



COAST COMMUNITY CHURCH

Safe Church Policy

(CRM-002)

	Name	Position	Date
Reviewed By	Elders	Elders	27/11/25
	Jeff Nagle	Hub Team Leader	27/11/25
	Karen Gould	Ops Lead	27/11/25
Approved by	Elders		
Date Instituted	15/04/2026		
Next Review	Feb 2027		

Safe Ministry Policy - Coast Community Church

Preamble

Coast Community Church is committed to providing safe, nurturing, and accessible environments for all who participate in our communities, with particular care for children and other vulnerable people. Our commitment reflects the biblical call to protect the vulnerable and our obligations under the NSW Child Safe Scheme, relevant legislation, and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

This document outlines the principles, structures, and practices that guide our approach to Safe Ministry. It functions as our overarching Safe Church commitment and is supported by additional operational documents.

1. Governance & Policy Review

The **Coast Community Church Board of Elders** (“the Elders”) has established this policy to express and operationalise our safeguarding commitments.

1.1 Head of Entity

For the purpose of NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian (OCG) requirements, the designated **Head of Entity** for Coast Community Church is the **Chair of Elders**.

1.2 Policy Review Cycle

Because of the changing nature of our world and our organisation, the Elders commit to reviewing this policy:

- **At least every 2 years, or**
- **When legislation or OCG requirements change, or**
- **Following any significant incident or organisational change.**

2. Our Commitment to Safeguard Vulnerable People

We are committed to actively preventing harm¹⁴, promoting safety, and ensuring equity for all involved in our communities, with particular concern for vulnerable

people—children, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, older persons, people with disabilities, people experiencing mental health challenges, and people experiencing marginalisation or heightened risk.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring vulnerable people are informed of their rights²
- Inviting participation in decisions that affect them²
- Taking all concerns seriously⁶
- Ensuring cultural safety and inclusivity⁴
- Maintaining environments free from racism and discrimination⁴

To support this commitment, Coast Community Church requires all volunteers, ministry leaders and staff to complete the **CCC Safe Ministry Members Safeguarding Course**, available via our Safe Ministry Check platform.

Attendees not involved in leading or supporting activities of Coast Community Church are also encouraged to complete the training at their own discretion.

This policy and further safeguarding information are available via our Safe Ministry Statement Page:

- https://****.safeministrycheck.com.au/statement

3. Commitment to Respond to Concerns

We strive to create a culture where people feel safe and supported⁶ in raising concerns about their own or others' wellbeing.

We commit to:

- Listening with care
- Handling concerns with confidentiality and dignity⁶
- Prioritising the safety and interests of children⁶ in all child-related concerns
- Responding in accordance with legislation¹⁰, denominational expectations, and best practice

3.1 Reporting Pathways

All concerns or allegations are managed by the **Safe Church Teams (SCTs)**.

The SCTs may be required to notify:

- **Head of Entity** – who must submit all notifications under the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme to the Office of the Children’s Guardian (with support from the Safe Church Team)
- **Overseers** – who provide local governance oversight and must immediately escalate any concern raised with them to the Safe Church Team
- **NSW Police** – if a criminal offence may have occurred
- **Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)** – if a child is at risk of significant harm
- **Office of the Children’s Guardian (OCG)** – where mandatory reportable conduct applies (submitted by the Head of Entity)
- **Operations Lead or delegated staff member** – for any matters requiring insurer notification
- **An Independent Ministry Investigator** – where appropriate

Safe Church Team Contacts

Bensville Campus

- **Name, mobile, email**
- **Name, mobile, email**
- **Name, mobile, email**

Tumbi Campus

- **Name, mobile, email**
- **Name, mobile, email**
- **Name, mobile, email**

The Safe Church Team operates as a sub-committee of the Elders and works collaboratively with Overseers to ensure this policy is implemented at each campus.

Role of Overseers: Overseers provide local governance oversight on behalf of the Elders. If a concern is raised with an Overseer, they must immediately notify the Safe Church Team. Overseers do not investigate or determine reportable actions but support the Safe Church Team in implementing safe practices at the campus level.

All reports and incidents are documented and stored securely in line with privacy laws.

4. Commitment to Screening, Selection & Training

We are committed to ensuring all leaders and volunteers are appropriately screened⁵, accountable, supported, and trained.

The following positions must meet Safe Ministry requirements:

- Board/Elders
- Staff members
- Ministry and team leaders
- All volunteers in personal/relational service roles (including anyone working with or around children)

All leaders must:

1. Be regular participants at Coast Community Church
2. Provide acceptable references
3. Complete approved Safe Ministry training⁷ (via SMC)
4. Commit to the CCC Safe Church⁵ **Code of Conduct**
5. Hold a verified and current⁵ **Working With Children Check (WWCC)** if working with children and youth

No one with a criminal record involving child abuse, molestation, or similar offences will be permitted to serve with children or youth.

4.1 Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

Coast Community Church may recognise equivalent child-safe training⁷ completed through other accredited providers (including but not limited to professional development training, denominational child safety training, or other approved courses). Approval of recognised prior learning is at the discretion of the Safe Church Team. All leaders, regardless of training pathway, must sign the Coast Community Church Safe Church Code of Conduct.

4.2 Endorsed Ministers and Chaplains

Endorsed ministers, chaplains, and other accredited ministry workers who meet denominational child-safe requirements are still required to comply with this policy and sign the Coast Community Church Safe Church Code of Conduct.

4.3 Volunteer Handbook and Supporting Guidelines

All leaders and volunteers will receive a Volunteer Handbook⁵ outlining organisation-specific guidelines, including working with children, reporting pathways, WHS expectations, and other relevant procedures.

4.4 Safe Ministry Check (SMC) as Screening Mechanism

Coast Community Church uses the Safe Ministry Check online platform⁵ as the primary mechanism for screening and compliance processes. This includes:

- Working With Children Check (WWCC) verification
- Completion of Safe Ministry training or approved equivalent training
- Code of Conduct acceptance
- Referee checks (where applicable)-

Referee checks are conducted where applicable, particularly for new volunteers, individuals serving in roles involving children or vulnerable people, or where further discernment is required as part of the screening process.

Acceptable references consist of two referees who can speak to the applicant's character and suitability for ministry. This includes:

- a. One reference from within Coast Community Church (where possible), and
- b. One external reference (e.g. employer, previous ministry leader, or community contact). Family members are not considered suitable referees.

The Safe Ministry Check platform also serves as part of CCC's recordkeeping system, with compliance snapshots stored securely within CCC records at least biennially.

4.5 Screening Documentation

These records are stored securely by the Safe Ministry Check platform and within CCC's internal recordkeeping systems.

The church maintains secure records of:

- WWCC verification
- SMC screening completion

- Code of Conduct acceptance
- Training currency

5. Commitment to Safe and Accessible Programs

Coast Community Church is committed to ensuring that all physical, interpersonal, and online environments⁸ promote safety and wellbeing.

Program planning must consider⁸:

- Venue safety
- Age-appropriate activities
- Ratios and supervision
- Toileting and hygiene practices
- Transportation procedures
- Consent and permissions
- Confidentiality of records
- Accessibility for diverse participants

The Safe Church Team will regularly check in with ministry teams, provide supervision, and support teams with training and guidance.

6. Recordkeeping and Privacy

CCC is committed to keeping accurate records¹⁰ of:

- Concerns and incidents
- SMC screening results
- WWCC verification
- Risk assessments and permissions
- Leader compliance records

Records are stored securely according to CCC privacy requirements and relevant law.

7. Supporting Documents

This policy is supported by the following documents:

- [Safe Church Code of Conduct](#)
- [Safe Church Team Role Description](#)
- Incident Management Process
- Leader Screening & Induction Procedure
- Risk Assessment Framework and Templates
- Volunteer Role Descriptions (where relevant)
- [Privacy and Data Protection Policy](#)

These documents are approved by the Elders and maintained in the CCC Policy Library.

Glossary

- **Head of Entity** – the person responsible for statutory reporting (for CCC: Chair of Elders)
- **Governance Body** – Coast Community Church Elders
- **Vulnerable People** – children and others identified by law or practice as at increased risk of harm
- **Safe Church Team** – appointed leaders responsible for receiving and responding to concerns
- **Incident Management Process** – CCC's documented process for responding to concerns or allegations

Footnote Legend – National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**

- **Principle 1** – Leadership, governance, culture
- **Principle 2** – Children are informed and participate
- **Principle 3** – Families and communities involved
- **Principle 4** – Equity and diverse needs respected
- **Principle 5** – Suitable, supported people
- **Principle 6** – Child-focused complaint processes
- **Principle 7** – Staff and volunteers equipped
- **Principle 8** – Safe physical and online environments
- **Principle 9** – Ongoing review and improvement
- **Principle 10** – Documented policies and procedures

References

1. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Principle 1 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Principle 2 – Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Principle 3 – Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Principle 4 – Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected.
5. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Principle 5 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported.
6. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Principle 6 – Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused.
7. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Principle 7 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe.
8. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Principle 8 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing.
9. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Principle 9 – Implementation is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Principle 10 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children.

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