



## Safe Church Policy (Child Safe)

Templestowe Baptist Church Inc. (TBC) is committed to protecting the safety of all people within its programs, ministries, and events.

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 at all times.

Our policy has been developed to uphold this commitment to safeguarding and adhering to the National and State legislations.

### **TBC Safe Church Policy:**

This Policy applies to all staff including senior leadership, pastors, managers, coordinators, paid staff, volunteers, students, or anyone who works on behalf of Templestowe Baptist Church Inc.

### **The Purpose of this Policy:**

To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive TBC ministry services.

To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

TBC believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We (TBC) have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to any practice in a way that protects them.

### **Our Policy aims to:**

- Minimise the risk of abuse, misconduct, and misuse of positional power.
- Ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- Ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- Ensure that all people are respected and valued.

### **Statement of Commitment to Child Safety:**

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

TBC 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 and reviews.

The following values reflect the culture that we are committed to promoting within TBC: due diligence, integrity, duty of care, transparency, inclusivity and teamwork.

### **Legal Framework:**

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

**National Legislation:**

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children "Protecting Children is Everyone's Business" – 2009–2020 (Commonwealth of Australia).

**State Legislation:**

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic).

**Working with Children Check:**

- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic).

**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 – 2009-2020".
- 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.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other organisations/agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

**We commit to:**

a. **Safe recruitment of leaders:**

We will screen all prospective leaders in our programs before they are appointed. (i.e., Working with Children Check/Police Check).

b. **Adequate training of leaders:**

We require that all leaders attend Child Safe training, attend a refresher workshop every 3 years and attend specific additional training as required.

c. **Have a clear Code of Conduct:**

TBC will adopt and implement a Code of Conduct for all leaders and volunteers, including boundaries of behavior and expectations of interactions with children. All leaders will agree to follow the TBC Codes of Conduct.

d. **Continued supervision of leaders:**

TBC commits to ongoing training, supervision and support for leaders.

e. **Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious misconduct:**

All leaders will report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, according to TBC procedure. TBC will listen to and believe children who raise concerns.

TBC 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 TBC in relation to a child, TBC will prioritise support to the child. TBC 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:**

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

TBC 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).

TBC understands 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.

Extra note: The State of Victoria has guiding legislation around responding to allegations of abuse. TBC leaders and volunteers should become familiar with legislative requirements e.g., in Victoria there is a "Failure to Disclose" offence, which was introduced in October 2014. The failure to disclose offence applies to you if: you are an adult, and you have information that leads you to form a 'reasonable belief' that another adult has sexually offended against a child under 16 in Victoria. 25 July 2022.

[Failure to disclose offence](#)

[Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria](#)

**g. Providing an open safe environment:**

TBC will afford participants a say in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas and encouraging participation. TBC will be accountable and transparent.

TBC will create a child-friendly environment, allowing people to raise their concerns in an appropriate manner. 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.

Any person in a position of leadership and authority (paid or unpaid) or any person working with children or young people in any capacity, who may suspect that a child is at risk of harm, MUST report these concerns to the appropriate statutory authorities.

**h. Understand and value diversity:**

TBC 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 providing adequate training for leaders.

TBC 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, encouraging the participation of all people and recognising their unique contribution to our community.

**Definitions:**

<b>Abuse:</b>	Abuse includes but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Physical Abuse</li><li>- Emotional Abuse</li><li>- Family Violence</li><li>- Sexual Abuse</li><li>- Grooming</li><li>- Neglect</li></ul>
<b>Child:</b>	A person who is under the age of 18 years (e.g. “The Commission for Children and Young People” Act 2012, Victoria).
<b>Disclosure:</b>	A disclosure occurs when someone informs a person in authority/leadership (or a trusted adult) within the (TBC) fellowship that they have been subject to abuse or know of abuse. A disclosure may or may not be an allegation or a notifiable circumstance, but it is the responsibility of the person in authority to investigate and take any appropriate action.
<b>Child Safe Environment:</b>	Discharges 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.
<b>Child Safe Leader:</b>	A person who has been through a recruitment process, understands responsibilities, is supervised and is an accountable team player.
<b>Child Safe Program:</b>	All risks have been assessed and events are thought through and planned.
<b>Vulnerable Person:</b>	A person who may be considered to be susceptible to abuse or exploitation based on factors such as their health status (physical or mental), age, grief, previous experience of abuse, social isolation or financial hardship. In this sense vulnerability can be temporary or permanent.

TBC is committed to reviewing our Policies annually (at the first leadership meeting following the Annual General Meeting).

This Policy was updated on: January 1, 2025 (SD).

This Policy was adopted on January 2, 2025

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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