



# Safe Church Policy

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## Purpose

Gateway Church of Christ Warrnambool is committed that all people (including children) have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected, and have their views and opinions valued at all times. We also live in a country that legislates for people's safety.

Our policy has been developed to help us fulfil our responsibilities under Australian legislation.

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## Our Policy aims to:

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

### a) Safe recruitment of leaders.

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

### b) Adequate training of leaders.

We require that all key leaders attend a Safe Church Awareness Workshop before commencing or soon after commencing in their role and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.

We require all leaders to attend additional specific training as required, such as the Safety Management Online Module 3: Keeping Children and Vulnerable People Safe.

### c) Have a clear Code of Conduct

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

### d) Continued supervision of leaders.

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

All leaders will agree to follow our Code of Conduct.

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

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

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

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

#### **f) Provide an open safe environment**

We will afford participants a say in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas and encouraging participation. We will be accountable and transparent. We will create a child-friendly environment, allowing people to raise their concerns in an appropriate manner. We will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.

#### **g) Respecting the right of all people to make their own educated choices in life**

Through respectful discussions and teaching we share what the Bible teaches in context. We do not coerce others, but empower and encourage people to make their own decisions and move towards a closer relationship with Christ.

## **Definitions**

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

- *Physical Abuse*
- *Emotional Abuse*
- *Family Violence*
- *Sexual Abuse*
- *Grooming*
- *Neglect*

**Child:** a person who is under the age of 18 years. (The Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, Victoria)

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

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

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

**The Safe Church Policy applies to all staff members and volunteer workers associated with the work of Gateway Church.**

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## **Monitoring and Review**

- The Risk Management Officer will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Safe Church Policy and revise the policy when required (reviewed every 3 years). Pastors and the Leadership Team will be notified of specific changes.
- The Safe Church Policy is available to staff, volunteers and visitors.

Approved on 30/07/2024 by Safe Church Manager: Carolyn McDonald  
Next policy review: 30/07/2027