



# Building Godly Relationships

## Our Safe Spaces Policy

Working with Vulnerable People

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## Precautionary Note

In all incidents that even have the potential to become a claim, QLD State Manager of Baptist Insurance Services (BIS) must be notified by the Church leadership immediately. DO NOT seek other legal advice first, as this could jeopardise any future claim and result in GBC becoming liable for all damages.

Furthermore, an incorrect procedure being applied could result in higher premiums, or even a denial of certain covers of insurance. Churches are now seen as higher risk entities, and some insurers have declined to cover any church.

In addition, it is wise to contact Baptist Australia (QLD) Professional Standards Officer and is mandatory in some cases.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of our Safe Spaces Policy is to enable our church's leaders and workers to develop a safe church culture so that all people, involved in or are attending our church's ministries and services, are safe from harm and able to grow in their relationship with God and others.

The requirements of Gympie Baptist Church (GBC) WHS Policy also apply, particularly for activities and events. Reference must be made to this document as required. Church leadership is responsible to ensure a culture of safety is promoted and vigorously pursued.

This document outlines our approach to the protection of people, particularly, children and vulnerable persons, so that we comply with relevant legislation, including but not restricted to, the Child Safe Organisations Bill 2024<sup>1</sup> and Family and Child Commissions Act which reflects the findings from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

There are 10 legislated standards that apply to Child Safe Organisations such as Gympie Baptist Church:

1. child safety and wellbeing is embedded into organisational leadership, governance and culture;
2. children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously;
3. families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing;
4. equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice;
5. people working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice;
6. processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused;
7. staff and volunteers of the entity are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/bill.first/bill-2023-079>

8. physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed;
9. implementation of the child safe standards is regularly reviewed and improved; and
10. policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children.

Collectively, the Strategy, related forms, procedures, other policies and people promote and maintain what is known as “Safe Spaces”. This term is often applied to legislation, people, procedures etc.

## Our Safe Spaces Policy:

(Previously known as Our Child Safe Strategy)

- commits us to providing a safe environment for all people, especially children and vulnerable persons. The church is required to **protect and prevent** children from being exposed to sexual abuse<sup>23</sup>
- **all adults** are required to report to police, any reasonable suspicion that a child is being, or has been, sexually abused.<sup>456</sup> There is an expectation that all members and regular attendees of GBC are aware of their responsibilities described in the Code of Conduct at a minimum;
  - A register of all volunteers at GBC is to be maintained showing name and if they are required to hold a blue card; and if so, what type<sup>7</sup>.
- authorises a Code of Conduct for all people engaged by the church, whether paid workers or volunteers, who are in contact with children and vulnerable persons; both within and outside of the church as far as possible;
  - authorises a Code of Conduct for children, parents and carers.
  - also authorises Position Descriptions for Team Members & team Leaders
- provides a process for screening all persons who will attend or participate in ministries with children or vulnerable persons. It is vital that persons responsible for screening are aware that individual State screening systems **are not interconnected**;
- GBC has zero tolerance for any form of abuse or harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults and are committed to actively seeking to prevent this abuse and harm. This includes maintaining an open and aware culture, treating all concerns and allegations raised seriously, not minimising the impact of abuse and harm on the victim, and promptly responding to all concerns and allegations
- provides a process for handling disclosures of harm or misconduct, and reporting to appropriate authorities;

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/types-of-crime/sexual-offences-against-children>

<sup>3</sup> Child Safe Organisations Bill 2024 Para 13.1

<sup>4</sup> It is a criminal offence to fail to protect a child against sexual crimes, and another crime to fail to report sexual crimes

<sup>5</sup> To report an offence, contact PoliceLink on [131 444](tel:131444).

<sup>6</sup> Child Safe Organisations Bill 2024 Para 4

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/system/changes-to-the-blue-card-system#church>

- provide mechanisms to remind all participants of their own responsibilities commensurate with their age, and provide multiple pathways for children and vulnerable people to voice their concerns;
- sets out training requirements for all people engaged by the church, whether paid or voluntary, to attend or participate in ministries with children or vulnerable persons, and
- acknowledges the need to be aware of the places our people may use their Church obtained Blue Card. Persons issued with a Blue Card through Gympie Baptist Church processes must also comply with the Church's required referee checks; training requirements and Pastor / Elder comments.

## POLICY COMMITMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. **It is our policy** to respect everyone as unique individuals created by God, and to give special attention to the care, protection and wellbeing of children and vulnerable persons. We will behave towards them in a manner that resembles and represents Christ's attitude and approach, providing an environment and ministry that promotes their spiritual, social and physical safety and personal growth and development.

To this end we will promote a "safe church" culture throughout our church, constantly communicating and reinforcing our commitment at all levels of our church's life and ministry. We will promote and uphold the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons

2. Therefore, the church will have regard to and implement the following principles as integral to our policy for cultivating a safe church environment and safe activities.
3. Embedding a "safe church" perspective, safety, including child safety, in our church's culture, leadership and governance.
4. Gympie Baptist Church will guard against common contributing factors<sup>8</sup>:
  - a. Poor practices.
  - b. Inadequate governance structures.
  - c. Failures to record and report complaints or understating the seriousness of complaints.
  - d. A culture where the best interests of children were not a priority.
5. Respecting children and vulnerable persons by giving them, or their parents / caregivers opportunities to participate and have a say in the decisions affecting them.
6. Keeping families and communities informed and involved in the development of the church as a safe environment.
7. Upholding equity and considering diverse needs
8. Ensuring that people working with children and vulnerable persons are suitable and are properly supported.

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<sup>8</sup> [Royal Commission Final Report 2017, common faults of churches contributing to harm of vulnerable people.](#)  
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9. Keeping the processes for responding to complaints of sexual abuse focussed upon the needs and best interests of children and vulnerable persons.
10. Equipping staff and volunteers with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and vulnerable persons safe through continual education and training.
11. Managing physical and online environments to minimise the opportunity for abuse occurring.
12. Continuously reviewing and improving the implementation of these principles for creating and maintain a safe church environment.
13. Maintaining up to date policies and procedures that document how the church is a safe place for children and vulnerable persons.

### **Associated Codes, Procedures, Forms etc**

1. Codes of conduct:
  - a. Staff and volunteers
  - b. Parents, Caregivers & visitors
  - c. Under 18 years of age volunteers
2. Position Descriptions:
  - a. Junior volunteer
  - b. Ministry Leader, Staff & volunteer
  - c. Team Member
  - d. Child Safe Coordinator
3. Procedures:
  - a. Person of Concern (POC)
  - b. Response to incidents
  - c. Handling of complaints
  - d. Electronic Media Guidelines
  - e. Procedure for communication and support
4. Fact Sheets
  - a. Sexual grooming indicators
  - b. Abuse, (other than sexual) Indicators
5. Forms:
  - a. Incident reports
  - b. Permission form – driving
  - c. Applications – working with children, references check
  - d. Suspicion of harm
  - e. Parent / caregiver feedback
6. Help files (“how to...”) have been developed. Most of these will be forwarded as actions items fall due. Contact Child Safe Co-ordinator for further assistance.

## **SCOPE, DEFINITIONS**

The words *children*, *child* or *vulnerable person* in this policy refer to individuals or an individual who is under 18 years of age, or individuals aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.

The term **church leader** refers to persons appointed by the church according to its constitution as responsible and accountable to the church members for the governance of the church.

The designation **Safe Church Coordinator** refers to the person appointed by the church leaders to manage the practical implementation of this policy under the guidance and directions of the church leaders.

This Safe Spaces Policy applies to the persons listed below, referred to in this document as **staff and volunteers**.

- Any church leader who is making decisions affecting children or vulnerable persons.
- Any person engaged by the church to provide a service to the church, whether paid or voluntarily, and who while providing their service will be in contact with children or vulnerable persons.
- Any students or trainees undertaking an internship or field placement at the church and who as part of that internship or field placement will be in contact with children or vulnerable persons.

## SCREENING AND SELECTION

### Persons requiring a Blue Card or Exemption Card

Volunteers should attend the Church for six months before being accepted to helping in a ministry role. This allows time for both the Volunteers to gain a greater understanding of the culture of the Church and its ministries and allows time for the Ministry Leaders to get to know the Volunteers better. There may be some instances where Volunteers have a pre-existing connection with the Church and extensive experience in a particular ministry where this could be waived.

### Exemption for parents<sup>9</sup>

According to legislation, parents volunteering for an activity their child participates in generally **will not need** a blue card.

However, due to the myriad of issues where a parent could possibly breach legal requirements, the decision of Gympie Baptist Church Leadership is that all supervisors must hold a blue card and subsequent requirements.

### No blue card; no start

**No person** can start working with children **until** they have an approved blue card. If the card expires before a new card has been approved by blue card services, all people must stop immediately it expires.

A Copy of this Policy will be made available to all members of Gympie Baptist Church and provided to all applicants (including renewal applicants). Visitors to the church are to be provided a copy upon request.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/system/changes-to-the-blue-card-system#church>

Applicants must be made aware of the screening processes and training requirements that the person will be subject to.

Before attending or participating in any church activities that will bring them into contact with children or vulnerable persons:

- All the church's *staff and volunteers who have any involvement with a child* **must** hold a verified valid, current Blue Card; **and** completed the following, with subsequent approval as required:
  - All relevant training.
  - Application for Working with Children, all referee checks and Code of Conduct certification as appropriate.
- Police and registered teachers require an Exemption Card.
- All cards (including Exemption Cards) expire after three calendar years.

Gympie Baptist procedure and application for applying for a Blue Card will be issued as required.

Required processes and checks could take up to three months to complete. In most cases, training will also be required before commencement of a ministry.

All paid staff will have a probationary written into contracts, and all volunteers will have a probationary period of one school term

### **Maintaining a record of the holders of Blue Cards and Exemption Cards**

The church leaders are responsible for ensuring the timely and accurate recording of information relating to the screening of applicants, and Blue Card status of all people who are required to hold a blue card.

The register of blue card holders is achieved via SMO and the Blue Card services portal.

### **Periodic Screening**

All Blue Card holders must supply a completed References Check every three years after their initial appointment. The Child Safe Coordinator / Child Safe Administrator is to verify with the nominated referees and complete the necessary forms.

### **Changes in circumstances affecting a Blue Card, lost or stolen cards**

All contact details must be current. All card holders must advise the Child Safe Coordinator / Child Safe Administrator and Blue Card Services once a change is made, or their card is lost or stolen.

If a blue card holder experiences a change in their circumstances, including contact details, then that person must:

- notify immediately the church's Safe Church Coordinator; and
- within 14 calendar days<sup>10</sup>, notify the Queensland Government's Blue Card Services.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card-services>

The Safe Church Coordinator, in consultation with the Church Leaders, can require the person to desist from attending or participating in any activities that will bring them into contact with children or vulnerable persons.

If a Blue Card is stolen or lost, the following procedure will apply:

- The staff or volunteer must notify the church leadership (or its nominee) as soon as possible – leaders must be aware of the time frame of notification.
- The volunteer must make an application to the Commission for a new card within fourteen (14) days of the card being lost or stolen<sup>11</sup>

### **Agreement to comply with policies and codes**

All *Blue Card holders associated with the church* must be provided with, and agree with, this Safe Church Strategy, including the Code of Conduct.

### **Church leaders' obligations re: The Application Process**

1. Where a person makes an application to work with children and/or vulnerable persons, the Church leaders must ensure the following criteria are met before accepting the application and allowing the applicant to be involved in any church activities that will bring them into contact with children or vulnerable persons.
2. Churches the applicant has attended (or has been involved or connected with) in the past five (5) years are contacted to ascertain whether there have been any alleged or actual incidents of harm involving the applicant (Schedule 3).
3. If the church leaders determine that more detailed information is required from the application, interview the applicant using the questions in Schedule 5 as a guide to ascertain the suitability of the applicant.
4. In the case of a volunteer, the person has attended the church regularly for a minimum of six (6) months unless exceptional circumstances apply.
5. The authenticity of the card is to be verified on the Blue Card web site.
6. Staff and volunteers will be inducted into their role before commencing by:
  - a. Reviewing the Safe Spaces Policy (and seeking any clarification required at interview or any time after as it arises)
  - b. Completing the Code of Conduct
  - c. Completing any required training

## **SUPPORT AND TRAINING**

The Safe Church Coordinator is responsible for establishing an arrangement for the appropriate supervision, support and training of staff and volunteers in contact with children and vulnerable persons.

The coordinator must report to the church leaders and the annual church members' meeting about the supervision, support and training of staff and volunteers.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card-services>

Where a person is appointed either as a staff member or as a volunteer who will have contact with children or vulnerable persons, the Safe Church Coordinator will ensure that the person's Blue Card or Exemption Card details are recorded in a register. At Gympie Baptist Church, this is to be carried by the Safety Management Online Tool.

The Church has an expectation all people working with children and vulnerable people will undertake the online training provided on SMO, and the Safe Church Coordinator will provide assistance where required. Training is to occur at least every three years, notification of any training requirements will be completed by the Child Safe Coordinator.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTACT WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

All staff and volunteers must:

- Comply with the Code of Conduct while in contact with children or vulnerable persons.
- Maintain appropriate documentation.
- Comply with the requirements of risk management plans that are required and in place for high-risk activities or special events - see **Gympie Baptist Risk Management Strategy** for further information.
- Written permission must be provided for all programs and activities before they start.
- Team Leaders in particular are to conduct “debriefing sessions” after each activity to discuss:
  - How things went,
  - Any concerns e.g. near misses or injuries – obtain statements, ensure the overall team leader is aware and other leadership are aware
  - What worked well, what didn't work so well and ways to improve the activity (Continuous Improvement).
- Activity participants should also be consulted for their perspective.

### Children/Young People: Adult Ratio

Safety ratios must be adhered to for all activities that fall outside of the normal scope of ministry activities (high-risk activities or special events). These ratio guidelines are included on activity applications. Ministries running during the same time as the church service are not required to adhere strictly to these guidelines as parents and guardians are close by.

Each Team should have two leaders, and provision must be made (e.g. extra supervisors, modifying or cancelling the activity) to cater for a higher number of participants than expected.

#### Recommended Safety Ratios

Children Under 2 years old – 1:3

Children 2 to 6 years old – 1:5

Children 7 to 9 years old – 1:6

All other activities – 1:8

There must always be a minimum of two adult members for all ministry program, regardless of any ratio. Junior leaders are not adults and are to be counted as participants.

Should a junior volunteer be assessed as having an outstanding maturity level and is capable of accepting adult level responsibilities. In such instances, the member is to be screened and trained as an adult; and the following provisions apply in such a case:

1. Parental permission must be provided before any further and subsequent action can commence.
2. Request specialist advice from QB, some extra, appropriate training may be required.
3. Junior leaders are not to lead their own peer group, and there should be at least one adult staff / volunteer in such activities.
4. In some cases, a blue card may be required, advice from Blue Card services must be sought in every circumstance.

Ratios will need to be modified with consideration to various factors including special needs, behavioural issues, high risk activities such as swimming and cooking, high risk venues:

- Promote the participation and empowerment of children and vulnerable persons, recognising that attention needs to be given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and other vulnerable groups, including disabled persons.
- Listen carefully and consider respectfully the input from children and vulnerable persons concerning decisions affecting them and what makes them feel safe or unsafe.
- Ensure children's personal information is treated appropriately and in line with the church's privacy / confidentiality policy for the collection, storage and use of information; and
- Participate in safe church training provided by the church and for which the leadership requests their participation.
- Permission to proceed with a reduced supervision may be granted, subject to an adequate risk assessment and justification.

## **ADDITIONAL RECORDS REQUIRED**

A record must be obtained and kept of children and young people attending children's and young people's ministries. Ministries involving children under the age of five years require their carers to sign them in and out of those activities. To ensure we comply with our Duty of Care, appropriate medical information is to be provided by carer/s. This information is private and confidential but must be made know to members of the team and if required, GBC leadership.

## **RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING HARM OR MISCONDUCT**

In all instances, an Incident Report must be completed and submitted to Church leadership for further action

## **Mandatory Reporting – child sexual offence**

Under the Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and other legislation Amendment Act 2020, failure to report a reasonable belief that a child sexual offence has been committed in relation to a child is a criminal offence, effective 5 July 2021. The Act requires the report be made to Police as soon as reasonably practicable after the belief is (or ought reasonably to have been) formed, that the offence has been committed. There are no exemptions for information gained during religious activities.

If any person is a mandatory reporter (see below), they will need to fulfill their obligations under the Act when handling any disclosure.

**Note: the above applies to all adults.**

In all cases, including situations described below, the Church leadership or ChildSafe Coordinator / Administrator is to be notified. Any notification is strictly confidential and **must not** be disclosed to any unauthorised person or entities.

In all incidents that even have the potential to become a claim, QLD State Manager of Baptist Insurance Services must be notified by the Church immediately. DO NOT seek other legal advice first, as this could jeopardise any future claim and result in GBC becoming liable for all damages.

Furthermore, an incorrect procedure being applied could result in higher premiums, or even a denial of certain covers of insurance. Churches are now seen as higher risk entities, and some insurers have declined to cover any church.

The process on reporting on harm of a sexual nature is different to responding to and reporting on other disclosures/suspicions of harm.

### **Mandatory Reporting (other than a child sexual offence)**

The Child Protection Act 1999 identifies certain professions (mandatory reporters) to make a report to Child Safety, if they form a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm. This is also applicable to unborn children (Section 13A of the Act).

Mandatory reporters include, but not limited to, teachers, doctors, registered nurses, police officers with child protection responsibilities, a person performing a child advocate function under the Public Guardian Act, and early childhood education and care professionals.

Reports are to be made to Child Safety and must be made if a reasonable suspicion exists.

### **Other Reporting**

It is the position of Gympie Baptist Church that all Blue Card holders registered at the church must make a report to either the Church leadership or ChildSafe Co-ordinator. Anyone making a voluntary (non-mandated) report is protected with regard to confidentiality and immunity from civil or criminal liability, provided the report is made in good faith, and a reasonable suspicion exists.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Child Safe Organisations Bill 2024 Para 59

## Defining Harm

Harm is defined as ‘any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing’. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation.<sup>13</sup>

IF there is a belief that a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, they should immediately contact the Queensland Police Service by dialling 000.

Harm can be caused by a single act or omission or a series of acts or omissions.

### First actions

1. Where we have reason to suspect that a child is experiencing harm or is at risk of experiencing harm or being neglected, or receive a disclosure of harm or misconduct, we will contact Child Safety Services and seek information and advice about how to proceed.
  - a. **During normal business hours** – we will contact the Regional Intake Service at <https://www.dcssds.qld.gov.au/contact-us/department-contacts/child-family-contacts/child-safety-service-centres/sunshine-coast-central-queensland-region>.
  - b. **After hours and on weekends** – we will contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on **1800 177 135** or (07) 3235 9999.
2. If the alleged misconduct or harm was perpetrated by a Registered Minister of Queensland Baptists, then the Safe Church Coordinator or church leaders will also inform either the QB Safe Church Officer or the Director of Pastoral Services for Queensland Baptists.
3. If the alleged misconduct or harm was perpetrated by the Safe Church Coordinator, the Pastor or Church leaders shall be immediately informed.  
Refer to Procedure for handling complaints
4. The person identified by the disclosure as harming and/or guilty of misconduct will be required to step aside from any activities that will bring them into contact with children or vulnerable persons while the matter is being investigated either by the church's Safe Church Coordinator, the church leaders, the police or a government department/agency, and until a determination about the matter has been made.
5. The church leaders in consultation with the Safe Church Coordinator would determine the parameters that will be put in place regarding the attendance and participation of the person identified by the disclosure, in other church meetings and activities during this process. This person will also relate to a person identified by the church leaders to liaise with the person and ensure they are kept informed about the process.
6. Where a staff member or volunteer has breached a legislative requirement pertaining to the protection and welfare of children, or an obligation stipulated by the Blue Card Services, then the authority responsible for issuing the Blue Card will be notified.
7. If the misconduct identified by a disclosure is outside the scope of government legislation and regulations but is covered by the Code of Conduct or the Church's

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<sup>13</sup> Section 9 of the Child Protection Act 1999

constitution, then the provisions of this policy and the church's constitution will be applied.

**Refer to the Procedure for Handling of complaints for further instructions.**

**What to do when receiving a complaint**

When a child protection concern is raised the following actions should be undertaken.

**LISTEN WELL:**

- Move to a suitable environment, free from distraction. Remember, a private conversation still needs to be in a space visible to others. Let your Ministry Leader know where you are.
- Be CALM and PATIENT – allow time for the person making the complaint (eg: Child or Young Person) to be heard.
- Let the person use their own words – avoid asking leading questions.
- Avoid 'quizzing' the person about details of the abuse.
- Don't be afraid of saying the wrong thing. Listening supportively is more important than what you say.

**GENTLY REASSURE:**

- Reassure the complainant that it is OK that they have told you what's been happening.
- Check if there are any concerns about the child's safety, especially immediate safety.
- Reassure the person, particularly if they are a Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult that they are *not* at fault, and *not* the cause of any distress that may be felt by anyone.

**SHOW RESPECT:**

- Respect that the person may only reveal some details.
- Acknowledge the person bravery and strength in sharing the information.
- Avoid making promises you can't keep – manage the person's expectations.
- Explain to the person that in order for the Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult to be safe, you will need to report this to someone else.

**IMMEDIATELY REPORT:**

- Immediately report the Disclosure to the Ministry Leader or a member of the Safe Spaces Team. If appropriate, keep the person informed of the reporting process.
- As soon as it is practical, complete an Incident Report Form, recording all details about the suspicion or disclosure of abuse.
- The Safe Spaces Team will be responsible for ensuring the appropriate form of action, that the Church fulfills its legal obligations and that all concerns are managed appropriately.
- A copy of the *Incident Report Form* is to be kept securely by the Church, and a copy sent to the QB Safe Spaces Coordinator and relevant authorities as required.

## Assessing a Disclosure or Suspicion of Harm

(Church leadership & Child Safe Co-ord to assess)

### Is the disclosure about a child in immediate danger?

If YES:

- Contact the Police immediately on 000 and report the information.
- Follow instructions given by the Police.
- Address any immediate safety needs of others present.
- Organise support for the person who has disclosed the complaint or information.
- Contact QB Church Services for additional support for your Church.

### If NO, Does the report include a disclosure or suspicion of harm?

If YES,

- Contact the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services and report the disclosure or suspicion. Such Child Protection concerns are responded to by the Department by either:
  - Recording a Child Concern Report when the concern received does not reach the threshold for a notification.
  - Recording a notification if the concerns suggest the child has been harmed or is at risk of harm and does not have a parent able to protect the child from harm.
  - Moving a child to a safe place if required.
- It is important to note that this is the decision of the Child Safety Officers. Your role is to report and provide support as needed.

If the disclosure or suspicion of harm is historical and has been already dealt with by the appropriate authorities, the report to the Department can note that this is a historical event previously reported. Even if the harm has already been dealt with, it is important to report as there might be extra details that you can provide which may not have been disclosed previously.

### Is the report about a Staff or Volunteer of the Organisation? If YES,

- Notify the appropriate authorities as per the procedure above.
- Follow the appropriate steps in the Church *Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers*

### Reporting:

- In all instances, an *Incident Report Form* must be completed, submitted to the QB Safe Spaces Team for action and filing.

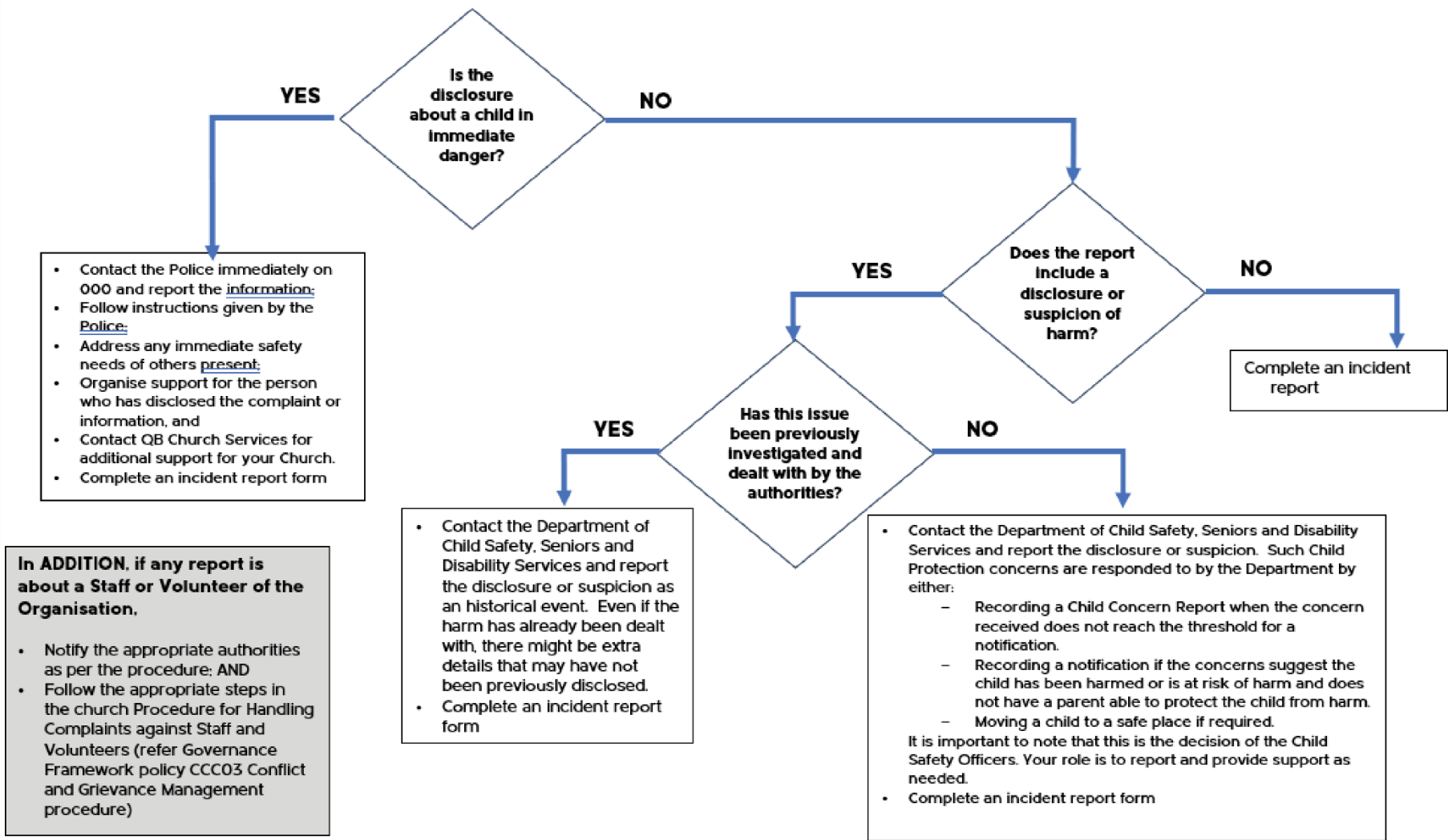
**Record Keeping:** For record keeping requirements, please refer to the requirements detailed in the Procedure for Record Keeping.

Are you unsure about any of the above procedures?

|      |     |
|------|-----|
| Yes, | Yes |
|------|-----|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>AND a Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult is in <b>immediate danger</b></b></p> |  |
| <p>Contact the <u>Police</u> immediately on 000</p>                                       | <p>Contact <b>QB's Safe Space Coordinator (ph:3354 5600)</b>, to discuss the appropriate response; and/or</p> <p>Contact the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services who will be able to advise on the best steps forward.</p> |

# Flow Chart for Assessing Disclosure or Suspicious Harm



## Assessing a Disclosure or Suspicion of Harm Flow Chart

This flow chart is to be assessed and actioned by the Safe Spaces Coordinator in collaboration with the Senior Pastor when reporting to the Authorities.

## Useful references

1. Blue Card Services website:  
[www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/)
2. Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women:  
[www.csyw.qld.gov.au/department-child-safety-youth-women](http://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/department-child-safety-youth-women)
3. Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020 <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/act-2020-032>
4. Family and Child Connect Services:  
[www.qld.gov.au/community/caring-child/family-child-connect](http://www.qld.gov.au/community/caring-child/family-child-connect)
5. Queensland Police Service:  
[www.police.qld.gov.au](http://www.police.qld.gov.au)
6. Department of Education and Training:  
[www.deta.qld.gov.au](http://www.deta.qld.gov.au)
7. Early Childhood Education and Care: [www.deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/](http://www.deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/)
8. Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships:  
[www.datsip.qld.gov.au/](http://www.datsip.qld.gov.au/)
9. Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel to access legislation such as the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011, Child Protection Act 1999 etc:  
[www.legislation.qld.gov.au/OQPChome.htm](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/OQPChome.htm)
10. Play by the Rules:  
<http://www.playbytherules.net.au/>
11. Bullying and cyberbullying:  
[www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/bullying](http://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/bullying)
12. Australian Human Rights Commission – Children’s Rights [www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights)
13. Queensland Family and Child Commission [www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/](http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/)

## List of Amendments

With effect from Version 3, page numbers relating to amendments have become irrelevant. Accordingly, amendments will refer to section name and if appropriate, paragraph number.

### **Ver 1.2, 20 Jan 2021**

Change to Exemption Card conditions.

Change to Periodic Screening due to change in meaning of Exemption Cards

Code of Conduct

- Inclusion of definition, “child” also includes “vulnerable person”
- Para 12 b) inclusion of toileting requirements

Ratified by Elders and Deacons 19 Jan 2021

### **Ver 1.2.1, 21 Feb 2021**

Application for Working with Children conditions.

- Inclusion of the word “new” to clarify that only new applicants to complete and submit this form.

References Check.

- Include notification that Child Safe Coordinator / Child Safe Administrator will advise when this form is to be completed, not an annual requirement.
- Inclusion of statement and signature block acknowledging person has re-read the Safe Spaces Policy and Code of Conduct.

### **Ver 1.3, 02 Mar 2021**

Amalgamation and improvement of description requiring blue or exemption cards.

Clarification of supervision ratios

Rewording of statement regarding children under 5 years of age.

Major changes to WWC and Referees Check forms, some design changes.

- Both forms. Introduces the requirement of an Elder or Pastor to further vet all applicants, improves Spiritual oversight.
- WWC, amalgamation of questions regarding medical / physical conditions that may impact. Process for applying WWC, changes to procedures due to Authority changes

### **Ver 1.4, 15 Nov 2021 – significant changes to legislative requirements**

Various amendments due to legislation changes e.g. <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/types-of-crime/sexual-offences-against-children/failure-to-report>

statements regarding strengthening of laws.

WWC:

Change to steps for obtaining Blue Cards as a result of Government procedural improvements.

## **Ver 2.0 30 Aug 2023 – Significant update, further legislative information and guidelines**

Purpose. Amended second paragraph.

Our Child Safe Strategy. Inclusion of people issued with blue card through GBC for other organisations. (last dot point)

Point 6. Inclusion of parents /caregivers input into decisions affecting them.

Scope, Definitions - Minor amendment of first paragraph.

Screening and Selection. Clarification of blue card expiry, removal of requirement to sight blue card, now completed online. Clarification of change of circumstances, personal details, lost or stolen card requirements.

Agreement to Comply. Now extends to all blue card holders registered at GBC.

Application Process. Further details added, new points 5 & 6.

Paragraphs duplicated elsewhere removed.

Responding / Reporting Harm or Misconduct. Significant additional legal information added.

Para 8. Inclusion of provision if Child Safe Coord Administrator is alleged perpetrator.

Code of Conduct –

Para 1 – consider input from vulnerable people, particularly in areas of feeling safe.

Para 2 – inclusion of certain people groups.

Para 5, 6 – privacy concerns relating to reporting requirements. Comply with legal obligations.

Para 13 – inclusion of inappropriate touching in any way.

Para 15 – new paragraph relating to group sizes, sign / out, collection procedures etc.

Para 17 – new paragraph. Must not engage in any communication via electronic or other means

Para 22 – expansion on consoling clause.

Para 23 – relating to a disclosure of any kind by a vulnerable person Para 33 – strengthening of illicit substances statement.

Changes to signature block

## **Ver 2.1 14 Jan 2024 – further requirements by QB**

List of amendments, addition of legal requirement during document review.

Policy Commitment – Inclusion precautions to guard against common church failure relating to vulnerable people.

Screening and Selection, - Copies of Strategy made available to wider church, increased requirements re training, referee checks etc.

Application process - inclusion of provision of identity document requirement for new applications, inclusion of induction and probationary requirements..

Inclusion of further descriptions of Disclosure, contact details of “who to report to” change.

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## Code of Conduct

Para 18 – new – not to attempt to do any negative behaviour described in Code.

**Important** - new section relating to Blue Cards, Restricted Persons, restricted employment.

Heading prior to Par 39 – inclusion of illegal drugs, impairment due to prescribed drugs.

Signature block – inclusion of acknowledgment re training completion.

Handling of Complaints – Further statements re disclosure

Persons of Concern – Further information re persons of concern processes.

### **Ver 2.2 Oct 2024 – Changes as a result of Legislation introduction: Child Safe Organisations Bill 2024**

Addition of precautionary note about advising QB about any incidents.

- new legislation and 10 principles listed. GBC is now listed as a Child Safe Entity.
- Church is now required to **protect** and **prevent** children from being exposed to sexual abuse.

Strengthening of statement re Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

- Removal of statement indicating agreement to the 10 Principles from the Child Safe Commission, it is now legislated.

Change in periodic screening requirements – from 5 to 3 years, introduction of Child Safe Administrator. Clarification of the Maintenance of Records

Para 7. Change in instructions for login details to SMO and introduction of 2FA.

Handling of Complaints; Record of disclosure. New requirement to notify Child Safe Commission within three days of an allegation or conviction is made known.

### **Ver 2.2.1 Nov 2024 – General update, Person of Concern changes**

Precautionary Note; advice to contact Baptist Professional Standards Officer (new requirement). Significant changes required by QB.

Purpose of document; strengthened statement re WHGS Policy application also applies.

Strengthened statements that all adult attendees are aware of requirements, and

- Cautionary note advising that there is no communication between States re screening.
- Providing multiple pathways for vulnerable people to voice concerns.

Requirements for contact with children and vulnerable persons; documentation improvements and requirements.

Team Leader requirements & safe supervision ratios. Inclusion of disabled person consideration into all activities.

Records required – inclusion of medical information required upon registration for activities.

### **Ver 3 Feb 2025 – Significant inclusions due to Legislative adoption on the 10 Principles**

Introduction of the term “Safe Spaces” in relation to Child and Vulnerable Persons.

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New Codes of Conduct and Position Description required.

Statement of Commitment which is to be publicly displayed.

Further statements regarding people requiring Blue Cards, screening and selection.

Time frame for completion of screening, training and paid staff probationary requirements.

Exclusion of family members, or people living in the same residence from being nominated as referees.

Minimum supervisor number set at 2, regardless of any ratio.

Adequate risk assessment required for all activities with below specified supervisor / participant ratios.

Allows provision and requirements for junior helpers.

In all instances of reported harm or misconduct, completion of an Incident report is mandatory. Further statements re mandatory reporters.

Clarification of, and introduction of, a variety of procedures.

Clarification of working with children when they are a restricted person.

Inclusion of procedure if complaint is against Pastoral staff.

Change in blue card services requirements – leadership require blue cards, exemption for parents involved with their own children in certain circumstances.

### **Downsizing of the Child Safe Strategy, renaming to Safe Spaces Policy**

Due to the size of the document, all Schedules, Forms and certain other information have been removed to separate file locations, but still form part of the overall Child Safe Strategy and compliance with Safe Spaces requirements.

Document name change to Safe Spaces Policy.