

Sample - Safe Church Policy

Name of Organisation/Church: _____

(Organisation/Church) is committed to protecting the safety of all people within its programs, ministries and events.

All people, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, disability and family/social background have equal rights to this protection.

All people (including children) have the right to be respected and valued as well as feel emotionally, physically and spiritually safe at all times.

Our policy has been developed to uphold this commitment to safeguarding and to adhere to National and Local legislation.

Our child protection policy

This policy applies to all staff, including senior leadership, manager, coordinators, paid staff, volunteers, students or anyone working on behalf of **(Organisation/Church)**.

The purpose of this policy:

To protect children and young people who receive **(Organisation/Church)** services.

To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection;

(Organisation/Church) believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Our policy aims to:

- Minimise the risk of abuse, misconduct and the misuse of positional power.
- Ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- Ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- Ensure that all people are respected and valued.

Statement of commitment to child safety

A statement of commitment should explicitly state the Organisation's/ Church's ongoing commitment to Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

(Organisation/Church) is committed to ministering to children, young people and vulnerable adults by providing a Church/Agency/Organisation environment that is physically, emotionally and spiritually safe.

(Organisation/Church) is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults by the following safeguarding measures: *Recruitment processes (screening, selection, interviews etc.), WWCC, Training, Induction, Supervision and Reviews*.

The following values reflect the culture that we are committed to promoting within **(Organisation/Church)**; *Due diligence, Integrity, Duty of Care, Transparency, Inclusivity, Collaborative Ministry, Christian ethics and the Gospel principles*.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, and is everyone's responsibility as outlined in the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children*
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other organisations/agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

WE COMMIT TO

a) Safe recruitment of leaders.

We will screen all prospective leaders in our ministries, before they are appointed. (ie. relevant working with children's check/vulnerable people/police check).

b) Adequate training of leaders.

We require that all leaders attend a safe church training workshop such as a SCTA workshop (Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Training) before commencing in their role and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.

We require all leaders to attend additional specific training as required.

c) Have a clear Code of Conduct

We will adopt and implement a Code of Conduct for all leaders and volunteers, including boundaries of behaviour and expectations of interactions with children.

All leaders will agree to follow our Code of Conduct.

d) Continued supervision of leaders.

We commit to ongoing training, supervision and support for leaders.

e) Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious misconduct.

All leaders will report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, according to our procedure. We will listen to and believe children who raise concerns.

We will ensure that procedures are clear and appropriate in responding to allegations of abuse.

Where a leader has an allegation of misconduct made against them we will provide support to alleged victims and perpetrators and seek appropriate denominational help for a just and fair resolution.

f) Provide an open safe environment

We will afford participants a say in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas and encouraging participation. We will be accountable and transparent.

We will create a child-friendly environment, allowing people to raise their concerns in an appropriate manner. We will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.

WE DEFINE:

Abuse: Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Family Violence
- Sexual Abuse
- Grooming
- Neglect
- Bullying
- Spiritual
- Financial

Child: a person who is under the age of 18 years. (eg: Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997, Tasmania; The Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, Victoria)

Safe Environment: discharges duty of care by taking steps to keep all those in our care safe, including e.g. spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional abuse (including bullying) or neglect.

Safe Leader: has been through a recruitment process, understands responsibilities, is supervised and is an accountable team player.

Safe Program: all risks have been assessed and events thought through and planned.

SCTA: Safe Church Training Agreement under the National Council of Churches in Australia – Safe Church Program.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was approved by:

on(date)

This policy was last reviewed on: (date)

Signed:

(this should be signed by the most senior person in your church/agency/organisation)

Legal framework

This policy reflects legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

National Guidelines

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children "Protecting Children is Everyone's Business" 2009 – 2020 (Commonwealth of Australia)

Local Legislation (identify your State/Territory Act)

- *Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)*
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*
- *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)*
- *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*
- *Children's Protection Act 1993(SA)*
- *Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 (Tas.)*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)*

Working With Children Checks (the relevant WWCC legislation for your State/Territory)

- *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (ACT)*
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)*
- *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)*
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)*
- *Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)*
- *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas.)*
- *Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)*