

Safe Church Policy

Introduction

We, the people of Baulkham Hills Baptist Church, affirm that all people we have contact with have the right to be emotionally, spiritually and physically safe particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We believe this is based on our biblical mandate as found in Mark 12: 30. Our church's mission statement also reflects the above.

Our policy has the following goals:

To ensure that we live out our biblical mandate.

To implement the 10 Child Safe Standards

To provide a framework to inform the provision of safe environments and programs for children/young people and vulnerable people and meet our legal obligations in relation to:

- Staff and volunteers engaged in child related work
- Reporting matters, including Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct, and reportable conduct involving a child to government authorities.

To minimising the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power within the church

Responsibility

This policy applies to:

- All Church Leaders, Staff and Volunteers
- All people who attend or are involved in the church and its programs.

The diaconate have the ultimate responsibility of ensuring that this policy, where appropriate, is incorporated into the various ministries/activities of the church.

1. Safe children ministries and activities

We will provide spaces, programs and relationships that are physically, emotionally and spiritually safe.

Church Leadership:

Recognises that children and young people are an integral part of the church and will talk about this in services, sermons, training events and meetings

Will involve children and young people in the routine of church life where appropriate

Will consider the needs of children and young people when making decisions about budgets, buildings, renovations, use of property, décor or catering

Will encourage children and young people to have input in decisions that affect them by including them in church forums and meetings when appropriate.

Safe Church Team Will:

Talk with children and young people about their right to feel safe, to be listen to and have their views respected (including discussing what they should do and who they should approach if they feel unsafe or hurt or if they suspect that someone else is unsafe or hurt)

Ensure that contact details are accessible to children/young people.

Ministry leaders, staff and volunteers will:

Listen to children/young people and take seriously what they are saying

Talk to children/young people about the kinds of behaviours, attitudes or “culture” that they want to promote in their group (keeping in mind the culture the church would like to promote)

Encourage children/young people to have input regarding the content and activities they would like to be part of their group.

Be aware that children/young people are an integral part of our church life and will remind those who attend the church of this frequently and/or as needed.

Encouraging children/young people’s voices to be heard in the decision making process that affect them.

Involve children/young people in the life of the church where appropriate.

2. Safe leaders/volunteers

We will endeavour to appoint people who have been gifted by the Holy Spirit and undergone our selection process and induction of staff and volunteers into our various ministries.

We will undertake appropriate screening processes for all staff and volunteers.

We will engage in a fair and transparent selection processes for all staff and volunteers.

We will provide appropriate inductions for all staff and volunteers.

The training and resourcing of staff and volunteers

We will ensure that staff and volunteers develop the knowledge and the skills to create safe spaces for everyone, particularly children/young people.

We will ensure that staff and volunteers have access to information about creating safe spaces and that they will undergo appropriate training regarding available procedures, guidelines and forms

We will provide ongoing supervision and support for leaders. We will encourage leaders to undertake further leadership training where this is available.

The church leadership will implement the procedures for staff and volunteers.

Certain standards of behaviour for staff and volunteers

The church will provide spaces, programs and relationships that are physically, emotionally and spiritually safe

The church will expect all staff/volunteers to uphold the code of conduct/ministry covenant which includes expected behaviour for those working with children/young people and vulnerable people.

The church will expect staff/volunteers to follow guidelines for activities with children/young people.

3. Conflict, Complaints and Concern

We will respond to all complaints regarding abuse, misuse of power, conflict or a minor breach of the code of conduct in accordance with the procedures and guidelines for handling complaints.

Responding to child protection concerns

We will ensure appropriate and timely reporting of all child protection concerns and any complaints relating to child sexual abuse or sexual misconduct involving a child in accordance with the procedure for responding to child protection concerns in accordance with the Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Concerns.

We will ensure that all child protection concerns and complaints will be reported to the relevant government departments and if necessary, police as soon as possible and in accordance with legislative duties.

Responding to complaints regarding staff/volunteers

The church will treat any complaint where a staff/volunteer has engaged in abuse, including child sexual abuse and sexual misconduct involving a child as a serious breach of the code of conduct and respond in accordance with the Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff/Volunteers

4. Safe environments

As the people of Baulkham Hills Baptist Church, we will ensure that the physical environment and the online environment promotes safety and wellbeing of all and especially minimises the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

a. Safe physical environments.

We will comply with the work health and safety requirements

We will consider the impact of the physical environment on potential for risk to children and vulnerable people.

The church will identify and address risk arising from the physical environment in which church programs and activities take place.

b. Safe online environment.

The church will promote safe on line behaviour in any electronic communication.

5. Risk Management

The church will work towards minimising all risk through the management of day to day operations, ministry programs and activities and community activities.

Risk Assessments

The church leadership will ensure that ministry leaders complete and make a record of a risk assessment in relation to any program or activity undertaken at, for or with the church.

- For regular activities, the risk assessment will be conducted at least annually and whenever there are significant changes in the program activities, attendance or location.
- For special activities the ministry leader with the help of the safe church team (if required) complete a risk assessment.

The church leadership will ensure that appropriate and reasonable precautions are adopted to address risk identified as part of a risk assessment.

The church will store assessment form for a period of 45 years.

Persons of Concern

The church will manage any person identified as a person of concern in accordance with An Australian Baptist Response to Persons of Concern.

6. Third Party and Affiliated Entities.

a. The church will require any third party (tenant or external party using the church property) that provided a service to children/young people to provide written confirmation of their compliance with the Child Safe Standards at least annually.

b. The church will ensure that any affiliated entities (any entity or program that is, or represented as, a ministry of the church) complies with the Child Safe Standards including annual reports to church leadership regarding child safety

7. Record Keeping.

The church will retain all written records for a minimum of 45 years in a hard copy and/or electronically in a secure manner.

Records to be kept are:

Ministry information sheets

Registration forms

Staff and volunteers files

Attendance and sign in forms

Risk assessment forms

Safe church registration

Safe church concerns forms and any notes regarding reporting decision.

Annual safe church commitments by third party and affiliated entities

Dated copies of any safe church policy, procedure, and forms or associated document in force at the time.

8. Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by the church.

Please refer to relevant guidelines and procedures for the practical implementation of this policy.

Baulkham Hills Baptist Church
Safe church - Policy Document