



COME TO JESUS CHURCH SAFE CHURCH POLICY

PURPOSE

Come to Jesus (CTJ) Church's Safe Church Policy exists to enable the provision of safe and secure environments for all people who are a part of CTJ Church and its community services, in compliance with relevant legislation.

This document provides an explanation of CTJ Church's approach regarding the protection of our people, the overall governance arrangements within CTJ Church, and how such are positioned to achieve its safety objectives.

SAFE CHURCH COMMITMENT STATEMENT

CTJ Church is committed to providing safe and secure environments, in all aspects of physical, emotional, and spiritual protection, for all people we encounter, both internally, as well as externally, through outreaches. Careful and proactive implementation of our Safe Church Policy serves to reduce the risk of any harm affecting people, both in our care and that our services encounter. It stands as a caring and appropriate response, should any suspicion, allegation, disclosure, or complaint of misconduct or abuse occur.

CTJ Church is committed to providing all people, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, disability, and family/social background with equal rights and access to this protection. Moreover, we are also committed to providing a safe environment for people living with a disability, people with a cultural, and/or linguistic diverse background and will consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about supporting their specific needs when necessary.

CTJ Church upholds a zero-tolerance approach to registerable sex offenders as it poses an unacceptable risk. Registerable sex offenders are not permitted to take part in any of CTJ Church's services, ministries, programs, activities, and/or events (CTJ Church Programs).

SAFE CHURCH OBJECTIVE

Based on our Statement of Commitment to CTJ Church's Safe Church Policy, three objectives have been clearly defined:

- provide safe and secure physical, emotional, and spiritual environments;
- reduce the risk of harm occurring to CTJ Church's people; and
- provide a caring and appropriate response, should any suspicion, allegation, disclosure, or complaint of misconduct or abuse occur.

Adhering to these objectives is a main focal commitment for all areas of CTJ Church's ministerial services and agendas. Those of which uphold responsibilities within the Safe Church Policy are as follows:

- CTJ Church Pastors
- Spiritual Council
- CTJ Board of Directors

- Generations Directors
- Ministry Leaders/Directors/Coordinators
- Connect Leaders
- Kids World (Children's) Teachers & Assistants
- Generation Fresh (Youth's) Leaders & Volunteers
- Establishment (Young Adult's) Leaders & Volunteers
- WHS Team

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibilities are shared between groups of people who are considered capable and competent to fulfil their duties. Individually, no person should feel that they carry the full responsibility for church safety. However, each person should feel that they have an important part to play in collectively providing a safer church for everyone.

Every CTJ Church leader, director, assistant, volunteer, member, and/or staff (CTJ Church Representative) who continues to attend and participate in any CTJ Church Program, is expected to have read and understood the CTJ Church's Safe Church Policy and have discussed its contents with the Senior Pastor, any CTJ Church Pastor, any member of the Spiritual Council, and/or any ministry leader/director/coordinator.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Under the CTJ Church Safe Church Policy, the following sub-policies and procedures provide further specific guidelines:

1. Safe Church Policy and Procedures
2. Child Protection Policy
3. Code of Conduct Policy
4. Working with Children Check Policy and Procedures
5. Complaints & Grievance Policy and Procedures

The CTJ Church Safe Church Policy was adapted from the National Council of Churches in Australia and Australian Christian Churches (ACC). It has been developed to uphold our commitment to safeguarding and adhering to National and Local legislation.

1. SAFE CHURCH POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1.1. This policy aims to:

- (a) promote respect, fairness, and consideration of all members of the community;
- (b) ensure that CTJ Church Representatives and CTJ Church Programs are functioning in a way that provides protection for all members of the community;
- (c) ensure that all people within our communities are respected and valued regardless of their age, country of origin, gender, cultural heritage, ability or background;
- (d) provide a safe environment for vulnerable members of our communities through accountability and layers of protocol; and
- (e) maintain a safe community for everyone.

- 1.2. The exercise of appropriate duty of care includes but is not limited to:
- (a) being vigilant at all times to establish awareness of the need to be safe;
 - (b) providing adequate supervision at CTJ Church Programs;
 - (c) ensuring that CTJ Church Representatives have read and are complying with the CTJ Church Code of Conduct;
 - (d) having appropriate strategies in place to deal with complaints and allegations within the local church, outreach or event;
 - (e) providing support to the alleged victims of abuse and their families;
 - (f) protecting workers and volunteers from false allegations of abuse;
 - (g) fostering an environment of mutual trust, respect, and support;
 - (h) staying impartial while settling a dispute and notifying appropriate agencies if necessary;
 - (i) maintaining accurate records of individuals who work and volunteer within CTJ Church;
 - (j) providing training for CTJ Church Representatives on the CTJ Church Safe Church policies and procedures; and
 - (k) completing risk management assessment checklists on the CTJ Church premises or any venue where a CTJ Church Program is conducted.
- 1.3. This policy takes into consideration all the vulnerable people within our church communities, including children, youth, the elderly, individuals with disabilities and their carers, and people who are emotionally and spiritually vulnerable (i.e. all individuals under authority of church leadership).

2. **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

- 2.1. This policy aims to:
- (a) protect children and youth who participate in CTJ Church Programs;
 - (b) provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection;
 - (c) minimise the risk of abuse, misconduct and misuse of positional power;
 - (d) ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and misconduct are handled thoroughly;
 - (e) ensure that all people and all CTJ Church Programs are safe; and

(f) ensure that all people are respected and valued.

2.2. In this policy, unless otherwise indicated by the context:

(a) *Abuse* includes but is not limited to:

- (i) physical abuse;
- (ii) emotional abuse;
- (iii) family violence;
- (iv) sexual abuse;
- (v) grooming;
- (vi) neglect;
- (vii) bullying;
- (viii) spiritual abuse; and
- (ix) financial abuse;

(b) *Child* means a person who is under the age of 18 years;

(c) *Safe Environment* means duty of care is discharged by taking steps to keep all those in our care safe and free from abuse;

(d) *Safe Leader* means an individual who has been through a safe recruitment process, understands responsibilities, and is an accountable team player;

(e) *Safe Program* means any CTJ Church Program in which all risks have been assessed, thought through, and planned; and

(f) *SCTA* means Safe Church Training Agreement under the National Council of Churches in Australia – Safe Church Program.

2.3. The welfare of the child is paramount, and is everyone's responsibility as outlined in the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children.

2.4. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from abuse.

2.5. CTJ Church acknowledges that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues and commit to providing care that goes beyond what is deemed reasonable and adequate to ensure their safety.

2.6. CTJ Church is committed to ministering to children, youth, and vulnerable adults by providing an environment that is physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe.

2.7. CTJ Church will work in partnership with children, youth, their parents, carers and other organisations/agencies in promoting their welfare.

2.8. CTJ Church is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children, youth, and vulnerable adults and will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment

for children, youth, and vulnerable adults by putting in place the following safeguarding measures:

- (a) safe recruitment of prospective ministry leaders:
 - (i) all prospective ministry leaders will be properly screened prior to appointment before they are appointed; and
 - (ii) all prospective ministry leaders will be required to obtain a WWCC;
- (b) adequate training of leaders:
 - (i) all leaders will be required to attend a safe church training workshop such as a SCTA workshop (Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Training) before commencing in their role;
 - (ii) leaders who have completed the initial training will be required to attend a refresher workshop every 3 years; and
 - (iii) leaders will be required to attend additional specific training as required;
- (c) adopt and implement a clear Code of Conduct which outlines boundaries of behaviour and expectations of interactions with children;
- (d) continued supervision, training, and support for leaders;
- (e) clear and appropriate procedures in responding to allegations of risks of harm (abuse) and serious misconduct:
 - (i) any CTJ Church member, upon being aware of any disclosure or suspicions of child abuse, should immediately report and notify the appointed Child Safety Contact Person by submitting an Incident Report Form;
 - (ii) any child, youth, and/or vulnerable adult who raise any type of concern will be heard objectively and will be given assurance that the matter will be duly investigated;
 - (iii) both alleged victims and perpetrators will be provided with support and appropriate denominational help will be sought for a just and fair resolution; and
 - (iv) the matter will not be dismissed until relevant action has been taken; and
- (f) provide an open safe environment:
 - (i) afford participants a say in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas and encouraging participation;
 - (ii) create a child-friendly environment, allowing people to raise their concerns in an appropriate manner; and
 - (iii) obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that their physical and emotional needs are met.

2.9. The following values reflect the culture that we are committed to promoting within CTJ Church:

- (a) due diligence;

- (b) integrity;
- (c) duty of care;
- (d) transparency;
- (e) inclusivity;
- (f) collaborative ministry;
- (g) Christian ethics; and
- (h) the Gospel principles.

2.10. This policy reflects legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- (a) National Guidelines;
- (b) National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children "Protecting Children is Everyone's Business" 2009 - 2020 (Commonwealth of Australia);
- (c) *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW); and
- (d) *Children Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW).

3. **CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

3.1. This policy aims to:

- (a) protect every CTJ Church Representative from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from any person in leadership;
- (b) provide a guideline for a standard of behaviour that is expected of every CTJ Church Representative;
- (c) reduce the possibility of allegations of abuse being made against any CTJ Church Representative and provide possible victims a pathway for voicing their concerns; and
- (d) reduce the possibility of allegations of abuse being made against our organisation as a whole.

3.2. CTJ Church condemns all forms of child abuse, discrimination and sexual exploitation, and is committed to creating and maintaining an environment which promotes safety and inclusiveness for children. Child abuse occurs when individuals subject children or youth to any form of abuse.

3.3. Every CTJ Church Representative is responsible for maintaining a professional role with children, which means establishing and maintaining clear boundaries that serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings or a violation of the relationship.

3.4. The following conduct exhibits compliance with the Code:

- (a) behaving in a manner that is consistent with the values of CTJ Church;
- (b) treating all children and youth with respect, regardless of race, ethnicity gender, language, religion, political/other opinion, national/ethnic/social origin, property, disability, birth/other status;
- (c) providing a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, youth, parents, staff and volunteers;
- (d) following and reporting any concerns of child abuse in accordance with the CTJ Church's child protection policy and procedures;
- (e) keeping confidentiality of all information regarding child protection cases, disclosing and discussion information only with the Safe Church Concerns Person or other parties as designated by them and according to reporting procedures;
- (f) respecting cultural differences;
- (g) encouraging open communication between all children, youth, parents, staff and volunteers, and allow children and youth to participate in the decisions that affect them;
- (h) upholding transparency in actions and whereabouts;
- (i) taking responsibility, staying accountable, and avoiding situations that pose a risk of allegations of misconduct being made;
- (j) ensuring other adults are present when working in the proximity of children;
- (k) discussing other measures as necessary with CTJ Church's Safe Church Concerns Person;
- (l) being mindful of behaviour, actions, language and relationships with children;
- (m) reporting any concerns or suspicions regarding abuse by a fellow worker, volunteer, contractor or visitor, via CTJ Church's child protection reporting mechanisms unless they are thought to be the perpetrator;
- (n) complying with all relevant Australian and State/Territory legislation;
- (o) immediately disclosing all charges, convictions and other exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures;
- (p) avoiding favouritism towards particular children;

- (q) ensuring any contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults is appropriate and within the parameters of the program/event/ministry as stated;
- (r) always ensuring language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory;
- (s) ensuring programs are made accessible for people with a disability, and to make changes where needed to assist any specific needs that may arise;
- (t) being an example of good conduct in daily activities;
- (u) challenging unacceptable behaviour and reporting all allegations/suspensions of abuse;
- (v) encouraging youth and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like; and
- (w) recognising that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or youth.

This list is non-exhaustive and may include other conduct which meets all intents and purposes of the Code.

3.5. Every CTJ Church Representative is expected to uphold at all times the standards of behaviour that constitutes compliance with this Code.

3.6. The following conduct exhibits non-compliance with the Code:

- (a) engaging in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, youth or vulnerable adults;
- (b) using inappropriate, offensive, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, culturally inappropriate or discriminatory language when speaking with a child or youth;
- (c) allowing allegations/suspected abuse/risk of harm or disclosures go unreported;
- (d) doing things of a personal nature that a child, youth or vulnerable adult can do for him/herself, such as assistance with going to the toilet or changing clothes;
- (e) hitting or physically assaulting children, including refraining from physical punishment or discipline of children.
- (f) developing inappropriate relationships with children, youth or vulnerable adults;
- (g) conducting a sexual relationship or indulging in any form of sexual conduct with a child, youth or vulnerable adult;
- (h) seeking to make contact and/or spend time with any child outside the designated times and activities set for performing any role as a CTJ Church Representative;

- (i) condoning or participating in behaviour of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- (j) acting in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children, youth and vulnerable adults;
- (k) releasing or discussing any personal and/or confidential information about suspected or proven child abuse or protection cases other than with the Safe Church Concerns Person and other parties as designated by them and according to reporting procedures;
- (l) using any computer, mobile phone, or video and digital camera to exploit or harass children;
- (m) giving children and youth your personal contact details (mobile number or address);
- (n) making sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures towards or in front of children, youth or vulnerable adults;
- (o) acting in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive;
- (p) making inappropriate promises to children and youth, particularly in relation to confidentiality;
- (q) jumping to conclusions about others;
- (r) exaggerating or trivialising child abuse issues; and
- (s) relying on an individual's reputation or that of the organisation's to offer protection against disciplinary action in an event of a breach.

This list is non-exhaustive and may include other conduct which meets all intents and purposes of the Code.

- 3.7. Each CTJ Church Representative is responsible for their own actions and is expected to utilise safe church standards and best practices to avoid actions and behaviours that could be in breach of this Code and any part forming CTJ Church's Safe Church Policy.
- 3.8. Any CTJ Church Representative who breaches this Code will be subject to CTJ Church's disciplinary procedures.
- 3.9. All CTJ Church Representatives are expected to report any breaches of this Code, whether affirmed or alleged, to the Child Safety Contact Person under the child protection policies and safeguarding procedures put in place by CTJ Church.
- 3.10. Any breach of the Code involving external workers and/or volunteers may result in them being asked to leave CTJ Church premises and/or any ongoing CTJ Church Program.

- 3.11. Disciplinary measures and/or legal steps will be taken against any CTJ Church Representative and/or external workers if there is any breach of the Code.
- 3.12. Serious breaches of this Code may also result in a report being made to authorities such as the police and/or the local statutory child protection authorities to meet obligations under Australian law.

4. **WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

- 4.1. This policy aims to:
 - (a) adhere to the NSW Government guidelines and legislation in relation to keeping children and youth safe;
 - (b) nurture a safe and healthy environment of all members of the community, particularly within each outreach and event; and
 - (c) provide a safe environment that will promote the wellbeing of all members, including children and youth.
- 4.2. CTJ Church follows the procedure for obtaining a WWCC as outlined in the Office of the Children's Guardian website.
- 4.3. Each CTJ Church Representative, whether actively involved in CTJ Church Programs or not, is required to obtain a WWCC, to ensure that people within CTJ Church community and all CTJ Church visitors are safe.
- 4.4. Prior to participating in any CTJ Church Program, an individual should submit their WWCC and other required details to be checked for validity.
- 4.5. All CTJ Church staff are to present their WWCC to the Senior Pastor for verification.
- 4.6. All volunteers are to present their Working with Children Check to the Volunteers Coordinator.
- 4.7. CTJ Church Representatives will be reminded to renew their WWCC three months before their respective WWCC expires and are responsible for applying and renewing their own WWCC.
- 4.8. The Volunteers Coordinator will maintain safe and accurate record keeping of WWCC details of all CTJ Church Representatives at all times. These records will be checked for verification of outcome every six months and shall be available for audit and monitoring purposes.
- 4.9. The following roles are classified as non-child-related work, and will not require a WWCC:
 - (a) providing food or equipment at/for a sporting, cultural, or other entertainment venue; and

- (b) providing a venue.

4.10. People covered by these exemptions are not required to obtain a WWCC:

- (a) a parent or close relative of a child volunteering in activities, except where the work is part of a formal mentoring program or involves intimate personal care of children with a disability;
- (b) a visiting speaker, adjudicator, performer, assessor or other similar visitor at a place where child-related work is carried out if the work of the person at that place is for a one off occasion and is carried out in the presence of one or more other adults; and
- (c) a person under the age of 18.

4.11. If for any reason, a CTJ Church Representative becomes barred from working with children, the Office of the Children's Guardian can contact:

- (a) The Senior Pastor; and
- (b) The Child Safety Contact Person.

4.12. If CTJ Church receives any notification advising that current CTJ Representative has become barred (or has an interim bar), they must be immediately removed from any child-related work, regardless if they are paid/unpaid or supervised/unsupervised. The following actions may be taken following the notification:

- (a) dismissal; and/or
- (b) suspension from child-related work pending the outcome of an appeal.

4.13. Any person who has any form of bar should not be engaged to work as staff or volunteer with children or youth.

4.14. People with a form of bar within CTJ Church, who are not working directly with children or youth, should be requested to sign a statutory declaration in order to acknowledge that they are aware that they should not be involved in any capacity with the children and youth within the community of CTJ Church.

4.15. Depending on the situation, it may be deemed appropriate for a person with a criminal record regarding misconduct with children to be provided with an attendant who will remain with them during their time within the community of CTJ Church.

5. COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

5.1. This policy aims to:

- (a) nurture a safe and healthy environment for all CTJ Church Representatives;

- (b) ensure that any issue that may arise will be dealt with in a fair, sensitive, impartial, and transparent manner in order to attain a favourable resolution;
- (c) ensure that all cases of suspected abuse or misconduct are handled in a consistent, unbiased, and thorough manner;
- (d) provide a framework for raising concerns, questions and/or complaints regarding behaviours, practices, decisions, and/or other issues of any CTJ Church Representative; and
- (e) comply with CTJ Church's biblical and legal obligation of duty of care, procedural fairness, and natural justice towards every CTJ Church Representative.

5.2. The following should be observed in relation to complaints:

- (a) all complaints should be documented with accurate notes including:
 - (i) date;
 - (ii) place;
 - (iii) time;
 - (iv) an account of events including people present; and
 - (v) any other relevant details; and
- (b) should the complaint be made regarding a different worker, volunteer, member or visitor of the local church, outreach or event, the Senior Pastor would be responsible for reporting and may request the support of the Child Safety Contact Person, even if the individual involved is not a child.
- (c) should the complaint be made regarding a person or persons outside of the local church, outreach or event, the senior pastor would be responsible for reporting and may request the support of the Child Safety Contact Person.

5.3. The following should be observed in relation to allegations of abuse:

- (a) it is not the responsibility of any CTJ Church individual to investigate alleged incidents of abuse but rather to report them to the Child Safe Contact Person within CTJ Church and/or the appropriate agencies;
- (b) an interview (formal or informal based on the age and situation) will be conducted to establish facts needed to make a report only but not necessarily to minimise or highlight the situation;
- (c) all parties involved will be given adequate time to respond to the alleged abuse;
- (d) all parties will be provided protection against any further abuse;
- (e) these allegations should not be discussed with other people within the community to protect the privacy of all involved;
- (f) if the person of the allegation is a CTJ Church Representative:

- (i) they may be informed, following the report being completed, of the allegation (if appropriate);
 - (ii) they may be informed of the substance of the report and any investigation; and
 - (iii) upon being informed, they should file an appropriate response either verbally or in writing to the Child Safety Contact Person and the person carrying out the investigation.
- 5.4. It is the responsibility of the Senior Pastor or, where appropriate, the Child Safety Contact Person to ensure that all relevant individuals, including children, families, and alleged perpetrators are receiving appropriate counsel and support.
- 5.5. All matters of relatively minor concern should be initially directed to the person the grievance is directly connected with.
- 5.6. If the issue is between a pastor or leader and another individual, an appointment should be made through the appropriate channel (generally the church office).
- 5.7. Matters which are unresolved or considered to be of a more serious nature, between CTJ Church members should be referred directly to the Senior Pastor to allow for mediation to occur.
- 5.8. Matters which are unresolved or involving the Senior leadership of the church, should be directed to the ACC Norwest Regional Leader, to allow for external mediation to occur.
- 5.9. All issues which arise should be addressed with discretion and not discussed openly with any other CTJ Church Representative who are not party to the dispute in order to promote peace throughout the community.
- 5.10. The following principles and procedures will be employed when dealing with formal conflict:
 - (a) allegations are to be stated clearly in writing, and addressed as follows:
 - (i) if a matter is brought against a Pastor, then the complaint must be addressed to the ACC Norwest Regional Leader; and
 - (ii) if a matter is brought against a Director, including the ACC Norwest Regional Leader, then the complaint must be addressed to the ACC NSW State President;
 - (b) there is a presumption of innocence until guilt is determined;
 - (c) strict confidentiality is to be maintained at all times (with exception of agencies communicating to other agencies under section 16A of the *Child Protection Act* or in a matter with potential criminal implications);
 - (d) the ACC NSW State President or his or her delegate in exceptional circumstances, will be the Head of Agency in relation to outside agencies such as Police, Ombudsman, WorkCover, etc;

- (e) an opportunity for all to respond should be granted to ensure procedural fairness;
- (f) all processes should take into consideration all appropriate government legislation;
- (g) affected parties will be made aware of the results of the investigation as soon as possible;
- (h) all records and documentation should be maintained as appropriate for any incident in order to assist due process to remain consistent and fair; and
- (i) at any stage in the conflict, prayer should be a central focus, as it is only through God that true peace can be found for individuals.

DOCUMENT AND VERSION INFORMATION

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