



Message: Jesus Only - Mighty to Save

Vision: In the Heart of the City, with a Heart for its People

Safe Church Policy

Commitment

Gateway Baptist 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 with whom we have contact, particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults.

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

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

Gateway condemns all forms of child abuse, discrimination and sexual exploitation, and is committed to creating and maintaining an environment which promotes safety and inclusiveness for children. Child abuse occurs when adults or other children hurt children or young people under the age of 18, either physically, emotionally, sexually, through neglect or in some other way.

Purpose

Gateway Baptist has adopted this *Safe Church Policy* to:

- Support our vision of being in the heart of the city with a heart for its people
- Implement the 10 Child Safe Standards from The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2017
- Provide a framework to inform the provision of safe environments, programs and procedures for children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection
- Meet our National and Local legal obligations in relation to:
 - staff and volunteers engaged in youth and child-related work or programs
 - reporting matters, including Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct, and Reportable Conduct involving a Child, to government authorities

- Minimise the risk of abuse, misconduct and the misuse of power
- Ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and misconduct are handled thoroughly

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- all Church leadership, staff and volunteers or anyone working on behalf of Gateway Baptist Church
- all people who are involved in or attend the Church and its programs

Principles

- Operate on the basis of our Constitutional membership: *Live holy lives in Christian love, taking care to watch over each other for good, and to encourage one another to love and good works.* (Gateway Baptist Inc. Constitution By-Laws 4.1b)
- Commitment to ongoing training, supervision and support of leaders
- Operate transparently in leadership and ministry practices

Actions

- Appoint a Safe Church Officer who will keep a record of people who have completed Safe Church Training and refresher courses and those who are registered to work with vulnerable people through the Department of Justice
- Require volunteers to complete Safe Church Training through the Safe Church online modules and workshops when offered in our region
- Require volunteers to have Working With Vulnerable People Registration (RWVP Act 2013)
- Adopt a clear Code of Conduct for all ministry areas including boundaries of behavior and expectations for interactions with children and adults
- Screen prospective leaders and volunteers before appointment to ensure compliance with WWVP or police checks
- Respond to and report disclosures or suspicions of any abuse or intentions to suicide or self-harm
- Ensure that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise any opportunity for harm
- Consider the impact of the physical environment on the potential for risk to children and vulnerable people
- Identify and address risks arising from the physical environment in which programs and activities take place
- Consider whether any ministries we support, including overseas ministries, have appropriate child protection practices in place
- Communicate the Safe Church Policy to ministry leaders and participants and the whole church congregation on a regular basis
- Review and revise the Safe Church Policy at Council level regularly

We define:

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

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

Child: a person who is under the age of 18 years (e.g. Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997, Tasmania).

Safe Environment: discharge 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 screening process, understands responsibilities, is supervised and is an accountable team player.

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

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

This policy was recommended by Church Council in May 2021.

Approved by Membership: