

Statement and Overview - Child Safe Guidelines and Processes for Western Australia

The ministry and fellowship in Western Australia (referred to as the 'church' in this overview) supports the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Children are a valued part of our gatherings, and we strive for both their spiritual and natural welfare. It is important that they are safe, feel happy, and are heard and supported.

Whilst the church does not run child-specific programs or facilities, and children remain in the care of their parents or guardians, the ministry endeavours to ensure that everyone who attends the meetings can do so in a safe and respectful environment. The implementation of protective measures, a set of guidelines and processes, awareness and education are all part of this endeavour.

All church responses in the matter of Child Sexual Abuse; will be handled with sensitivity to all affected, in accordance with state and federal legislative requirements and in keeping with the Scriptures.

Child Safe Guidelines for WA

The WA Child Safe Guidelines comprise of three key documents:

1. Child Safety within the church (policy)
2. Safe Conduct within the church (code of conduct)
3. Reporting within the church (allegation management process)

The documents have been developed through consultation on relevant aspects with:

- o People within the church across WA, other states, and New Zealand, experienced in child safety, policy development, interpretation of legislation, survivor support, allegation management and/or with personal lived experience.
- o External independent law firms, specialising in child safeguarding and child sexual abuse cases.
- o Commissioner for Children and Young People WA (CCYPWA)
- o The Western Australian Police Sexual Assault Squad
- o The ministry workers in WA.

The documents have been developed taking guidance from:

- o Recommendations from the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- o Relevant WA legislation and regulatory requirements, mandatory reporting, privacy obligations, child safety, risk management, recommended protective measures, proportionate response, privacy and a fair and just process.
- o Australian National Child Safe Standards.
- o Requirements for Sexual and Molestation, Public and General Insurance policy extension.

The documents have been independently and externally reviewed by:

- o Those with church related child sexual abuse expertise at, Irdi Legal, Perth Western Australia

Responsibility

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. This set of child safety and protective measure documents has been developed to help in creating a safe environment—and so that people can know where and how to report any concerns.

We feel for all affected by abuse, particularly victims, survivors, and their families, and we recognise how difficult it can be to disclose. Importance is placed on considering the risks posed by individuals of concern and the sensitivities of others in our meetings.

By working together, we can create safer spaces for every child. We value those who have come forward to help make that possible.