

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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BR & SCT using SSR, CCYP and BUV guidance	2.0	Replaces Safe Church Policy v1.0	Board approval: 16/09/2026	Two years from approval date

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out our commitment to the safety, wellbeing, participation and inclusion of all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in our church, ministries, programs, events, and activities. It provides a clear framework for preventing harm, responding to concerns, and building a culture where everyone is safe, valued, heard, and respected.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all pastors, staff, Board members, elders, ministry leaders, volunteers, contractors, and other people engaged in child-connected work or activities on behalf of New Peninsula Baptist Church. It also applies, where relevant, to other people participating in church ministries, programs, events, and activities (including external contractors & services providers).

While this policy focuses on child safety and wellbeing, it also recognises New Peninsula Baptist Church's broader responsibility to promote the safety, wellbeing, dignity and respect of everyone with particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), those with disabilities, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and young people who are unable to live at home, and regardless of sexual orientation, sex and/or gender.

We are committed to providing an environment in which every child and young person is treated with dignity and respect and is protected from abuse, harm, bullying, harassment, and discrimination, including harm arising from disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, or sexual orientation.

3. Our Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

New Peninsula Baptist Church supports and adheres to the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards issued by the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP). We recognise these Standards as the minimum requirements for organisations that work with children and young people, and we are committed to implementing them across our leadership, governance, culture, policies, procedures, ministries, programs, activities, physical environments and online environments.

We will monitor and respond to guidance issued by the Victorian Government and the applicable Child Safe Standards regulator, including the Social Services Regulator where relevant.

- We have zero tolerance for child abuse, harm, neglect, racism, discrimination, bullying and grooming.
- We actively promote the wellbeing, dignity, and rights of every child and young person, and vulnerable adults, in particular those identified in Section 2 of this policy.
- We are committed to providing a church environment that is physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe for all children, young person, and vulnerable adults.
- We are inclusive and respect the needs of all children regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background.
- We listen to children, take their concerns seriously, and involve them in decisions that affect them wherever possible.
- We partner with families, carers, and communities to strengthen child safety and wellbeing, actively supporting participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and families

4. Governance and Responsibilities

The church will appoint a Safe Church Team who will act as Child Safety Officers to provide visible, accessible and trained contact points for child safety matters. The Safe Church Team is authorised to receive concerns, support reporting, advise ministry leaders, keep secure records, monitor compliance with this policy, and escalate matters to the Senior Pastor, Board Chair, external authorities or Baptist Union of Victoria as required. Contact details for the Safe Church Team will be made available to children, families, volunteers, staff and the congregation.

- The church council or board is accountable for child safety governance, resourcing, policy approval and oversight.
- Pastors, staff and ministry leaders must model child safe behaviour, apply this policy, and ensure safe ministry practices.
- Volunteers and contractors must adhere to this policy, follow the Code of Conduct, complete required screening and training, and report concerns promptly.
- The Safe Church Team provides a clear contact point for questions, concerns, support, and referrals.

Role	Key responsibility
Person receiving concern	Listen, prioritise immediate safety, record basic facts, and report according to this policy.
Safe Church Team	Receive concerns, support reporting, maintain records, advise on procedure, and refer to external authorities where required.
Senior Pastor	Ensure the church's Reportable Conduct Scheme obligations are followed, consult authorities, oversee internal action, and notify the Board Chair as appropriate. With the support of the Safe Church Team.
Board	Provide governance oversight, ensure policy effectiveness, review systemic issues, and monitor corrective actions.
Ministry Leaders	Implement practical safeguards, ensure volunteer compliance, and escalate concerns promptly.

5. Recruitment, Screening and Training

Before commencing any volunteering and child-connected work, staff, leaders and volunteers must complete recruitment and screening requirements appropriate to their role. This may include a role description, application or expression of interest, interview or suitability conversation, referee checks, identity verification, Working with Children Check verification, Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct acknowledgement, induction and approval by the Safe Church Team.

The church may use probation, mentoring or additional supervision where a person is new to child-connected work or where additional safeguards are required.

As part of the onboarding process, staff, leaders and volunteers are required to complete training that includes, but is not limited to, boundaries and expectations, mandatory reporting, how to respond to concerns or disclosures, and recognising signs of potential abuse including harm caused by other children and young people. This training must be refreshed at least every 24 months, or earlier following any incidents, reviews or changes to legislation or this Policy or the Code of Conduct.

6. Safe Programs, Places and Online Environments

All ministries, programs, events and activities involving children must be planned, approved, supervised and reviewed with child safety in mind. Leaders must identify and manage risks in physical and online environments, including supervision, transport, photography, livestreaming, social media, electronic communication, excursions, and overnight activities.

Adults engaged in volunteering and child-connected work must maintain transparent, accountable and appropriate boundaries at all times. Ministry activities must avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations and must follow approved arrangements for supervision, transport, toileting and personal care, overnight activities, photography, video, livestreaming, social media, electronic communication, gifts, physical contact and pastoral care. Communication with children must be appropriate to the ministry's purpose, observable where possible, and consistent with the Code of Conduct and safety guidelines.

Where the church engages third-party contractors, service providers, or facilities in connection with activities involving children and young people, relevant procurement, contracting and risk-management processes must consider child safety. These contractors will be required to comply with this Policy, and other applicable child-safety requirements.

7. Reporting and Responding to Concerns

Any concern, disclosure, allegation or suspicion that a child is at risk of harm must be taken seriously and acted promptly. **Where a child is in immediate danger, contact emergency services by dialing 000**

Concerns must be recorded and reported in line with our reporting procedure, legal obligations, mandatory reporting requirements, the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme where applicable, and Baptist Union of Victoria guidance.

Any person who receives a disclosure, observes concerning behaviour, suspects abuse or harm, or becomes aware of a breach of this policy must act promptly. The person must first ensure the immediate safety of the child and call emergency services if there is immediate danger. The concern must then be recorded factually and reported to the **Safe Church Team** or Senior Pastor as soon as practicable. The church will consider and meet all mandatory reporting, police, child protection, Reportable Conduct Scheme, Child Safe Standards regulator, Social Services Regulator where applicable, and Baptist Union of Victoria notification obligations.

Any person involved in receiving, assessing, reporting, investigating, deciding or responding to a child's safety concern must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. A conflict may include a personal, family, pastoral, ministry, employment or close social relationship with a child, complainant, alleged victim, accused person, witness or decision-maker. Where a conflict exists, the person must step aside from decision-making unless their involvement is necessary to protect a child or meet an urgent legal obligation.

8. Conduct and Boundaries

All adults must maintain appropriate behavioural, physical, emotional, spiritual, and online boundaries with children and young people. The Code of Conduct sets out expected behaviours and unacceptable conduct and applies to all child-connected work and ministry settings.

The church recognises that children and young people can experience harm from other children, including bullying, violence, harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, image-based harm, coercion, intimidation and online abuse. All child-to-child incidents must be taken seriously, recorded, risk assessed and managed in a way that prioritises safety, support, procedural fairness and age-appropriate responses.

The church will provide support to affected children, consider supervision and safety planning, involve parents or carers where appropriate, and refer to external authorities or specialist services where required.

9. Participation, Inclusion and Communication

We will provide child-friendly information about safety, complaints, and support. We will seek feedback from children, young people, families, and carers and use it to improve our practices. We will make reasonable adjustments so all children can participate safely and meaningfully.

10. Records, Privacy and Confidentiality

Child safety records must be accurate, secure, timely, and shared only with people who need the information to protect children, meet legal obligations, or support a fair and appropriate response.

The church will maintain evidence that this policy is implemented in practice. Evidence may include training records, screening records, risk assessments, incident and complaint records, meeting minutes, audit outcomes, child and family feedback, policy acknowledgements and compliance checklists.

11. Review and Continuous Improvement

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or earlier if there are legislative changes, significant incidents, audit findings, feedback from children or families, or changes to Baptist

Union of Victoria guidance, or changes to guidance or requirements issued by the applicable Child Safe Standards regulator, including the Social Services Regulator where relevant.

Reviews will consider risks, complaints, training outcomes, implementation gaps, and opportunities for improvement.

Any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents will be analysed to identify underlying causes, patterns, or systemic failures, and that this analysis will inform ongoing improvement.

12. Contact Details

If you have questions about this policy, please contact a member of the **Safe Church Team** through the New Peninsula Baptist Church office on **(03) 5973 8888**.

For concerns or reports of abuse outside office hours, please contact the Pastor on call on **0407 311 185**. Or email safe@newpeninsula.com.au

13. Related Documents

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Reporting Procedure
- Recruitment, Screening and Training Procedure
- Risk Management Policy
- Safe Church Team Contact Person
- Online Safety and Communication Guidelines
- Photography, Video and Livestreaming Permission Procedure
- Baptist Union of Victoria Creating Safe Spaces resources and guidance
- Victorian Child Safe Standards guidance issued by CCYP

14. Quick Reference: Victorian Child Safe Standards

This table identifies where each Victorian Child Safe Standard is addressed in this policy.

Standard	Where addressed in this policy
1. Culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children and young people	Sections 3 and 4
2. Child safety and wellbeing embedded in leadership, governance and culture	Sections 3 and 5

3. Children and young people empowered about their rights, participation and voice	Sections 3 and 10
4. Families and communities informed and involved	Sections 3 and 10
5. Equity upheld and diverse needs respected	Sections 3 and 10
6. People working with children suitable and supported	Sections 4 and 5
7. Child-focused complaints processes	Sections 4, 7 and 10
8. Staff and volunteers equipped through education and training	Sections 4 and 5
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing	Sections 6 and 8
10. Review and improvement of child safe practices	Section 5 and 11
11. Policies and procedures document child safety practices	Sections 10, 11 and 12