

North Coast Church

Child Protection Policy

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1. Overview

This document outlines the policy of NCC, under the direction of the Elders, with respect to all activities of a corporate nature (gatherings for worship or other stated ministries of the Church) where a level of risk is recognised. This policy does not apply in the context of the general activities of individuals unless at a Church meeting convened by the Elders as part of the ministry of the Church.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to **demonstrate the strong commitment of North Coast Church to the care, safety and wellbeing of all children at our church.**

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Elders, ministry staff, children's ministry volunteers, youth ministry volunteers and any other individual involved with children's activities within the church.

4. Context

The Elders recognise that they have a duty of care towards those who are part of the Church and therefore desire to manage the affairs of the Church such that attendees, whether members or visitors, (termed "the Congregation") are not exposed to any unreasonable danger.

The policy complies with the requirements Children and Community Services Act 2004 and supports the ten Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

5. Commitment to Child Protection

- In carrying out its primary role of caring for the spiritual wellbeing of its members, the Church is also committed to the emotional and physical care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people.
- The Church recognises and shares responsibility with their families and the broader community, for their care, wellbeing and protection.
- The Church seeks to create a culture in which child protection is everyone's business.
- The Church shows its commitment to child protection through the provision of:
 - Child Protection Policies and Procedures;
 - The review of quarterly Child Protection reports by the Oversight Board;
 - The provision of training and education.

6. Our Beliefs

Our Church and its Elders believe the Bible gives us the truest description of the condition of mankind. From the Bible we believe:

- That all men and women on earth are fallen creatures, subject to temptation and disposed to the committing of evil against their neighbours;
- That Christian men and women, although having learned of the grace that God provides, may still be tempted to commit evil;
- That our society has lost the desire and capacity for self-discipline, being evidenced by the acceptance and promotion of loose sexual morals, the rise of the pornography industry and various forms of sexual perversion;
- That one of the currently prevalent perversions is the sexualisation of children;
- That our Congregation includes people who may have been victims, or even perpetrators, of abuse in the past;
- That, although we teach and exhort our Congregation to practice upright and disciplined living, we do not know whether someone attending our Church is an abuser or may be tempted to abuse someone if the opportunity arises;
- That the private lives of our Congregation are not fully known to us and we may be mistaken concerning the trust we put in any person;
- That, in addition to teaching and preaching, we need to put in place measures to assist us to identify potential risks and minimise them in practical ways;
- That we have a duty before God to work towards the healing of victims and the restoration of perpetrators;
- That we need to expel persons who have been perpetrators and are unwilling to subject themselves to restorative disciplines, or who evidence in their behaviour that they are unwilling; and
- That we must co-operate with Government agencies and act within the law.

7. Underlying principles

- For young children of our Church to grow and develop a foundation of emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing they must be respected and valued within trusting, secure relationships. It is everyone's responsibility within our Church to do this for our children.
- This policy and supporting documentation is intended to direct and assist our Church in achieving a consistently safe and protective environment for our children.
- This Policy applies to all persons in any of our Congregations, whether members or adherents or visitors.
- Our Church recognises the responsibility for child protection is shared by the whole community. This policy highlights the Church's stance on child abuse, and our responsibilities to protect children.

- Children and young people grow to their full potential when they are provided with a spiritual, emotional and physical environment that is enriching and safe.
- The Oversight Board has ultimate responsibility for the child protection policies and procedures and promoting adherence, supported by education and training, throughout the church. The Oversight Board will review the Child Protection Procedures and this Policy on a bi-annual basis.

8. Responsibilities

- Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.
- The Church will help members, staff and volunteers to keep children safe by promoting awareness of this policy and the associated procedures and by providing education and training as appropriate.
- Staff and volunteers will help protect children by ensuring they are aware of this policy and the associated procedures and following them.
- The Child Protection Officer (CPO) will help protect children by reviewing this policy and associated procedures, providing or promoting training and education and by auditing current practice from time to time to ensure compliance
- The Oversight Board will oversee child protection initiatives within the Church and address any child protection concerns in accordance with this policy and the Children and Community Services Act 2004.
- The Church will foster an environment of transparent and open communication with Western Australian authorities in regard to child protection concerns.

9. The Oversight Board

- The Oversight Board comprises members of the Church appointed by the members.
- The Oversight Board oversees child protection initiatives within the Church and addresses any child protection concerns in accordance with this policy and the Children and Community Services Act 2004.
- The Oversight Board receives quarterly reports from the CPO on child protection education, training, incidents and initiatives, in addition to briefings on urgent matters.
- The Oversight Board provides advice on child protection to the senior leadership team of the Church and will promptly address any significant child protection issues or concerns arising.