

CENTRAL MOUNTAINS BAPTIST CHURCH

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People

A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

CODE OF CONDUCT

AND PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

1.1 Policy Statement: A Commitment to Child Protection

The purpose of this Policy is to guide Central Mountains Baptist Church in developing a child-protective church. Central Mountains Baptist Church is committed to welcoming children and their parents or carers and providing: a 'child-safe'¹ environment, a child-safe attitude of the people, and child-safe programs for children (and other vulnerable² people) who attend the services and other programs. We see such a commitment as flowing naturally from our commitment to operate according to biblical, Christian principles for living and for recognising the unique value and potential of every person, regardless of race, age, gender, ability or disability.

All children who come to Central Mountains Baptist Church have a right to be safe. The welfare of children in our care will be an important priority. The church and ministry leaders accept the responsibility of providing a safe and friendly environment where children are listened to, are kept safe, are given enjoyable activities, accept challenges, learn and grow. This duty of care applies at all times, although when children attend church and are not taken from their parents/guardians, then the parents/guardians have the primary duty of care.

We recognise the particular need for sensitivity for those from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, including those with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. We take into consideration the needs of children with disabilities and seek to include them and make them feel safe and welcome.

This Policy recognises both Federal and State legislation and commits worker³ to responsibly and reasonably cooperating with Government departments, law enforcement, and child protection agencies. The operational principles of our Code of Conduct support and facilitate the protection of children and young people.

1.2 Scope:

The provisions and duties of care expressed in this Child Protection Policy apply to:

- Pastors. A Pastor is: *A person defined or appointed as a recognised leader* amongst peers in our church
- All employees (including volunteers) members and attendees.
- All activities and programs organised by or with the approval of the pastor(s) of Central Mountains Baptist Church, on the premises or off-site, including camps and day trips.
- All guests of the venue and its facilities. Such temporary users of Central Mountains Baptist Church facilities will have access to copies of this Policy Code of Conduct and relevant procedures,
- Contractors, subcontractors, delivery persons or others engaged to provide services on the premises, whether or not they have direct contact with children whilst on site. Normally such temporary visitors to Central Mountains Baptist Church premises will be provided with an Induction Pack⁴ and required to sign their willingness to comply with the expectations outlined.

1.3 Authority

This Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct was revised and updated to reflect the most recent changes to State and Federal law and guidelines towards being a child-safe organisation. It was approved by the membership and adopted for use by Central Mountains Baptist Church on June 17, 2018 with the amendments noted in the minutes.

1.4 Policy Review

The Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Code of Conduct will be reviewed at least every two years, or to remain compliant with new legislation. This will occur during first term of the school year, beginning 2020, and be conducted by the Child Protection Officer with input from the church leadership.

Any proposed changes or updates will be submitted to the pastor(s) and deacon(s) of Central Mountains Baptist Church for approval. Such changes can be accepted or rejected at a meeting of CMBC membership properly convened for consideration of the proposed changes.

1.5 Operating Principles

Duty of Care: Means any legal responsibility that Central Mountains Baptist Church has to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those who participate in programs or activities of Central Mountains Baptist Church.

Vicarious Liability: Means any legal liability that Central Mountains Baptist Church may be determined to have for the conduct of those who act on its behalf (e.g. its staff and approved voluntary leaders).

Reasonable Standard of Care: Refers to the level of care that a user may reasonably expect that Central Mountains Baptist Church will take in providing any program, activity, service, or facility.

Reasonable Foresight: Refers to a responsibility that Central Mountains Baptist Church has, when planning activities for children and young people, to identify any reasonably foreseen danger/risk and take reasonable steps to prevent or avert such risk.

Child Protection Reporting Obligations: This principle covers mandatory reporting, for those professions and roles that are defined by law, and the moral and legal responsibility that all adults have to report all types of known or possible child abuse, where there is

1. It is recognized that no organisation can guarantee the safety of children and other vulnerable people who are on site at a venue. The term 'child-safe' means that child safety is important to this organisation, that it has compliant policies and procedural documents that identify risk and practices that reduce risk.

2. In the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 chapter 6 part 6 a vulnerable person is a person who has suffered a personal assault offence and is one of the following
a child, or

a cognitively impaired person. This includes: (a) an intellectual disability, (b) a developmental disorder (including an autistic spectrum disorder), (c) a neurological disorder, (d) dementia, (e) a severe mental illness, (f) a brain injury.

3. Worker. Any adult or older child assisting in a children's ministry, in any way, is a worker. Ministry leaders are also workers, more experienced, able to lead an activity, programme, or ministry.

4. Induction Pack. The Induction Pack contains a copy of the Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct with a declaration for them to sign. A list of approved service providers will be developed and held by the Child Protection Officer.

Reasonable belief: A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds, through disclosure by the child or a third party or personal observation of indicators that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk.

2. Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

The staff and leadership of Central Mountains Baptist Church encourage children to feel a part of Central Mountains Baptist Church by seeking their feedback regarding children's programs, and through listening to them when they speak about matters that directly affect their sense of safety or wellbeing.

Part of our work with children is to teach and inform them of what they can do if they feel unsafe, threatened or upset by the behaviour of adults or other children. We will listen to and if necessary act on any concerns children or their parents/carers raise with us. We value diversity and do not tolerate discrimination in our words or practices or in those of others. It should not be seen as spiritual abuse when, in our preaching and teaching, we make a Biblical stance against sinful behaviour. Preaching and teaching about sinful behaviour is not discrimination against a person, nor is it spiritual abuse.

We are committed to protecting children from harm/self harm. 'Harm', as used in this policy, includes any and all of the following types of abuse or neglect of children and young people: physical; sexual; emotional/psychological; racial/cultural or spiritual/religious (See Appendix 1). It should not be seen as spiritual abuse to seek repentance from sin and commitment to Christ.

2.1 Feedback from Children

Children and young adults will have the opportunity to reflect on their experience of church programs and to make comments regarding the standard of planning for and delivery of programs for their age-group. This can be done verbally or using the form in appendix 2. We will invite comments on other aspects of wellbeing, including staff conduct. Such feedback will inform Central Mountains Baptist Church and guide adjustments to practices, programs and training.

3. Employment of Staff and Volunteer Leaders

3.1 Recruitment, screening and selection practices

Central Mountains Baptist Church will be vigilant in the recruitment, selection and screening of all staff, contractors, leaders and volunteers to ensure they are safe and suitable to work with children and young people. It is important that every person who works with children under the auspices of this church upholds and exemplifies our Christian beliefs and values, especially in their interaction with children and other vulnerable people.

Workers will normally have been known to Central Mountains Baptist Church for at least six months.

Only those children who have proved to be sensible can be workers in children's ministries.

Ministry leadership⁵ roles will only be appointed to adults (i.e. those 18 years or older).

Mixed gender activities should normally have mixed gender workers.

1. Our statements of commitment to child safety and our behavioural expectations of employees and volunteers are included in all advertisements for jobs and Job Descriptions.
2. All people wanting to engage in ministry with children (either paid or volunteer) will complete an Application for Children's Ministry (Appendix 8).
3. We conduct reference checks on employees and volunteers prior to engagement, using an agreed set of questions (Appendix 9,10,11). Conversations will be documented and kept as part of the employment file of successful applicants.
4. Short-listed applicants will be interviewed by pastor(s) / ministry leader(s), prior to appointment being made official. The Senior Pastor will make appointments to a specific role in the form of an Employment Contract⁴. Such an Employment Contract will include a commitment to Central Mountains Baptist Church's Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Code of Conduct.
5. All ministry leaders and children's workers who do not have a current written employment contract are to accept such a contract dealing with their suitability to be workers and agreeing to these child protection policies, procedures and the Code of Conduct.
6. We will conduct thorough screening to determine whether a prospective staff member, contractor, volunteer or leader may pose a risk to children. This will include Central Mountains Baptist Church making reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:
 - a. Child-related Employment Screening Clearance (e.g. Working with Children Check, Criminal History Check);
 - b. proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
 - c. the person's history of work involving children; and
 - d. references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
7. The type of evidence that an applicant is required to provide to Central Mountains Baptist Church will vary depending on the type of position that they are applying for. However, Central Mountains Baptist Church will not offer any applicant a position at Central Mountains Baptist Church until they provide the required evidence to the Clerical Assistant. We have a clear staff and volunteer induction process that includes providing them with a copy of this Policy, the Code of Conduct and

5. Consistently, through the church documents of Central Mountains Baptist:

A. "Church leadership" or "leadership of Central Mountains Baptist Church" refers to the pastor(s) plus deacon(s)

B. "Ministry leadership" refers to leaders of ministries, programmes, and activities of Central Mountains Baptist Church

4. Employment contracts will be made up of:

#1. a job description according to our constitution and will differ for each job.

#2. According to 3.1.3 it will include a commitment to our child protection policy, procedures and code of conduct. The declaration on page 8 is signed.

8. All staff and volunteers are normally trained annually to refresh their knowledge of our policies and expectations in terms of conduct and protocol, especially where there has been document review.

3.2 Support and Training

We provide a system of support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. To this end we have developed a Code of Conduct to guide our staff and volunteers.

1. Staff and volunteers are provided with a copy of this **Child Protection Policy** and the **Code of Conduct** that defines unacceptable conduct, boundaries and expectations for behaviour. Staff will sign a pledge stating they have read, understand and will comply with guidelines.
2. Annual 'Refresh, Renew, Update' sessions are run for all program staff and volunteers, to ensure staff and volunteers awareness of the importance of child safety and familiarity with child protective practices and expectations. Normally these will be conducted during term 1 of the school year, commencing 2019. The training will be arranged by the Child Protection Officer.

4. Investigation of Suspected Child Abuse

In the case of an allegation being made against staff member, volunteer, leader and/or contractor at Central Mountains Baptist Church, the Pastor and/or Child Protection Officer will follow the Child Protection Procedure. Central Mountains Baptist Church will take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child is paramount.

The first step is to withdraw the accused person from active duty, which could entail standing down (with pay, where applicable), re-assignment to other duties that do not have direct contact with children, or to work under increased supervision while the matter is being investigated.

4.1 Case management

In the event of a child disclosing an incident of abuse to someone they trust it is essential that it is dealt with swiftly, sensitively and professionally.

4.2 Investigations

Central Mountains Baptist Church may conduct an independent investigation into the allegation to the extent that it will not interfere with investigations by the Department or the police, and will co-operate with the authorities as required.

All people covered by the Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure must co-operate fully with any investigation by any government Department, the police or Central Mountains Baptist Church.

Central Mountains Baptist Church will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential, until otherwise necessary; however, from time to time other employees, leaders, volunteers and contractors may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation (e.g. to provide witness statements).

An investigation conducted by Central Mountains Baptist Church will be conducted in accordance with procedural fairness to protect the integrity of the investigation and the interests of all the participants involved in the investigation. Central Mountains Baptist Church will also handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for Central Mountains Baptist Church to engage a person (or persons) from outside Central Mountains Baptist Church to conduct an independent investigation in relation to allegations.

The outcome will depend on the findings of the investigation, but may include withdrawal from active duty, re-assignment to duties with no contact with children, increased supervision, disciplinary action, dismissal or criminal prosecutions.

5 Risk Management

Central Mountains Baptist Church will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall approach to risk management.

Risk assessment and management practices are embedded in our thinking for all services, programs or activities authorised by Central Mountains Baptist Church. We use these concerns to inform our planning and implementing of all aspects of operation at Central Mountains Baptist Church.

Risk management applies to Work Health and Safety generally. This policy applies specifically to the minimising of risks of abuse of any kind to children who are in our care and to maximising their physical safety in the buildings or activities of Central Mountains Baptist Church.

In situations where a person seeks to attend or join Central Mountains Baptist Church with a record of offending in child abuse of any kind, the leadership will put in place appropriate boundaries⁶ restricting access, to ensure the safety of children. This is not to say that such a person, with demonstrated repentance cannot attend and benefit from the pastoral care of Central Mountains Baptist Church.

Central Mountains Baptist Church will have the Pastors, Deacons, Ministry Leaders, Child Protection Officer and Clerical Assistant commit to identifying and managing risks within Central Mountains Baptist Church and its environment.

6. The leadership including Child Protection Officer will consider the following boundaries:

- An offender will not be permitted to participate in ministries involving children.
- There should be restrictions on movement when an offender is present at church. This would relate to use of the toilets in particular and any space where other people cannot see, such as the space next to the stage. Policing requires everyone.
- The risks and degree of risks to a particular age groups, sexes, ethnicity etc should be identified. To ensure that procedure and/or standards will be successful they must negate the level and type of risk
- Anyone's relationship to the offending person may cloud their judgment. The leaders will need to be aware of this within themselves and others throughout the whole process of setting boundaries.
- Normally we would need to advise against victim and perpetrator being in the same church.

If risks of child abuse occurring in Central Mountains Baptist Church or its environment are identified the Child Protection Officer and Clerical Assistant will make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the Central Mountains Baptist Church can take to reduce or remove the risks (i.e. risk controls). Page 5

Risk identification, monitoring and evaluation will be reported at the Annual General Meeting by the Child Protection Officer.

The **Child Protection Officer** is recommended by the leadership and approved by the church membership, for responding to complaints made by staff, contractors, volunteers, children or other attendees and members of the congregation⁷. The Child Protection Officer will normally serve a two year term.

The Child Protection Officer will be identified and their role explained at appropriate times in Central Mountains Baptist Church each year. Guests, staff and volunteers are expected to use either the **Complaints Form** or the **Incident Form** to note concerns arising from observations or experience. (See Appendix 3 and 4) Copies of these forms will be kept in Central Mountains Baptist Church Office by the Child Protection Officer.

6 Record keeping

All reports of alleged abuse or harm/self harm, or risk thereof, must be recorded in the form of an Incident Report. Places, times, dates, names of people, observable behaviours or evidence of harm/self harm shall be recorded. Reports must be securely stored by the Clerical Assistant.

7 Privacy and Confidentiality

Central Mountains Baptist Church will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information in accordance with relevant privacy legislation.

That is, as much as is reasonably possible, an individual's confidentiality is to be protected. Both those who are making reports and those about whom accusations are being made are entitled to confidentiality. Where there is suspected abuse or misconduct, staff members, leaders, volunteers and contractors must not disclose or make use of the information in a manner that breaches confidentiality, other than to report and act consistent with the Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure, and relevant statutory requirements. If church discipline becomes necessary the Central Mountains Baptist Church constitution will be followed.

7. The Child Protection Officer is mature, experienced and readily accessible during those times children are on site. The Child Protection Officer is appointed by the church and works with the Senior Pastor, being accountable to him, except where an accusation has been made against the Senior Pastor. The Child Protection Officer has access to the Complaints and Incident Forms and is familiar with the legal requirements applying to the reporting of abuse against children.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose:

Central Mountains Baptist Church is a group of followers of Jesus Christ in the Blue Mountains of NSW seeking to reflect the teachings of Christ and of the New Testament with integrity and humility. Beyond personal faith in the redeeming work of Christ in His death and resurrection, we accept that this faith is worked out and expressed in the quality of relationships we develop as a church community and all those with whom we interact in our daily lives. Jesus summarised God's expectation for the conduct of His people into one famous and succinct sentence: *'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbours as yourself.'* (Luke 10:27). He reinforced this 'law of love' by adding, *'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples; if you love one another!'* (John 13:35).

Jesus also taught and demonstrated the importance of truth and honesty, of justice and mercy as essential to healthy relationships.

This **Code of Conduct** seeks to apply to the ministerial, or pastoral relationship those ethical standards that God expects of all people. People in various forms of recognised ministry are therefore expected to be examples and models of Christian faith and practice. It is the duty of any person in a ministry position not to use the influence or authority of their position for personal gain, whether that gain is financial or in terms of power, sexual gratification, or otherwise. This includes any action, verbal, written or electronic, physical or emotional that could be interpreted as emotional, sexual or spiritual abuse, and applies especially when working with children.

The adoption of this Code of Conduct and the related Procedural Documents for investigating breaches of the Code, reflects a deep desire to follow an open, accountable process that seeks to express justice, acceptance and compassion to all parties, rather than to protect the organisation.

This Code has been written in recognition of the power differential between people in ministry roles and the people they serve. The potential for this power imbalance to impact detrimentally on relationships is high. These guidelines have been established to help inform the conduct expectations in all aspects of personal relationships between people in ministry and those they serve.

1.2 Our Commitment

Our commitment to expressing the love of Christ leads us to the view that all people should be able to live, work and learn in an environment that is free from abuse of any kind. Our commitment is to cultivate an environment where a diversity of people, regardless of age, gender, race and national culture can thrive and grow holistically. That is, we are committed to Central Mountains Baptist Church being a safe place for all people, with a special focus on the safety and wellbeing of children.

This Code of conduct aims to detail the standards of conduct expected by staff (paid and voluntary) in the performance of their duties and to provide guidance in areas where there is a need to make personal and ethical decisions.

The **Code of Conduct** recognises and is aligned with all statutory and compliance requirements enshrined in State and Federal law. Central Mountains Baptist Church is committed to operating in accordance with this code of conduct, so that it provides a safe, ethical, and caring place for all users and activities.

1.3 Complaints regarding child abuse

Where there is a complaint made regarding child abuse, especially child sexual abuse, **the procedures for reporting such abuse outlined below will be followed.**

2. Specific Expectations to Protect Children from Abuse

All those who minister or work under the auspices of Central Mountains Baptist Church with children should be fully aware of our **Child Protection Policy** and this **Code of Conduct**. Abusive behaviour towards children will not be tolerated and any and all allegations will be investigated and reported if found to be substantially true.

DO:

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of, or in connection with, Central Mountains Baptist Church must:

- ◆ contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of harm/self harm (telephone '000');
- ◆ adhere to the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and uphold Central Mountains Baptist Church's statement of commitment to child safety at all times;
- ◆ take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- ◆ ensure only women change nappies and assist with a child on a toilet. There may be times when a parent/guardian may give permission to a man to help with toileting eg to help with a disabled male teen.
- ◆ conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as an employee, volunteer, leader, worker, or contractor of Central Mountains Baptist Church and as a positive role model to children and young people;
- ◆ work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of Central Mountains Baptist Church ;
- ◆ be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
- ◆ maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
- ◆ establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
- ◆ take care in the context of physical games, both in regard to injury that may be caused, and also in relation to the example that is set for the children.
- ◆ be fair, considerate and honest with others;
- ◆ treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas, opinions and backgrounds;
- ◆ promote the cultural safety acceptance, participation and encouragement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island child's self-identification);
- ◆ promote the safety acceptance, participation and encouragement of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);

- ◆ promote the safety, participation and encouragement of children with a disability;
- ◆ listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they are or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child;
- ◆ ensure (as far as practicable) that adults are not alone with a child;
- ◆ ensure that a child worker should be present with children from the arrival of the first child to the departure of the last child.
- ◆ During a camp situation where children will be staying away from their parents/guardians overnight sleeping arrangements will be organised to ensure the children's safety. Normally parents/guardians will be informed of the intended sleeping arrangements beforehand.
- ◆ For trips, camps and outings I acknowledge that there are to be at least two workers supervising the children at all times, and I will take care that there are adequate workers to ensure the appropriate oversight and safety of the children at all times. Anyone transporting children not belonging to their family must be over 18 years of age.
- ◆ comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to reporting under legislation; (see Child Protection Procedure, page 9)
- ◆ raise concerns about suspected abuse with the Pastor and/or Child Protection Officer as soon as possible;
- ◆ record and act upon all allegations or suspicions of abuse, discrimination or harassment;
- ◆ if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe;
- ◆ be professional in their actions;
- ◆ maintain strict impartiality;
- ◆ respect confidentiality when sharing information about children in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and your reporting obligations;
- ◆ maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people;
- ◆ act with reasonable care towards children when they are present at church even when the primary responsibility rests with the parents/guardians. For example, if I see a toddler enter a car park unsupervised, I will act;
- ◆ carry out my ministry responsibility with faithfulness. I will make proper arrangements if for some reason I must be absent from a ministry commitment. Proper arrangements includes contacting my ministry leader or, if I am a ministry leader, the pastor.
- ◆ cooperate with the overall programme of the church and with my ministry leader. If at any time this becomes impossible, I will resign and let someone else take my place so that the cause of Christ may not be harmed.
- ◆ spend adequate time preparing for each ministry opportunity.
- ◆ pray regularly for those children under me in ministry; and
- ◆ operate within the policies and guidelines of Central Mountains Baptist Church, especially Section 6 part H of the church constitution, Leaders and Workers Code.

DO NOT:

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of Central Mountains Baptist Church must not:

- ◆ ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- ◆ put a child at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors for an improper reason);
- ◆ speak to a child in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Some examples are:
 - swearing or using inappropriate language in the presence of a child;
 - yelling at a child, except in an emergency situation where the a child's safety may be in danger;
 - dealing with a child while the adult is angry with the child; and
 - using hurtful sarcasm.
- ◆ discuss sexual activities with a child unless it is a specific job requirement (eg counsellor) and the person is equipped to discuss these matters;
- ◆ have contact with a child outside of church activities without the knowledge and/or consent of Central Mountains Baptist Church's leadership and/or the parents/guardian;
- ◆ have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) unless their parents/guardian or ministry worker are copied in (that is, fully informed of the content of any online contact);
- ◆ use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account to communicate with a child without parental/guardian knowledge;
- ◆ exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child unless necessary; if this is necessary it should be done through the parents/guardians
- ◆ use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol while in the presence of or while supervising a child;
- ◆ use, possess, or be under the influence of any impairing substances whether prescription or illegal while in the presence of or while supervising a child;
- ◆ provide or allow a child to consume alcohol;
- ◆ provide or allow a child to consume illegal drugs or abuse prescription drugs;
- ◆ initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
- ◆ engage in rough physical games, hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way ;
- ◆ engage in any sexual contact with a child for any purpose;

- ◆ take a child to your home or encourage meetings outside program activities (unless parental/guardian permission has been provided and the pastor informed);
- ◆ be naked in the presence of a child;
- ◆ possess sexually explicit printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.);
- ◆ sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag, room or tent with a child/children;
- ◆ discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender identity, sex, race, culture, sexuality, or disability;
- ◆ engage in any activity with a child that is likely can be reasonably expected to physically or emotionally harm them; Biblical teaching has no expectation of emotional harm
- ◆ be alone with a child unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
- ◆ develop a ‘special’ relationship with a specific child for their own needs;
- ◆ show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- ◆ photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
- ◆ administer physical punishment;
- ◆ do anything in contravention of Central Mountains Baptist Church’s policies, procedures or this Code.

DECLARATION⁸

I, _____ have read the Code of Conduct and the Child Protection Policy and Procedures that express the intent of Central Mountains Baptist Church to protect and nurture children and other vulnerable people.

I declare that:

I have never made any kind of sexual approach to a child whether verbal or physical at any place nor at any time. I have never been involved with or convicted of, nor am I currently under investigation for any violence, sexual assault, or other crime against a child. I understand that a NSW Government ‘Working With Children Check’ showing clearance to work with children must be obtained to verify my claims (not applicable if you are less than 18 years old). I will make the results of this check available to the clerical assistant for verification. I understand this clearance lasts for five years. I understand that the applicable government agency responsible for child protection will conduct interim criminal history checks during this period.

I understand that should I fail to meet my commitments as set out above, I could be asked to withdraw from children’s ministry at Central Mountains Baptist Church.

I make this declaration believing it to be true.

I agree to comply with these rules, expectations, Child Protection Policy and Procedures and Code of Conduct. I am aware that if I breach these, and/or break the law, that my actions will be reported to the Police or the Child Protection agencies.

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 20__

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 20__ Employer or Senior officer of Central Mountains Baptist Church

Pastors and Child Protection Officer - When a report of inappropriate activity is received, I will ensure that an appropriate investigation / action / report will be implemented. According to the circumstances, this response plan may include reporting the situation to the police, to the relevant government department, and to the insurers.

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 20__

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 20__ Employer or Senior officer of Central Mountains Baptist Church

For Contractors, subcontractors, delivery persons or others engaged to provide services on the premises of Central Mountains Baptist Church:

I have been provided with a copy of Central Mountains Baptist Church Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People including A Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct. I am willing to comply with the expectations set down in this policy and code of conduct. I have never made any kind of sexual approach to a child whether verbal or physical at any place nor at any time. I have never been involved with or convicted of, nor am I currently under investigation for any violence, sexual assault, or other crime against a child.

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 20__

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / 20__ Employer or Senior officer of Central Mountains Baptist Church

8. A signed copy of the declaration will be kept by CMBC and the person making the declaration.

1. Handling of Complaints and Allegations**1.1 Steps to respond to an Allegation of Abuse****Step 1.**

Any person who believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse should telephone 000.

Otherwise, if a person is concerned about their own safety or the safety of another person, the person may speak to the **Child Protection Officer**.

Central Mountains Baptist Church encourages all persons with concerns about the safety of a child⁹ involved in the activities of the Central Mountains Baptist Church to raise these concerns promptly and directly with the Child Protection Officer, who can assist the person to make the report to relevant Government agency in NSW and/or the police as required.

However, a person is not required to consult with Central Mountains Baptist Church, or gain the support of Central Mountains Baptist Church, prior to making a report.

The Child Protection Officer will meet with the complainant, and hear the story, taking notes and seeking clarification, ensuring that the complainant feels listened to, understood and protected. (Some complaints may be able to be dealt with at this time, where there is misunderstanding, a lack of evidence of any abuse or no reportable act has been committed.)

Step 2.

Where possible, any person (including a child) making an allegation should be encouraged to fill out a Complaints Form and give this to the Child Protection Officer, who **may**, if appropriate, share the allegation with the senior Pastor of Central Mountains Baptist Church. A copy of this Form **must** be kept by the Child Protection Officer. The complainant may keep the original. This is an essential record of the event.

A Report to Child Protection Services is required if you believe, based on reasonable grounds, that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, significant self harm/harm as a result of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

The following information will be required when making a formal report to Child Protection Services:

- The child's name, age (date of birth is preferable) and address
- The name, age and address of any known siblings
- Your reasons (observations or disclosures) for believing that the child is at risk of abuse, or actually being abused or neglected
- Your assessment of the immediate danger to the child
- Current whereabouts of the child or vulnerable person (if not in the home)
- Your description of injuries or 'sign' behaviours you have observed
- Any other information you may have of relevance to the investigation

N.B. You do not have to be given permission by anyone at church to make such a report. Your identity as notifier will remain confidential unless you choose to inform the child or family.

Step 3.

3A. Certain professions are referred to as 'mandatory reporters'. This includes medical practitioners, nurses (including school nurses), members of the police force, counsellors and primary and secondary teachers and principals (NSW). Penalties may be incurred by those named as 'mandatory reporters' if they fail to notify the relevant Government agency in NSW if they have reasonable grounds for a belief (not proof!) that a child or young person is in need of protection, because they have suffered, or are likely to suffer significant self harm/harm particularly physical or sexual abuse.

In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse, may disclose that information to the Police or the relevant Government agency in NSW.

3B. When is a child in need of protection?

A child is in need of protection if any of the following grounds exist—

- a) the child has been abandoned by his or her parents/guardians;
- b) the child's parents/guardians are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person willing and able to care for the child;
- c) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant self harm/harm as a result of physical injury and the child's parents/guardians have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;
- d) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and the child's parents/guardians have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;
- e) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is, or is likely to be, significantly damaged and the child's parents/guardians have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;
- f) the child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be, significantly harmed and the child's parents/guardians have not provided, arranged or allowed the provision of, or are unlikely to provide, arrange or allow the provision of, basic care or effective medical, surgical or other remedial care.

3C. Making a report is to lay a serious allegation of a criminal offence against another person, so clarify your perceptions (talk to the Child Protection Officer) and decide the best method of reporting. The police are the most appropriate first responders if the report is

9. A verbal comment, by a child(ren), to any worker or leader constitutes 'a report'. If the child will put the comment in writing it will be helpful. However the leader or worker **must** make a report to the Child Protection Officer of the child's complaint. It is the Child Protection Officer's responsibility to evaluate and take any action from there.

regarding behaviour taking place in relationship to church activities. The Child Protection Officer may also decide to call the police as a first step.

A report can also be made to:

- ◆ **Child Protection Helpline:** 132 111- 24/7 specialist unit
<http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/preventing-child-abuse-and-neglect/reporting-suspected-abuse-or-neglect>
<https://www.childwise.org.au/page/41/state-legislation-reporting-nsw>
- ◆ **National Child Abuse Helpline:** 1800 99 10 99 Mon- Friday 9am -5pm

If any person has trouble deciding whether to report or not the “Decision Tree” can be used.
<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>

The relevant NSW authority must be notified of the allegations, by the church, no later than 30 days after Central Mountains Baptist Church leadership becomes aware of the allegation or conviction. Central Mountains Baptist Church will fully co-operate with the relevant Government agency in NSW and be directed by the investigation process.

The Child Protection Officer may conduct an independent investigation into the allegation to the extent that it will not interfere with investigations by relevant Government agency in NSW or the police, and will co-operate with the authorities as required.

Where an allegation is made against a senior pastor or member of the church leadership, the Child Protection Officer should engage at least one independent ‘investigator’¹⁰, to handle the case.

Where an allegation has been made, Central Mountains Baptist Church will make, secure, and retain records of the allegation of child abuse and the Central Mountains Baptist Church’s response to it.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in this Procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

The accused person (staff member/volunteer or carer) may be stood down from duties and any access to children on the property, until the matter has been investigated and resolved.

Step 4.

When a report is made to the authorities, the leadership will contact the insurer, GJ Insurance Consulting Pty Ltd.

10. The independent investigator should be a senior person from a church of like faith and practice.

Child abuse includes:

- a. any act committed against a child involving
 - i. a sexual offence; or
 - ii. an offence under section 498(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and
- b. the infliction, on a child, of-
 - i. physical violence; or
 - ii. serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- c. serious neglect of a child.

“Child” means a person under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child. Collective term for “child” is “children”.

There are five common types of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional, neglect and racial/cultural

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as:

- Hitting, punching, kicking, beating (marks from belt buckles, fingers).
- Shaking (particularly babies).
- Burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair.
- Alcohol or other drug administration.

Sexual Abuse, including ‘grooming’

Sexual abuse is any sexual act or threat to perform such upon another person. It occurs when a person uses their power and authority to take advantage of another’s trust to involve them in sexual activity. It does not necessarily involve genital contact but is any act which erodes the sexual boundary between two persons. It may appear consensual but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential.

Sexual grooming is a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging a child, as a precursor to sexual abuse. Examples include inappropriate special time with the child, inappropriately giving gifts, ‘accidental touching’, allowing the child to sit on lap, having secrets. In isolation, such behaviours may not indicate the risk of abuse occurring, but if there is a pattern of behaviour occurring, it may indicate grooming. Grooming behaviours often mimic the kind of loving behaviour Christians do for the benefit and wellbeing of children, that is, gaining the trust of the child, demonstrating care and concern, spending time, visiting in the home, finding out about family, friends and hobbies. However, grooming to involve a child in sexual activities for the personal gratification of an adult is a crime.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Emotional abuse is the chronic attitude or behaviour of one person, which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a child’s development, self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include: devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising or chronic and extreme domestic violence in the child’s presence. Emotional abuse does not include leading a child to recognise and confess sin.

Neglect

Neglect is characterised by the failure to provide for the child’s basic needs. And includes any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person’s development. Examples include the failure to provide food, shelter, adequate hygiene or schooling for a child.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated, unreasonable, unwanted behaviour conducted by an individual or group against another person, which has a negative impact on health and wellbeing. This includes aggression, verbal, emotional/psychological or physical acts that intimidate or threaten. It often involves an abuse of a power differential between the bully and the victim.

Other Forms of Abuse

Racial, cultural or religious abuse

Racial abuse is any harmful conduct that discriminates against, or demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, ethnic origin, or skin colour. It may be overt, such as racial vilification or discrimination, or covert, such as demonstrating a lack of cultural sensitivity to a different ethnicity.

Religious or national cultural abuse is similar to racial abuse, but is directed towards expressions of religious faith or practice or national cultural dress, identifying styles of national cultural expression or practices. ‘The harm that is caused by racial, religious or cultural abuse targets the child’s **identity**.’ This does not negate the right of this church to preach Christianity as the **ONLY** way to God excluding all other supposed ways. It is to be noted that some aspects of any national culture may be sin, as defined by the Bible, and may need to be spoken against as sin. This is not to be seen as an attack on any individual’s national culture.

Spiritual abuse

This involves the perpetrator using their position of authority in Central Mountains Baptist Church or higher understanding of biblical teaching or God’s will to manipulate a child for their own use or benefit, or to pressure a child for their own use or benefit. This is not reportable to a Government Child Protection agency, although in extreme circumstances can be classified as emotional abuse.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying occurs when a person uses any form of telecommunication to sexually groom, bully, suggest an inappropriate relationship be formed, or engage a child in sexual language or behaviours. The explosion of electronic communications (Facebook and other social media sites, text-messaging, internet, chat rooms, etc.) has seen a sharp increase in cyber-bullying.

It is very difficult to know precisely the amount of child abuse that occurs in Australia, as many acts go unreported. Statistics of reported acts, though, are available through government agencies. Child Protection Australia 2010-11 report reported that there were 237, 273 notifications of child abuse involving 163,767 children in Australia¹¹. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2002) revealed the following breakup of perpetrators: 74% natural parent, 10% step-parent or de facto, 7% other relative or sibling, 5% friend or neighbour, 4% others (including strangers)¹². The reality of abuse in Australia is a lot worse than the statistics. There are estimates that as many as 1 in 20 men in Australia may sexually offend against a child. As many as 1 in 5 children will be sexually abused during their childhood. On average, it takes a girl 7 years to tell someone about such abuse, and for men the average is well over 25 years, if they ever do.

11. NSW and Act Baptist Churches, *Creating Safe Spaces Manual 2012 v1.3, p11*

12. Ibid

APPENDIX 2 Example Feedback Survey of Children.

Name: _____ Date: _____

This survey is your chance to have a say about the children's programs. Think about each statement and mark on the line, somewhere between "Not at all!" and 'Absolutely!'.

1. I feel welcomed and looked after when I come to this church..

I _____ I _____ I _____
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

2. My parents like the log-in process and arrangements for my care.

I _____ I _____ I _____
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

3. I know which toilets to use and feel safe when using them.

I _____ I _____ I _____
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

4. There are good spaces for activities and learning times.

I _____ I _____ I _____
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

5. The activities are well-organised.

I _____ I _____ I _____
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

6. I am safe while I am in the children's programs.

I _____ I _____ I _____
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

7. I feel that the leaders know what they are doing and are looking after me.

I _____ I _____ I _____
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

8. The leaders are friendly and respectful of my friends and me.

I _____ I _____ I _____
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

9. If I am worried or upset, I know who I can go to for help.

I _____ I _____ I _____
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

10. I would recommend this church program as great for kids.

I _____ I _____ I _____
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

APPENDIX 3. Complaint Form

Please use this Form to make a Formal Complaint regarding discrimination or abuse of any kind towards yourself or another person, including a child.

Please read the Code of Conduct Document before using this form.

COMPLAINT FORM (Private and Confidential) Date: / /201__ Time: : am/pm

Your Name: _____

Role at Central Mountains Baptist Church: _____

Is the complaint about offending behaviour:

- a. directed towards you? **Yes / No**
 - b, concerning a child? **Yes / No**
 - c. about a vulnerable person? **Yes / No**
-

Who was the victim of the behaviour?

Name: _____

Date of Birth: ___ / ___ / _____ **Age:** ___

Address: _____

Please briefly, but accurately, describe the alleged behaviour about which you are lodging this Complaint Form. (Keep to the facts, without interpretation or opinion.)

Who was the offending person: _____

What abusive behaviour did you observe or come to hear about? _____

Is the abuse still happening or was it a past event? _____

Where did the event/behaviour take place? _____

Were there other witnesses? If so, provide name(s) _____

What is the level of risk to the victim now? Low – High; Immediate – possible;

Any other comments: _____

Statement of Intent: I make this complaint in all sincerity, recognising that such a complaint may have a serious or long term impact on all those involved. I will act in good faith in the process and accept the ruling of the ‘investigator’ where I believe it is fair and transparent.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____ / _____ / 20____

Witness: (Print name) _____ **Date:** _____ / _____ / 20____

Signature: _____

LEGISLATION RELEVANT to CHILD PROTECTION

Both Federal and State legislation is relevant to the concepts discussed in this policy. This legislation includes:

Federal:

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012

Fair Work Act 2009

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

Family Law Act, 1975

Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986

New South Wales

Principal Acts:

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Other relevant Acts:

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Parental Responsibility Contracts) Act 2006

Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000

Crimes Act 1900

Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998

The Ombudsman Act 1974

International:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Appendix 6 MEDICAL & HEALTH INFORMATION – SPECIAL EVENT

Central Mountains Baptist Church

Child's Name:
(Surname) (Christian name) Date of Birth

Is your child taking any regular or currently prescribed medication? YES / NO

If so, please name the medication and provide details of dosage and administration.

Your child's leader will administer medication to your child as directed by written instructions from you. Please clearly mark your child's name on all medication along with the dosage and administration procedures.

Is there anything about your child's health which means that s/he should engage in only limited physical activity? YES / NO

If so, please give details.....

Does your child require a special diet because of health problems? YES / NO

If so, please give details.....

Is there any other information which may help us care for your child? YES / NO

If so, please give details.....

Emergency contact 1. Name: _____ Mobile: _____

Emergency contact 2. Name: _____ Mobile: _____

Preferred Medical Centre/ Doctor: _____ Phone: _____

Do you have private medical insurance? Provider: _____

AUTHORISATION

'In the event of an accident or sudden illness, I authorise the person in charge to call an ambulance or to seek medical attention at my expense, should I not be contactable.'

Signed: _____ Date: ___/___/20___

Parent/guardian/caregiver [Print name if not one of the above] _____

Witness Name: _____ Signature: _____

Central Mountains Baptist Church

As a parent/caregiver of: _____

I, give my consent for him/her to take part in the (special activity or camp) to be held at the _____(event site)

From _____ to _____ (or on _____)
(date) (date) (date)

I have seen the attached copy of the programme for the _____(event) and acknowledge that risk of injuries is inherent in physical activities. While I am aware that staff will take all due care I recognise that accidents may occur.

The staff and supervisors have my authority to take whatever action they think necessary to ensure the safety, wellbeing and successful conduct of the participants as a group or individually in the above-mentioned activity.

If my child becomes ill or is accidentally injured, I authorise the person-in-charge to obtain on my behalf whatever medical treatment my child requires. I will agree to pay all such medical expenses.

I have attached information as asked concerning my child’s health including any relevant details of his/her limitations for the planned activity. My child’s own local doctor or medical specialist may be contacted in an emergency.

I also acknowledge that Central Mountains Baptist Church and all its representative leaders or other helpers at _____(event) can accept no liability for any personal injury or property loss suffered by my child during the period of the _____(event).

Signed: _____ Date: __/__/20__
Parent/Guardian/Care-giver

FULL NAME: _____
 DATE OF BIRTH: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 MARITAL STATUS _____
 OCCUPATION: _____

MINISTRY INTERESTS: Sunday School / AWANA / Youth / Crèche / Kid’s Church / Scripture / Vacation Bible School / Other
 (Please specify) _____

Have you received a ‘Working With Children Check’ showing that you have been cleared to work with children?

What is your ‘Working With Children Check’
 number _____

Have you read and signed a ‘Central Mountains Baptist Church Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and
 Procedures? _____

List any other names by which you have been known (including maiden name)

List the name of any other churches in which you have served in children’s ministry and the nature of that service

Why do you wish to serve in children’s ministry?

List any education, training, gifts, secular jobs, or other factors that you feel have prepared you for ministry to children

List any other churches that you have regularly attended in the last 5 years

List the name, address and telephone number of two people who can provide references based on working with you in a
 child related area (secular or spiritual)

The information contained in this application is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

NAME: _____
MINISTRY: _____
PANEL: _____

As you have expressed an interest in a ministry position that involves contact with children, and because we have an important duty of care to protect children under our care, we ask that you answer the following questions, and sign this record of interview.

1. Can you elaborate on the reason (s) given in your application for wanting to be involved in this ministry?

2. Can you share with us any positive experiences in your past involvement with children?

3. What about negative experiences?

4. Do you feel that you are a positive role model for children, and/or are you comfortable with the idea of being a role model?

5. Have you ever had a situation, directly or indirectly, where you feel a child was sexually provocative? If so, describe the incident, and how you handled it, or would handle it if it happened?

6. Is there any other information relating to your suitability for this ministry that we should be aware of?

Signed: _____
(Interviewee) (Panel Chairman)

Date: _____

Central Mountains Baptist Church,
17 Woodland Avenue,
HAZELBROOK NSW 2779
Date: _____

Dear

CHARACTER REFERENCE

(Name of worker) has offered to help with our children’s ministry.

Before any workers are appointed, we must take all reasonable care to satisfy ourselves that they are suitable. In particular it is our responsibility to ensure that the children in our care are not subjected to harm of a physical, emotional or sexual nature.

(Name of worker) has given us your name as someone who is in a position to give a character reference.

We will be grateful if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire – the information you provide will remain confidential.

(Name of worker) would mainly be involved with children (age range) as (brief description of work).

With thanks,

Yours sincerely,

(Pastor)

APPENDIX 11 – QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY REFEREE

Name of proposed worker _____

Your relationship with (*name of worker*) _____

How long have you known (*name of worker*) _____?

From your knowledge of and experience with (*name of worker*) please comment on his / her suitability to work with children / young people / the cognitively impaired.

Specifically comment on his / her honesty, reliability, and experience / capacity in working with children / young people / the cognitively impaired.

Are there any other comments you would like to make about (*name of worker*)?

Signed : _____

Date : _____

Name : _____