

Child Safe Guidelines for Western Australia

Document A – Child Safety within the Church

The church in Western Australia supports the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Children are a valued part of our gatherings, and it is important that they feel safe, happy, heard, and supported.

For these Guidelines, the term “church” is used to refer to our ministry and broader fellowship as a collective. This is consistent with the scriptural meaning of “church” a body or gathering of people united by faith. Whilst commonly referred to as the Ministry and Fellowship, “church” has been used to reflect the combined responsibility of both in the context of this matter. It is also to help recognise and retain the sanctity of our individual fellowship and relationship with God.

The term “church-related” refers to any function or responsibility that falls within the ministry’s responsibility or control, and to child abuse perpetrated by a ministry worker or elder in the course of their duties, or abuse that occurred at a ministry-organised meeting. The term “ministry organised meetings” refers to meetings including Sunday morning fellowship meetings, weeknight Bible studies, gospel meetings, mid-year special meetings, preparations and conventions. It does not extend to private social events such as weddings, funerals, or personal gatherings.

The term “responders” refers to individuals selected from the Western Australian ministry and others who may be called upon to assist in responding to allegations and supporting case management. They are not counsellors or investigators. Their role is to assist in receiving child safety concerns and to respond in accordance with these Guidelines.

The term “we” or “our” refers to either the church generally or responders specifically, depending on the context in which it appears.

These Guidelines are specifically focused on the safety and wellbeing of children who come into contact or otherwise engage with the church, helping to set clear expectations about child safe practices for the church in Western Australia.

A Shared Responsibility to Child Safety

Everyone in the church plays a vital role in ensuring meetings are welcoming and safe for all. A united approach allows us to work together towards a safe and caring environment for all who meet. We all should:

- Be aware of the importance of child safety.
- Take children's concerns seriously and respond supportively.
- Report known or suspected abuse to relevant authorities.
- Learn to recognise the signs of abuse.
- Communicate any areas of risk or concern.

The church holds worship meetings and gospel services for people of all ages. We do not offer child-specific programs and children are to remain in the care of their parents or guardians at all ministry organised meetings. However, the church accepts its legal and moral obligation to ensure attendees can worship safely, and that risks to attendees’ safety are appropriately mitigated.

A unique and valued aspect of the church is that ministry workers are welcomed into the homes of those in the fellowship. This is not a requirement or obligation of those in the church but occurs where there is personal invitation from homeowners and in a spirit of trust and hospitality. We recognise that this practice brings an added responsibility of care, and it has been considered in developing these Guidelines.

Child Safe Conduct

We believe the Scriptures offer a complete and guiding example for conduct. These Guidelines seek to honour this by helping protect children and the vulnerable within the church.

All ministry workers in Western Australia are trained in child safe practices including identifying and reporting child sexual abuse. Training is available for interested elders and their spouses. Please make contact for recommended options.

The safety of children depends on us all. Together, we help foster an environment of safety, and genuine care. For more information, refer to *Document B – Safe Conduct within the Church*.

Guiding Principles for Child Safety

1. To be guided by the Word of God and the example of Christ – that all responses, are with love, and impartiality.
2. To promote child safety — raise awareness and encourage vigilance to help ensure all children and young people are kept safe when attending ministry organised meetings.
3. To consider survivors — supporting those who have experienced harm with care, and respect.
4. To comply with the law – state and federal legislative requirements and mandatory reporting.
5. To respect privacy – that in all actions and communications, every effort will be made to maintain the privacy of the survivors, those accused, and others involved, except when disclosure is required by law or to keep children safe.
6. To uphold procedural fairness and proportionate response – respecting the rights of all affected and following consistent due process.
7. To respect rights — recognising that children have the right to safety and equal protection from abuse and neglect.

Guideline Review

Child Safe Guidelines for Western Australia – Document A: Child Safety within the Church replaces the *WA Child Safe Policy*.

These Guidelines have been implemented to help in the safeguarding of children across ministry-organised meetings, and reflect alignment with Western Australian, and federal legislation, and takes guidance from the recommendations of the *Royal Commission* and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

These Guidelines have been reviewed by Irdi Legal, external counsel with expertise in child safeguarding, and are subject to biennial internal reviews.

Next review: October 2027

Ministry – Training and Assessment

We greatly appreciate those who serve in the ministry and are grateful for their commitment. We warmly welcome visiting ministry workers and value their time and willingness to come and share with us.

Western Australian **ministry workers** are required to:

- Hold a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) card.
- Complete scheduled child safe training as directed or required, complete compliance checks and participate in scheduled reviews of these Guidelines.
- New ministry workers in WA complete training through Safe Ministry Australia and Ministry Safe USA, prior to their commencement in ministry in this State.

As part of the endeavours to promote child safety, **visiting workers** will be obliged to:

- Review and understand the child safety roles and responsibilities and reporting obligations in these Guidelines.
- Provide to the Western Australian Overseer either prior to arrival or upon arrival:
 - Any available current Working with Children Check (WWCC), police clearance, or equivalent clearance certification from their state or country of residence; and/or
 - A current child safe training certificate from one of the following recognized providers:
 - Ministry Safe (USA), or Safe Ministry Check (Australia), or
 - Another internationally equivalent child safety training provider.

Reporting Concerns

Anyone with concerns is encouraged to report to the relevant authorities. Reports can be made to any Western Australian police officer and/or [Report child abuse | Western Australian Government](#)

Within the church, reports should be made to a ministry worker or an elder. Where possible and appropriate, the church responders will respond to concerns involving ministry workers, elders or ministry organised meetings. When concerns fall outside these areas or the concern is such that church responders do not have the capacity to assist, support and guidance towards appropriate authorities and services will be provided.

Concerns are taken seriously, and every endeavour will be made to protect the privacy, rights, and wellbeing of all involved. This approach is guided by fair processes and in consultation with relevant authorities where necessary. Refer to *Document C – Reporting within the Church*

Managing Risk

Child safety is a key part of the church's approach to risk management for ministry organised meetings. Child abuse or risk of harm towards children is never acceptable. We work to protect children from harm at all ministry organised meetings and during any interactions with the ministry including in homes, online and via electronic communication.

Each person contributes to creating safe environments – for example, by speaking up constructively about potential risks. This shared responsibility is outlined further in the Roles and Responsibilities listed in *Document B – Safe Conduct within the Church*.

In some circumstances, keeping children, safe means looking at individual situations. In line with the recommendations of the [Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#), and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, we will assess and manage any risk arising in relation to a person who is the subject of a substantiated complaint or conviction.

While we acknowledge the potential for individual reform and recognise that risk may change over time, the church's duty is to uphold the safety and wellbeing of children. To support this, we adopt an approach based on the current risk posed by an individual when determining participation in ministry organised meetings and we will respond proportionately to that level of risk.

Meeting Together

People, including children, from all walks of life, cultures and backgrounds are welcome in public gospel meetings. Fellowship meetings, mid-year meetings and conventions are open to those who have made a commitment to God through the gospel.

While we value the importance of fellowship and worship to individuals, safety is crucial. When required, decisions about meeting attendance are made with the safety of children in mind. This may include limiting attendance in certain circumstances. If the in-person attendance of an individual is deemed inappropriate, we may offer other ways for that individual to stay connected—such as fellowship meetings with agreed volunteers or listening to meetings remotely—so that person can continue to receive spiritual support in a safe and respectful way.

Resources and Contacts

- [Identifying child abuse and neglect](#)
- [Report child abuse | Western Australian Government](#)
- [Child Protection](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse in WA](#)
- [Recommendations | Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#)
- [Child safe organisations](#)
- [Child Protection Online Training Courses | Bravehearts](#)
- [Webinars for parents and carers | eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Child Safe Training](#)

Support Services

- **1800 Respect**
 - website: www.1800respect.org.au
 - phone: 1800 737 732
- **Bravehearts**
 - website: www.bravehearts.org.au
 - phone: 1800 272 831
- **Lifeline**
 - website: www.lifeline.org.au
 - phone: 131 114
- **Men's Line Australia**
 - website: www.mensline.org.au
 - phone: 1300 789 978

Church Contacts

- WA overseer: wa.cs.docs.2025@gmail.com
- Any WA Worker
- Training Options: training.cs2025@gmail.com

Related Documents

- [WA Child Safe Guidelines](#)
- [Document B – Safe Conduct within the Church](#)
- [Document C – Reporting within the Church](#)
- [WA Concerns Form](#)