



CBC Safe Church Policy

Preamble

Our mandate comes directly from God. God identified classes of vulnerable people who were to be protected and given special care and treatment in society because of their powerlessness (e.g. [Ex 22:21-22](#), [Deut 10:17-19](#), [Jer 22:2-4](#), [James 1:27](#)).

Protection of vulnerable people is our responsibility. This policy takes into consideration all vulnerable people in our churches, whether they are children, young people, elderly, those with disabilities or the emotionally and or spiritually vulnerable (i.e., those under the authority of church leaders).

Canterbury Baptist Church is committed to protecting the safety of all people within its program, ministries and events. We affirm all people, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, disability and family or 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, having their views and opinions valued at all times. (3.6)

We also live in a country that legislates for people's safety, particularly in the area of child protection. This policy has been developed to uphold this commitment to safeguarding and to adhere to National and State legislation.

Our Safe Church Policy

This policy applies to all staff, including senior leadership, paid staff, volunteers, students or anyone acting on behalf of Canterbury

Baptist Church.

The Purpose of this Policy is:

- To protect children and young people, vulnerable adults and all people who worship here at Canterbury Baptist Church.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.
- Canterbury Baptist Church believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Our Policy aims:

- To ensure that all people are respected and valued, irrespective of their gender, age, country of origin, cultural heritage, beliefs, socio-economic background or ability.
- To ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- To minimise the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power within the church.
- To ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and ministry misconduct are handled in a consistent, unbiased and thorough manner.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Canterbury Baptist Church is committed to ministering to children, young people and vulnerable adults by providing an environment that is physically, emotionally and spiritually safe.

Canterbury Baptist Church is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people by the following safeguarding measures:

- Recruitment processes (screening, selection, interviews etc.)

- Working with Children Check
- Training
- Induction
- Supervision
- Reviews.

The following patterns reflect the culture that we are committed to promoting at Canterbury Baptist Church: Due diligence, Integrity, Duty of Care, Transparency, Inclusivity, Teamwork and Accountability.

Values are the underlying convictions that consistently shape our everyday decisions and behaviours as a church; they are essential characteristics that we desire to be reflected in our lives and be the message we communicate through words and actions.

This policy has been developed to help us live out our Biblical mandate and our legal responsibilities under Australian legislation.

Legal Framework:

This Policy reflects legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children "Protecting Children is Everyone's Business" 2009 – 2020 (Commonwealth of Australia) at www.dss.gov.au (National Legislation)
- [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au) - www.legislation.vic.gov.au (State Legislation)
- Working with Children Checks (WWCC) for everyone in any form of leadership/volunteer work. [Working with Children Act 2005](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au) (Vic.) www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Failure to disclose (mandatory reporting)
- Failure to protect
- Grooming Offence

For the list of definitions that support this policy refer to Appendix 1

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount and is everyone's responsibility as outlined in the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues such as being unable to live at home.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other organisations/agencies are essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We commit to:

a. Safe recruitment of leaders.

We will screen all prospective Ministry Coordinators, Team Leaders and Team Members in our ministries, before they are appointed. (Ministry Application Form, Recruitment Procedures as per Standard 4), including WWCC/Police Check.

We will have a minimum of six-month church attendance (presence) policy for all prospective volunteer team members and a 2-year minimum church attendance to hold a ministry leader or church leadership position.

b. Adequate training of leaders.

We require that all leaders attend a Child Safe Spaces Workshop (or equivalent) before commencing their role and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.

We require all leaders to attend additional specific training as required.

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.

All leaders will agree to follow our Code of Conduct. Those who are unable to agree will not be permitted to serve in ministry or leadership.

d. Continued supervision of leaders.

We commit to ongoing training, supervision and support for leaders and volunteers. Ministry Team Leaders will provide support, accountability, encouragement and reviews to those in their leadership team. The Senior Pastor will provide support, accountability, encouragement and reviews to the Ministry Team Leaders.

We have an annual Approval for Ministry and Application for Ministry for all leaders.

e. Disclose and Protect

We will honour our responsibilities regarding disclosure and protection and comply with the requirements around failure to disclose and failure to protect legislation.

Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious 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 an allegation of misconduct is made against a person in the organisation in relation to a child, we will prioritise support to the child. We will seek appropriate support for the person implicated to protect the safety of the child as the paramount consideration.

f. Responding to other disclosures of abuse.

We will understand the processes of responding to disclosures of abuse and harm including self-harm and suicide ideation.

We will ensure that appropriate training takes place to recognise and respond to indicators of abuse and neglect and receive support for all involved in the disclosure (including the leaders/volunteers).

We understand that responding to abuse is not limited to children, but also includes adults within our programs who may be vulnerable at any given time where abuse could be present and that everyone understands the most appropriate steps to take in supporting our vulnerable people within our community.

g. 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 facilitate an environment where the values for friendship are recognised and supported, thereby helping young children to feel safe and less isolated. 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.

Where a church event happens at an external property or CBC has contracted event organisers inhouse for youth or child services/events, it will be cleared with the diaconate for budgetary and church safety purposes.

h. Understand and value diversity.

We will be mindful in our approach for all programs to be inclusive for all people. This includes adapting programs for anyone with a disability to receive access to various programs, as well as provide adequate training for leaders.

We will be sensitive to those from 'Culturally and Linguistically Diverse' (CALD) backgrounds and those within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with our programs, information, support and services. As well as upholding respect to all cultures we will encourage the participation of all people and recognise their unique contribution to our community.

i. Safe Church Team.

Duty of Care is primarily exercised by the authorized leaders of ministries and their teams of volunteer church members, however all church members and participants of church-run programs, including members of the public have a responsibility to report their concerns regarding their safety or the safety of another person to the church. The Duty of Care Officer will monitor the following areas to see that CBC is maintaining a safe physical environment: fire safety, building safety, first aid, food safety practices, risk assessment for activities, adequate ministry supervision for activities, transport, critical incident and emergency recommendations.

Canterbury Baptist Church has nominated a specific team of people who are appointed by the church annually at the AGM to receive and respond appropriately to all reports of possible breaches of safety, complaints, concerns and queries about: a

breach in the CBC Code of Conduct by church or ministry leaders or volunteers; abuse and misconduct; concerns regarding the protection of children and/or vulnerable people to physical, emotional or sexual abuse, environmental safety issues such as physical hazards around the church building; any behaviour or circumstances that create some concern about safety.

The Safe Church Team will communicate the reported concern to each other **within 24 hours** and plan the appropriate response.

All reports made to any of these persons will be dealt with seriously and in confidence and according to protocols and legal requirements established by the Baptist Union of Victoria, the Commission for Children and Young People and other authorities.

CBC Safe Church Team 2022:

SCCP – Vicky Dyer

SCCP – Ray Hu

Family & Community Pastor – Pastor Joy

Senior Pastor – Stephen Field

Duty of Care Officer – Natasha Sawtell

(For the list of definitions that support this policy refer to Appendix 1)

We are committed to reviewing our Policy and Practice annually.