

Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

(Luke 18:15-17 NIV © 1973 International Bible Society)

Our policy applies to all credentialed pastors, elders, staff members and volunteer workers associated with ministry to children or young people within the ministry of any church aligned with ACC-NSW.

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

child a person who is under the age of 16 years (NSW) or 12 years (ACT).

child-safe places that take steps to keep children safe from physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

child-friendly places where children are valued, respected and included so they feel confident they will be listened to.

leaders credentialed pastors, elders, staff members and volunteer workers.

young person a person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years (NSW) or 12-18 years (ACT).

Our policy is supported by:

- ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct
- ACC-NSW Code of Good Ministry Practice
- ACC-NSW Safe Environment Procedures
- TOWARDS SAFE PLACES Participant Workbook
- TOWARDS SAFE PLACES Implementation Pack
- ACC-NSW Response to Complaint Guidelines

As such **Our Policy** should not be solely relied upon for advice.

Remember, you are not on your own in these matters for more information talk to the Safe Places Unit ACC-NSW State Office on 02 4587 8229.

Reporting Suspected Risk of Harm (abuse)

NSW: DoCS Help Line 13 21 11

ACT: Care and Protection Services 1300 556 728

Counselling help

National: Kids Help Line – 1800 55 1800

Lifeline — 13 11 14

Child Abuse Prevention Service

(24 hr) — 02 9716 8000

Family Crisis Centre

(24 hr) — 02 9622 0522

Our policy takes into account:

NSW 1998: The Ombudsman Act,
The Commission for Children and Young People Act,
Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act,
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection)

ACT: Children & Young People Act (1999),
Protection Orders Act (2001)

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Our policy has been developed by ACC-NSW Safe Places Unit, 2007.



OUR POLICY

Child Safe and Child
Friendly Policy
2008 - 2011

An initiative of the Safe Places Unit
ACC-NSW

Why a policy?

Our mandate comes directly from God who in his word identified that all vulnerable people were to be protected and given special care and treatment (eg Ex 22:21-22, Deut 10:17-19, Jer 22:2-4, James 1:27). Protection of vulnerable people is our responsibility.

Children and young people are vulnerable and trusting. As those charged with leading and caring for them, we have a responsibility to ensure their safety and wellbeing. They have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected, and have their views and opinions valued at all times.

We also live in a country that legislates child protection. Our policy has been developed to help us live out of biblical mandate and our responsibilities under NSW and ACT legislation.

Our policy has the following goals:

To minimise the risk of abuse to children and young people within the church.

To ensure that all cases of suspected abuse are handled in a consistent and thorough manner.

To ensure that leaders and programs are safe.

To ensure that children and young people are respected, valued irrespective of their gender age, country of origin, cultural heritage, socio-economic background or ability.

Safe Leaders

We commit to:

a) safe recruitment of leaders.

We will screen all prospective leaders in child related ministries, before they are appointed.

We will recruit using the Working with Children Check Guidelines 2006 or equivalent for ACT leaders.

We will have a minimum attendance policy for all prospective volunteer leaders (e.g. 6 months).

b) adequate training of leaders.

We require that all leaders attend approved Safe Places Introductory workshops (eg TOWARDS SAFE PLACES) within their first year of ministry and to attend a refresher workshop every three years.

We require all leaders to attend additional ministry-specific departmental training as required by individual departments.

c) continued supervision of leaders.

We commit to ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for leaders.

We require all leaders to agree to follow the **ACC-NSW Code of Conduct for Church Leaders**.

d) responding to allegations of suspected children at risk of harm (abuse).

All leaders will report disclosure or suspicions of child abuse, using ACC-NSW protocols.

ACC-NSW will provide support to alleged victims and perpetrators.

Where a leader has an allegation of misconduct made against them ACC-NSW protocols will be followed when responding to the complaint.

Safe Programs

We commit to:

a) Child friendly environments.

We will afford children and young people a say in the programs and the activities in which they are to participate, by fostering and valuing their ideas, and encouraging participation in all areas of the life of the church, as far as is sensible and practical.

We will obtain information relating to the children and young people's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for the physical and emotional needs of the children and young people.

b) Safe Physical environments.

All leaders will follow the **ACC-NSW Safe Environment Procedures**.

Leaders will exercise a duty of care through the use of forms, checklists and templates made available through the **TOWARDS SAFE PLACES Implementation Pack** for establishing and maintaining safe environments in ACC-NSW churches.

All senior leadership and heads of department will ensure that the following areas are incorporated into establishing and maintaining a safe physical environment in their churches: OH&S; first aid protocols; food safety practices; risk assessment for activities; adequate ministry supervision for activities; transport protocols; critical incident and emergency protocols and ministry review.

To create child safe and child friendly churches we need to ensure that we have safe leaders and safe programs.