

BEACONSFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH

# Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

This document should be read in conjunction with the  
Child Safety Code of Conduct, and Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures



Beaconsfield Baptist Church is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.

# Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Beaconsfield Baptist Church (**BBC**) is committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people participating in our ministries, activities, programs and services.
- 1.2 BBC's commitment to child safety and wellbeing is a biblical, pastoral, moral and legal responsibility.
- 1.3 BBC has zero tolerance for any type of abuse and harm to children and young people.
- 1.4 This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (**'Policy'**) outlines our commitment to fulfill BBC's biblical, pastoral, moral and legal responsibilities and has been approved by the BBC Leadership Team.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to:
  - a) communicate BBC's biblical and organisational commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.
  - b) outline the principles that guide BBC's approach to safeguarding children and young people in every ministry context.
  - c) clarify the responsibilities of all leaders, staff, and volunteers in upholding a culture of child safety and wellbeing.
  - d) ensure that BBC's ministries, activities, programs, services and environments (both physical and online) reflect best practice and minimise risk of harm.
  - e) demonstrate compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and alignment with BBC's supporting documents, including the **Child Safety Code of Conduct**, **Child Safety Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures**, and **Child Safe Ministries Procedures Manual**.

## 3. Scriptural Foundations for Protecting Children

- 3.1 The call to protect children comes first from God's Word. The Bible consistently commands God's people to protect the weak, care for the vulnerable, and guard those unable to defend themselves.
- 3.2 At BBC, we believe:
  - a) All children are precious to God.
    - *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."* (**Matthew 19:14**)
    - *"If anyone causes one of these little ones - those who believe in me - to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."* (**Matthew 18:6**)
  - b) The vulnerable must be protected.
    - *"Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."* (**Psalms 82:3-4**)

- *“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” (Proverbs 31:8–9)*
  - *“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.” (Isaiah 1:17)*
- c) Church leaders are accountable before God.
- *“Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them - not because you must, but because you are willing...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” (1 Peter 5:2–3)*
  - *“Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach...he must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.” (1 Timothy 3:1–5)*
- 3.3 For BBC, safeguarding children is not only a legal requirement but a biblical mandate. Leaders are accountable before God to create an environment and culture where children are safe, valued, and nurtured in Christ. Compliance with legal standards is therefore the minimum baseline; our deeper calling is to reflect the gospel by protecting *“the least of these” (Matthew 25:40)*.
- 3.4 In all these things, BBC seeks to reflect the character of Christ - protecting the vulnerable, strengthening the weak, and fostering a community where every child can flourish in safety and faith.

## 4. Scope

- 4.1 This Policy applies to:
- a) all BBC pastors, elders, deacons, staff, leaders, and volunteers, as well as any contractors or individuals engaged by BBC to work with children and young people;
  - b) all BBC ministries, programs, activities and services that involve children and young people, conducted in all BBC operational environments and all interactions with children and young people including physical contact, face-to-face contact and contact by written, oral or electronic communication;
  - c) all hirers and third-party users of BBC facilities who conduct activities involving children or young people, who must comply with BBC’s child safety expectations and provide evidence of their own compliance with child safety laws;
  - d) all attendees, visitors, and members of the BBC community while participating in church activities or while on BBC premises, who are expected to behave in ways that uphold the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

## 5. Policy & Faith Statements

- 5.1 BBC Commitment to Child Safety
- a) BBC believes that all children and young people have a right to feel and be safe within all BBC ministries, programs, activities and services, and to be protected from abuse and harm.
  - b) BBC is committed to creating and maintaining a child-safe organisation with zero tolerance for child abuse or harm. This commitment is foundational as we seek to foster an environment where every child can flourish, knowing they are created in the image of God, who loves and cares for them.
  - c) BBC recognises its responsibility to comply with relevant child safety legislation and standards, while being guided by its Christian values and biblical convictions.

## 5.2 Acknowledge Differences and Create a Culturally Safe Environment

- a) BBC affirms that all children and young people, have equal rights to protection from abuse and harm, and to care and support, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background.
- b) BBC values and celebrates cultural identity while ensuring that expressions are centred on Christ and shaped by the gospel. This means encouraging and supporting children and young people to express their culture in ways that affirm their God-given dignity (**Genesis 1:27**), celebrate the richness of cultural diversity as part of God's design for the nations (**Revelation 7:9**), and reflect the hope, values, and truth revealed in Christ.
- c) BBC holds the biblical view that God has created all people in His image and ascribed dignity, sanctity and worth to human life from conception until death. God requires human life to be accorded respect and to be protected from harm (**Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:13-16, Exodus 20:13**).
- d) BBC holds the gospel view that in Christ Jesus, *“there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female”* (**Galatians 3:28**). In Christ, ethnicity, gender, social background, and ability do not determine our status before God or our welcome into His covenant family. The gospel levels the ground at the foot of the cross, where all are received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. At the same time, Scripture often names specific groups (such as Samaritans, Gentiles, widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor) reflecting God's heart for the vulnerable and the Church's responsibility to guard against neglect and prejudice, and to protect and pursue justice for all.
  - *“Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.”* (**Psalm 68:5**)
  - *“Cursed be anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow.”* (**Deuteronomy 27:19**)
  - James condemns favouritism, whether preferring the rich or sidelining the poor. (**James 2:1–9**)
- e) In upholding the dignity of all people, BBC also affirms the biblical design for human identity and relationships as part of God's created order.
- f) BBC holds the biblical view that God has created humanity as distinctly male and female and has ordained a normative connection between binary biological sex and a person's true self conception as male or female. (**Genesis 1:27, Matthew 19:4**)
- g) BBC holds the biblical view that God instituted marriage between a man and a woman as the only scriptural covenantal, sexual, and procreative union for humanity, which signifies and mirrors the covenant love between Christ and His Church. Married couples must be sexually faithful to one another, and sexual relationships outside of marriage are contrary to God's will and command for humanity. (**Genesis 2:23-24, Matthew 19:5-6, Ephesians 5:22-32**)

## 5.3 BBC's Commitment to an Organisational Culture of Child Safety and Wellbeing

- a) BBC is committed to strong and effective leadership and governance for safe ministry to children and young people. This includes cultivating a culture of transparency, accountability and care, and establishing the **Child Safety Committee** and the portfolio of **Child Safety Deacon** to oversee implementation.
- b) BBC's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is demonstrated through our policies, codes of conduct, guidelines, procedures, and related Child Safety documentation.
- c) BBC will engage in continuous review and improvement of its child safety policies, codes of conduct, guidelines, procedures and related frameworks to ensure they remain effective, current, and responsive.

- d) It is a serious breach of this Policy for any Pastor, Elder, Deacon, staff member, or child or youth ministry leader or volunteer to contravene this Policy, any related procedure, or any law in relation to the safety and protection of children and young people.
- e) The Leadership Team will model this culture of safety through their own conduct, decision-making, and communication.

#### 5.4 Governance and Leadership Responsibilities

- a) The Leadership Team holds ultimate accountability for child safety and wellbeing at BBC and will ensure appropriate systems, resources, and oversight are maintained.
- b) The Leadership Team will receive regular reports from the Child Safety Committee on compliance, incidents, and improvement actions.
- c) Child Safety will be a standing agenda item at Leadership Team meetings and will be included in ministry planning and risk reviews.
- d) Members of the Leadership Team and Child Safety Committee will complete governance-level child safety and reportable conduct training at least every two years.

#### 5.5 Risk Management and Continuous Improvement

- a) BBC is committed to actively identifying, assessing, and managing risks to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- b) To reduce and prevent risk within the BBC environment, the Leadership Team through the Child Safety Committee will ensure that BBC:
  - conducts **Child Safety Risk Assessments** for BBC ministries, programs, activities and environments considering the nature of activities and the characteristics of participating children and young people;
  - regularly reviews and monitors risk controls, including following any incident or change in ministry context;
  - requires all people covered by this Policy to comply with this Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures, and Child Safe Ministries Procedures Manual.
  - integrates child safety and wellbeing into recruitment, screening, induction, training, and performance management; and
  - ensures that all people working with children receive ongoing training and guidance appropriate to their role.
- c) BBC, through the Child Safety Committee, will maintain a current **Child Safety Risk Register** identifying potential sources of harm to children and young people across all ministries, programs, activities, services and environments.
- d) The Child Safety Committee, will regularly assess risks, implement control measures, and monitor the effectiveness of risk management strategies, ensuring alignment with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- e) Significant risks, incidents, or patterns of concern will be reported to the Leadership Team for review, action, and documentation.
- f) The Child Safety Risk Register and related child safety systems will be reviewed biennially and following any reportable incident, complaint, or material change in ministry activity. Outcomes from each review will inform updates to BBC's policies, training, and ministry practices as part of our commitment to continuous improvement.

## 5.6 Children, Families and the Church Community are included in Promoting Child Safety

- a) BBC affirms that the care, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people is a shared responsibility of the whole church community. We will actively include and communicate with children, families, and the broader congregation about child safety practices, expectations, and reporting processes.
- b) We acknowledge the God-given dignity and value of every child and young person and the importance of their participation in matters that affect them. BBC is committed to ensuring that children and young people are informed, encouraged to participate appropriately in decisions that impact them, and genuinely listened to and taken seriously, as far as is reasonably practicable. Participation will always be age-appropriate, sensitive to each child's developmental stage, and protective of their wellbeing. Our approach seeks to give children a genuine voice without placing on them responsibilities or burdens they are not ready to carry, and to do so in a way that respects the primary role of parents and care givers and the guiding responsibility of leaders and volunteers.
- c) BBC will provide opportunities such as feedback forms, discussions, or child voice check-ins (brief opportunities during programs where children can share how safe and supported they feel) at programs, and the Child Safety Committee will review feedback and identify opportunities for ongoing improvement.

## 5.7 Accessibility, Inclusion and Support for Diverse Needs

- a) BBC will ensure that all children, families, and church members, including those with disabilities, language barriers, or diverse cultural identities, as far as reasonably practicable, have equitable access to ministry program, activities, services, safety information, and reporting processes.
- b) BBC recognises that some children and young people may require specific support tailored to their unique needs to participate in our programs and activities. Acknowledging the individual nature of their requirements, the church understands that no single approach will suit every need, and commensurate with the skills of staff and volunteers, we will work with the child and young person and their parents/guardians to find suitable support.
- c) BBC will ensure that information about child safety, including reporting processes, key contacts, and the roles of the Child Safety Deacon and Safe Church Persons, is communicated in clear, age-appropriate, and accessible formats, both online and in visible physical locations. Child-friendly summaries of this Policy, the Code of Conduct, and Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures will be available in ministry programs and on the BBC website.

## 5.8 Recruitment, Screening and Selection

- a) BBC will implement thorough recruitment, screening, and selection practices to ensure all staff, leaders and volunteers are safe and suitable to work with children and young people in accordance with BBC's **Child Safe Ministry Procedures Manual**.
- b) Everyone serving in ministries that involve supervision of, or ministry to, children and young people must be formally appointed.
- c) All volunteers wishing to work with children and young people must complete a **Leader/Volunteer Application and Screening Form** before commencing ministry and will receive ongoing supervision and support.
- d) Except where legal exemptions apply (e.g. police officer), a current Working with Children Check ('**WWCC**') registered to Beaconsfield Baptist Church must be held by:
  - all pastors and staff, whether paid or unpaid;
  - all elders and deacons;

- all volunteers aged 18 and over (including parents/guardians) serving in ministries, programs, and activities involving children and young people;
  - all members of the Child Safety Committee; and
  - all appointed Safe Church Persons.
- e) A person who no longer holds a valid WWCC card or has not renewed it within thirty (30) days of expiry, will not be permitted to participate in any activities that may involve intentional contact with children and young people. The Child Safety Committee will monitor compliance and maintain records of all WWCCs and screening checks.
- f) All pastors, elders, deacons, staff, and volunteers serving in ministries, programs, and activities with children and young people must read, acknowledge, and sign the BBC Child Safety Code of Conduct annually. Failure to do so within thirty (30) days of each anniversary will result in suspension from ministry duties until the requirement is completed.
- g) Any person charged with a violent or sexually related offence, regardless of conviction status, will be precluded from involvement in ministries, programs, and activities involving children and young people.

#### 5.9 Child Safety Training, Support and Duty of Care

- a) BBC will provide inductions and training, supervision, and support to ensure all those engaged in ministry with children and young people understand their duty of care and reporting obligations to ensure the safety of children and young people.
- b) Pastors, elders, deacons, staff, members of the Child Safety Committee, Safe Church Persons, and volunteers serving in ministries, programs or activities involving children and young people must undergo induction, training, and ongoing supervision to acquire the knowledge, skills, and awareness necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- c) Induction and training will include, at a minimum, familiarisation with and agreement to comply with:
- this Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy;
  - BBC's Child Safety Code of Conduct;
  - BBC's Child Safety Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures;
  - BBC's Child Safe Ministries Procedures Manual;
  - indicators of child abuse, neglect and grooming;
  - how to identify and mitigate risks in both online and physical environments, while respecting a child's right to privacy, information, social connection, and learning; and
  - mandatory reporting and other legal obligations.
- d) All required training must be completed before commencing ministry and refreshed at least every **two years**, or more frequently if required by law or as directed by the Leadership Team. The Child Safety Committee will maintain accurate records of all training completion and supervision activities.
- e) Pastors, elders, deacons, staff, and volunteers serving in ministries, programs and activities with children and young people have a duty of care, and at times a legal obligation, to take all reasonable steps to prevent harm to any child or young person.
- f) Any breaches, including minor breaches, of BBC's Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct, or Complaints Handling Policy & Procedures must be promptly reported and documented to the Child Safety Deacon or a Safe Church Person. This duty of care extends to all children and young people present on BBC premises or engaged in BBC-related activities, whether or not they are participating in a BBC-organised program.

#### 5.10 Physical and Online Environments Promote Safety and Wellbeing

- a) BBC is committed to creating and maintaining safe physical and online environments that minimise the risk of harm or abuse, while upholding every child's right to privacy, inclusion, access to learning, development of faith, and connection with God and others.
- b) BBC will identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in both physical and online contexts, in accordance with our [Child Safety Procedures Manual] and [Safe Ministry Guidelines].
- c) The Leadership Team, through the Child Safety Committee, will regularly review the safety and suitability of all ministry environments to ensure they remain safe, inclusive, and child-centred.

#### 5.11 Child-Focused Process for Complaints and Concerns

- a) BBC welcomes and encourages reports or disclosures of concern on any matter, regardless of the level of evidence. This includes complaints, allegations of misconduct (by staff, volunteers, or attendees), breaches of a Code of Conduct or other policies, health and safety issues, reports of harm to children, privacy breaches, or any disclosure of abuse. All concerns will be addressed according to BBC's Child Safety Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures.
- b) BBC is committed to ensuring that all complaints processes are child-focused. This includes responding to every concern with care, respect, and pastoral sensitivity - so that children and young people feel safe, heard, and supported. We seek to nurture an environment where risks to wellbeing are quickly identified, appropriate action is taken, and protective responses are provided promptly and compassionately.
- c) BBC will ensure all complaints are managed promptly, fairly, and in accordance with its Child Safety Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedure.
- d) BBC will ensure that complaint processes are:
  - Accessible – communicated in child-friendly ways and available to children, families, and the broader church community;
  - Timely and fair – managed promptly, impartially, and in accordance with natural justice principles;
  - Safe and supportive – ensuring that anyone making a report in good faith is protected from retaliation; and
  - Confidential – maintaining privacy except where disclosure is required by law.
- e) Where complaints or disclosures relate to suspected or actual child abuse, serious misconduct, or criminal behaviour, BBC will report the matter to the appropriate external authorities (such as Victoria Police, Child Protection, or the Commission for Children and Young People), consistent with legal obligations and BBC's Child Safety Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures.
- f) All reports will be documented and managed in accordance with BBC's Child Safety Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures.
- g) Where appropriate, BBC may seek advice or engage an independent investigator (e.g. via BUV or an external professional) to ensure objectivity and best-practice responses.
- h) BBC affirms that caring for those who bring forward concerns reflects our biblical calling to protect and restore those who are vulnerable (Proverbs 31:8–9; Matthew 18:6).

#### 5.12 Privacy, Records and Information Management

- a) BBC will handle all personal and sensitive information in accordance with **BBC's Privacy Policy** and relevant recordkeeping laws.
- b) All records of complaints, reports, Working with Children Checks, screening documentation, and training completion will be securely stored and retained for the legally required period.

- c) Access to such records will be restricted to authorised personnel only, and information will only be disclosed where required by law or with appropriate consent.
- d) BBC will ensure digital systems used for storing child safety information are password-protected, regularly backed up, and accessible only to authorised users.
- e) Children, young people, and families may request access to personal information held about them, consistent with privacy law and BBC's Privacy Policy.

#### 5.13 Implementation, Review, and Publication

- a) This Policy will be reviewed every **two years** or sooner following any reportable incident, legislative change, or material change in BBC's activities.
- b) The Child Safety Committee will coordinate the review process and provide recommendations to the Leadership Team for approval.
- c) The most current version of this Policy and related child safety documents will be made publicly available on the BBC website.
- d) All staff, leaders, and volunteers will be notified of policy updates, and required to acknowledge that they have read and understood the updated version.

## 6. Roles & Responsibilities

### Shared Responsibilities

- 6.1 The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is everyone's responsibility. All people covered by this Policy must act to prevent harm, reduce risk, and report concerns promptly.

### Leadership Team (Governance & Accountability)

#### *Context*

- 6.2 Under the BBC Constitution, the Leadership Team (Pastors, Elders, Deacons) exercises oversight of ministry areas delegated by the Church Meeting.
- 6.3 It is the practice of BBC for all members of the Leadership Team to be "Responsible Persons" for purposes of governance and charity regulation as defined by the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission.

#### *Accountability*

- 6.4 The Leadership Team holds ultimate accountability for child safety and wellbeing at BBC. It may delegate tasks but retains responsibility for outcomes.

#### *Key Responsibilities*

- 6.5 The Leadership Team will:
- a) Champion a culture of child safety and wellbeing, embedding it in leadership, governance, planning and communications.
  - b) Ensure compliant policies, procedures and systems are in place, approved, and reviewed at least every **two years** or after any significant incident.
  - c) Approve and oversee the Child Safety Committee, the Child Safety Deacon, and the appointment of Safe Church Persons.

- d) Ensure sufficient resourcing for implementation (training, supervision, risk management, complaints handling, record keeping).
- e) Monitor compliance via regular reports (risk register, training/WWCC registers, incidents, improvements).
- f) Ensure risk management is active and documented, and that child safety is a standing agenda item at Leadership Team meetings.
- g) Ensure everyone covered by this Policy is aware of their obligations, including mandatory and internal reporting requirements.
- h) Oversee BBC's response to reportable conduct and ensure legal reporting to external authorities occurs in accordance with BBC's Child Safety Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedure.
- i) Take all practical measures to ensure the Code of Conduct and Policy are implemented effectively across all BBC environments.
- j) Ensure procedures are in place so that contractors, hirers and third-party users who engage with children comply with BBC's child safety requirements.

### **Child Safety Committee (Implementation, Review, Risk & Compliance Monitoring)**

#### *Purpose*

- 6.6 Established by the Leadership Team to provide specialised oversight, review, coordination and monitoring of child safety implementation across BBC.

#### *Composition*

- 6.7 The Child Safety Committee is to comprise of a no more than 7 members, and must include:
- a) Child Safety Deacon (Committee Chair) – as governance and operational bridge
  - b) One Elder – independent governance voice (Optional)
  - c) Youth & Young Adults Pastor – operational practice
  - d) Children's Ministry Worker – operational practice
  - e) No more than two parents/guardians from the congregation (not staff or Leadership Team) – child/family voice
  - f) One independent professional – legal/risk/compliance expert (If available)
- 6.8 The Senior Pastor may attend the Child Safety Committee meetings as a non-voting observer and must recuse themselves whenever a conflict of interest exists.
- 6.9 A quorum for Committee meetings will be at least three members.
- 6.10 The Child Safety Committee may meet in camera (without staff present) when discussing sensitive matters, conflicts of interest, or issues involving staff behaviour.

#### *Key Responsibilities*

- 6.11 The Child Safety Committee will:
- a) Oversee implementation of child safety policies, procedures and practices and recommend updates at least every **two years** or after incidents/changes in law.
  - b) Maintain and review the Child Safety Risk Register; ensure Child Safety Risk Assessments are completed for all children and youth related ministries, programs, activities, and environments; regularly assess risks and implement/monitor the effectiveness of controls; and ensure risk management practices align with the Victorian Child Safe Standards. The Risk Register and related

systems will be reviewed at least **annually** and following any reportable incident, complaint, or material change. Outcomes will inform updates to BBC's policies, training and ministry practices.

- c) Review legislative and regulatory changes and advise the Leadership Team of required policy/procedure updates.
- d) Review operational registers (staff/volunteer, WWCC, training, incidents) for currency; escalate non-compliances or themes to the Leadership Team.
- e) Ensure effective internal systems exist for responding to complaints, concerns, disclosures, and incidents, and that post-incident reviews inform improvement.
- f) Provide minutes of Child Safety Committee meetings to the Leadership Team.
- g) Provide regular written reports to the Leadership Team on compliance, incidents, risks and continuous improvement.
- h) Promote accessible communication to children and families (key contacts, reporting pathways) and facilitate child/family feedback loops for improvement.
- i) Oversees compliance but does not conduct investigations. It monitors that each investigation conducted by the Child Safety Deacon and a Safe Church Person follows the approved procedure, meets legal requirements, and ensures lessons learned are documented and acted upon.

### **Child Safety Deacon (Lead Operational Steward)**

#### *Purpose*

- 6.12 Portfolio established by the Deaconate to lead and coordinate operational child safety across BBC and to chair the Child Safety Committee.

#### *Key Responsibilities*

- 6.13 The Child Safety Deacon will:

- a) Act as the primary point of contact for child safety concerns within BBC and ensure compliance with internal and legal reporting obligations.
- b) Chair the Child Safety Committee and ensure its functions are carried out effectively.
- c) Oversee the effective implementation of training across ministries (delivered by ministry pastors/leaders) and maintain visibility over completion.
- d) Lead investigations into child safety concerns in partnership with a Safe Church Person, in accordance with BBC's Child Safety Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedure.
- e) Ensure that no internal investigation is undertaken by a single individual. All internal investigations must involve both the Child Safety Deacon and one Safe Church Person to ensure transparency, accountability, and procedural integrity.
- f) Ensure risk assessments are completed and that controls are implemented and monitored across ministries.
- g) Promote child-safe practices and continuous improvement across all BBC environments.
- h) Report to the Leadership Team on compliance, risks, incidents and improvements.
- i) Ensure that where a conflict of interest exists (e.g. the allegation concerns them or someone close to them), the matter is escalated to a Safe Church Person and the Chair of the Leadership Team.

## Safe Church Persons

### *Appointment & Independence*

6.14 Appointed by the Leadership Team; must be BBC Members, suitably trained, independent (no conflicts of interest), and not related/married to staff or members of the Leadership Team.

### *Role*

6.15 Designated, accessible points of contact for receiving and supporting concerns, disclosures or complaints.

### *Key Responsibilities*

6.16 Safe Church Persons will:

- a) Be accessible and visible points of contact for receiving disclosures, allegations or concerns from children, parents, staff, volunteers or attendees.
- b) Receive and document all disclosures or concerns confidentially and without delay, and notify the Child Safety Deacon immediately.
- c) Participate with the Child Safety Deacon in all investigations, interviews, and documentation processes to ensure visible accountability and independent oversight.
- d) Ensure that children, families, staff and volunteers are supported appropriately during and after any report or investigation.
- e) Ensure all external reporting obligations (Victoria Police, DFFH/Child Protection, CCYP) are enacted in collaboration with the Child Safety Deacon, following the BBC Procedures Manual.
- f) Maintain strict confidentiality, independence, and avoidance of conflicts of interest.
- g) Promote child safety awareness within BBC and assist children and families to understand reporting pathways.

## Employment Deacon (Safe Recruitment & Screening of Paid Staff)

### *Purpose*

6.17 The Employment Deacon is responsible for ensuring that all paid staff are recruited, screened, inducted and supervised in accordance with BBC's child safety obligations. The role focuses exclusively on employed staff. Oversight of volunteer recruitment and screening is the responsibility of the relevant ministry pastors, in alignment with the Safe People Policy and the Child Safety Committee.

### *Key Responsibilities*

6.18 The Employment Deacon will:

- a) Develop and maintain child-safe recruitment practices for paid staff, including:
  - child-safe statements in job advertisements;
  - position descriptions that include clear child safety responsibilities;
  - role requirements for training, WWCC and compliance expectations.
- b) Ensure that all pre-employment screening for paid staff is completed and documented, including:
  - referee checks (with child-safety specific questions),

- verification of WWCC, qualifications and registrations,
  - identity checks and any other screening required under the Safe People Policy.
- c) Ensure all new paid staff receive a role-specific induction, including:
- the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy;
  - the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
  - Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures;
  - information sharing and privacy obligations;
  - expectations for record-keeping and professional boundaries.
- d) Maintain systems to monitor and track the ongoing validity of WWCCs, registrations and qualifications for paid staff, and ensure timely renewal.
- e) Ensure paid staff receive regular supervision and annual performance reviews, including assessment of:
- compliance with child safety responsibilities,
  - adherence to the Code of Conduct,
  - suitability to continue in a child-connected role.
- f) Provide guidance to paid staff managers (e.g., Senior Pastor) on how to respond if concerns arise regarding a staff member's behaviour, competence or compliance with child safety responsibilities.
- g) Maintain accurate and up-to-date records relating to recruitment, screening, training and performance of paid staff, and provide periodic compliance reports to the Leadership Team and Child Safety Committee.
- h) This role does not oversee volunteer recruitment or supervision, which remains the responsibility of ministry pastors.

## Senior Pastor

6.19 The Senior Pastor will:

- a) Champion child safety across BBC and model child-safe conduct.
- b) Support the Youth and Young Adults Pastor, Children's Ministry Worker, Child Safety Deacon and Committee in implementation and culture-building.

## Youth and Young Adults Pastor (Years 7 to 12) (Day-to-Day Compliance)

6.20 The Youth and Young Adults Pastor will:

- a) Implement child safety practices, procedures and training within the youth ministry.
- b) Be a member of the Child Safety Committee; undertake Risk Assessments under the direction of the Child Safety Committee and contribute to the Risk Register.
- c) Develop and maintain risk management strategies specific to youth programs and events.
- d) Volunteer recruitment, screening, induction and supervision with guidance and oversight from the Child Safety Deacon and Child Safety Committee.
- e) Be accountable to the Child Safety Deacon/Committee for compliance in their ministry areas.

## Children's Ministry Worker (Up to Grade 6) (Day-to-Day Compliance)

6.21 The Children's Ministry Worker will:

- a) Implement child safety practices, procedures and training within children's ministries.
- b) Be a member of the Child Safety Committee; undertake Risk Assessment under the direction of the Child Safety Committee and contribute to the Risk Register.
- c) Develop and maintain risk management strategies specific to children's programs and events.
- d) Volunteer recruitment, screening, induction and supervision with guidance and oversight from the Child Safety Deacon and Child Safety Committee.
- e) Be accountable to the Child Safety Deacon/Committee for compliance in their ministry areas.

## People Covered by this Policy (All Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Staff, Leaders, Volunteers, Contractors)

6.22 All people covered by this Policy have a responsibility to prevent, identify and reduce risks related to child safety and wellbeing, and must:

- a) Promote child safety and wellbeing at all times and provide safe environments for children and young people.
- b) Read and comply with this Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- c) Take all concerns seriously and respond in a child-focused manner with sensitivity and professionalism.
- d) Report promptly any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of harm/abuse (or risk of harm) and any suspected breach of this Policy or Code, in accordance with BBC's Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures.
- e) Cooperate fully with any internal process or external investigation by statutory authorities (e.g., Victoria Police, DFFH/Child Protection, CCYP).
- f) Disclose any potential conflict of interest relating to child safety matters.

## Escalation & Reporting Lines

- 6.23 Anyone may raise a concern with a Safe Church Person or ministry leader (or directly to the Child Safety Deacon).
- 6.24 The Safe Church Person informs the Child Safety Deacon immediately, who ensures internal documentation and external reporting occur in line with law and the Procedures Manual.
- 6.25 The Child Safety Committee monitors themes, risks and compliance, and reports to the Leadership Team.
- 6.26 The Leadership Team retains ultimate accountability and ensures continuous improvement.
- 6.27 If a concern, disclosure, or allegation involves the Child Safety Deacon, Senior Pastor, or any member of the Leadership Team, a Safe Church Person must escalate the matter directly to the Chair of the Leadership Team or relevant statutory authority, in accordance with BBC's Reporting Procedures.

## 7. Related Documents and Legislation

7.1 Related policies, procedures and codes of conduct include:

- a) **Child Safety Code of Conduct** – sets standards for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and outlines responsibilities when working with children and young people. All Pastors, Elders, Deacons, staff, and volunteers in child- and youth-related ministries must read, sign annually, and adhere to the Code.

- b) **Child Safety Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures** – outlines how concerns, complaints, disclosures or allegations can be made and how BBC will respond, including investigation requirements and reporting to authorities.
- c) **Child Safe Ministries Procedures Manual** – translates BBC’s Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety Complaints Handling & Reporting Procedures into clear, practical, operational steps for staff, pastors, leaders, volunteers and contractors.

7.2 Relevant legislation, regulations and standards include:

- a) *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
  - Establishes the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
  - Empowers the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) to monitor and enforce compliance.
  - Includes Part 5A – Reportable Conduct Scheme (external oversight of allegations of misconduct involving children).
- b) *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
  - Governs child protection and outlines mandatory reporting obligations for certain professionals (including ministers of religion).
- c) *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*
  - Includes offences for failing to disclose child sexual abuse, failing to protect a child from harm, and grooming offences.
- d) *Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Regulations 2015*
  - Provides detail on compliance with the Child Safe Standards and CCYP enforcement powers.
- e) *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)*
  - Sets out requirements for Working With Children Checks and ongoing monitoring of cardholders.
- f) *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*
  - Regulates the handling of personal and sensitive information, including child safety records.
- g) *Victorian Child Safe Standards*
  - The 11 Standards that set requirements for creating a child-safe culture.
  - Apply to all organisations that exercise care, supervision, or authority over children, including churches.
  - CCYP provides guidance, resources, and audits compliance.
  - See: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/>

# Acceptance, Amendments & Review Register

## Policy Administration Schedule

<b>Document Owner</b>	BBC Leadership Team
<b>Approved By</b>	BBC Leadership Team
<b>Approval Date</b>	May 2026
<b>Version No.</b>	Version 1.0
<b>Modification made to this version</b>	Incorporated new Victorian Child Safe Standards
<b>Next review date by Document Owner</b>	May 2028 or earlier if required

## Version Control

Version	Date	Written By	Reviewed By	Summary of Action or Document Amendments
1.0	May 2026	Glen Slimmon (Elder)	BBC Leadership Team	Initial version – approved by the BBC Leadership Team. Incorporation of the eleven new Child Safe Standards that took effect on 1 July 2022.  Replacement of all previous BBC child safety policies and procedures.