently where required by the Church Executive Body, legislative requirements or changes to safeguarding practices.
- C. The Safe Ministry Coordinator is responsible for monitoring training compliance and maintaining appropriate training records.
- D. The Church will provide reasonable support, guidance and supervision to staff and volunteers in relation to safeguarding responsibilities and Child Safety Concerns.
- E. Records of completed training and any additional safeguarding development activities must be maintained in accordance with the Church's recordkeeping requirements.

7.9 Procedure for risk assessment and risk management

Ministry Leaders are responsible for identifying and managing risks associated with ministries, programs and activities involving Children.

- A. Risks that may affect the safety and wellbeing of Children must be considered when:
 - a. commencing a new ministry, program or activity;
 - b. undertaking a special event, camp, excursion or high-risk activity;
 - c. changing locations, activities or operating arrangements; or
 - d. responding to incidents, complaints or identified safeguarding concerns.
- B. Risk assessments must consider factors including:
 - a. the age and needs of participating Children;
 - b. supervision arrangements;
 - c. physical environments;
 - d. online environments;
 - e. transport arrangements;

- f. overnight activities;
 - g. interactions between adults and Children;
 - h. interactions between Children; and
 - i. any other foreseeable risks to safety and wellbeing.
- C. Appropriate controls must be implemented to eliminate risks where reasonably practicable or otherwise minimise risks so far as reasonably practicable.
- D. Risk controls may include:
 - a. appropriate supervision arrangements;
 - b. compliance with Codes of Conduct;
 - c. restricting access to certain areas or activities;
 - d. implementing communication protocols;
 - e. training and briefing staff and volunteers; and
 - f. any other reasonable safeguarding measures.
- E. Risk assessments for regular ministries involving Children must be reviewed at least annually and whenever a significant change occurs.
- F. Risk assessments for camps, excursions, special events or other higher-risk activities must be completed before the activity commences.
- G. Risk assessments and risk management plans must be retained in accordance with the Church's recordkeeping requirements.
- H. Any significant safeguarding risks identified through a risk assessment must be reported to the Safe Ministry Coordinator and addressed before the activity proceeds.

7.10 Procedure for creating safe environments

All activities involving Children or Vulnerable Persons must be conducted in a manner that promotes safety, wellbeing and dignity.

- A. Ministry Leaders must ensure appropriate supervision arrangements are in place having regard to the age, number and needs of participating Children and the nature of the activity.
- B. Activities involving Children should, where reasonably practicable, occur in environments that are observable and interruptible by others.

- C. Staff and volunteers must avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations with Children. Where one-to-one interactions are required, reasonable safeguards should be implemented.
- D. Appropriate standards of behaviour and professional boundaries must be maintained at all times.
- E. Transport, excursions, camps, overnight activities and higher-risk activities must be approved and managed in accordance with the Church's risk management requirements.
- F. Photographs, video recordings and other media involving Children must only be taken, stored and used in accordance with Church policies and any applicable consent requirements.
- G. Any safety concern, hazard, incident or Child Safety Concern identified during an activity must be reported promptly in accordance with Church procedures.
- H. Ministry Leaders must regularly review activities and environments to identify and address potential safeguarding risks.

- E. Photographs, video recordings and other digital content involving Children must only be created, stored, shared and published in accordance with Church policies and any applicable consent requirements.
- F. Any online behaviour, communication, content or interaction that may place a Child at risk must be reported promptly in accordance with Church safeguarding procedures.
- G. Ministry Leaders must regularly consider online safeguarding risks and implement appropriate measures to minimise those risks.

7.12 Procedure for managing persons of concern

Where a Person of Concern is identified, the Church Executive Body, Safe Ministry Coordinator and Head of Entity must take reasonable steps to assess and manage any risks to Children.

- A. In assessing and managing risks, the Church may have regard to *An Australian Baptist Response to Persons of Concern* and any advice received from Queensland Baptists, legal advisers, police, insurers or other relevant authorities.
- B. Before a Person of Concern participates in Church activities, the Church may undertake a risk assessment and develop a written safeguarding plan where considered necessary to protect Children.
- C. A safeguarding plan may include restrictions, supervision requirements, access limitations, behavioural expectations, reporting arrangements and any other measures considered necessary to manage identified risks.
- D. The Person of Concern must comply with any safeguarding plan or conditions imposed by the Church.
- E. Any suspected breach of a safeguarding plan must be reported immediately to the Safe Ministry Coordinator and Church Executive Body and assessed without delay.
- F. The Church Executive Body may review, amend, suspend or terminate a safeguarding plan at any time where necessary to protect Children, respond to changing circumstances or comply with legal obligations.
- G. Records relating to Persons of Concern and any safeguarding plans must be maintained securely and confidentially in accordance with the Church's recordkeeping requirements.

7.11 Procedure for electronic communications and online safety

Electronic communications with Children must support legitimate Church ministry purposes and be conducted in a manner that promotes safety, transparency and accountability.

- A. Communications with Children should, where reasonably practicable, occur through approved Church communication channels and include parents, carers or other authorised adults where appropriate.
- B. Staff and volunteers must not engage in secretive, inappropriate or personal online communications with Children.
- C. Social media, messaging applications, email, video conferencing and other online platforms used for Church ministries must be appropriate to the age of the Children involved and managed in accordance with Church requirements.
- D. The Church must not require a Child to create or use an account contrary to applicable law or the platform's age requirements. Communications with a Child must use approved channels, relate to a legitimate ministry purpose and, where reasonably practicable, include or be visible to a parent, carer or another authorised adult.

- H. The safety and wellbeing of Children will remain the Church's primary consideration when assessing and managing any Person of Concern.
- I. The Church will not treat an allegation as established merely because it has been made. However, the Church may impose proportionate interim safeguards while information is assessed or investigated. Any ongoing safeguarding plan must be based on an individual risk assessment and reviewed regularly.

8 Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers Working with Children and Vulnerable Persons

This Code of Conduct sets out the behaviour expected of all staff and volunteers involved in ministries, programs and activities involving Children or Vulnerable Persons

Staff and volunteers must act in a way that is safe, respectful, transparent and accountable at all times.

General Conduct

Staff and volunteers must:

- Treat Children, Vulnerable Persons, families, carers, staff and volunteers with respect, dignity and care;
- Act in the best interests of Children and with appropriate regard to the dignity, wishes and wellbeing of Vulnerable Persons;
- Model appropriate Christian conduct, language and behaviour;
- Maintain appropriate boundaries at all times;
- Follow reasonable directions from Ministry Leaders, Safe Ministry Contacts, the Safe Ministry Coordinator and the Church Executive Body;
- Comply with this Policy, Church procedures and any applicable risk management plan;
- Listen to Children and Vulnerable Persons and take their concerns seriously;
- Act transparently and avoid behaviour that may reasonably appear secretive, exclusive or inappropriate; and
- Report concerns in accordance with this Policy.

Supervision and Boundaries

Staff and volunteers must:

- Provide appropriate supervision having regard to the age, needs and circumstances of the Children or Vulnerable Persons involved;

- Avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations with Children;
- Ensure one-to-one interactions with Children occur in observable and interruptible environments wherever reasonably practicable;
- Avoid developing exclusive, secretive or dependent relationships with a Child or Vulnerable Person;
- Avoid favouritism, special treatment, private jokes, secrets, gifts or privileges that could create dependency or confusion;
- Avoid unnecessary contact with Children or Vulnerable Persons outside approved Church activities;
- Ensure toileting, changing, first aid and personal care assistance are provided in a safe, respectful and accountable manner; and
- Promptly seek guidance from a Ministry Leader, Safe Ministry Contact or Safe Ministry Coordinator if unsure whether conduct is appropriate.

Physical Contact

Staff and volunteers must:

- Ensure any physical contact is appropriate, reasonable and necessary in the circumstances;
- Consider the age, needs, wishes, dignity and comfort of the person involved;
- Use the least intrusive form of physical contact required;
- Immediately stop physical contact if the person indicates discomfort, distress or objection;
- Avoid rough play, wrestling, tickling, sitting children on laps, unnecessary hugging or other physical contact that may be misunderstood; and
- Ensure physical contact is never sexual, coercive, secretive, punitive or for the worker's own gratification.

Communication and Online Conduct

Staff and volunteers must:

- Communicate with Children only for legitimate Church ministry purposes;
- Use approved Church communication channels where reasonably practicable;
- Include parents, carers or another authorised adult in communications with Children where appropriate;
- Ensure communications are respectful, transparent and able to be reviewed if required;
- Avoid private, secretive, excessive or personal messaging with Children;

- Not use personal social media accounts to form private online relationships with Children;
- Not send or request images, videos or personal information except for approved Church purposes and in accordance with consent requirements; and
- Report any online communication or behaviour that may place a Child or Vulnerable Person at risk.

Transport, Activities and Offsite Contact

Staff and volunteers must:

- Only transport Children where authorised by the Church and, where appropriate, by a parent or carer;
- Avoid being alone in a vehicle with a Child unless authorised and unavoidable;
- Comply with approved arrangements for camps, excursions, overnight activities and higher-risk activities;
- Not arrange private meetings, visits or activities with Children outside approved Church ministry arrangements;
- Ensure activities occur in safe, observable and appropriate environments; and
- Comply with any applicable risk assessment or safeguarding plan.

Prohibited Behaviour

Staff and volunteers must not:

- Engage in Harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, grooming, Reportable Conduct or any conduct that places a Child at risk of harm;
- Use physical punishment, intimidation, humiliation, shaming, threats, coercion, bullying or degrading treatment;
- Engage in sexualised, romantic, overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour with a Child;
- Make sexually suggestive comments, jokes or gestures in the presence of Children;
- Show, provide or allow Children to access pornography, sexualised material, violent material or other inappropriate content;
- Provide alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, illegal substances or inappropriate medication to a Child;
- Engage in secretive or deceptive communication with a Child;
- Give gifts, money, favours or special privileges to a Child in a way that is secretive, excessive or not connected to an approved Church activity;
- Take, possess, access, publish or distribute inappropriate images or recordings of Children;

- Be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances while undertaking duties involving Children;
- Ignore, minimise or conceal a Child Safety Concern; or
- Act in any way that may reasonably bring the safety, wellbeing or dignity of a Child or Vulnerable Person into question.

Reporting Obligations

Staff and volunteers must promptly report:

- Any Child Safety Concern;
- Suspected Harm or Reportable Conduct;
- Concerns relating to the safety, dignity or wellbeing of a Vulnerable Person;
- Breaches of this Code of Conduct;
- Unsafe practices, boundary concerns or grooming behaviours; and
- Any conduct that may place a Child or Vulnerable Person at risk.

A person must not victimise, threaten or disadvantage another person for raising a concern in good faith.

Consequences

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, removal from ministry, termination of employment or engagement, notification to relevant authorities, or any other action considered necessary by the Church.

Acknowledgement

All staff and volunteers involved in ministries, programs and activities involving Children or Vulnerable Persons are required to acknowledge that they have read, understood and agree to comply with this Code of Conduct.