



COASTLANDS CHURCH

In Partnership with



Safe Ministry Policy

Developed by www.safeministrycheck.com.au

Endorsed by Ansvr Insurance 2018-07-01

Safe Ministry Commitment

Coastlands International Christian Centre Inc.

Background & Governance

Coastlands is an autonomous, local Eldership led and governed Christian church and member of Advance Global Movement of churches. Primarily, Coastlands gathers as a congregation on Sundays at Coastlands Community Centre 530 Brighton Road. Families, children and young people also often meet throughout the week for various activities in specific locations and community groups across the city of Adelaide.

Scope

This policy outlines the underlying principles that direct our approach to safeguarding vulnerable people involved with Coastlands Church. It applies to all staff, leaders, pastors, coordinators, volunteers, trainees and anyone working on behalf of Coastlands eldership. The Elders of Coastlands take responsibility for ensuring these principles are reviewed regularly and embedded in the organisation culture at all levels.^{1 2} It applies:

- on the church premises
- at functions, excursions, trips or camps organised by the church
- when members of the church community are representing the church.

Principles of Practice

A clear and accessible child safety policy

The Coastlands Safe Ministry Policy is a clear and accessible statement of intent in regard to the Church's commitment to be a highly regarded child safe environment and safeguarding all children and vulnerable people from harm.

The policy is written with reference to the guiding principles and requirements of the Child Safe Environments: Principles of Good Practice (DECD 2012)

As part of an annual review, at the beginning of the year, the policy will be appraised by the Church Leadership Team to ensure its currency, review any issues and to guide any implementation, priorities, improvements and/or changes for the year ahead.

A full review with broader consultation is undertaken every three years. All changes are to be approved by the Eldership Team.

¹ This policy is in accordance with the Children and Young Persons (Safety) Act 2017 SA.

² As per Point 1 of the National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Policy Statement

A clear and accessible Safe Ministry Culture policy

1. Commitment to Safeguard Vulnerable People

We are committed to the Biblical call to care for the vulnerable by actively preventing harm and abuse, and by seeking to provide safe programs.³ We are also responsible and accountable fulfilling our obligations under State and Federal law to protect children and vulnerable people. We are committed to ensuring that vulnerable people (including children, families, the disabled and elderly) are informed and involved in decisions that considerably affect them. We recognise the diverse needs of vulnerable people should be taken into account and that their concerns be taken seriously.⁴ We are committed to embedding this care into all levels of our leadership and culture.

2. Commitment to Screening and Training Relevant Leaders

We are committed to ensuring that all reasonable actions are taken so that only suitable and appropriate people are selected to work or volunteering in close proximity with our children and young people.

Key members of the Ministry Team and team leaders will complete the Safe Ministry Check training and screening program or equivalent.

All other volunteers or staff will complete a training session which covers basic understanding of child abuse, mandatory notification, church child protection policy and a duty of care component specific to the ministry in which they will be working (including underage volunteers).

Note: Duty of Care Guidelines (general and ministry specific) will be covered in a separate document

Screening involves a combination of Criminal History, Working with Children Checks, Referee and Background checks, face to face interviews and vigilance in observing their behaviour, attitudes and relationships with children. Anyone in leadership who is responsible for programmes and/or working with children or youth will have to complete appropriate training as follows and will be updated every 12 months.:

- All Relevant Leaders are screened, appropriately supported and trained through the process outlined below.⁵
- All Relevant leaders must be regular participants at Coastlands. They will have their potential roles and responsibilities clearly outlined for them as they start their role,

³ Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Matthew 18:1-6; Mark 10:13-16

⁴ As per Points 2, 3 & 4 of the National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations

⁵ As per Point 5, 7 & 8 of the National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations

- All Relevant Leaders must provide referees who can confirm the proposed leader is suitable to work with vulnerable people and that there is no reason the proposed leader should not be appointed in such a role,
- All Relevant leaders must complete an Ansvar approved Safe Ministry Training Course (e.g. <http://www.safeministrycheck.com.au/>) which outlines appropriate behaviour including how to minimise the chances of harm and abuse, as well as training in how to identify and report cases of abuse,
- A Coastlands Volunteer Statutory Declaration and Volunteer Agreement must be thoroughly completed for all staff and Next Generation volunteers of the church, which provides further insight to the applicant's suitability for working with children.
- Relevant leaders will have committed to the leader's Code of Conduct and behave as followers of Jesus and be willing to be held accountable for their behaviour, and if a Relevant Leader is working with children & youth, they must have their State "Working With Children Check" which must be kept current and verified prior to commencing regularly in their role.

Underage assistants (14 - 18 years of age) are permitted to participate in children's ministry without statutory declarations but must have a Working with Children Check and be supervised at all times by an adult accredited worker who has completed all the above steps. Underage workers must have completed an awareness level of training provided by Safe Ministry Check.com.

Dealing with known child abusers

Coastlands seeks to support and safeguard the vulnerable. We may at times be approached by those who have had undesirable pasts. While Christianity offers the hope of a redemptive future there must not be any circumstance where the church knowingly endangers any of those in our care.

Anyone who attends the church and is found to have a history of abusing children must agree with and adhere to the following requirements if they are to remain a member of the Coastlands community:

- The person will enter into an agreement with the church leadership that will restrict the person's involvement in church ministry to whatever level the leadership deems appropriate to continue to provide a child-safe environment. (A sample agreement is attached although each agreement will require statements specific to each person)
- The person will have regular meetings with senior leadership for accountability as deemed necessary.
- The person will be willing to have their name and appropriate details given to any pastors and leaders who are involved in ministry to youth and children or any other ministries that the senior leadership deems necessary.

No-one with a criminal record of child abuse, molestation or similar offences is permitted to be involved in children's or youth ministry at Coastlands.

3. Commitment to Providing Safe and Accessible Programs

We are committed to ensuring that our programs and events are safe and appropriate for those attending. The church has developed and implements a risk management strategy that identifies, assesses and takes steps to minimize the risks of harm to children.

Supervision of Children

Children are supervised by staff and volunteers at an appropriate ratio for the age of the students, purpose, type and location of the activity. Supervision requirements for practical lessons, counselling, camps, excursions, travel, etc. are documented in the relevant policies and procedures of which all staff and volunteers are made aware and required to follow.

Working One on One with Children

At times it may be necessary for staff and volunteers to work one to one alone with a child. Guidelines for these situations are outlined in the Child/Teacher Relationships Policy, the Staff/Volunteers Code of Conduct as well as the [“Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people”](#).

In these scenarios, four essential guiding rules are:

- make it authorised (ensure you have your church leader’s approval)
- make it public (open and visible space)
- make it timely (consider the appropriateness of the time of day and length of time)
- Make it purposeful (there is an identified wellbeing and/or learning need of the child or young person)

Identify and analyse risk of harm

The church has developed and implements a risk management strategy that identifies, assesses and takes steps to minimize the risks of harm to children

Careful consideration must be given to the activities chosen, the venue, safe ratios of supervision, appropriate toileting practices, transportation, work health and safety, parental or guardian permission and confidentiality of records kept.

To help maintain appropriate standards, we will give all relevant leaders access to ongoing training and adequate supervision in their roles and responsibilities.

Accurate, up to date and confidential records are kept of staff and volunteer training and Working with Children Checks.

Training will ensure that staff and volunteers

- Are aware and able to recognise when children and young people’s wellbeing or safety is being compromised. They should be prepared to act and report their concerns.
- Understand that the needs of children and young people who have been harmed through violence, abuse or neglect may require them to adapt their programs and support accordingly
- aim to help these children and young people stay connected to church and contribute to their recovery, healing and development of purpose-filled life skills and future success.

4. Commitment to Appropriately Respond to Concerns and Complaints

We are committed to creating a culture where people feel safe to speak out about inappropriate behaviour without fear of being rejected or ridiculed. We believe our children have unique perspectives on life, family and purpose, and we encourage them to actively be involved their church experience.

At Coastlands, children are seen as valued members of the church community and are provided with opportunities to grow in their confidence and encouraged to develop their creativity and abilities as part of the body of believers. A culture is fostered among staff and volunteers to ensure each staff member is approachable and willing to listen to each individual child as they communicate their needs, desires and concerns.

We are committed to listening and responding appropriately to concerns and complaints about behaviour and safety at Coastlands. Throughout this process we are committed to protecting the confidentiality, dignity, health and well-being of all individuals involved. Any child-related issues will be managed with a focus on the interest of the child and will be reported to the relevant State Child Protection body.⁶

What is Child Abuse?

In general, child abuse is categorized in four ways according to the Children's Protection Act 1993.

- Physical abuse - This is commonly characterized by physical injury.
- Sexual Abuse - This occurs when someone in a position of power to the child uses his/her power to involve the child in sexual activity.
- Emotional Abuse - This tends to be a chronic behavioural pattern directed at a child whereby a child's self-esteem and social competence are undermined or eroded over time.
- Neglect - This is a failure to provide for the child's basic needs.

There are detailed descriptions of these in the attached booklet "Child-Safe Environments, Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect" on page 5.

⁶ As per Point 6 of the National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Reporting Procedure

It is an expectation of the church that any person who, in the course of their work or volunteering suspects on reasonable grounds that a child is being or has been abused or neglected must report their suspicion to the **Child Abuse Report Line: CARL 131478**.

All reports will be managed by the Coastlands Safe Ministry Supervisors.

Safe Ministry Supervisors

Andrew Hill – andrewh@coastlands.org.au

Trina Whittaker – trinaw@coastlands.org.au

The Safe Ministry Supervisors will ensure that timely and relevant information is gathered and shared with other relevant persons and that children and their families are directed to support when they first show signs of need

Safe Ministry Supervisors will follow a Safe Ministry Incident Management Process.⁷

This includes reporting any criminal activity to Police, and the possibility of reporting allegations of abuse to the CARL and the insurer of Coastlands. In certain incidents (as outlined in the Incident Management Process) the Safe Ministry Supervisors will appoint an Independent Ministry Investigator and/or Advance Movement leadership representative to investigate allegations of inappropriate behaviour.

Related Church Policies, Procedures, Programs and Documentation

Coastlands Staff and Volunteer Statutory Declaration Coastlands Staff and Volunteer Agreement	Codes of Conduct: Staff, Volunteers, (Safe Ministry Check)
Coastlands Child Safe Procedures (under review) Coastlands Kids Ministry Rationale (under review) Behaviour Management Policy (under review)	Recruitment Policy (under review) New Staff and Volunteer (under review) Induction Procedure (under review)
Mandatory Notification Procedure (form) Risk Assessment Procedure	Excursion and Camps Policies (under review) Transport of Students (under review)
Bullying and Harassment Policy (under review)	
Safe Ministry Incident Management Process Critical Incident Response (form)	
Sweeper and Security Marshal Role Description	

⁷ As per Point 10 of the National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Review, Approval and Reference Documents

Version	2.3		
Publication Date	Feb 2020		
Review Date	Jan 2021		
Related Legislation and Regulatory Requirements	UN Conventions of the Rights of the Child Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA) Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)		
Cross sector Guidelines (SA)	<p>Child Safe Environments: principles of good practice</p> <p>Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people</p> <p>Managing allegations of sexual misconduct in SA education and care settings</p> <p>Responding to problem sexual behaviour involving children and young people: guideline for staff in education and care settings</p>		
Responsibility	Eldership Team		
Written By	Andrew Hill – Elder		
Approved by	Eldership		Date: August 2020