

# *A safe place for children*



*Child safety policy & procedure for  
The Church of the Foursquare Gospel in  
Australia 2022 update*

This document was compiled and written by Ps. Sandra Basham in good faith that it meets relevant State and Federal laws and respects the Biblical demand for protecting and ministering to children. Sandra Basham. (2017) Cert IV TAA; Dip A.C. Ed.; Dip C.C & F.T.; B. Ed.; M. For Sx.; Ph. D (under examination).

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## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS CHILD-SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURE**

The Church of the Foursquare Gospel in Australia understands the seriousness of its 'Duty of Care' to its members, visitors and staff regarding the safety of children in its care. This 'Duty of Care' applies to those attending church functions or activities on the properties of the abovementioned church, or at locations facilitated by the church or churches.

'Duty of Care' is defined by Australian law<sup>1</sup>, which the Bible directs us in Romans 13:1-14 to obey. The level of 'Duty of care' covers risk of and actual harm, damage and loss caused by reasonably preventable events occurring whilst persons (including children) are in the care of the Church of the Foursquare Gospel in Australia. A church's "*duty of care means that*" a church "*has an obligation to ensure that their acts or omissions do not cause reasonably foreseeable injury*" to children [lawhandbook.org.au, 2015, n.p.]. What is 'reasonably foreseeable' and involves 'proximity' and 'relationship' between the parties being key issues: Ministry to children involves all these variables. An example being, that an 'anaphylaxis' policy and procedure for children with serious allergies must be in place at all churches.

The physical, psychological and spiritual safety of children requires risk management and specific policy and procedure for reporting *risk* of harm to a child, or if a child reports harmful events within church contact. Policy covers staffs observing and reporting harmful events or reasonable belief of abuse involving children in their care to delegated authorities. **Reporting of criminal activity involving children is legally mandated and church leaders must report child abuse to the relevant authorities for investigation, for example, to the Police and/or The Department of Child Protection as required by law (*Children and Community Services Amendment Act 2021*). Section 124b of the Act requires "... a person who is recognised in accordance with the practices of a faith or religion as a person who is authorised to conduct services or ceremonies in accordance with the tenets of the faith ... and... includes such a person regardless of how the person's position or title is described (for example, clergy, priest, minister, imam, rabbi or pastor)." This means workers with the title 'pastor' in a local church (ie., youth, women's, children's) but who are not formally licensed by Foursquare, must comply with the mandate to report. This legislation's requirements will be mandated after 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022. All Foursquare ministry staff (paid or unpaid) and church volunteers in contact with children must be trained in their responsibilities, the limits thereof, and agree to uphold the principles, policies and procedures of this document in compliance with Australian criminal and civil law.**

The Church of the Foursquare Gospel commits to being a child-safe community which provides a safe environment for children and/or help for children via equipped leadership and policy & procedure that values and cares for children as the Lord Jesus Christ would endorse. Children being defined by law as those who are under the age of 18 years of age: This in no

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.lawhandbook.org.au/04\\_08\\_02\\_duty\\_of\\_care/](http://www.lawhandbook.org.au/04_08_02_duty_of_care/)  
[http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/general\\_duty\\_of\\_care.pdf](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/general_duty_of_care.pdf)

way demeans the value, maturity, or special legal status of young adults or ‘mature minors’<sup>2</sup> over the age of 14.

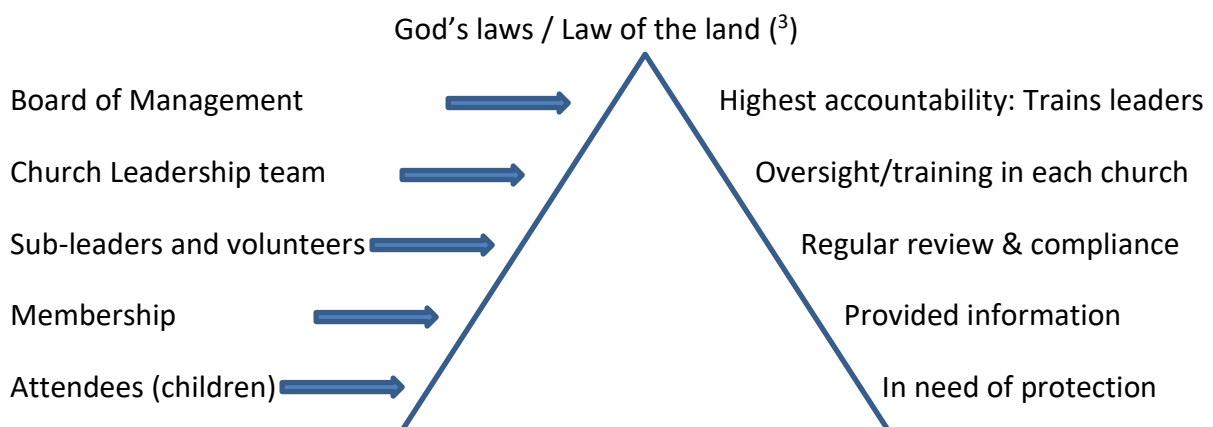
The Church of the Foursquare Gospel intends to comply with legal and moral requirements to fulfil its ‘Duty-of-Care’ to children. This policy & procedure manual is written in good faith to achieve this goal.

## THIS DOCUMENT IS FOR WHOM?

The policies, procedures and forms in this document are designed for Foursquare church leadership teams, departmental leaders, church councils, volunteer leaders, church members and all children of the wider community who engage in relationship with or attend a Church of the Foursquare Gospel within Western Australian jurisdiction. The goal being to comply with legal requirements, meet community expectations and insurance requirements the Foursquare church is required to comply with. Wherever this document is not clear in intent or application to the reader, readers are referred to the ChildSafe resources available at: [www.childsafe.org.au](http://www.childsafe.org.au) and to the relevant resources referenced in this manual.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY

An organisation like a church operates in levels of accountability and delegated authority. The Church of the Foursquare Gospel is also accountable to outside authorities, such as the criminal and civil Law of Australia. The structure of this system of accountability and authority is somewhat like a pyramid. The laws of God and of the land are highest authority to whom the churches are accountable.



<sup>2</sup> A mature minor has independent legal rights in regards to health, psychological assistance and legal representation.

<http://www.alrc.gov.au/publications/68.%20Decision%20Making%20by%20and%20for%20Individuals%20Under%20the%20Age%20of%2018/capacity-and-health-info>

<sup>3</sup> Children and Community Services Amendment Act 2021

The Board of Management will be conversant with this document and make training available to church leadership in how to utilise this Policy & Procedure, inclusive of aligning with ChildSafe<sup>4</sup>, State legal requirements or other required training as required. The Board will appoint a Child Safety officer to liaise with churches and their leadership and report to the Board as required.

It is *mandatory* that all church leadership, sub-leaders and volunteers who have contact or proximity to children have a current Working with Children<sup>5</sup> background check and card. Any person without this card cannot be in close proximity to children or represent the church in any ministry having contact with children. An example being - bus drivers for child or youth events such as camps, or youth leaders who drive youth home.

Each church's leadership will appoint an appropriate *child-safe coordinator*. This person will be responsible for reporting to the senior minister, Foursquare administration and relevant authorities if abuse or neglect of a child has been alleged or committed involving a child attending one of their church events. This person will keep records of reported hazards, incident reports, consent forms and other relevant information to child safety. This person will report to the Board's Child-Safety Officer, the Board of Management and their Senior Pastor. This person will be responsible to inform sub-leaders, volunteers, the church members and attendees about child safety at their church.

Each sub-leader, volunteer and member in a church also has a responsibility to protect children. For example, if a child reports a distressing event (including one involving a primary caregiver) to a church sub-leader, volunteer, or member, that person has a responsibility to inform the child-safe Coordinator of that church and fill out an incident report.

The intention of this system of accountability is not to create a legalistic culture, but to create a church environment for children, where they know that they can speak about what has happened to them. Also, a church leader or volunteer can report if a harmful event appears to have happened to a child based upon the child's behaviour or disclosure. Such incidents will be taken seriously, incident records filled out, records kept and discussion will occur with relevant parties involved in a confidential manner...*Confidentiality not* being an *absolute privacy* of no information sharing with others: Confidentiality being the keeping of specific information within boundaries of 'need-to-know' status to protect people from gossip, loss or damage<sup>6</sup>, yet allowing for information to be shared with relevant persons or agencies in the case of harm to self, others, or if criminal activity has occurred.

People, (including children) voicing their concerns is not an attack on church leadership or staff; it is an opportunity to minister, listen and make the ministry of the church to children better. If the senior leadership and child-safe coordinator decide further action is required by

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<sup>4</sup> Childsafe is the recognised national training body for child safety within organisations.

<sup>5</sup> <https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/>

<sup>6</sup> Civil law matters.

law, such as reporting to the police, this will occur. Alleged crimes against children are not investigated by church organisations; this is not the Church's role.

All churches of the Foursquare Gospel in Western Australia are expected to comply with the principles, policies and procedures of this manual. Refusal to do so will result in the Board of management suspending all activities of that church relating to children.

## **BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION**

Fear of not getting it right, or of not finding willing volunteers, or of keeping records is expected. However, considering the needs of children to be safe, these are fears to be faced. Facing these fears will involve training church leaders, then sub-leaders and having meetings with church members to inform them of the positive changes being made in Foursquare Churches to protect children. Working with Children Checks currently cost \$10 for volunteers and a church could pay for its volunteers as a way of valuing their contribution.

Denial that abuse could happen in one's church is difficult: to believe or accept that someone in a moral and spiritual community would abuse a child is heinous. The reality is that sex offenders against children use religious organisations to gain access to children via having a trusted position (Salter, 2004; Sax, 2009). Acknowledging that child abuse happens in all levels of society from family, to school, to clubs, to church and by people we may not have suspected is a reality to prepare for.

Concern about having the time, energy, people and resources to implement this policy & procedure manual needs addressing: There will be a cost to being an excellent and safe church for children to attend, enjoy and grow to maturity in. The more leadership of churches share information with their members and inform them everybody has a responsibility, the more likely the vision of excellence will be adopted and people engage.

Complacency about the risk of abuse to children in church care is a large barrier. Church people can assume that trust is automatic with fellow believers and that *'those sort of people'* don't come to this church: empirical research says they do, because easy access to children makes churches a target (Salter 2004; Sax, 2009). If children are part of church ministry and future leadership can emerge out of this environment, it means that these children must be safe from harm or abuse, or their experience of church and God will be harmful, not helpful.

A church culture that doesn't delegate authority or share information about child safety is an environment at risk. Where long-term staff or volunteers run programs involving children, an assumption can be made things are under control and they're OK as they are. This means there is no openness to new ideas, new programs and new eyes to assist the leaders in the protection of children.



ChildWise (2004) and ChildSafe (2016) advocate organisations like churches deal with barriers by identifying any barriers applying to their congregation.

- Brainstorming between leadership and members how their church can better manage risk and comply with legal and Foursquare requirements regarding protection of children. Keep minutes.
- The Board appointing a Child-Safe Officer to advise and report to the Board of Management.
- All members, especially leadership, learning about child abuse and child protection basics. Inviting or facilitating appropriate training.
- Consulting with the Child-Safety Officer and study material available.
- Convene a church membership meeting to discuss implementation of this policy & procedure. Keep minutes.
- Appointing the child-safe coordinator for your church. Setting up record-keeping.
- Implement the Policy & Procedures according to a timeline that is recorded.
- Review the implementation annually and communicate ideas to the Child-Safety Officer for Board of Management review.
- The Board review the Policy & Procedure every 2 years, or upon the recommendation of the Child Safety Officer in line with recent legislation changes.

It is beneficial for church leaders to listen to church members concerns about this policy & procedure and to emphasise the importance of being a safe and preventative organisation, rather than one that reacts to harm of children when it occurs, or after a later disclosure. Policy and procedure protect not just children, but church leadership, staffs, volunteers and church members involved with children. Appealing to the Biblical and moral imperative of protecting the “little ones” Jesus cares so deeply about is vital (Matt 19:14; Mk 10:14)... to act like Jesus is to be protective of children in advance and listen to their concerns. The cost of criminal or civil cases against the Church of the Foursquare Gospel, or a particular non-complaint Foursquare church regarding substantiated child abuse could see that church closed and its assets confiscated.

## **BACKGROUND TO NECESSITY OF THIS POLICY & PROCEDURE**

### **DEFINING CHILD ABUSE**

Child abuse covers multiple variations of intent or behaviour by a more powerful person than a child: Physical abuse, mental cruelty, psychological abuse, cyber-bullying or cyber grooming, sexual abuse (physical contact and non-contact) and neglect by caregivers to meet basic human needs all constitute child abuse. These kinds of abuse are defined and punishable by Australian law within the federal Criminal Code Act (1995), the Western Australian Criminal Code (1902 and variations).

Spiritual abuse of a child as defined by Nicloy (2006): is "a kind of abuse which damages the central core of who we are. It leaves us spiritually discouraged and emotionally cut off from the healing love of God." Another definition of spiritual abuse is "the mistreatment of a person who is in need of help, support or greater spiritual empowerment, with the result of weakening, undermining, or decreasing that person's spiritual empowerment."

Not appropriately protecting children from abuse or suspected abuse, by church leadership or members could constitute spiritual abuse.



### **PREVALENCE AND INCIDENCE**

Australian statistics on child abuse and neglect indicate that the most common forms of abuse in order of incidence are: Emotional and psychological abuse [including witnessing relational violence], neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, than other forms. One form of abuse often co-occurs with another (AIFS, 2016). Aboriginal children evidence higher risk of abuse.

In Australia, it is estimated that one in four girls and one in six boys will be inappropriately sexually abused before they turn 18 years of age (AIFS, 2016; ChildSafe, 2016). Girls are twice as much at risk of sexual abuse than boys (AIFS, 2016). These statistics are underestimated and flexible as they only reflect crimes reported to Police or substantiated.



A lot of child sexual abuse is not reported at the time of the abuse (Basham, 2007). Most sexual abuse against children happens at the hands of a family member or a person trusted by the child's family; the offender may be an adolescent (Sax, 2009). Sexualisation of children often occurs via unwanted messages sent to a child, who doesn't tell his/her parents (Sax, 2009).

An increase in substantiated abuse (35%) against children has occurred as a result of mandatory reporting laws, which are expected to soon apply to church organisations (AIHW, 2015). Children with substantiated abuse often had other reports on file (op cit., 2015).

## OFFENDERS

There is no typical child abuser. What is known about people who abuse children is:

- Child abusers have motivation, overcome their conscience, act privately and frighten a child into compliance or feeling responsible for the abuse (McMenanim, 2004; Sax, 2009)
- They are, in the vast majority, known to the child and/or child's primary caregivers (Briere, 2015; Sax, 2009; Hutchison, 2005).
- 95-97% of known sex offenders against children are male. Not all of these males were sexually abused as a child; most were physically abused. Females *do* sexually offend against children (Briggs, 1995; Salter, 2004; Sax, 2009).
- If a sex offender, they can appear to be 'too good to be true', being charming and seeking positions of power or public prestige rapidly (Sax, 2009; Salter, 2004). In churches this may be being in the worship team, to Sunday-school, to youth ministry, to home group leadership, transportation, coaching sports teams or involvement in holiday programs or camps... Access to children is part of the plan. Single mothers are vulnerable in churches.
- Sex offenders first commit offences against younger children in adolescence which is often minimised as sexual experimentation. Consequences for the victim are often minimised (McMenanim et al., 2004; Sax, 2009; Salter, 2004).
- Emotional child abusers have relational difficulties. They have impulse control problems when in a negative emotional state, can ignore a child's needs, verbally degrade a child's character or ability, threaten the child's safety and have unrealistic expectations about a child's compliance to their demands (McMenanim et al., 2004)
- Physical child abusers purposefully injure a child to achieve their own goals. They misuse their anger and become violent, physically pushing, hitting, slapping, pinching,

punching, whipping or inappropriately restraining a child. This constitutes assault by law (op. cit).

- Child neglecters fail to provide [when they can] the basic needs of a child for food, drink, shelter, warmth, comfort, health care, nurture and supervision that is developmentally appropriate and legally required (op. cit.).
- Bullies who abuse children are people, or young people who are insecure, feel powerless and use bullying to feel more powerful at the expense of a child who becomes afraid of them. Methods range from verbal bullying, to psychological, physical assault, sexual harassment or discriminatory assault (eg. sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, gender, religious difference, or disability) (Hutchison, 2005).

## **EFFECTS OF ABUSE ON CHILDREN**

The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies released a report called 'Childhood Trauma Remembered: A Report on the Current Scientific Knowledge Base and its Applications' (n.d.), which, along with experts in their field, outlined some serious consequences of child abuse such as: emotional and psychological scarring, development of mental illness, dysfunction in relationships as an adult, problems with concentration in study or at work, inability to trust, high anxiety, low self-worth, consequent substance abuse, poor emotional containment OR emotional numbing and problems with memory. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD] is common in people abused or neglected as children (Briere & Scott, 2015; Hutchison, 2005; Shapiro, 2010).

Children who have been abused show changes in behaviour at home, at certain places, with certain people, or at school or church. They may wet the bed, sleep poorly, change eating habits, play with toys in sexualised ways, touch other children inappropriately, bully other children, draw pictures that are disturbing or sexual, have angry outbursts and/or have growing anxieties or phobia (McMenanim et al., 2004; Hutchison, 2005; Sax, 2009).

Long-term effects of child abuse include:

- Disturbed ability to attach in secure and healthy, loving relationships. This is a result of learned avoidance or anxiety about being vulnerable to abusive caregivers, thus, over time, to others (Levy & Orlans, 1998).
- Mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation, dissociation, emotional regulation problems and substance abuse. Difficulties with relational boundaries are common and thus, victims can be re-victimised. Some victims bully others out of anger.
- Addictions, substance misuse and poor coping mechanisms.

- Victims of bullying can become anxious recluses, mentally ill, self-harm or have suicidal thoughts or action.
- Sexual problems for victims of child sexual assault include: prostitution, promiscuity, painful sex, sexual phobia and/or asexuality.
- Children become broken mirrors, whose reflection of God's image is marred, thus ability to trust God and believe in His goodness is damaged.

(Briere and Scott, 2015; Hutchison, 2009; ChildSafe, 2016).

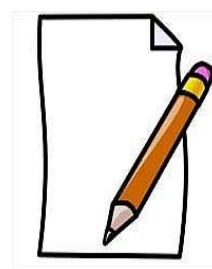
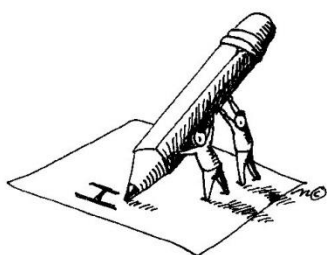
## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



### HOW TO RESPOND TO DISCLOSURE OF ALLEGED ABUSE

- When a child discloses an allegation of abuse, listen intently and thank them for telling. Tell them it is OK to seek help to make it stop.
- Let the child take time to tell and use their own words... do not put words into their mouth or assume how an event occurred and in what order.
- Do not immediately confront an alleged perpetrator; especially on your own.
- If a child or mature minor discloses an allegation of child abuse, the person who is listening MUST move the child to a more private location, along with one other leader who has a Working with Children Check [at observable distance]. This is so other children are not exposed to potentially traumatic stories, or other people do not overhear what is being said and there is more confidentiality.
- The person listening to a child or mature minor's disclosure of abuse must *not interrogate* the child who is speaking with lots of questions; that is not their role. They are to listen; take note of details and offer no promises they can fix the problem. They must not tell a child they will keep it a secret from everybody.
- Listeners to a disclosure or allegation of abuse must be very careful about embracing a distressed child as it can be misinterpreted at such a moment.
- The person to whom disclosure has been made must fill out an incident report ASAP and forward it to the child safe coordinator and/or senior minister of their church. A phone call may be necessary. They are then to follow the mandated requirement to report to the Police or Department of Communities via the Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889 OR email CPDUTY@communities.wa.gov.au
- Persons to whom allegations of abuse have been disclosed by a child or mature minor are to maintain confidentiality apart from discussion with the child safe coordinator and senior minister.

- The child safe coordinator or senior minister of a church will contact the primary caregivers of a child who has made an allegation: except in the instance of a primary caregiver being alleged to be the abuser. In such cases, the Central Intake Team will be called on 1800 273 889 OR emailed via CPDUTY@communities.wa.gov.au
- Further guidelines about responding to child abuse are found at <https://www.wa.gov.au> and the AIFS website: <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/responding-children-and-young-people-s-disclosures-abu>



## REPORTING OF SUSPECTED ABUSE/ RECORD KEEPING

This Policy & Procedure means The Church of the Foursquare Gospel is committed to ensuring that the abuse of children, mature minors or the vulnerable in our churches will, in good faith, not occur. Leadership in the Churches are commended for their diligence in applying this policy & procedure as they have responsibility to protect members and attendees, especially children against all forms of abuse.

Complaints or allegations involving abuse of a child or mature minor (under 18 years of age) must be reported and recorded.

- Every person, inclusive of children or mature minors, who makes a complaint, or allegation of abuse, will be heard, taken seriously and told that their complaint requires action. Each disclosure or allegation will be dealt with confidentially.
- Equally, each person against whom a complaint is made will be heard, and records kept of any communication... if criminal behaviour is alleged or witnessed; the church will keep incident reports and report the incident to the Central Intake Team 1800 273 889 or email [CPDUTY@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:CPDUTY@communities.wa.gov.au) for investigation.
- Reports are made via completion of an *incident report*, which are available within each church department. Incident reports are speedily and confidentially forwarded to the church's child-safe coordinator & Senior minister for record keeping. A copy of the details of date, time and content of report to the Central Intake Team will be made for administration.

- Child abuse complaints may result in meetings between the Senior Minister, the child-safe coordinator and primary caregivers to resolve complaints involving children or mature minors.
- Complainants have the right to seek appropriate legal action, or external mediation to resolve their complaint [aside from legal action]. Complainants and respondents will still receive Pastoral support and care.
- Incident reports, correspondence concerning alleged child abuse [txt's emails, etc], or other information related to an allegation of abuse will be kept securely in a locked cabinet by the child safe coordinator or senior minister.
- Incident reports, witnesses and other correspondence regarding allegations of child abuse may be subpoenaed by courts for evidence in criminal cases, hence keeping reporting records are vital.
- It is NOT the role of the church to investigate alleged crimes or child abuse: This is the role of the Police or the Central Intake Team [Department of Communities], to whom appropriate and timely reports will be made in good faith.



## **MINISTRY TO CHILDREN GUIDELINES**

All ministry staffs, leaders, volunteers and church members have a 'duty of care' to protect children. Working with children and youth is not a minor ministry. All persons ministering to children are to be trained in this policy & procedure, inclusive of Sunday School leaders, crèche attendants, holiday program leaders and their volunteers [P&P].

This includes:

- Senior ministers and child safe coordinator first, who can then train those in their church mentioned following: Elders/Lay Assistants / Church Council members / Sunday School Teachers and Leaders / Youth Leaders / Regular Volunteers / Home Group Leaders / Ministry Leaders in Pastoral Care and all persons in a position of trust.
- All who minister to children and youth will sign an agreement to abide by this P & P.

- When managing children's disruptive behaviours, no physically forceful methods are to be used by leadership or volunteers.
- 2 leaders are to take children to toilet breaks.
- No leader is to be alone in a room with a child with doors closed. Leaders operate in 2's.
- Physical contact between leaders and children is to be non-sexual in appearance and limited to public areas. Leaders need to be careful with hugging [side-on is best option]. Do not kiss children or youth as this can be misinterpreted easily during puberty.
- If you transport children or youth in your vehicle, you must make ensure you have a Working with Children Check, a valid license and another adult present. Speeding is illegal and safety belts must be used. If a child requires a booster seat by law, one must be used.
- When picking up or dropping off children, you must have a mobile phone to txt appropriate church leaders about pick up or drop off time. If the primary caretaker is not present at drop-off, drivers are to call the primary caregivers [number required] to make arrangements for the child.
- No child in the care of a Foursquare church, is to be bullied, assaulted or abused by staffs, volunteers or members. If a child's behaviour is beyond control of staffs or primary caregivers, police or an ambulance must be called.
- The Church of the Foursquare Gospel will not interfere with standing child custody arrangements; notice of these will be required and held on file. We will respect primary caregivers.
- Sunday schools, holiday programs and youth groups are to develop a simple anaphylaxis policy that all staffs know. Any child with severe allergies will need to have medicine available at hand and parents advised.
- There needs to be an appropriately trained First Aid officer at all church functions involving children.



## **CAMPS AND YOUTH EVENTS**

Any youth event involving groups of youth in church facilitated activity requires planning by the leadership of churches involved, youth ministers and other leaders. This is to ensure that all leaders are aware of the risk of abuse, bullying or sexual harassment within youth group events and that plans are put in place to contain such risks.

- All youth events will have planning meetings prior to facilitation to address policy & procedure compliance, staffing and volunteer screening, Working with Children Checks, First Aid officer appointment [if training is required? First aid kit?], anaphylaxis policy & procedure, consent forms, transportation, emergency protocols & plans, event scheduling, catering, ministry teams, mobile phone contact list, incident report forms and procedures are clear, agreement form for attendees with clear boundaries [such as no leaving camp grounds unsupervised/rules clear for sexes about dormitories or sexualised touch / bullying consequences / sexual harassment consequences] and monitoring of number of attendees.
- 2 leaders will be assigned to each dormitory or room with the same gender as the children or youth. Leaders are to pair-up for all responsibilities and no leader is to be alone with a child. In the vent of 'counselling' a child or youth, another leader is to observe from a distance.
- A part of a camp consent form regarding the use of mobile devices will be necessary for camp attendees to sign, that they will not use these devices to bully, intimidate or harass other attendees.
- Alleged incidences of bullying or sexual harassment at youth events or camps, will involve an incident report being completed and the involvement of primary caregivers meeting with church leadership to resolve the complaint soon thereafter. The child safe coordinator and senior pastor will discuss with the accused and their primary caregivers, the need to report abuse of children to protect all children.



- Any youth who has been witnessed abusing, bullying or sexually harassing another youth, will be asked to leave that event ASAP, their primary caregivers notified and arrangements for transportation made from the event. Incident reports will be filled out and reporting to the Senior Pastor will occur. A meeting will be called with the accused young person, their primary caregivers, the senior Minister and child safe coordinator to discuss the complaint. Mandatory reporting will be complied with for sexual abuse cases.
- The senior minister may call a meeting with the complainant, their primary caregivers and the child safe coordinator to discuss the matter. A mediation meeting between parties may be convened thereafter.
- Criminal behaviour such as assault or sexual assault by an attendee at a Youth event will result in the church reporting the incident to the Police and if sexual assault, to the Central Intake Team via 1800 273 889 or CPDUTY@communities.wa.gov.au
- Complainants about abuse, bullying or harassment have the right to report to the police independent of church leadership.



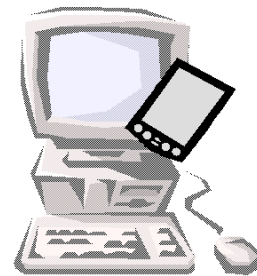
## **BULLYING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The Church of the Foursquare Gospel believes a person's worth is determined by the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and the biblical truth that people, children inclusive, bear the image and likeness of God's creative intent (Gen 1:26). Foursquare churches will not tolerate bullying or sexual harassment of children or youth: we want children and youth to grow in churches that are safe and validate their worth in word and action.

Bullying is a serious issue with children and youth. Bullying is the ongoing and deliberate actions of a person or group of people, to physically, psychologically, spiritually, or due to gender or perceived sexuality, humiliate and degrade another person for any reason (Opperman, 2008). Children and 'mature minors'(14-18yo) are not exempt from the legal consequences of bullying face to face, via social media or digital communication methods: All such correspondence is admissible in a court of law if a complaint is made.

Cyberbullying is more difficult to control or monitor due to the privacy of the actions on mobile devices church leadership has no access to. However, the police and legal representatives can monitor and subpoena digital devices, including phones, iPads and computers for evidence in cases of sexual harassment, sexual assault, bullying and stalking. Children and youth need to know there is no absolute privacy of anything on the internet.

Sexual harassment is an extreme form of bullying which is designed to intimidate, objectify and discriminate against a chosen victim by a person or persons. No informed consent is considered and 'no' by targeted victims in word or behaviour is not respected by perpetrators. Such harassment may include exposure to sexual material, inappropriate jokes or language, public shaming & name calling, inappropriate touch, txt, email, or social media images or messages (Sax, 2009). Sexting, distribution of sexual images or actual sexual assault of children is illegal and will be reported to the Central Intake Team 1800 273 889



## **CYBERSAFE GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH MINISTRY**

All church youth will be taught that what they do when they correspond online may be illegal and that they could, via ignorance, for example, by showing a child or youth pornography or sexting them, end up on the sex-offenders register. The age of sexual consent is 16... this is not the legal age for pornography, which is 18.

Church children and youth may be harassed by what they view on the internet. The age of first exposure to hard-core pornography in Australia is now as young as 11 years of age, most common in boys aged 14-17 (AIFS, 2016). Easy access to the Internet via mobile devices means a lot of what children see is unmonitored. It is advisable that ministry staff and youth leaders discuss internet safety with their youth and advocate with parents in churches for the use of filtering software at home.

Church leaders in child or youth ministry must have a WWCC and not utilise computer or internet technology or devices available to them in a manner that places a child or youth at risk of being bullied, sexually harassed or abused. See Code of Conduct for more information about church leaders and behaviours.

## **APPENDICES & FORMS OVERLEAF**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEADERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

The Church of the Foursquare Gospel is committed to standards of excellence regarding the protection of children in our care from all forms of abuse. We support the rights of the child and will ensure a child safe environment exists in all areas of our ministry. We also support out ministry staffs, leaders and volunteers who assist children and advocate for *their* safety as they minister to children and youth. Hence, this code of conduct is for all who work with children or youth, who will be required to sign in agreement with.

- All persons, including church leaders, who have contact with children in church-based activities, MUST have a current 'Working with Children' Card...*no exceptions*. Any church leader, volunteer or member who doesn't comply with this requirement cannot be with children in church-based activities.
- All persons ministering to children or youth must conduct themselves in a manner in agreement with the principles outlined in the policy & procedures. They must also respect the individual worth of each child.
- Persons working with children in church-based activities are not to abuse, assault or threaten a child or mature minor. They are to notice a child's reaction to their communication and if an allegation of misconduct is made against them, they will be stood-aside temporarily whilst appropriate investigation occurs.
- Church leaders in contact with children or youth ministry are to be an example of moral conduct, agreeing with biblical standards of behaviour. No sexual contact, harassment or grooming is to be made to a child or mature minor.
- Any touch of a child or youth should be in response to the needs of the child or youth and with their consent. Such as, for comforting a 3 year old who is crying or needs assistance to get onto a toilet seat, or for medical assistance or assisting with teaching a skill. Touch will be non-secretive, non-aggressive and will avoid breasts, genitals and groin area.
- The ethic of confidentiality applies to matters pertaining to children and youth. Church leadership and Primary caregivers will need to know issues pertaining to specific children and youth regarding complaints or abuse.
- Any computers or digital equipment church leaders and volunteers use when ministering with children or youth is to be free of pornography, sexualised images or links to pornographic sites.

- Leaders and volunteers who work with children or youth are not to advocate on social media promoting racism, sexual harassment or discrimination, bullying or disability shaming. Any church leader who ministers to children or youth who is involved in these activities, and they are substantiated, will be immediately stood down.
- Recruitment and selection of persons working with children and youth must include background checks, references and potentially, Police checks for interstate and overseas persons.

[Regular review of this code will occur in consultation with church leadership, experts in child safety and changes in legislation].

I agree to these terms:

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

### **INCIDENT, ILLNESS, TRAUMA, EVENT REPORT FORM**

This form is to be used in the event of an occupational health and safety issue, inclusive of disclosures of abuse, bullying, sexual harassment or assault, considered reportable by The Foursquare Gospel Church of Australia (WA). All ministry staff, lay ministry staff, youth leaders, children's ministry leaders and church based/appointed 'counsellors' are to fill in a form as soon as possible after a reportable event.

It is important to remember, that you must tell the persons involved in this report that the information will be forwarded to the relevant authorities (Church or state) for their protection and that no unauthorised person will see or hear details of this report.

#### **Person's details:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Is the person legally a child? Y / N (circle) if so, is the child under 14? Y / N (circle)**

**Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mobile phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Family GP [if known]** \_\_\_\_\_

**Incident report:**

**(series of events; date; time; location; witnesses; injuries; nature of injury; disclosure of abuse, harassment or assault; add pages as required)**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses \_\_\_\_\_

Event \_\_\_\_\_

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Actions \_\_\_\_\_

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Medical intervention? Y / N (circle)

If yes, provide name, location of treating facility/person

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Details of person completing this form:

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Role within the organisation:

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Notifications:

Parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Director/teacher/coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Regulatory authority (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Parental notification acknowledged (if applicable):

I,

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(name of parent/guardian) have been notified of my child's incident/injury/trauma/illness. (circle)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Follow-up by church on the incident:

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Other relevant information or appendices, attached here.

## **CAMP ATTENDANCE [MODEL for AGREEMENT]**

Camp and youth events are mean to be fun, safe social events with Christian, or interested children and youth attending. Given that church leaders have responsibility to ensure safety of all in attendance according to law, I agree I will follow the guidelines below.

- I will not abuse or bully other attendees by any method.
- I will encourage others to participate in the fun and activities.
- I will not leave campgrounds or the event without notifying a leader of the reason.
- I will not break camp or event rules about dormitories.
- I will respect others physical and sexual boundaries... 'no' means no.
- If I see abuse or bullying occurring, I will report it to leaders.
- I will treat others the way I want to be treated.

Signed by young person or their primary caregivers and handed to youth leader.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_



**RATIONALE AND RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES FOR PERSONS WORKING WITH CHILDREN/MATURE MINORS**

Churches have a ‘duty of care’ to the vulnerable, powerless and in need of pastoral care (Deut 10:17-19 / Prov 3:27 / Isa 61: 1-4), this is the work of Jesus. The risk of harm and damage via trust breaches and violations of child safety necessitate the church ‘screens’ all volunteers or staffs who work with children *apart* from mandatory Working with Children Checks. Risk assessments need to consider all variables regarding working with children: participants; settings; activities; level of supervision; relationship types; leadership knowledge or power differential and the law (United church of Canada, 2000).

High risk activities include when a child or youth is alone with someone and/or unobserved and unsupervised, where no informed consent exists from primary caregivers or the youth and there is knowledge and power differential between the child and the other(s) they are with. An example being a 14 year old girl being driven home by an 18-19 year old male youth leader alone or with a person without a WWCC and no informed consent has been given by primary caregivers or the mature minor. ‘Counselling’ by non-qualified persons is high risk.

Medium risk activities include small group activities with participants having wide differences in gender, culture, age, ability or disability, in which there is no prior or de-briefing of the risk of psychological bullying regarding accepting any differences. Examples being: an ethnic young person new to the youth group who doesn’t yet understand the majority language; or a child/youth who is not ‘visibly’ disabled; or a child/youth who is economically disadvantaged and can’t participate in social media or afford activities. Medium risk also includes activities that are not well planned with no informed consent is gained and policy & procedure is haphazard.

Low risk activities is where there is a high level of ‘screened’ leaders who also have a WWCC and where activities are planned for supervision, safety, informed consent forms have been signed, including a code of agreed behaviour and all leaders comply with policy & procedure as well as participants comply with a code of behaviour for the event.

**Assessing overall risk variables scale – low to high**

Activity	low 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 v. high
Legal issues?	Low0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 v. high
Participants	low0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 v. high
Power issues	low0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 v. high
Setting	low0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 v. high
Supervision	low0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 v. high

Proposed events can be assessed for risk and can be adjusted to reduce risk... keeping records of plans adds to evidence of good intent in case of a complaint.

**The United Church of Canada (2000, pp11-20) advocates 10 steps in screening ministry volunteers and ministry staff, this is paraphrased below:**

1. Clearly describe the nature of the role, the goals of the role, the skills necessary for the role, the duration of the role, any training available, supervision requirements and have a written agreement about the role that is signed.
2. Determine the nature of risk associated with the role or activity. How do you reduce the risk?
3. Use the role description to recruit a skilled, *willingly* screened person with WWCC as a minimum; do not rely on personality or unchecked testimony. Have a supervised probationary period.
4. Use application forms for roles involving children - records of information about person's that can be checked, verified and includes their consent to policy & procedure (see overleaf for example)
5. Have an interview of the applicant by a group of church leadership (reduces bias & opens checks to scrutiny)
6. Ask for 3 written references, inclusive of one from a person they disagree with and CHECK these referrals for evidence of integrity.
7. Mandatory WWCC for all staff and volunteers working with children or youth...and for recent interstate or overseas applicants, a federal police check.
8. Provide practical and timely induction on the Foursquare Church policy & procedures in regards to working with children and youth for all staff and volunteers. Follow-up on probation period and supervision.
9. Provide supervision of ministry teams, volunteers and youth leaders in contact with children that allows for feedback on their needs, problems and ideas.
10. Have a regular check-up with all participants to encourage them and call meetings to discuss Foursquare Church P & P issues.

**CONSENT FORM FOR CHECK OF APPLICANTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND/OR YOUTH**

I \_\_\_\_\_ want to assist in this church \_\_\_\_\_ with children's or youth ministry. I understand this is a position of trust, delegated by the church leadership, the congregation and the parents. I also understand that it is necessary for the church to screen all applicants and check their background and suitability for roles involving children and youth.

I agree I will acquire a Working with Children Check, provide evidence of this check and will disclose any criminal charges or convictions which may exclude me from serving this church. I intend to cause no harm to any child or youth I work with in any role.

I agree, if I have recently moved from interstate or overseas, to acquire a Federal Police check. I also agree to provide 3 written (email is acceptable) referee's the church leadership can contact, one of which, will be a person who I do not agree with on some matters. The church will contact these referees to discuss my suitability.

I agree, if I am approved, to a probationary period determined by the church leadership of \_\_\_\_\_ and the church agrees to Supervise my role and provide induction in Foursquare Church policy & procedure.

I agree if I am under 18 years of age, that my primary caregiver will sign this document along with me.

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Caregiver: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Church leadership signatory: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **LINKS TO RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION / GOVERNMENT SITES & SOURCES**

Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission. To check paperwork requirements and keep charitable status. <https://www.acnc.gov.au>

Australian Institute of Family Studies. Resources. <https://aifs.gov.au/>

Australian Law Reform Commission. Information on sexual offences.  
<https://www.alrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/pdfs/publications/25...>

Department for Child Protection and Family Support WA.  
<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx> if needing to report concerns about a child:  
<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Pages/Ifyouareconcernedaboutachild.aspx>

Department of Commerce: Civil Law matters.  
[http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/general\\_duty\\_of\\_care.pdf](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/general_duty_of_care.pdf)

WA Police Child Abuse Unit. <http://www.entrypointperth.com.au/directory/wa-police-child-abuse-squad-24-hrs/>

The Central Intake Team [Department for Communities] 1800 273 889 or email  
[CPDUTY@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:CPDUTY@communities.wa.gov.au)

WA Government 'Child Protection' Resources/ Fact Sheets/ Forms /Legislation  
[mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au)

WA Government. 'Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse' <https://wa.gov.au>