

# Safe Environments | Child Safety Training: Church Policy, Mandatory Reporting | Protecting Our Kids

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Date: 18 July 2025

[0:00] Music What I'm presenting tonight is a compressed, concise crash course tailored really for our own church policy, which is what we have to implement.

So what we have to do is everyone's responsibility.

So we're going to cover these things here tonight. The policy, the mandatory reporting and the code of conduct. So there's various handouts that you've got and we'll show online for those that are watching.

You can download those here. So what we're going to focus on, you've got in front of you the sheet that's called Bible School. And that's what we're going to go through. We're going to walk through that, the training notes.

And you also have a handout there, the policy, the trainings based on the policy. Alright, so the policy is what our local church policy is about working with children and vulnerable people.

[1:09] So just to kick things off, what our commitment is as a church, these are things that we're committed to, to keep the place a safe environment for everyone. So that's for children, young people, vulnerable people, really for everyone.

And for all of our ministries and activities to be safe, physically, emotionally and spiritually. We were just mentioning before, physically we tried to get the crates sorted out. So it's a bit tidier there and there's less hazards.

So just in the physical context, but more emotionally, spiritually, the kind of environment that we work in. So creating a place that's child safe and child friendly, where children, vulnerable people and young people are valued and respected.

And we want to respond appropriately to any harm or risk or harm. So we're going to talk about that, unpack that a little bit. And what we want to do is champion this kind of culture, that we're child safe as a culture, and model it from all levels.

So like from our committee level right through, everyone in the church at all, ministries of the church, and really everybody that attends the church too. That we've got that culture, that we want to keep this a place that's safe for children, and that we're going to have zero tolerance for harm and for child abuse.

[2:24] Okay, so as a policy overview, this is our philosophy. So really it's our philosophy and model of ministry as a church. And you could say that there's Christian principles that underlie it as well.

These are not out of accord with the scriptures. And so we want to make sure that there's no bullying or harassment, and that we comply with all those different relevant acts and regulations there.

So there's a whole heap of them that we want to adhere to, as to what we legally have to adhere to. And it's not in your notes, but I like this scripture in Psalm 9 verse 9, that we're creating a refuge for the oppressed.

A refuge for the oppressed. And our church should be a friendly place that people can feel safe when they come here. And one of the legal documents there is that third one there, National Principle for Child Safe Organisations.

I've kind of paraphrased it, what that means. This is a national principle, so it's been agreed right across the nation. That child safety and wellbeing is at the core of how we lead and run things.

[3:29] That children and young people know their rights, they've got to say, they're listened to. That families and communities are kept in the

loop, and we help keep kids safe together.

Number four there, everyone's unique needs are respected. There's fairness. Number five, workers are carefully chosen and supported to prioritise child safety.

Complaints are handled with kids' needs at the heart of the process. Number seven, our people get ongoing training. So that's part of what we're doing tonight. Bit of a catch up really. We've not really had such a training before.

Just by the by, really this training, you probably need a whole day on it. In some organisation they spend a whole day on it, or you get an external facilitator to give you a really full on training.

So this is really just a really condensed version tonight. So I'm sorry it's going to be quite a bit of intake in one hit. And then we see physical and online environments promote safety.

[4:26] The policies and procedures document child safety. And our rules and plans show how we keep children and young people safe. So that's all the national principles in a paraphrased version.

And really our values are grounded really in the Word of God as a church, of course. It embraces God's love that we have and to shield the vulnerable.

And it reflects God's heart for the poor and the oppressed. And we know that God's Word really tells us about our mandate to ensure safety and minister, especially to the young and vulnerable.

And God has identified vulnerable people who are to be protected and given special care. So there's different scriptures there you can look at. For example, the scriptures that tell us love our neighbour for one thing, to love one another, to suffer, or in other words, let the little children come unto me.

And it says how if we receive one of these children in his name, we receive our Lord. And it tells us comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, think of all those things that we should care for others.

[5:31] And that nurturing environment. So really that biblical principle, and like I was talking about on Sunday, the principle of stewardship, they're under our stewardship. The children that come here, vulnerable people, we want to show care, nurture and protection.

And it's all really biblical values at the heart of all of those things. It's not a contradiction for us. And so some of those values-based things, they're not actually in the policy, but I just wanted to give that as a bit of an intro.

As far as the policy goes, the scope of the policy, it covers really everything that we do. Our operations, students, others volunteering that come. When they're within our church context, it's overarching really what we do, isn't it?

That scope of the policy. And also that we're communicating it. And we've got feedback mechanisms for children and families. And that we're actively concerned about listening and acting on concern.

So we want to be responsive to those sort of things. Just some terminology that we're going to unpack. So this is really around 1.5 in the notes there.

[6:38] The terminology. Some of these things are confronting abuse. Of course that can include physical harm, sexual harm, grooming, emotional harm, domestic harm and neglect.

It's interesting, our policy's been revised in different iterations over time. And the government's kind of changed things to put more of an emphasis on harm as against abuse.

Because harm kind of incorporates abuse. But harm could be something that, or at risk of harm. It's a broader kind of scope now. It's a broader definition to include harm.

So it can include neglect or psychological harm and such things as well. And then you've got a definition of a child. Is anyone under 18? Just as an aside, a young person, you could say a definition of a young person is 16 to 17.

According to the government kind of definitions. And then this term child safe environments. That's what we want to have as a church to be that place. That's safe and friendly, proactive, participatory and protecting children from harm.

[7:44] By the way too, another definition that's not in your notes here. But again, when they've updated this policy or they've guided us how to update the wording of our policy, they've included the term vulnerable

people.

So it's not just children and young people, but vulnerable people. And a definition of that, the Australian government, the Department of Social Services, defines vulnerable people to include children under 18 and adults over 18 who may not be able to protect themselves from harm due to physical harm, age, illness, trauma, disability or other reasons.

Now we know, for example, there's older people that we've had concerns about in our church. There's elder abuse. So you could think, well, there's a broad scope here really of how can we care for the people? How can we nurture everybody?

No matter what their age really. So there's vulnerable people of all ages. And of course we think at times the people with disabilities that fellowship with us, we want to look after them too. So it's a broad scope is the point I'm making there.

The definition of leader is really anyone, paid or unpaid, over 18, responsible for control and safety of others. Mandatory reporting, we're going to unpack that a little bit more, a bit later in the process.

[8:59] And the volunteer is really unpaid person, over 16, helping a leader in the ministry. So just definitions here to introduce things. And then further, this is not in the notes.

I thought I'd expand this as well on the slides and our training tonight. Grooming is a big thing to be aware of what grooming is. It's really that preparatory stage when a predator will try to gain trust and or compliance of the child or young person.

It's an awful thing to think of, but we need to be mindful of it and alert to these things, where they might want to establish this special contact and wanting to build that trust, really to ultimately gain control of a child or through their family as well.

So they could be, for example, using tactics like giving gifts, special attention, fostering that kind of special relationship, sharing interests, isolating them from family, friends or support networks.

Touching them could be tickling, wrestling, that then can escalate further. Threats, shame, guilt or authority to manipulate the child. You know, having special secrets and such things like that.

[10:10] And then they can use drugs or drink or financial benefit to capture the child. So child abuse, again, it can include a really whole lot of things.

There's all those things that can be intruding on children or young people. It can be a physical harm, an injury that could be inflicted upon them.

It could be by physical punishment or aggressive treatment. Emotional harm, where a person rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This emotional environment.

And then you've got sexual harm. And then neglect is the failure to provide basic necessities as well, so that the child's health and development are harmed. Some potential signs of harm.

Again, I've added this in. It's not really in the policy. But just to kind of elaborate a little. Things to look out for. The potential signs of harm. So physical signs.

[11:08] These are kind of pointers, signs to look out for, indicators. So whether it could be bruises or burns or fractures. Whether it's poor hygiene. All of those things listed there. So physical signs to kind of look out for.

So you can keep these training notes to kind of unpack all that as a resource later. Then there's behavioural signs too. Where they can show little or no emotion when hurt.

There's this wariness of people. Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour. Excessive friendliness to strangers. It could be they're trying to hide bruises or low self-esteem.

So there's a whole lot of things here. I know I'm conscious that just I meant to introduce things today. By saying if any of these things trigger anyone here tonight too. Just we don't want anyone to feel uncomfortable about this kind of stuff.

Because we know that any one of us could have been a victim ourselves. And this might trigger some of those memories. So I'm sorry if that's the case for you. But of course we want to be sure that we've got the environment that supports the children.

[12:08] So there's these physical signs, behavioural signs. And a big question is what should I do then if a child tells me about abuse? And so it might come that occasion where you see some of these signs or a child starts talking to you about abuse.

How are you to approach that? What should you do? So it's an important thing to think about. Again I've added this in really because it's important that we know what to do. Just give them that attention.

Accept what they're saying. And tell them that you believe them. Sometimes it's very traumatic for a child to reveal such things. And tell the child that they're not to blame. Don't press the child for information.

Because when they start to tell you, you don't want to kind of act like an investigator. Because it could hinder further investigations by the police. You're basically just reassuring the child. And taking it seriously what they're saying. And telling them what you're going to do next. And what will happen. So let the child know if you intend to make a report. And finish on a positive note and tell the child that you're pleased that they told you.

[13:15] It's important that the child is not required to repeat their disclosure. So interviewing the child is best left to train people who are skilled in the process. Because sometimes it can, I think it can damage the criminal case that might come later.

If you overly unpack that and you seem to be coaching the child and such things. You're not going to go into those kind of details with the child. As soon as possible, make some notes about what they said. And the date and time of the meeting.

So these are important things just to capture that. And the introduction to when someone's revealed, disclosed something to you like that. The obligations that we have. We've got a responsibility.

Of course we're committed to treat all people fairly with dignity and care. And to give that necessary nurture and protection. We've got a legal responsibility too. To comply with federal and state child protection laws.

And common law principles. Really just basic common sense kind of principles of what's ethical and legal and appropriate. And then we've got ethical responsibilities as well. As to unacceptable behaviours.

[14:18] We want to be mindful of those unacceptable behaviours. Especially when children are present. You know, inappropriate sexual conversations. Inappropriate jokes. Coarse language. Suggestive gestures.

Inappropriate touching. Unconsented recording. So all of those things are unacceptable. And then we want to have high standards as well. In what we do. Next one. Number four.

Is selection and screening. So as a church we want to be careful about how we select people for roles. And to make sure people are appropriate. To work with children and vulnerable people. And so we've got a selection process. And of course a working with children's check is mandatory. Now I know some people here are in the process of getting their check. There's others that we've indicated like committee members.

It would be good for them to get a working with children's check. Really anyone that you think. Even if you might be a casual bus driver. And you might be picking up children. Or helping in the youth group.

[15:16] The young adults. The creche. The Sunday school. The Sunday school. In all of those areas of the church. And it's good if you can apply for that. And that way we're covered with what we need to have.

And so some of the requirements of a leader. Is that we have the various forms filled out. So you've got three forms to fill in tonight. You can see in the handouts that I gave you.

At the table there. And people are watching online. We'll give you links to that. But it's good to really document that you've attended this training tonight. For one thing. That you've filled out a volunteer form.

If you're wanting to formally serve. And basically that you understand the kind of code of conduct. Which is the overarching way that we are working. So all of those things.

So that's the leader requirements. And so the training tonight. Really it is short and brief. It's concise. It's really a bit of a crash course. But hopefully it gives you an understanding of the essentials.

[16:15] Which I think is very important that we all have. And because we need to know what the policy is for our local church. How we operate. And also how to be a mandatory notifier. And have really that mindset that

child safety.

That child safety is something really. It's a standing agenda. And we want to foster that. So number eight. Ensuring a safe environment. Here's some basic things. Just really distilling what's in our policy.

A two leader rule. So there's two leaders present. When working with children. To reduce that risk. And clarify allegations. Home visits. It's not something we generally do.

But the same principles apply. As in transportation. So leaders not to be left alone with a child. In a vehicle. Counseling to be conducted in sight of another leader as well.

So all of those things. It's appropriate conduct isn't it? Yeah. Just further in the notes there. Like respecting privacy. And having transparency too. For example at our youth group.

[17:17] Parents can be present. And that's all the more encouraged. And we're not doing anything that's secretive. But mind you. Unauthorized persons. We've got to be careful about that too. If we have an unauthorized person come.

And they may not be appropriate to be present. So they could be asked to leave. If we seem so necessary. Number seven. Managing inappropriate behaviors. Of course the reality is.

You're going to get kids that act up. And arc up. And do the wrong thing. How are we to approach that? Really firm. But gentle. Verbal correction. That's age appropriate. And respectful.

Leaders aren't to administer physical. Emotional. Or mental discipline. So there's no striking or restraining. Perhaps an occasion for using minimal restraint.

Might be if they're about to run onto the road. And get run over. For example. But really. Restraining is not to be done. There's other ways. You can have isolation if necessary.

[18:13] In a safe supervised area. But really. The emphasis is on warnings. Explanations. Just trying to talk through the situation. But the time could come where it's persistent.

Misbehavior. And the verbal correction is not working. So you might have to contact the parent or caregiver. About organizing them to be picked up. Or such.

Or take over. And of course we want to keep that communication with parents. So if there's a persistent problem. The parents know. Hey this is awkward for us. How can we handle it? Maybe work together with the parents to find solutions.

Number eight. Reporting procedures. So again. This is important that we are very mindful. If we do see something of harm. Or a risk of harm.

That we report it. This is our legal obligation. Again. I'm going to unpack mandatory reporting. A little bit more. Further on. In the night. Definition of harm. Is physical or psychological harm.

[19:13] Caused by abuse or neglect. And in a nutshell. Here's the response. Is to call the child abuse report line. So in South Australia. It's that number 131478.

Is the child abuse report line. Or CARL. They abbreviate it as. If there's a reasonable belief. A reasonable belief of harm. Or risk of harm. If you reasonably believe. There's harm or risk of harm. Then it's appropriate to report. And of course. If there's an immediate risk. Call the SAPOL.

Emergency on triple zero. And if it happens to be an Aboriginal child.

Through the child abuse report line. There's a special unit there. That can give special tailored help. For Aboriginal children too. Internal reporting. Of course.

As well as doing the mandated reporting. Let your leader know. If you're working under supervision. If you've got a senior person. Who's running the program. Let that person know. Let me know as the pastor.

[20:11] Try to keep everybody informed. So as well as external investigations. And remove accused workers. From the roles. Of working with children.

Support victims. And document. And securely store all reports. Of course. If the person who's the abuser. Might happen to be. The supervisor. Or even the pastor. Then of course.

You would bypass that person. Right? You would go to someone above that person. So in the case of the pastor. Go to the committee. For example. If it's the supervisor. Go above the supervisor. To the pastor.

And such. So just so that. Follow. Appropriate process. So the report is made. And then we can do our internal processes. Following that. So you report your suspicions immediately to the car. That's important. That's you do that. Don't hesitate to do that. And then. I will contact the insurer as well. Because they need to be aware. And so reasonable grounds. Include disclosure by the child. [21:09] Or someone close to them. Do not contact the alleged perpetrator. And retain clothing. If there might have been some potential assault. Those things can be very helpful with.

Conviction of. If someone's done something like that. Keep that kind of clothing. As evidence. And maintain confidentiality. And of course.

As a church. We'll take disciplinary action. Per the church's constitution. If someone is. Inappropriate. With their conduct. That goes without saying. Alright.

8.2. General complaints or feedback. So we want to encourage that feedback. To improve our services. So. We're really keen to hear what parents. Want to tell us about. Our services. And. Ensuring that children and families feel valued. So that's really important for us. And so. Complaints or feedback. That can be verbal or written. And we want to record those. And forward them to the pastor.

[22:06] Keep that kind of feedback. And information. So we can improve. And we can securely store such matters. And escalate. If there's need to. Risk management. Number nine.

There's a whole lot of risk management. In all of this. You can think. What could happen. What could go wrong. We want to implement this child focus. Code of conduct. So. I've just kind of. Fleshed out something. Really. The last few days. I've captured things from all kinds of resources and sources and tried to develop our own little. Code of conduct. So that's separate from that policy. I just sort of frame that. At least. As the first. Iteration of that. So we've got a. A child focus code of conduct. And we want to make sure that. All of those legal things are embedded in what we do. That we've got. Processes to ensure that we're recruiting people. With wisdom. About selecting people. And that we're reporting. And all of our policy is up to date.

[23:04] And such things. So. There's some sort of safety. Aspects there in everything that we do. Physical concept must be appropriate. Explained and consented to.

By the child or family. Of course it can be. And talking realistically in some games. There might be. A bit of. Argy bargy. With certain games. But of course the physical concept must be appropriate. It's not that it's inappropriate. And obviously not something that's unfitting. We don't want unnecessary contact with children. I know there's a degree of. There's a scope for. Maybe passing them on the shoulder.

Or something like that. And there might be some scope for that. But of course we know. That it can go further. And we want to make sure. That it's not. In appropriate contact. All right.

So. I know there's a degree of scope for that. And. Where we might be comforting a child. Or. Of the same gender. To get a degree of. Calming them. Or. That kind of.

[24:00] Measure of touching. But. Not anything that's unnecessary. All right. So. Online communications. We don't really have that. But. I suppose. Where it could be social media contact.

There's wisdom there. We've got to exercise. With that. And. Normally it would not be appropriate. Social media contact. With a child. That said. Maybe younger people.

As they get older. Maybe there's some scope. But. We want to be very guided. And careful about that. And it's only if it's. Really fitting. And it's not. Intruding on anything. That's inappropriate.

And then of course. Transportation. We want to make sure. Parents are consenting to that. The person's got a valid license. The vehicle's road worthy. And no lone adult.

With a child in a vehicle. And that's an important point there. That we've got that supervision. There's. Really two adults. With a child. At all times. Privacy and confidentiality.

[24:56] Of course. There's. Information that we store. And so as a committee. We might be privy to such things. Where there's some. Matters that are somewhat confidential. We want to make sure. That they're securely stored.

And that we're managing that. In a wise way. There might be occasion. Of course. If you had some outings. There's a church. And. There could be. People might go swimming. Or such things. On camps. And such things. Of course. We'd be very guided. And guarded. About. How we do that. And I'm sure. As a youth group. Or. Whichever department.

Is running. That. Is running. Something like that. They're going to be. Mindful of all that. That everything's safe. Again. Mandatory reporting!!  
And they're valid.

[26:08] And they're valid for five years. So. It's valid for. Five years. I did skip one there. Alcohol and drugs. Of course. There's no consumption of alcohol or drugs. On the church grounds.

And. We don't want to have that kind of. Situation. And I've skipped another one there. Policy review. It's more of an administrative issue. That basically our policy gets updated. Every so often. It's more of an admin thing. So I haven't bothered about. Talking to that. It's in the policy. If you want to check that. So. Next one. In the notes. Number 12.

The legal and ethical. Obligations. Really. As we talked about. Those things before. In the policy. It's got an incident report. Where we document. Where there's been an accident. Or harm. Or property damage. So. Just fill out the report form. It's fairly self explanatory. There's an application form. For working with children. Of course. If you can fill out the form.

[27:05] At least in brief. So that we've got an application form. That can. Collect your personal details. And. Your experience. And such things. And then. A volunteers agreement too. Just that you're committing.

To treating children with dignity. Follow the guidelines. Report harm. And. Follow appropriate procedures. And training. Alright. And. Next slide.

Here are the key points. In the notes there. Key points. Just really summing up things. About what the policy has. Safety first. That's what we want. Isn't it? A safe place. That children and young people feel safe.

When they're here. That they're looked after. Vulnerable people. That we comply with. Our legal and ethical obligations. Including mandatory reporting. And. That we act promptly and confidentially.

On harm or risk of harm. And. Really risk management is something that we're proactive about. So we mitigate risks across all activities. It's that risk management kind of approach.

[28:04] And there's all kinds of resources that we can access. And. I've got links shortly. To one of them. And. There's all kinds of. More detailed information you can access on all of this kind of stuff.

I really tried to capture the. Essentials tonight. Just to really give you a bit of a. Overview. And just some of the key things that we need to know when we're working with children. It's really just to give you the. Essentials that you need.

To have those important contacts. And. That we've got that. Generally that philosophy. That culture. That commitment. That this is a commitment that we're all making. It's a collective responsibility. So it's not just people who've got a role. Who called a leader of this or that. But really it's the whole church. That philosophy of the church isn't it. That. And anyone that comes to our church. Any of the adults in our church. You've got that mindset. How are we going to look after children. We're going to make this a safe. Welcoming environment. Where children can be nurtured. And cared for. Here's one that you can download.

[29:03] Or you can look it up online. There's. Just search for that online. And you'll find it. Mandatory reporting information booklet. Safe environments for children and young people. So this is.

One of the. Key documents about. Mandatory reporting. So. It's. Not in your notes. What I've done is. To distill. From this resource.

A summary only. Of some of the key things. About mandatory reporting. Because it's one of the essential things. That we have. A responsibility for. Clergy. Or people in roles like.

You have. As workers with the children. Sunday school workers. Young people. Youth workers. You are a mandatory reporter. You are mandated.

So it's by the government. The government. Direction. You have a mandatory. Responsibility. A legal responsibility. To. Pursue these things. As the law tells us to.

[29:59] So we're just going to. Unpack some of that now. Understanding. The reporting. Obligations. Who must report. Mandatory. Reporters. Must report. So that's you.

If you're working with children. If we're providing. Or volunteering. As providing. Child related services. We're legally required. To report. Suspicions of harm. Or risk to children.

So it's under the. Children and Young People's Safety Act. 2017. That's the state government. Legislation. And anyone can report. Concerns too. Even if not legally required. So.

If you're here tonight. And I know there's some. You're not necessarily. A worker. And you may not have a working with children's check. You may not be formally appointed. You're one of the church folk. And. You can report these concerns.

Or suspicions. Yourself. Even though you're not legally required to. And so. As far as reasonable grounds. Of course you get. Sometimes you get a child. Actually disclose to you direct.

[30:55] That. A situation is happening for them. So that's. One. Again. Observations. Concerning behaviors or injuries. Or you can get reliable information from others. So.

Maybe. Someone who's aware of the circumstances. So. They're all reasonable grounds for reporting. Okay. Number two there. We're on page seven. Number two. Recognize the types of risks and harm.

Again. There's a whole. Array of them there. You can see some of them listed. We touched on it somewhat already. But there's all those kind of layers of harm. Domestic violence.

Family violence. Physical harm. Neglect. Psychological emotional harm. Sexual abuse. Grooming. Substance abuse. Mental health concerns. Concerns. So.

There's all of those kind of. Risks and harm. That can happen to a child. You can see in the notes. The descriptions of all of that. They're just little. Signs that you can. Have those indicators in mind.

[31:52] Oh. That might be an indicator here. Or an indicator there. And you can recognize that. You can have a mindset to recognize that. To be alert to that. Next one. Number three. Respond to disclosures. Again.

We kind of unpacked that a little. So. Some of this is over. Repeating again. Emphasizing it again. If a child comes to you. And they want to disclose. Hey. This is happening to me.

This has happened to me. What should we do? Stay calm. And supportive. Just reassure the child. It's sometimes a very. Awkward thing for them to open up.

And you want to assure them. Hey. You're doing the right thing. By telling me. About this. And. It's not your fault. And. It's important.

That. When they're disclosing to you. You don't say things like. Oh. I'm not going to tell anyone else. Because you can't say that. Don't make promises you can't keep. Because. You have to tell.

[32:47] The legal authorities. About the matter. And. Again. Do not ask leading questions. Or start kind of. Digging up. What's happened. You don't need to do that. Or investigate that.

Just listen to them. Just listen to them. What they want to tell you. And. Just keep notes. And. Then. That. Investigation is for later on. That's for the authorities.

That's for the criminal. Authorities to. Take those steps. So. It can damage that. Process. If you overly. Unpack it. At that. First point.

All right. Important that you record. What the child says. Without probing there. All right. Document carefully. And then again. As a mandated reporter. What are you to do? You report those suspicions.

That could be. The child's in immediate danger. Don't hesitate. Ring triple zero. If they're at risk. Of. Of their life. If there's something that's. Very serious. In.

[33:43] The circumstance. Call triple zero. To get the police. To attend. If it's a non emergency. Report to the child abuse. Report line. That's one three. One four seven eight.

It's a twenty four by seven. Phone number. But. I do understand. It can take some time. It can take some time. To get through to someone. So. You're going to have to. Be patient.

If you ring that number. There is a way of reporting to online. But it's not for serious concerns. So you can. Fill out an online report. At that. Link there as well.

At the child protection. SA gov. Dot au. Site. Have those information. Details to provide. That you can. Provide the child's details.

The alleged perpetrator. The allegations. Your details. And. What the context is. As far as serious concerns. Report by phone. Or. For an imminent danger.

[34:40] Serious harm. Or chronic neglect. Now you've got this document. That I've. Also. Laid out for you. As the code of conduct. Which I'd like to ask you. If you're wanting to work with children.

To sign that. You've read it. So I'll just unpack that. In brief. What that code of conduct is. Just to outline some of the expectations. That we have. For working in this kind of ministries.

To ensure the safety and well being. Of children and young people. So it's really got Christian values. Underlying it. And. So some of the core responsibilities. Are to promote safety and well being.

To always act in the interests. Of the children and young people. And make appropriate reports. As required by law. Some of the things we should do. Engage respectfully. It's really important.

That we listen to the children. That they feel listened to. And heard. And that we. Making sure that we're. Also responsive. To their families. Providing clear information.

[35:37] About. Our programs and services. And. Really having. That heart. To ensure that children's voices. Are. Part of the process. Of what we do. And.

Ensuring access to confidential complaint processes. And professional counseling too. We want to make sure. That we can. Support. In. All those stages. Of all of that. Next one.

Maintain professional standards. It's really an introduction tonight. Of that training. We want to act with that integrity. To have that dignity. And.

Biblical principles. In what we do. And. Having that character. In accord with scripture. To be that positive role model. And. Not just join the youth group. But at all times. That we've got that positive role model.

Mindset. And. We set clear boundaries too. Where there's. Behaviour with children. We want to be appropriate with that. So. Avoid unnecessary one on one situations.

[36:34] Don't put yourself in that. Situation of risk. Or. Where you can be accused. And. Make sure that physical contact's only appropriate to your role. So. Unprohibited.

Behaviours. Harmful actions. Do not engage in. Or condone abuse. It goes without saying really all of those things. Doesn't it? Grooming. Coercion. All of those misconduct things.

Avoid. Unlawful activities. Inappropriate language. Sharing inappropriate materials. Do not use alcohol. Tobacco. Or drugs. And such things while working with children.

All of that. Important that we don't disclose personal or sensitive information about a child. Including images without consent. Except for mandatory reporting or legal requirements.

We do try to be mindful of that when we're taking photos of the children and the youth group. The Sunday school. And such. That. If the parents are okay. We can put it on social media.

[37:31] I try to be guarded about that. Hopefully I've not let anyone down in that department. But. Naturally we try to blur faces. Or. We try to get the. Back of their heads. That kind of thing.

When we're taking images. Of course it kind of limits in a way. As a church. We'd love to have more pictures of. Of young people and children. On our website. For example. So if. Parents are willing.

Then we're very much. Glad to have. Such pictures. Such images. On our website. But. That's a great thing to live in today. Isn't it? That we want to be careful about that. Unprofessional relationships.

We don't. Develop special relationships. With. Children that could be seen as favoring. Or a kind of. That grooming kind of behavior. And. Unsafe practices.

Do not be alone with the child. Unless another adult is present. All of those things. And of course. During camps and things like that. It's even more. Prone to risk and such. So we want to make sure.

[38:26] That we're very careful in all of those circumstances. So if ever we run a camp or an outing where there could be swimming or whatever it

can be, we want to make sure that we're very safe and very risk averse in all of those circumstances.

We want to make sure that everything is done very safely. All right, reporting breaches again. We've really talked about that, but this is more like the code of conduct. As workers, really, we've got to adhere to the code of conduct.

And if there's a breach of the code of conduct, well, it could follow all those mandated reporting requirements as well as internal processes. It could be a church discipline matter. All of that. Basically, do the right thing and you won't get into trouble. And we want to also have that culture where we encourage reporting. So workers are encouraged and supported to make reports. We want to have that culture of accountability and openness. So it could be a fellow worker. You want to say to a senior worker or the supervisor of the program, hey, this has happened.

[39:31] We want to be alert to that. And we're all accountable, basically. We're all accountable, every one of us, myself included. There's that openness where children and families feel safe to speak up.

All right. And, of course, there's all those consequences of breaches, discipline and criminal proceedings and such. So God forbid we have to go that route, but that's the reality.

And we want to be sure that we follow due process. And we want to be squeaky clean. We want to be fulfilling every jot and tittle with this kind of stuff. Again, to underline what we started with is that commitment that we have to a safe environment.

That's what we started by talking about. It's about children, keeping them safe. These are vulnerable, precious persons that we know are very vulnerable to harm.

And we know awful things can happen in churches or in the world in general. And so we've got that commitment that this is going to be a safe place when they come to this church, when they're involved with our programs, that we all act with transparency.

[40:34] We avoid situations that could lead to accusations. We follow church policy. So you've got the policy there. You can read it in more detail. We have that child-safe culture where everyone is treated with respect and where concerns are addressed promptly and fairly.

We want to protect children. And really, it's upholding biblical values, isn't it? Because our Lord wants us to nurture the vulnerable, the children. And, of course, we know our Lord says there's serious consequences for someone who causes a little one to stumble.

The Lord rebukes that very strongly as to harm to children. God forbid that we see such a thing in our church. And hopefully, as a church, we've got that mindset now.

Hopefully, it's given you some good clues tonight about, really, our policy. It's very all-encompassing. We've got our training that we've covered here tonight, which has included talking about mandatory reporting as well.

That responsibility that we have. Be proactive. If you reasonably suspect, if you reasonably believe that there's harm or risk of harm, then report it. That's doing your part.

[41:45] Whether it goes further is up to the legal authorities of that. We just want to do our part as a church to do the right thing and to give that safe environment for how we operate.

So thanks for attending tonight. I know it's been a bit heavy in part. Some of this is quite awkward to talk about and think about. And you might have experienced yourself or your family members. It's an awful thing to think of such things. But because you've attended tonight, you're qualified, as it were, in a sense that you've at least got some basic, hopefully, increased awareness of such things.

And there's various forms that I've talked about to fill out. There's basically three forms to fill out as I hand it out to you, particularly if you want to be a volunteer to serve.

There's the Child Safety Code of Conduct. You can download it there if you're watching online. If you can sign that, that you've agreed to that, you've been trained in that.

[42:45] So just to underline, really want to thank you tonight. I know sometimes this is an area that's hard to serve in because there's all these ramifications. You think, oh, it'd be easier not to get involved.

It'd be easier not to put my hand up and put myself in the spotlight and put myself at risk of accusation and this and that. But really, it's a blessed ministry, isn't it?

Working with children, supporting children. We've got the Crest, we've got the Little Lamb Storytime, all of these areas of the church where you could be interacting with children. And it's a precious ministry, really, isn't it?

Because you're having input into these young lives that are very, hopefully, receptive to the gospel and to introducing them to the Savior. It's a glad privilege that we have to minister to children and young people.

And we want to encourage everyone who has a heart that way to be a part of such a ministry. And really, as a church, we've got that commitment that this is a safe environment. That, hey, if you come here, we're going to look out for you.

[43:45] We're going to look after you. We're going to nurture and care. For those that are watching online, you can download that. For those present, you've got it in paper form and those other couple of forms as well.

Again, just to really cap it off, just to sum it all up is it's a safe environment. That's what we want. We want this place, we want our operations, our services to be a safe place for children, for young people, for vulnerable people.

And that keeping children safe is really everyone's responsibility. Let's not opt out and say it's someone else's. Or you might think, well, I'm just the bus driver or whatever it be.

You might just have passing contact with children or young people. But really, it's overarching everything that we do. It's really every ministry of the church.

At every meeting of our church, we've got young people and children present. If you're serving, if you're ministering, if you're addressing groups, then you're addressing young people and children.

[44:47] So we want to have all of those things in place. And so thanks again. I know it's been a bit awkward, some of the content. And again, for people online watching as well, we want to make sure that we hear from you, that you've attended this training.

And we're going to capture this video as a resource. So when someone volunteers and says, I want to get involved with the young people, with youth group, with little lambs, with creche, with Sunday school, whatever it be, that we say, hey, watch this video.

This is the training. All right. It's as comprehensive as we can make it in a short time. So with the working with children's checks, they're valid for five years. We keep a record of those dates.

And internally in the church, if you want to get working with children's check, if you can approach Sister Jackie Harvey, she's the one who's the go-to. She knows all the procedure and the filling out of forms and all of the various online procedures that you need to go through.

And she's got a list, too, of everyone's children's check and when it's due and all that kind of thing. So you can talk to me about that. And I can let you know when your check is due. The question was about vulnerable people.

[45:57] Of course, that includes people who might have dementia, people that have got any kind of disability. We want to make sure everyone is covered and that we've got that heart to care, to support, to look after anyone who might be considered vulnerable, that they feel included and looked after and supported.

Lord, we thank you tonight for your church and, Lord, for our part to play in it, Lord, for every soul. Lord, for the little ones amongst us, the babies, the children, the young adults.

Lord, for the vulnerable. Help us, Lord, to care, to have your heart, that everyone feels safe and no one is hurt. Lord, that no one is harmed and that we can look out for one another.

And we pray, Lord, for your blessing, for our fellowship. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.