

**Safe Church Policy Adopted on 20 September 2020**

Commitment

The Church is committed to providing places, services and programs that promote physical, emotional and spiritual health and safety and model the love of Christ to all whom we have contact with, particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Purpose

The Church has adopted the *Safe Church Policy* to:

* help us live our biblical mandate to *‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbour as yourself’* (Mark 12:30-31);
* implement the 10 Child Safe Standards;
* provide a framework to inform the provision of safe environments and programs for children, young people and vulnerable adults; and
* meet our legal obligations in relation to:
	+ staff and volunteers engaged in Regulated Activities); and
	+ reporting matters, including Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct, and Reportable Conduct involving a child, to government authorities.

The *Safe Church Policy* outlines the commitment of the church to principles in various areas. More detail regarding the practical implementation of these commitments is available in the relevant procedures and guidelines

Scope

This Policy applies to:

* all Church Leadership, staff and volunteers;
* all people who are involved in or attend the Church and its programs;

## **Activities and Services for Children at the Church**

As a church, we commit to providing spaces, programs and relationships that are physically, emotionally and spiritually safe.

### Church Leadership:

* + 1. recognise that children and young people are an integral part of the Church and talk about this in services, sermons, training events and meetings;
		2. involve children and young people in regular church life where appropriate
		3. consider the needs of children and young people when making decisions about budgets, buildings, renovations, use of property, décor, or catering; and
		4. encourage children and young people to have input into decisions that affect them by including them in church forums and meetings when appropriate.

### Safe Church Team:

* + 1. talk with children and young people about the fact that they have the right to feel safe, to be listened to and to have their views respected (including discussing what they should do and who they should approach if they feel unsafe or hurt, or they suspect that someone else is unsafe or hurt); and
		2. ensure their contact details are accessible to children

### Staff and volunteers:

* + 1. listen to children and take seriously what children are saying;
		2. talk with children and young people about the kinds of behaviours, attitudes or ‘culture’ that they would like to promote in their group;
		3. encourage children and young people to have input regarding the content and activities they would like to be part of their group.

## **Staff and Volunteers**

### Screening, selection and induction of Staff and Volunteers

1. The church will undertake appropriate screening processes for all staff and volunteers
2. The church will engaged in fair and transparent selection processes for all staff and volunteers
3. The church will provide appropriate induction for all staff and volunteers
4. All staff and volunteers are to be recruited, selected and inducted in accordance with the *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers.*

### Training and Resourcing of Staff and Volunteers

* + 1. The church will ensure that staff and volunteers develop the knowledge and skills to create safe spaces for everyone, particularly children and young people.
		2. The church will ensure that staff and volunteers have access to information about creating safe spaces and that they all undergo appropriate training regarding the available Policies, Procedures and Forms.
		3. The church will support staff and volunteers with adequate resources to enable them to maintain and promote safe spaces for everyone, particularly children and young people.
		4. The church will implement the *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers*

### Standards of Behaviour for Staff and Volunteers

* + 1. The church will provide spaces, programs and relationships that are physically, emotionally and spiritually safe.
		2. The church will expect all staff and volunteers to uphold the *Code of Conduct* which includes expected behaviours for those who engage in ministry with children and/or vulnerable people.
		3. The church will expect staff and volunteers to follow *Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People*.

Please see the *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers,* the *Code of Conduct*, and the *Screening Questionnaire* for more detail.

1. **Conflict, Complaints and Concerns**

### Responding to Child Protection Concerns

1. The church will ensure appropriate and timely reporting of all child protection concerns and any complaints relating to child sexual abuse and/or sexual misconduct involving a child in accordance with the *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*.
2. The church will ensure that all child protection concerns and complaints will be reported to the relevant government departments and, if necessary, Police as soon as possible and in accordance with legislative duties.

### Complaint Handling

1. The Church will respond to complaints in accordance with the *Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers*.
2. Where there is a complaint that a staff member or volunteer has engaged in abuse, including child sexual abuse and sexual misconduct involving a child, the Church will treat the allegation as relating to a serious breach of the *Code of Conduct* and respond in accordance with the *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers.*
3. In the event of receiving a complaint that relates to a minor breach of the Code of Conduct or a grievance, the Church may determine to respond to the matter in accordance with the *Procedure for Resolving Conflict.*

Please see the *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns and the Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers* for more detail.

1. **Safe Environments**

### Physical Environments

1. The Church will ensure that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
2. The Church will comply with Work, Health and Safety requirements.
3. The Church will consider the impact of the physical environment on the potential for risk to children and vulnerable people.
4. The Church will identify and address risks arising from the physical environment in which programs and activities take place.
5. If the Church has any residential property that is identifiable as being church property then the Church will ensure that all regular adult occupants of that property obtain and hold WWCC or WWVP clearance for the duration of their residence.
6. The Church will consider whether any ministries it supports, including overseas ministries, have appropriate child protection practices in place. (This includes consideration of whether supporting orphanages overseas is appropriate)

### Online Environments

The Church will promote safe online behaviour in any electronic communication

Please see the *Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People* for more detail.

1. **Risk Management**

### Persons of Concern

The Church will manage any person identified as a Person of Concern in accordance with *An Australian Baptist Response to Persons of Concern*.

### Risk Assessments

* + 1. The Church will ensure that Ministry Leaders complete and make a record of a risk assessment in relation to any program or activity undertaken at, for or with the Church.
		- for regular activities, the risk assessment will be conducted at least annually and whenever there are significant changes in the program activities, attendance or location.
		- for special activities the Ministry Leader or Safe Church Team will complete a risk assessment.
		1. The Church will ensure that appropriate and reasonable precautions are adopted to address risks identified as part of a risk assessment. When considering what measures are appropriate, the Church will consider the likelihood of an incident occurring, the seriousness of the consequences and the difficulty of avoiding the risk.
		2. The Church will store risk assessment forms in a secure location for a period of at least 45 years.
1. **Third Parties and Affiliated Entities**
	1. The church will require any third party (tenant or external party using church property) that provides services to children and/or young people to provide written confirmation of their compliance with the Child Safe Standards at least annually.
	2. The church will ensure that any entity or program that is, or is represented as, a ministry of the Church complies with Child Safe Standards. Unless included in the internal review required at paragraph 8.1, such programs or entities must review child safety annually and report their findings to the Diaconate.
2. **Recordkeeping**

### Storage of Records

1. The Church will retain all written records for a minimum of 45 years, in hard copy and/or electronically in a secure manner.
* Where records contain, or may contain, sensitive information, they will be kept in a manner that protects confidentiality and will only be accessed by a limited number of authorised persons.
* Where records are kept in hard copy, they will be held in a secure location with proper consideration of access, and physical conditions.
* Where records are kept electronically, they will be monitored to ensure security and ongoing accessibility.
1. Records to which this item applies includes, but is not limited to:
* Ministry Information Sheets
* Staff and Volunteer files
* Attendance (sign-in/sign-out) sheets
* Risk assessment forms
* Safe Church Register
* Safe Church Concerns forms and any contemporaneous notes regarding reporting decisions
* Annual Safe Church commitment by third parties and affiliated entities
* Dated copies of any *Safe Church Policy*, Procedure, Form or associated document in force at any time

Please see the *Privacy Policy* for more detail.

1. **Review and Accountability**

### Internal Review

The Church will review this policy annually.

### External Accountability

The Church will seek advice from and communicate with the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Manager in relation to any Reportable Conduct, Child Protection Concerns and/or Complaints against Accredited or Recognised Ministers in accordance the *Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers* and the *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*.

1. **Definitions**

In the *Safe Church Policy* and associated documents, unless the context otherwise requires:

**Church** means the local church which adopted this *Safe Church Policy*, as indicated on the cover of the Policy.

**complaint** includes any allegation, suspicion, concern or report of a breach of the Church’s *Code of Conduct* or theBaptist Churches of NSW &ACT *Code of Ethics and Conduct* (where applicable). It also includes disclosures made to an institution about any child protection concern.

**Creating Safe Spaces** means Creating Safe Spaces training offered by the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT or alternative training that is Safe Church Training Agreement approved and has a face-to-face component.

**disclosure** means a process by which a person conveys or attempts to convey that they are being or have been abused or neglected.

**governance body** means the Diaconate.

**Mandatory Reporting Legislation** means

In NSW, the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*

In the ACT the *Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)].*

**Pastoral Staff** means any pastor or any accredited or recognised minister or any paid or unpaid staff member of the Church who is engaged in pastoral ministry through the Church.

**Reportable Conduct Legislation** means

In NSW the *Ombudsman Act 1974* (NSW) / *Children's Guardian Act 2019* (NSW)

In the ACT the *Ombudsman Act 1989* (ACT)].

**Safe Church Register** means the register required to record information relating to

In NSW staff and volunteers who engaged in Child-related Work and their relevant details in accordance with section 9A of the WWCC Legislation.

In the ACT, staff and volunteers who engaged in a Regulated Activity and all relevant WWVP clearances.

**vulnerable** means the state of being unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason, and includes those that suffer disadvantage such as social and financial hardship.

**WWCC Legislation** means the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act* 2012 (NSW).

**WWVP Legislation** means the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act* 2011 (ACT).

**young person** means a person who is 16 or 17 years old.

# Procedure for Staff and Volunteers

Purpose

The *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers* sets out a procedure for recruiting, screening, training and resourcing all staff and volunteers, particularly those engaged in Child-related Work (within the meaning of the **WWCC Legislation**) or Regulated Activity (within the meaning of **WWVP Legislation).**

Scope

Part 1 of the Procedure applies to Recruitment and Screening of all staff and volunteers within the Church.

Part 2 of the Procedure applies to the Induction of all staff and volunteers

Part 3 of the Procedure applies to Training and Resourcing of all staff and volunteers

Part 4 of the Procedure applies to Recordkeeping and Review of documents related to staff and volunteers

The procedures set out in this policy will have immediate effect from the date of its adoption for new appointments.

Existing staff and volunteers were already required to comply with many elements of the policy (e.g. WWVP clearances, Safe Churches training). They must comply with all other requirements of the policy within six months of the policy being adopted.

This Procedure should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

* *Screening Check Questionnaires*
* *Safe Church Register*
* *Code of Conduct*
* *Privacy Policy*

# Part 1 – Recruitment and Screening

Category 1 a - Pastoral staff and staff in leadership roles and/or engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults

The screening process for pastoral staff applies

* + to any staff member, who undertakes pastoral work in or on behalf of the church. (This typically includes any role that includes the word ‘Pastor’ or ‘Minister’ but may include other roles);
	+ to any staff member in a leadership role;
	+ to any staff member engaged in work with vulnerable people; and
	+ in addition to any requirements of the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Committee for the Ministry or the Standing Orders.
1. Prior to recruitment:
	1. the **position description** will be reviewed and updated if necessary;
	2. the position will be advertised appropriately; and
	3. the position description and/or advertisement will state that any offer of employment is subject to applicants:
		* agreeing to abide by, and upholding, the *Code of Conduct*;
		* completing a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
		* undergoing a National Police Criminal Record Check; and
		* being eligible for, or holding a current clearance in accordance with **WWVP Legislation**.
		* In addition, for pastoral staff,
		* agreeing to abide by and uphold the *Code of Ethics and Conduct*
2. Applicants for the position will submit a written application including a resume and an outline of their willingness to commit to the mission and values of the Church
3. Shortlisted applicants will:
	1. complete a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
	2. be interviewed by a committee appointed by the Diaconate or a Church meeting;
	3. be subject to a National Police Criminal Record Check;
	4. provide evidence of a current clearance in accordance with **WWVP Legislation**; and
	5. provide at least 2 references
4. Successful applicants will:
	1. sign and agree to abide by the *Code of Conduct;*
	2. participate in an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including being given a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and all Procedures and guidelines; and
	3. (in addition, for Pastoral Staff) provide evidence that they are Accredited or Recognised by the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT (or have applied to be Accredited or Recognised) or an equivalent body of another mainstream Christian Church.

Category 1 b - Staff who are not in leadership roles and are not engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults

The screening process for staff who are not engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults applies

* + to any staff member to whom the screening process in Category 1 a does not apply; and
	+ in addition to any requirements under the Standing Orders.

1. Prior to recruitment:

* 1. the **position description** will be reviewed and updated if necessary;
	2. the position will be advertised appropriately; and
	3. the position description and/or advertisement will state that any offer of employment is subject to applicants:
		+ agreeing to abide by, and upholding, the *Code of Conduct*;
		+ completing a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;

2. No person will be appointed unless they have:

* 1. completed a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
	2. been interviewed by **a** committee appointed by the Diaconate or a Church meeting;
	3. provided a minimum of 2 references

3. Successful applicants will:

* 1. sign and agree to abide by the *Code of Conduct; and*
	2. Participate in an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including being given a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures and guidelines.

Category 2 a - Volunteers in leadership roles, engaged in child-related work and/or engaged in work with vulnerable adults\*

The screening process for volunteers engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults applies to:

* + Deacons, including the Secretary and the Treasurer;
	+ any volunteer involved in ministry to children and/or young people (this may include children’s ministry, playgroup, creche, youth ministry, families ministry);
	+ any volunteer engaged in a role that includes leadership of a ministry area in which children or young people are also part of the ministry team; and
	+ any volunteer engaged in ministry to vulnerable adults.

1. Prior to being appointed, a potential volunteer will:

* 1. be provided with a current **position description**
	2. complete a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
	3. be interviewed the Ministry Leader (specified by the Diaconate)
	4. sign and agree to abide by the *Code of Conduct*
	5. either (i) provide evidence that that have completed Creating Safe Spaces training within the past 3 years, or (ii) complete the online component of the Creating Safe Spaces training and commit to attend face-to-face training within 9 months
	6. provide evidence that they hold a current clearance in accordance with **WWVP Legislation** (unless the volunteer is aged under 18).
	7. participate in an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including being given a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures and guidelines.
1. Prior to the volunteer commencing in the role the volunteer will participate in an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including being given a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures and guidelines.

Category 2 b - Volunteers not in leadership roles or engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults

The screening process for volunteers not-engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults applies to

* + any volunteer who is **not** a Deacon, Ministry Leader, engaged in child-related work or engaged in work with vulnerable adults. (this may include volunteers on the flower, cleaning or maintenance roster)
1. Prior to being appointed, a potential volunteer will:
	1. be provided with a current **position description;**
	2. complete a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
	3. be interviewed by the relevant Ministry Leader (as specified by the Diaconate); and
	4. sign and agree to abide by the *Code of Conduct;* and
2. Prior to the volunteer commencing in the role:
	1. The Safe Church Team will obtain written parental consent for the volunteer to undertake the role suggested (if the volunteer’s age is less than 18), and
	2. The volunteer will participate in an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including being given a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures and guidelines.

Category 3 – Supervised volunteers aged under 18

*The Church may determine that specific 16 or 17-year-olds have sufficient maturity to volunteer without direct supervision, despite being under 18 years of age. These volunteers will be screened and trained in accordance with category 2, including Creating Safe Spaces training.* ***However, note that there should always be at least one adult leader on-site and participating in the program.***

Please see the *Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People* for more details on the differences between junior/trainee volunteers and volunteers.’

1. Prior to being appointed, a potential volunteer will:
	* be provided with a current **position description;**
	* complete a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
	* be interviewed by the Ministry Leader (specified by the Diaconate);
	* sign and agree to abide by the *Code of Conduct;* and
	* if over sixteen years of age and working with children or vulnerable adults, provide evidence of a current clearance in accordance with **WWVP Legislation***.*
2. Prior to the volunteer commencing:
	* The Safe Church Team will obtain written parent/guardian consent for the volunteer to undertake the role suggested if the volunteer is under 16 years old (we also recommend getting parent/guardian consent for 16 and 17-year-olds wherever possible);
	* The volunteer will participate in an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including being given a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures and guidelines, and an additional briefing on child protection responsibilities and practices, including the procedures and guidelines relevant to their area of ministry.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Please see category definitions for further detail* | **Application & Screening****questionnaire** | **BA Code of Ethics and Conduct** | **Accreditation or Recognised Minister** | **Interview, reference checks, induction** | **Code of Conduct** | **WWCC\*/ WWVP** | **CSS** | **Police Check** |
| **1a**: Pastoral Staff | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **1a:** Staff engaged in leadership, child-related work or work with vulnerable adults | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **1b:** Other Staff (not engaged in leadership, child-related work or work with vulnerable adults) | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | Maybeat church discretion  |
| **2a:** Volunteers in leadership, child-related work or work with vulnerable adults | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| **2b:** Other Volunteers (not engaged in leadership, child-related work or work with vulnerable adults) | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| **2b:** Volunteers aged 16 or 17 in child-related work | Yes(use under 18 screening) | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yess | No | No |
| **3:** Supervised volunteers under 18 | Yes(use under 18 screening) | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |

# Part 2 – Induction

* 1. All staff and volunteers will be provided with an induction appropriate to their role. This induction may include:
	2. an overview of general site health and safety expectations;
	3. operating procedures that apply to relevant equipment;
	4. the content of the *Code of Conduct* and expectations and appropriate behaviours for staff and volunteers as set out in the *Safe Church Policy*;
	5. the role description and any reporting structure;
	6. expectations regarding Creating Safe Spaces training, if appropriate
	7. an overview of the *Procedures for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers, Conflict Resolution and Responding to Child Protection Concerns*;
	8. who to contact in the event of any conflict, concerns or complaints; and
	9. any Guidelines appropriate to their ministry area.
	10. A record of the induction (including the name of the person giving the induction, the date of the induction and the topics covered) will be kept.

# Part 3 – Training and Resourcing

* 1. Creating Safe Spaces Training

a) All staff and volunteers engaged in leadership and/or child-related work and/or work with vulnerable adults will:

* + - attend Baptist Churches NSW & ACT Creating Safe Spaces Training (or other SCTA approved face-to-face training) at least once every 3 years; or
		- if they have not attended such training prior to appointment, will complete the online component of the training prior to commencement and commit to attend the face-to-face component within 9 months of commencement.

c) The Safe Church Team will ensure that information about staff and volunteer attendance at Creating Safe Spaces Training is recorded in the *Safe Church Register*.

* 1. Other training

Church Leadership (or Ministry Leaders) will arrange ongoing staff and volunteer training as required.

* 1. Resourcing

The Diaconate will ensure that Church programs are adequately resourced with staff and volunteers and have the required equipment for the safe and effective running of the program.

* 1. Supervision

The Diaconate will provide ongoing support and supervision for all staff and volunteers, to ensure they feel valued, respected and fairly-treated, including:

* + 1. up to date *Safe Church Policy*, guidelines and procedures;
		2. formal or informal support mechanisms, so that staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of who to go to for support and what type of support is available to them (for example, team meetings, counselling, prayer); and
		3. where appropriate, an annual process of position review to provide an opportunity for mutual feedback and encouragement.

# Part 4 – Recordkeeping and Review

* 1. Recordkeeping

For each staff member or volunteer, the following items should be recorded and kept for a minimum of 45 years.

* + 1. their written application for the position (if applicable);
		2. their completed *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
		3. all notes relating to the interview and reference checks (if applicable);
		4. notes confirming the content and date of their induction;
		5. signed *Code of Conduct;*
		6. signed *Code of Ethics and Conduct* (if required);
		7. a copy of the *National Police Criminal Record Check* (if required);
		8. evidence of their current WWVP (if required);
		9. evidence of the date of completion of Creating Safe Spaces training (or equivalent SCTA approved training with a face-to-face component); and
		10. records of all other relevant training, incidents, annual reviews, etc

Any items which contain sensitive information (such as Screening Questionnaires, Safe Church Concerns Forms, investigation notes and reports) must be kept in a manner which protects confidentiality and will only be accessed by a limited number of authorised persons (for example, the current Senior Pastor).

* 1. Safe Church Register

The church must maintain a *Safe Church Register* which records a summary of necessary screening and training for all staff and volunteers.

* 1. Review
	2. Pastoral Staff should participate in pastoral or professional supervision in addition to other review processes.
	3. Staff should participate in a formal review process each year. This process should
		+ review the position description and make any necessary amendments;
		+ provide an opportunity for mutual feedback and encouragement;
		+ identify opportunities for training and development in the following twelve months; and
		+ consider involving a committee comprising members of the governance body and any other church members who may be appropriate
	4. Where appropriate, volunteer positions should be reviewed at least annually to identify areas for support or development and to amend role descriptions where appropriate.

**Definitions**

*Ministry Leader* means a person responsible for overseeing an area of ministry.

**Code of Conduct
For Staff and Volunteers**

Purpose

The Church is committed to creating safe spaces where people can be confident that they will be cared for, nurtured and encouraged as they grow and at the same time, protected from spiritual, physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

As part of this commitment, staff and volunteers are required to sign and abide by this *Code of Conduct*

The *Code of Conduct* sets out the following:

* the ministry commitments of staff and volunteers
* minimum behavioural standards and appropriate boundaries required of staff and volunteers;
* the obligation of staff and volunteers to comply with Safe Church Policy and Procedures; and
* the steps to be taken in the event of a potential breach of this Code.

Scope

The *Code of Conduct* applies to all staff and volunteers aged 16 and over

The Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

* *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers*
* *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*
* *Procedure for Handling* *Complaints against Staff and Volunteers*
* *Procedure for Conflict Resolution*
	1. **Staff and Volunteers are encouraged to:**

Nurture healthy relationships:

* + treat others with respect;
	+ love and care for their family (including paying attention to the effect of ministry on them);
	+ be accountable
	+ cooperate with other staff and volunteers
	+ treat every program participant fairly and equitably
	+ acknowledge when they am out of their depth, or do not possess the required skill set in difficult pastoral situations (such as helping a victim of abuse, or a person who needs professional counselling), and seek help from the Safe Church Team or a Pastor;
1. **Staff and Volunteers commit to:**

As a staff member/volunteer of the Church, I promise to:

* 1. uphold, support and abide by the *Safe Church Policy*;
	2. respond to reasonable directions from the person with responsibility for the ministry I am involved in;
	3. communicate with integrity, including wise and accountable use of electronic communication, including in accordance with *Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People*
	4. not knowingly make false, misleading, or deceptive statements;
	5. not engage in bullying, harassment, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, of any person including my own family;
	6. not act violently or intentionally provoke violence;
	7. uphold confidentiality; not disclose any confidential information without the consent of the person providing the information (except where there is a legal obligation);
	8. report concerns about misconduct and/or abuse according to the Church’s *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures;
	9. disclose all relevant information as part of completing the *Screening Check Questionnaire* if I have not already done so;
	10. disclose to the Church Leadership if I am investigated for any criminal offences or have any knowledge of serious unlawful activity in the church context.
	11. express my sexuality in healthy and God directed ways;
		+ - recognize that it is inappropriate to access any type of pornographic material and, if I struggle with this addiction, I will seek professional help;
			- ensure that romantic interactions are meaningfully consensual
			- give consideration to any power imbalances in intimate relationships.
	12. act with financial integrity, including:
		+ having accountable and transparent systems in place for financial matters.
		+ not seeking personal advantage or financial gain from my position (other than in wages, recognised allowances and deductions).
	13. not take or use property belonging to others without express consent, including intellectual property (copyright);
	14. not use any prohibited substance and be responsible in my use of substances that may be addictive (eg. prescriptions, alcohol);
	15. avoid ongoing counselling of people with whom I have pastoral relationships; and
	16. make alternative arrangements for pastoral ministry for any person with whom I may develop a romantic or intimate relationship.

**3. *I understand that if there is a complaint against me relating to a breach of this Code of Conduct:***

* 1. and it is a plausible complaint relating to Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct involving a child, the Church may ask me to step aside from my duties while the complaint is being considered; and/or
	2. if the complaint relates to serious misconduct and/or abuse (including Child Sexual Abuse) it will be reported to relevant government authorities in accordance with relevant legal requirements; and/or
	3. I agree to participate in any process initiated under *the Procedure for Resolving Conflict, Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers* and/or *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*.

**4. *If I am a Pastoral staff member, I:***

* 1. agree to uphold and be bound by the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT *Code of Ethics and Conduc*t;
	2. understand that a breach of the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT *Code of Ethics and Conduct* will be considered a breach of this *Code of Conduct*;
	3. (if I am an Accredited or Recognised Minister) agree to participate in any process initiated under the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT *Procedures for Handling Allegations.*

|  |
| --- |
|  I,\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have read, and agree to be bound by and uphold, the Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers.   |
| Signature  |   | Date  |   |

**NOTE: the staff member or volunteer should receive a copy of this *Code of Conduct* and the Church should retain the signed and dated copy of the *Code of Conduct* for at least 45 years.**

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For staff and volunteers aged 18 and over

Please Note: This is a **sensitive** document that must be stored in a confidential manner accessible only by a limited number of authorised persons.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname: ...............................................................................................................................

Given Names:.........................................................................................................................

Previous Name/s (if applicable):.............................................................................................

Date of Birth: .............../............/.............. Preferred gender designation.......................

Address: ................................................................................................................................

Phone: .............................................................Email:  ..........................................................

WWCC / WWVP Number (if required):  ................................................................................

Do you have any health conditions that we should know about? .......................................... .......................................................................................................................................................................

**Please circle either “YES” or “NO” for each of the following questions**. If you answer “yes” to any of the following questions, please give details on a separate page or discuss with the Senior Pastor or the person holding an equivalent leadership role in your church. **A ‘yes’ answer will not automatically rule an applicant out of selection.**

Please note that, if you disclose any potentially criminal actions, the church may need to report this information to the police or other relevant government authorities.

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| --- |
| **For all staff and volunteers** |
| 1. Have you ever been charged with and/or convicted of a criminal offence?
 | Yes / No   |
| 1. As an adult (18+ years) have you ever engaged in any of the following conduct:
 |   |
| * + sexual contact with someone under your care (such as a parishioner, client, patient, student, employee or subordinate)
 | Yes / No   |
| * + use, possession, production or distribution of child abuse material?
 | Yes / No   |
| * + sexual contact with a person under the relevant age of consent
 | Yes / No   |
| 1. To your knowledge, has there ever been any allegations made against you regarding any abuse of a child, physical abuse or sexual misconduct?
 | Yes / No   |
| 1. Have you ever had an apprehended violence order, order for protection or the like issued against you as a result of allegations of violence, abuse, likely harm, harassment, stalking, etc?
 | Yes / No   |
| 1. Have you had a history of alcohol abuse or substance abuse (including prescription, over-the-counter, recreational or illegal drugs)?
 | Yes / No   |
| 1. (if the ministry role may involve driving) Has your driver’s licence ever been revoked or suspended?
 | Yes / No   |
| **For staff and volunteers in pastoral ministry, leadership or engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults** |
| 1. Have you ever had permission to undertake paid or voluntary work with children or other vulnerable people refused, suspended or withdrawn in Australia or any other country?
 | Yes / No   |
| 1. Has a child or dependent young person in your care ever been removed from your care by relevant authorities?
 | Yes / No   |

**CHURCHES YOU HAVE ATTENDED REGULARLY IN THE PAST 3 YEARS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of church   | Location   | When (Month/Year)   | Any positions held   |
|    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |
|  |  |  |  |

**REFEREES**

Please provide details of two referees who are over eighteen years of age and able to give a verbal report on your character and suitability for ministry. Referees may be part of the church.

**Referee 1**

Name: ............................................................... Phone:  ..........................................................

**Referee 2**

Name: .............................................................. Phone:  ..........................................................

**WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE CHECK  AND/OR NATIONAL POLICE CHECK**

I consent to \* verification of my WWCC number (in NSW, if required)
\* a National Police Check (for staff only)

**CONSENT TO HOLD INFORMATION**

I consent to the information contained in this application, including any subsequent pages, to be kept by our church. I understand that this information will be kept in a confidential file and used only for screening purposes.

DECLARATION

I,.................................................................................. sincerely declare that:

* The information I have provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
* I understand that if I provide false or misleading information or withhold relevant information from this questionnaire, the church leadership may determine that I am unsuitable to serve in any role in the church.
* I have received a copy of the *Code of Conduct* and am willing to uphold it.

Applicant’s signature: .............................................................................Date: ........................

**Church Use Only**

CSS Training undertaken: (date of training) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

WWCC/WWVP No. supplied Yes / NA Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(if in NSW) WWCC Verified by:(name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed *Code of Conduct* received by: (name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Entered onto Safe Church Register by: (name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Interview led by: (name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Referee Checks conducted by: (name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Induction led by (name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*. Full records of the above processes (including interview notes, referee check comments and induction content) should be kept in the relevant staff and volunteer admin file.*

# C:\Users\Chris\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Outlook\HIN8PWV3\canb bapt 4 lemon overlay on yellow background with text  (7).jpgSafe Ministry Screening Questionnaire

For anyone aged under 18 serving as a volunteer or a junior volunteer/helper.

 This is a **sensitive** document that must be stored in a confidential manner accessible only by a limited number of authorised persons.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname: ...............................................................................................................................

Given Names:.........................................................................................................................

Previous Names (if applicable) ..............................................................................................

Date of Birth: ........./............/..... Preferred gender designation.............................................

Phone/s: ...................................................... .........................................................................

Address: ................................................................................................................................

Email:  ....................................................................................................................................

Do you have any health conditions that we should know about? ......................................... ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

Name of at least one Parent/Guardian:  ………......................................................................

Contact Phone for Parent/Guardian:  .....................................................................................

Please circle either “YES” or “NO” for each of the following questions. If the answer to any of the following questions is “yes”, please give details on a separate page or discuss with the Senior Pastor or the person holding an equivalent leadership role in your church.

**A ‘yes’ answer will not automatically rule an applicant out of selection.**

**Please note that, if you disclose any potentially criminal actions, the church may need to report this information to the police or other relevant government authorities.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Have you ever been charged with and/or convicted of a criminal offence?

  | Yes / No   |
| 1. Have you a history of alcohol abuse or a history of substance abuse including prescription, over-the-counter, recreational or illegal drugs?
 | Yes / No   |
| 1. To your knowledge, has there ever been any allegations made against you regarding any abuse of a child, physical abuse or sexual misconduct?
 | Yes / No   |

**CHURCHES YOU HAVE ATTENDED REGULARLY IN THE PAST 3 YEARS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of church   | Location   | When (Month/Year)   | Any positions held   |
|    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |
|  |  |  |  |

**WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE CHECK  AND/OR NATIONAL POLICE CHECK**

I consent to \* verification of my WWCC number (in NSW, if required)

**REFEREES**

Please provide details of two referees who are over eighteen years of age and able to give a verbal report on your character and suitability for ministry. Referees may be part of the church.

**Referee 1**

Name: ...............................................................Phone:  ..........................................................

**Referee 2**

Name: ..............................................................Phone:  ..........................................................

CONSENT TO HOLD INFORMATION

I consent to the information contained in this application, including any subsequent pages, to be kept by our church. I understand that this information will be kept in a confidential file and used only for screening purposes.

DECLARATION

I,.................................................................................. sincerely declare that:

* The information I have provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
* I understand that if I provide false or misleading information or withhold relevant information from this questionnaire, the church leadership may determine that I am unsuitable to serve in any role in the church.
* I have received a copy of the *Code of Conduct* and am willing to uphold it.

Applicant’s signature: .............................................................................Date: ........................

PARENT GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

Name of parent/guardian:  ...................................................................................................

Signature:   ..................................................................................................Date:.....................

**Church Use Only**

Parental Consent obtained (name): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

WWVP number (16/17 yo)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CSS Training undertaken (for 16/17 yo in non-junior roles): On (date): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Interview led by: (name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Referee Checks conducted by: (name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Entered onto Safe Church Register: (name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Induction led by (name) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ On (date):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Full records of the above processes (including interview notes, referee checks and induction content) should be kept in the relevant staff and volunteer admin file.*

# Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns

Purpose

The ***Procedure* *for Responding to* *Child Protection Concerns******(Procedure)***sets out a procedure to follow when a complaint or information about any form of child protection concern is received. In the ACT this includes a Sexual Offence Committed Against a Child or Young Person, Sexual Misconduct Involving a Child, Child Sexual Abuse and/or Non-Accidental Physical Injury.

The Church and its staff and volunteers have legal obligations to report certain information to government authorities, this includes duties under the *Crimes Act 1900* (ACT), *Children and Young People Act 2008* (ACT), and the *Ombudsman Act 1989 (ACT)*

Some of these duties apply to the church as an organisation or to church leaders, some of the duties apply to individuals. In some circumstances, failing to report knowledge of child abuse incidents to ACT Police may be a criminal offence. Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT have developed this ***Procedure*** to address various relevant duties in a way that is both thorough and practical.

Scope

This Procedure applies to all staff and volunteers of the Church.

**If you have any doubt as to whether a complaint or information would fall within the scope of this Procedure, or about any of the steps set out in this Procedure, contact the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Hotline on 1300 647 780.**

The Procedure should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

* + *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*
	+ *Safe Church Concerns Form*
		1. **Receiving a complaint or identifying a child protection concern**

A child protection concern may include concerns regarding:

* a Sexual Offence Committed Against a Child or Young Person
* Sexual Misconduct involving a Child
* Child Sexual Abuse
* Non-Accidental Physical Injury
* Serious neglect of a child
* Behaviour which may psychologically harm the child
* Inappropriate discipline
* Inappropriately personal or intimate communication and/or behaviours which may constitute grooming
* Exposure of a child to Domestic and Family Violence
* or any other reason for concern

A child protection concern may be received:

* + - from a child who has been directly involved;
		- from an adult who has been directly involved (including personal disclosures of wrongdoing);
		- from another person with information about a child or adult;
		- from another organisation with information about a child or adult;
		- from staff or volunteers who have concerns based on their observations and interactions with one or more children or adults.

If someone raises a concern or reports an allegation:

* DON’T promise not to report the information
* DON’T ask leading questions
* DON’T attempt to assess the validity of the concern, or seek to investigate any allegation yourself
* DO clarify information reported to you if appropriate (for example, ‘Can you tell me more about that?’)
* DO assure the person that appropriate action will be taken
* if a child, DO reassure them that they are not at fault and that they will not be in trouble for sharing this information.

If a staff member or volunteer has a concern about a child’s wellbeing but have not received any specific information they may report the concern, using the *Safe Church Concerns Form*.

* + 1. **Consider whether there is an immediate danger to a child**

Where there is an **immediate** danger to a child

* + contact Police immediately on (131 444 or 000) and report the information;
	+ follow any instructions given by Police;
	+ address any immediate safety needs of others present; and
	+ organise support for the person who has disclosed the complaint or information.

* + 1. **Internal Reporting**

1. Complete Safe Church Concern Form

If a staff member or volunteer has or is notified of a child protection concern they should complete a *Safe Church Concerns Form* as soon as possible. This form should include relevant details of the concern, contact information, and the signature of the person completing the form.

A staff member or volunteer who has a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child must make a report to the police.

1. Notify the Safe Church Team

* If a staff member or volunteer has or is notified of a child protection concern they must inform the Safe Church Team as soon as possible.  The Safe Church Team is responsible for ensuring the church fulfils its legal obligations and ensuring that all concerns are managed appropriately.
* If there is any delay before the Safe Church Team can be contacted, the individual should consider whether it is necessary to report their concerns to external government agencies as outlined in step 4 below.  They may contact the Ministry Standards Hotline on 1300 647 780 for advice.
* Staff and volunteers should ensure they do not discuss any concerns raised with the accused person at this point in time.  Doing so may impede future investigation processes.
* If the concern raised would create a conflict of interest for a member of the Safe Church Team consider contacting the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Hotline on 1300 647 780 for advice.
	+ 1. **External Reporting to Government Agencies**

* 1. Safe Church Team responsibilities

The Safe Church Team should:

* ensure all necessary reports are made. Reports to different government agencies is required for different purposes and therefore multiple reports may be required.
	+ - keep detailed contemporaneous notes of all information and steps taken.
		- Where necessary, also follow all relevant steps outlined in the *Procedures for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*.

* 1. Mandatory Reporting to the Child and Youth Protection Service (CYPS)

If a pastoral staff member

* + Believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is being or has been **sexually abused**, or is experiencing or has experienced **non-accidental physical injury** (physical abuse)
	+ AND the reasons for the belief arise from information obtained during the course of, or because of, that person’s work

then they must make a Mandatory Child Concern Report as soon as possible to the CYPS via

* CYPS Mandated Reporters Line on 1300 556 728, or
* by email childprotection@act.gov.au, or
* by using the online form at <https://form.act.gov.au/smartforms/csd/child-concern-report/>

*Children and Young People Act 2008* (ACT) section 356

Offence—mandatory reporting of abuse

(1) A person commits an offence if—

(a) the person is a mandated reporter; and

(b) the person is an adult; and

(c) the person believes on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has experienced, or is experiencing—

(i) sexual abuse; or

(ii) non-accidental physical injury; and

(d) the person’s reasons for the belief arise from information obtained by the person during the course of, or because of, the person’s work (whether paid or unpaid); and

(e) the person does not, as soon as practicable after forming the belief, report (a mandatory report) to the director‑general—

(i) the child’s or young person’s name or description; and

(ii) the reasons for the person’s belief.

…

(3) In this section:

mandated reporter—each of the following people is a mandated reporter:

…

(p) a minister of religion, religious leader or member of the clergy of a church or religious denomination;

* 1. Voluntary Reporting to the Child and Youth Protection Service (CYPS) regarding risk to the safety and wellbeing of a child

If the Safe Church Team considers that there is a serious risk to the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person then they should make a voluntary report to the CYPS on 1300 556 729 as soon as possible.

If there is any doubt whether a concern would be considered a serious risk to the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person then the Safe Church Team should call CYPS on 1300 556 729 to receive advice.

*Children and Young People Act 2008* (ACT) section 354

Voluntary reporting of abuse and neglect

(1) This section applies if a person believes or suspects that a child or young person—

(a) is being abused; or

(b) is being neglected; or

(c) is at risk of abuse or neglect.

(2) The person may report (a voluntary report) the belief or suspicion, and the reasons for the belief or suspicion, to the director‑general.

* 1. Report Child Abuse Offences to Police
* If the Safe Church Team obtains information that leads to a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child then they must report this to an ACT Police officer, regardless of whether the victim of the alleged abuse wants this report to be made
* The requirement to report to ACT Police includes both recent incidents and allegations of historic abuse.  The Safe Church Team should notify the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Hotline (1300 647 780) of any allegations of a Child Abuse Offence.
* Failure to Report a Child Sexual Offence to ACT Police is a criminal offence and may be punishable by up to two years imprisonment.

Crimes Act 1900 (ACT) 66AA

Failure to report child sexual offence

(1) A person commits an offence if the person—

(a) is an adult; and

(b) obtains information that leads to the person reasonably believing that a sexual offence has been committed against a child; and

(c) does not, as soon as practicable after forming the belief, give the information to a police officer.

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply if—

(a) the person—

(i) obtains the information when the alleged victim was no longer a child; and

(ii) reasonably believes the alleged victim does not want a police officer to be told about the person’s belief; or

(b) the person reasonably believes that giving the information to a police officer would endanger the safety of a person (other than a person reasonably believed to have committed the sexual offence); or

 (c) the person reasonably believes a police officer already has the information; or

 (d) the person—

(i) is a mandated reporter under the [Children and Young People Act 2008](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2008-19), section 356 (2); and

(ii) has reported the information under that [Act](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2008-19), division 11.1.2 (Reporting abuse and neglect of children and young people) or reasonably believes someone else has done so; or

(e) subject to subsection (3), giving the information to a police officer would disclose information in relation to which privilege may be claimed under a law in force in the Territory; or

(f) the information is generally available in the public domain; or

(g) the person has another reasonable excuse.

* 1. Report Allegations of Reportable Conduct to the ACT Ombudsman

Under the Reportable Conduct Legislation churches are required to nominate a Head of Designated Entity for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme. The Head of Designated Entity for Canberra Baptist Church is the Pastoral Team Leader and the Church Secretary.

Ombudsman Act 1989 (ACT) 17E

Meaning of Reportable Conduct

(1) In this division:

"reportable conduct" means [conduct](http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/act/consol_act/oa1989114/s17e.html#conduct)—

(a) engaged in by an [employee](http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/act/consol_act/oa1989114/s17eac.html#employee) of a designated entity, whether or not in the course of employment with the entity; and

(b) that results in any of the following, regardless of a child's consent:

(i) ill treatment or neglect of the child;

(ii) exposing or subjecting the child to—

(A) behaviour, or a circumstance, that psychologically harms the child; or

(B) misconduct of a sexual nature that does not form part of an offence mentioned in subparagraph (iii);

(iii) an offence against any of the following provisions of the [Crimes Act 1900](http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/act/consol_act/ca190082/) for which the child is either present or a victim at the time of the [conduct](http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/act/consol_act/oa1989114/s17e.html#conduct):

(A) part 2 (Offences against the person);

(B) part 3 (Sexual offences);

(C) part 4 (Female genital mutilation);

(D) part 5 (Sexual servitude);

(iv) an offence against either of the following provisions of the Education and Care Service National Law (ACT)

(A) section 166 (Offence to use inappropriate discipline);

(B) section 167 (Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards).

In the event of receiving any allegations that any staff or volunteer has engaged in Reportable Conduct, whether or not the conduct was in the course of employment, the Head of Designated Entity must

* notify the Reportable Conduct Scheme (administered by the ACT Ombudsman) as soon as practicable, but within a maximum of 30 days from receiving the complaint or information, in accordance with s 17G of the *Ombudsman Act 1989* (ACT). The Safe Church Team should also follow section 2.2 of the *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*.
* As soon as practicable, conduct an investigation or appoint a suitable person to conduct an investigation regarding the reportable allegation (see section 6 of the *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*)
* Provide a written ”s17J final report” to the Ombudsman in the form outlined in <http://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/81005/No.-7-17J-final-report.pdf> (see section 11(e) of the *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*)
	+ 1. **Accountability Measures**

* 1. Report back to person making initial notification
		+ As soon as is practicable (no longer than 48 hours), the Safe Church Team must inform the person completing the initial *Safe Church Concerns Form* of what action they have taken including any reports made and the ‘report number’ for reports to ACT Police or CYPS.
		+ If the Safe Church Team determines that it is not necessary to make a report to the ACT Police, or CYPS, the person who made the initial *Safe Church Concerns Form* may choose to make a report themselves in order to ensure that they have not breached s66AA of the *Crimes Act 1900 (ACT),* or obligations under the Mandatory Reporting legislation.

b) Report to Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT

If a Child Protection Concern has been reported to any government agency the Safe Church Team should advise the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Manager via email on standards@nswactbaptists.org.au of the matter for the Association’s confidential records, and to seek confirmation that the matter has been managed appropriately.

* + 1. **Recordkeeping**

The *Safe Church Concerns Form* and detailed notes of action taken in relation to any Child Protection Concern must be kept secure for a minimum of 45 years.

* + 1. **Advice and Support**

If you have questions about whether a report should be made please contact the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Manager on 1300 647 780 for advice, guidance and support.

**Procedure for Handling Complaints
Against Staff and Volunteers**

Purpose

The *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers* (the **Procedure**) sets out a procedure by which a complaint or information relating to a serious breach of the Code of Conduct can be received, investigated and resolved.

The Procedure should also be followed if the Church receives a complaint or information relating to Reportable Conduct. The Church has an obligation in accordance with Reportable Conduct Legislation to have practices and procedures to deal with Reportable Conduct, including:

* for receiving complaints of Reportable Conduct;
* for dealing with Reportable Conduct allegations; and
* for the receipt, handling and disclosure of information relating to Reportable Conduct and investigations.

Scope

This Procedure applies to all staff and volunteers of the Church.

This Procedure applies to all matters which are a serious breach of the *Code of Conduct*, including complaints relating to: a sexual offence having been committed against a child, Sexual Misconduct involving a Child or a child or young person that has experienced, or is experiencing, Child Sexual Abuse or non-accidental physical injury.

Please note: Accredited and Recognised Ministers are subject to:

* this procedure in relation to a complaint of a breach of the *Code of Conduct,* (If an Accredited or Recognised Minister is found to have breached the Baptist Association *Code of Ethics and Conduct* that would also constitute a breach of the church’s *Code of Conduct)*; and
* the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT *Procedures for Handling Allegations* in relation to a complaint of a breach of the Baptist Association *Code of Ethics and Conduct*.

Please note: This Procedure *does not* apply to matters which would more appropriately be dealt with under the *Procedure for Conflict Resolution* (for example, a low-level breach of the *Code of Conduct*).

If there is any doubt as to whether a complaint or information would fall within the scope of the Procedure, or about any of the steps set out in the Procedure, a church leader should contact the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Manager on 1300 647 780.

The Procedure should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

* *Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers*
* *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*
* *Procedure for Conflict Resolution*
* *Privacy Policy*

**1. Receiving a complaint or information**

Anyone may make a complaint or pass on information that relates to a breach of the Code of Conduct (including Reportable Conduct) by staff or volunteers of the Church. Complaints should be directed to:

* the diaconate;
* Safe Church Team; or
* in the case of reportable conduction, to the Pastoral Team Leader or the Church Secretary (who are the Church’s heads of entity for the reportable conduction scheme).

Complaints or information may be received verbally, however a written outline of the complaint should be encouraged.  In all cases, the Safe Church Team should document all complaints and information received in the Safe Church Concerns Form.

**2. Reporting information**

* 1. Determining appropriate reporting process
		1. Any complaint about a staff member or volunteer which may be considered a serious breach of the Code of Conduct should be reported to the Diaconate. If the complaint or information relates to a member of the Diaconate then it should not be reported to them, but instead reported to another person in the Church Leadership or the Safe Church Team.
		2. On receipt of a complaint or information that may relate to any form of child protection concern the person who recieves the complaint or information must follow the *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns.*
		3. Any person who knows that a serious crime has been committed, whether or not it is related to children, should report that crime to the Police.
		4. If a complaint is, or should be, reported to government authorities the Church Leadership will only commence an investigation under this Procedure after consulting the government authorities that it has been reported to.
	2. Allegations regarding Reportable Conduct
1. The Head of Entity (in Canberra Baptist Church this is the Pastoral Team Leader and the Church Secretary) is obligated to notify the Reportable Conduct Scheme (the Ombudsman) of Reportable Conduct allegations within a defined timeframe, in accordance with **Reportable Conduct Legislation**
2. .
* the Reportable Conduct Scheme covers any staff or volunteers regardless of whether they are required to hold a WWVP clearance.
* notification must be made within 30 days of receiving the complaint or information under s17G of the *Ombudsman Act 1989.*
	+ - * A ‘final entity report’ must be submitted within 30 days. If it is not possible to submit the final report within 30 days then an interim report must be submitted within 30 days in accordance with s38 of the *Children’s Guardian Act 2019.*
* A report regarding the findings of the entity’s investigation must be submitted as soon as practicable after the conclusion of the investigation

c) The notification of the allegation to the Reportable Conduct Scheme must be in writing and should include:

* the name, date of birth and WWVP number of the person;
* the name, contact details and head of the relevant entity;
* details of the allegation;
* the nature of the relevant entity’s initial risk assessment and risk management action,
* if a report to police has been made, the police report reference number;
* if a report has been made under **Mandatory Reporting Legislation**, the report reference number; and
* the names of other relevant entities that employ or engage the employee.

**3. Risk Assessment**

1. In addition to considering or making a report under section 2 above, the Safe Church Team must conduct a risk assessment relating to the safety of the complainant or any other children or vulnerable people and take reasonable precautions to minimise those risks.
2. The Church should be careful not to prejudice ongoing criminal investigations, so it may be necessary to initiate risk management without alerting the person subject of the complaint.
3. Subject to the view of government authorities, if the Church has received a plausible complaint (ie/ not clearly false or vexatious) of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct involving a Child and the complaint relates to a staff member or volunteer who is engaged in a ‘regulated activity’ then the Church Leadership must suspend the person from the regulated activity while the complaint is considered in accordance with this Procedure.
4. **Appointing a person to handle the complaint**
5. Where a matter is to be investigated under this Procedure, the Church Leadership will appoint a person to handle the complaint (the Investigator).
6. In appointing the Investigator, the Church Leadership will avoid conflicts of interest (for example where there may be a close personal relationship between the subject of the complaint and the proposed investigator).
7. For any matters related to any form of harm or abuse of a child, the Investigator should be an external person (unless this is not reasonably practicable and a suitably qualified and independent internal Investigator is available).
8. Church leaders should contact the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Manager on 1300 647 780 for assistance in identifying an external Investigator.

**5. Providing support**

The Church must ensure that support is provided to both the Complainant and the Respondent, including:

* providing them with a contact person to whom they can direct inquiries about the progress of the complaint;
* offering them a support person; and
* considering providing them with access to counselling and other support services.

**6. Investigating the complaint**

* 1. The Investigator is to investigate the complaint (or concern, or allegation if the investigation arises from information about Reportable Conduct that did not come in the form of a complaint)
	2. In Investigating the complaint, the Investigator is to:
		+ act in good faith, without bias and without unreasonable delay;
		+ collect and document evidence, including by conducting interviews and taking statements from the complainant and other witnesses; and
		+ maintain a record of all relevant evidence obtained and steps taken in the investigation.

**7. Putting the complaint to the Respondent**

1. The Investigator is to put the complaint in writing to the person whose conduct is subject of the complaint (the respondent).
2. In doing so, the Investigator is to:
	* + set out the complaint with sufficient detail for the respondent to understand the complaint;
		+ state the part of the *Code of Conduct* that is alleged to have been breached;
		+ set out the potential adverse outcomes for the respondent in the event that there is a finding that the respondent breached the *Code of Conduct*; and
		+ provide the respondent with an opportunity to respond to the complaint in writing and within a stated timeframe not exceeding 2 weeks.

**8. Putting any further adverse information to the Respondent**

If, in the course of the investigation, further adverse information is brought forward in relation to the respondent, the Investigator will:

* + - advise the respondent in writing of the further adverse information; and
		- provide the respondent the opportunity to respond to the information.

**9. Investigators findings**

1. The Investigator must provide a written report which sets out:
	* + the complaint;
		+ the part of the *Code of Conduct* that is alleged to have been breached;
		+ the proposed finding
		+ the evidence relied upon to make the finding, including the response of the respondent (if any) to the complaint; and
		+ a finding about whether the complaint is sustained or not sustained, using the “balance of probabilities” as the standard of proof (for matters relating to child protection concerns, reference should be made to Reportable Conduct Legislation)
		+ possible outcomes or consequences that the Church Leadership may consider implementing
2. If the matter relates to an allegation of Reportable Conduct the Investigator should ensure that the report also sets out
* information about the facts and circumstances of the reportable allegation;
* the findings after completing the investigation including an analysis of the evidence and the rationale for the findings,
* a copy of any written submission made by the employee or volunteer
* any copies of documents in the relevant entity’s possession that are relevant to the report, including transcripts of interviews and copies of evidence.

c) The Investigator’s Report will be provided to:

* + - the Church Leadership; and
		- Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Manager (standards@nswactbaptists.org.au)

d) A summary of the Investigator’s report (considering both confidentiality and procedural fairness) will be provided to the Respondent along with:

* an invitation to respond in writing to the Diaconate within a defined timeframe
* written notice of the possible consequences if the Investigator’s Report is accepted by the Diaconate. This may include suspension, termination from duties for volunteers, termination of engagement for staff. It may also require notice to Police, Ombudsman and/or the Office of Children’s Guardian, which may impact WWCC or WWVP clearance.

**10. Determination of Complaint and Outcomes**

1. The Diaconate is to consider the report of the Investigator and to decide whether to accept the finding put forward by the Investigator.
2. In doing so, the Diaconate is to consider all relevant material available.
3. If the Diaconate makes a determination that a complaint is sustained and the *Code of Conduct* has been breached, they are to determine an outcome for the respondent, which may include, but is not limited to:
* termination of employment/engagement;
* suspension from employment/engagement for a period of time; and/or
* imposing conditions on the employment/engagement.
1. If the Diaconate does not accept the Investigators finding, the Diaconate should decide whether there is another available finding on the basis of the evidence presented to it and record written reasons for departing from Investigators finding (and if relevant, propose an outcome for the respondent as above).

**11. Communication of Outcome**

* 1. The respondent will be informed in writing of the:
	+ determination of the complaint
	+ any consequences arising from the determination
	+ the reasons for the decision
	1. The person who raised the complaint will be informed of the outcome of the complaint.
	2. The Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Manager will be informed of the outcome of the investigation
	3. If the matter constitutes a **Child Abuse Offence** or other serious criminal offence, a report must be made to the local police station (unless a report has already been made).
	4. If the matter is Reportable Conduct, the ‘Head of Entity’, must notify the Reportable Conduct Scheme (the Ombudsman) in accordance with Reportable Conduct Legislation, including the:
	+ Investigator’s report;
	+ any deviation made by the Diaconate from the Investigator’s findings, including reasons for the deviation; and
	+ the proposed course of action in response.

Church leaders should seek advice from the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Manager on 1300 647 780 to ensure that the determination and outcome is consistent with the evidence gathered.

**Procedure for Conflict Resolution**

Purpose

The Procedure for Conflict Resolution (the **Procedure**) sets out a procedure for resolving conflict between two or more staff, volunteers, members or attenders of the Church in a pastoral and restorative manner, rather than through a formal complaint handling procedure.

It is important to identify that some issues cannot be resolved in this manner, and this Procedure is **not** designed to:

* resolve issues relating to domestic violence, family law matters before the Family Law Court (or similar body), or
* resolve complaints or concerns relating to abuse (including Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct involving a Child) or other serious breaches of the Code of Conduct that are to be resolved in accordance with the *Complaint Handling Procedure*.

Scope

The Procedure applies to all staff, volunteers, members and attendees of the Church.

An attendee is a person who regularly attends (at least once a month) a ministry of the church (for example, Sunday services, Bible study, Friday night youth group).

The Procedure should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

* *Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers*
* *Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff or Volunteers*
* *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*

When does this procedure apply?

Situations to which this policy applies include the following:

1. a disagreement between two or more staff, volunteers, members or attenders of the Church;
2. a perceived offence caused by a staff member, volunteer, member or attendee to another;
3. a perception by one person that they have been bullied by a staff member, volunteer, member or attendee (and that it is a matter that is able to be resolved in a pastoral manner);
4. dissatisfaction with the manner in which a staff member or volunteer has fulfilled their ministry role; and
5. a complaint that a staff member or volunteer has committed a minor breach of the Code of Conduct.

Raising an issue

1. Anyone may raise an issue
* with a person directly (see Pathway 1).
* with Church Leadership or the Safe Church Team in order to seek assistance in resolving the issue (see Pathway 2).
1. If the concern relates to a member of the Church Leadership or the Safe Church Team, the person should raise their concern with another member of the Church Leadership or Safe Church Team.

Key Principles

In raising an issue, all parties are to be guided by the following key principles:

* + - Seeking to glorify God in our responses to each other.
		- Striving to serve each other even in the midst of our disunity.
		- Seeking to be Christ-like in our reactions to each other.
		- Extending grace to each other.
		- Focusing on forgiveness and restoration of relationships where appropriate.
		- Seeking help where needed, to address grievances.

The Church acknowledges that:

* + - the nature of relationship breakdown means that it is necessary to respond sensitively and with care for all parties involved;
		- in many conflict situations, to help each party understand the key issues and ways forward, the assistance of a neutral third party becomes essential;
		- many issues are specific to a particular context and relationship and so must be responsive to this, seeking resolution of substantive issues and where possible, appropriate restoration of relationships between all parties;
		- the pathway recommended by Church Leadership will depend upon the nature of the issue, the positions or roles of the parties involved and the skills and capacity of Church Leadership to address the situation.

Pathway 1 – Personal Approach

1. Where an issue arises between a staff member, volunteer, member or attendee and another and the parties feel able to address their concerns without involving other parties, they are to go to the other person and express their concerns with a view to resolving their differences.
2. The person initiating the personal approach should consider seeking advice from a wise and unbiased senior leader (from within the church community or externally) or receiving conflict coaching before approaching the other person.
3. This approach may be useful for addressing personal disagreements and perceived offences.  This pathway will not be appropriate where there are concerns about significant power imbalances.

Pathway 2 – Locally-assisted Approach

* 1. In the event of any of the following then the matter should be brought to the attention of Church Leadership.
* Pathway 1 being unsuccessful in restoring relationship; and/or
* the issue relates to perceived bullying; and/or
* the issue relates to dissatisfaction with the manner in which a staff member or volunteer has performed their ministry role.
1. If an issue is brought to the Church Leadership
* Church Leadership are to provide support to all parties.
* Where the Church Leadership considers the issue to be sufficiently serious, they are to appoint a suitably skilled person to assist in resolving the conflict. This may be a senior member of the pastoral staff. Church Leadership are to avoid conflicts of interest where possible when selecting this person. In some cases, for example, where the conflict involves the Senior Pastor, a church consultant from the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT may be requested.
1. Where all parties involved in the matter are willing to work towards restoring relationships, the person selected to assist in resolving the conflict will:
	* + value confidentiality at all times;
		+ meet with each person separately to ensure they are given a chance to tell their story in private, working through their underlying concerns in moving towards resolution;
		+ clearly communicate the process to be used to each party during resolution meetings;
		+ hold a meeting with the parties together to identify common ground, work through the issues and determine the course of action;
		+ follow up to ensure that the solutions are being implemented; and
		+ if appropriate, monitor the situation over the following weeks, including to check-in with the parties to ensure that the situation is resolving and that relationships are being restored.
2. At any stage throughout the process, the person selected to assist resolve the issue may contact Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT for assistance or resourcing.

Escalation to Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff or Volunteers

During the course of resolving a concern in accordance with this Procedure, it may be necessary to escalate the matter in accordance with the *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers.* There may be several reasons this is required, including:

* that on inquiry into the issue it is identified that the conduct complained of would more appropriately be characterised as a serious breach of the *Code of Conduct* (such as child protection concerns); or
* the subject of the concern is a staff member or volunteer and they are not willing to participate in this Procedure (as required under the *Code of Conduct*).