



**C3 CHURCH MONASH  
SAFE CHURCH POLICY & GUIDELINES**

(Adapted from the C3 Australia Safe Church Policy and Guidelines)

**Adopted by the Executive Committee on:** 17 March, 2022

**Classification:** Public

**Version:** 1

**Completed by:** C3 Australia and adapted for C3 Monash

**Responsible Person/Group:** Executive Committee

**Policy #:** GC06

**PURPOSE**

The Safe Church Policy and Guidelines:

1. guide our work in establishing and maintaining safe environments for all people, including children and young people.
2. underpins our biblical mandate to love the lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40).
3. promotes and provides for the provision of services that foster the health and safety of all who access our church and/or programs.
4. ensures that all workers (paid and volunteer) associated with our church fulfil their pastoral and organisational responsibilities.
5. ensures compliance with legislation, and also with the intention of the legislation, as it relates to protecting people, particularly the vulnerable (including children).

**SCOPE**

The Safe Church Policy covers all C3 Church Monash (C3 Monash) leadership, staff, and volunteers as well as all people involved in or attending the church and its programs (ministries). The Safe Church policy and associated policies or procedures extend to hirers of the church and its facilities and their guests and to contractors, subcontractors, delivery persons and any others engaged to provide a service.

**POLICY STATEMENTS**

1. C3 Monash acknowledges that all people have a right to feel safe, and to experience life-giving, harm free interactions when engaging in C3 Monash programs, ministries, and events.
2. We acknowledge the need for sensitivity and consideration of all people of aboriginal, ethnically and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as any person with a disability.
3. We commit to the welfare of all people through the adoption, implementation and ongoing improvement of this Safe Church Policy as well as associated policies and procedures and the C3 Australia Safe Church Guidelines. This includes:

- 3.1. Providing safe and friendly environments where people are listened to, feel safe, accept challenges, develop faith, and grow in connection with God and others.
- 3.2. Safe and adequate recruitment, training, supervision, support, and resourcing of our workers.
- 3.3. Appropriate and expedient responses to all incidents, accidents, child protection and/or safe church concerns.
- 3.4. In relation to children (0-17 years), we acknowledge the primary role of parents and caregivers as well as the role of children in child protection and will engage with children and caregivers and the wider community in the shared responsibility of child safety.
- 3.5. In relation to children (0-17 years), we acknowledge the shared responsibility of the whole community for child safety and welfare, including caregivers and our workers, and as such we will promote the role of parents and caregivers and the wider community in the shared responsibility of child safety.
- 3.6. It is a serious breach of this policy for any worker in our church to contravene this policy, any related procedure, or any regulation in law, in relation to the safety and protection of children and the vulnerable.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

All workers are to:

1. be respectful of all people, especially of children and the vulnerable, respecting the rights of all people at our church to safe and friendly interactions.
2. foster and encourage the participation and empowerment of all people in staying safe.
3. take all reasonable care for their own health and safety.
4. take reasonable care that their actions do not adversely affect others health and safety.
5. comply with all reasonable instructions from the church leadership.
6. comply with church policies, guidelines and directives from the leadership as communicated, including the code of conduct.
7. report all child protection and other safe church (misconduct and abuse) concerns, allegations, or incidents immediately to the Risk Management Office (RMO = Safe Church contact).
8. report all incidents or hazards to the RMO or a Team/Ministry Leader as soon as practicable.

## **SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

In addition to the general responsibilities the following office holders and those associated with our church have the following specific responsibilities under this policy:

### *CHURCH BOARD (EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE)*

1. Primary duty of care, to ensure so far as is practicable the health and safety of all persons involved in the organisation.
2. Ensure that C3 Australia Safe Church minimum standards are maintained at their church (as found in the C3 Australia Safe Church Policy and Guidelines).
3. Assign responsibilities for the management of the C3 Australia Safe Church Policy and Guidelines.
4. Monitor and review the implementation of the C3 Australia Safe Church Policy and Guidelines.
5. Ensure disclosures of harm are reported to all relevant regulatory bodies.
6. Fulfill relevant legislative 'head of entity roles' (and equivalent in State based reportable conduct schemes) in child protection related investigations.

### *TEAM/MINISTRY LEADERS*

1. Implementation of this policy and related procedures as applicable to their church ministry/program/events.
2. Monitor workers who they oversee to ensure workers are acting safely and according to the policy, guidelines, and procedures.
3. Provide reasonable instruction to workers regarding the provision of safe environments.
4. Report to the RMO (Safe Church contact person) any suspicions, allegations, incidents, or potential breaches of the church's code of conduct.
5. Identify and report all risks and hazards to the RMO for treatment.

### *RISK MANAGEMENT OFFICER (SAFE CHURCH CONTACT & HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER)*

1. Implementation of the procedures in relation to responding to Safe Church concerns, including child protection.
2. Tasks as directed by the Executive Committee.
3. Receive reports of incidents and/or concerns of risk of harm in relation to children or workers.

4. Maintain secure records in relation to Safe Church Policy and Guidelines.
5. Regular reporting to the Executive Committee.
6. Implement WHS Policies, including privacy policy and evacuation procedures (Emergency Response Manual)
7. Keep WHS on the agenda at meetings of the leadership and Executive Committee.
8. Receive notifications of hazard/incidents, such as serious events and dangerous incidents, from workers and visitors.
9. Notify incidents, such as serious events and dangerous incidents, within a prescribed period to the appropriate office holders i.e., the Executive Committee.
10. Address health and safety concerns within a reasonable timeframe.
11. Undertake a site safety audit at regular intervals (minimum twice per annum)

#### *CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS*

1. Provide all information as necessary to ensure the safety of the person in their care.
2. Provide feedback to the leaders of the church about safety issues.

Deliberate or continued failure to abide by approved church policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from a held employment or volunteer position.

The underlying document to this Policy, the C3 Australia Safe Church Policy, and Guidelines, will be reviewed, as a minimum, by the C3 Australian Region every two years and as often as necessary, in order to remain compliant with new legislation. C3 Monash will accordingly update this policy in order to maintain alignment with the identified 'minimum standards' for C3 churches and to ensure continued legislative compliance.

#### **C3 Monash Executive Committee**

**EC Member**



**Date:** 17 March 2022

**EC Member**



**Date:** 17 March 2022

## **C3 CHURCH MONASH SAFE CHURCH GUIDELINES**

(Adapted from the C3 Australia Safe Church Policy and Guidelines)

The C3 Australia Safe Church Guidelines contain both C3 Australia Region's mandated 'minimum standards' ('Shall') and 'recommended good practice' ('recommend') for duty of care, child, and vulnerable people protection and just and caring responses to misconduct and abuse.

The C3 Australia Safe Church Guidelines, adapted for and adopted by C3 Monash, are an outworking of our Safe Church Policy and are divided into two categories:

- those considered to be legal, biblical and/or moral imperatives, denoted by the word 'shall' must be implemented as a minimum standard in practice, and
- those considered as good practice, denoted by the word 'recommended', are nevertheless strongly recommended.

### **GUIDELINE 1**

#### **SAFE CHURCH TRAINING**

As an outworking of policy statements:

We commit to the welfare of all people through the implementation and ongoing improvement of our C3 Safe Church Guidelines including:

- Safe and adequate recruitment, training, supervision, support, and resourcing of our workers, and
- Appropriate and expedient responses to all incidents, accidents, child protection and/or safe church (misconduct and abuse) concerns.
  - a. All C3 workers (paid and volunteer) 'shall' receive adequate, appropriate, and ongoing training in our Safe Church policy and Safe Church Guidelines.
  - b. All C3 workers involved in children and youth and vulnerable persons ministries 'shall' receive adequate, appropriate, and ongoing training in the concepts of child protection including identifying and responding to concerns about children and vulnerable people at risk of harm.
  - c. C3 Australia Credential Holders as part of their credentialing 'shall' complete C3 recognised Safe Church training initially and then every three years.

### **GUIDELINE 2**

#### **PROMOTING EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION**

As an outworking of policy statements:

- We acknowledge that all people have a right to feel and be safe, and to experience life-giving, harm-free interactions when engaging in C3 Monash ministries/activities, events, and programs.

- We commit to the welfare of all people through the implementation and ongoing improvement of our Safe Church documentation which includes safe and friendly environments where people are listened to, feel safe, accept challenges, develop faith, and grow in connection with God and others.
  - a. Our church 'shall' promote the empowerment and participation of all people at church.
  - b. It is 'recommended' that our workers assist the families of children to:
    - Speak up when they have a concern.
    - Access information about what child abuse is.
    - Feel welcome and have a say in the activities and programs in which their children or young people participate as far as is practical.
    - Engage in two-way communication between families and the church.

### **GUIDELINE 3**

#### **BEING AWARE OF CHILD ABUSE INDICATORS**

As an outworking of policy statements:

We commit to the welfare of all people through the implementation and ongoing improvement of our C3 Safe Church Guidelines including:

- Safe and adequate recruitment, training, supervision, support, and resourcing of our workers, and
- Appropriate and expedient responses to all incidents, accidents, child protection and/or Safe Church (misconduct and abuse) concerns.
  - a. All C3 Monash workers in child related ministry 'shall' be made aware of child or young person abuse and neglect and report to their Safe Church contact when they have concerns about a child and/or young person who is involved in the church.

### **GUIDELINE 4**

#### **RESPONDING TO CONCERNS OF RISK OF HARM**

As an outworking of policy statements:

We commit to the welfare of all people through the implementation and ongoing improvement of our C3 Safe Church Guidelines including:

- Appropriate and expedient responses to all incidents, accidents, child protection and/or Safe Church (misconduct and abuse) concerns.

#### **4.1 CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN**

It is recommended that C3 Monash appoint a Safe Church Contact Person or Team, whose roles include receiving reports, assisting in the process of reporting of Safe Church concerns and keeping accurate records permanently and securely in accordance with privacy legislation. At C3 Monash this person is identified as the Risk Management Officer (RMO).

- a. All C3 Monash workers (paid and unpaid) 'shall' report concerns when:
  - a child or young person discloses they have been or are at risk of being abused.
  - someone else (regardless of age) discloses that they know of a child or young person who has been/is at risk of being abused.
  - there are concerns that the child or young person may have been or is at risk of being abused based on their physical appearance or behaviour.
- b. C3 Monash workers are not required, as an initial response, to establish or investigate if abuse has occurred, but rather report reasonable suspicions or concerns of abuse, including the grounds for concerns, to their Team/Ministry Leader or directly to the RMO.
- c. If a Team/Ministry Leader or the RMO is not available and the abuse is currently occurring, or there are reasons to believe that a child or young person is at risk, a report should be made immediately to the police and appropriate authorities.

#### PROCESS FOR REPORTING CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN (AT RISK OF HARM)

- a. Report to the RMO – Report concerns to the appointed RMO, except when a disclosure occurs at a program or event, or a child's/young person's immediate safety is at risk (sexual and physical abuse). In this case, immediately phone the police and organise appropriate support for the child/ren. This can be done with the help of the most senior on-site leader, who will also need to assist with managing the immediate situation.
- b. Report to the Safe Church Helpline (1800 070 511 AEST Mon-Fri 9:00am-5:00pm) for advice and guidance in the management of the situation as a church.  
This will include appropriate actions including:
  - Completing applicable form/s and/or online reporting, e.g., Safe Church Helpline Contact form and/or state government online reporting tool/s.
  - The RMO keeping a local church log/register, upholding privacy principles.
  - Police and Government Child Protection agency reporting (Child and Youth Protection Services).
  - Initiate relevant complaints handling processes (including Reportable Conduct) if the allegations are about a C3 Monash worker.
  - Insurance reporting and notification.
  - Provide ongoing support, pastoral care, and risk management processes. It is the role of the Executive Committee to implement pastoral care and support for all parties involved, including the child or young person and family, as much as is practical. There may also need to be risk management processes that need to be implemented e.g., standing aside a worker who has been accused of harming a child or young person while an investigation occurs.
  - Disclosures - "Do's and Don'ts – for workers

### Do

- Listen...do not add anything to what the child says (this will need to be written down verbatim).
- Reassure... the child that they have done the right thing in speaking to you.
- Inform...the child that you need to tell people who will try to help them.
- Ensure...that the child is not in immediate danger.

### Don't

- Start an investigation re the information, do not ask leading questions, i.e., questions that have a yes or no answer.
- Promise the child that the abuse will stop.
- Tell anyone who does not need to know.

Note – Keep it brief, do not have a long conversation, as this may be seen to have influenced the child.

## 4.2 CONCERNS ABOUT ADULTS

- a. It is recommended that C3 Monash appoint a Safe Church Contact Person or Team, whose roles include receiving reports, assisting in the process of reporting of Safe Church concerns and keeping accurate records permanently and securely in accordance with privacy legislation. At C3 Monash this person is identified as the Risk Management Officer (RMO).

- b. It is 'recommended' that C3 Monash workers report concerns when there are concerns of:

Bullying behaviours	Emotional harm	Harassment
Elder abuse	Domestic violence	Criminal behaviour
Sexual harassment	Sexual misconduct	Sexual assault
Physical violence	Stalking	Self-harming
Suicide risk		
Historical child abuse (sexual, physical, emotional neglect)		
Concerns about the harmful behaviours of any person at a church program		
Concerns about misconduct by a church worker against another adult		

### c. **RECOMMENDED PROCESS FOR REPORTING CONCERNS ABOUT ADULTS**

1. During a disclosure – follow the principles of the disclosure (above)
2. Report to Team/Ministry Leader

- Report to your Team/Ministry Leader all disclosures and reasonable concerns about an adult to discuss reasonable, appropriate, pastoral, legal and organisational actions (unless the concern is about your Team/Ministry Leader, then go to point 'd').

- It may be that this is a process of negotiation with the adult, as their right to privacy should be considered. However, remember confidentiality does not mean keeping secrets but rather telling those who need to know. As a worker

of the church, you are required to follow all church procedures, including this one, and as such will need to inform the person disclosing of your church requirement to report, at least some of the information, i.e., that there has been a disclosure, the nature, and the persons first name.

Note: In the case of immediate danger to an adult it may be necessary to call the emergency services, e.g., threat of violence against another person, suicide attempts. In such cases the most senior leader on site should make this phone call.

3. Seek advice from national Safe Church Helpline (1800 070 511 AEST Mon-Fri 9:00am-5:00pm).
4. Implement a response plan – supervisor will contact Safe Church contact to arrange a response plan.
5. Assist – actively assist the Safe Church contact to take the appropriate pastoral, legal organisational and risk management actions, dependant on the nature of the concern.

## **GUIDELINE 5**

### **RECRUITMENT AND SCREEN OF WORKERS**

As an outworking of policy statements:

We commit to the welfare of all people through the implementation and ongoing improvement of our Safe Church Guidelines including safe and adequate recruitment, training and supervision, support, and resourcing of our workers.

- a. C3 workers shall be screened, appointed, and inducted using a formal accountable /transparent process.
- b. All completed recruitment and screening documentation shall be stored securely, and successful applicant documentation will be held on file permanently.
- c. It is recommended that recruitment and screening documentation only be assessed by a member of the church with the authority of the Church Board.

## **GUIDELINE 6**

### **SUPERVISION OF WORKERS**

As an outworking of policy statements:

We commit to the welfare of all people through the implementation and ongoing improvement of our Safe Church Guidelines including safe and adequate recruitment, training, supervision support and resourcing of our workers.

- a. C3 workers shall receive appropriate oversight in their roles, including being provided with clear behavioural expectations for their role through a code of conduct.
- b. C3 credential holders shall adhere to the standards in the C3 Australia Code of Conduct for Credential Holders.
- d. It is recommended that C3 churches:
  1. Provide adequate support for workers, it is recommended that there is adequate provision for formal and informal support for all C3 workers.

2. Establish and maintain Safe Church environments for each other and those to whom we minister when we work as the 'body' or minister in 'team' context. All C3 workers shall minister in transparent and accountable teams e.g., avoid unsupervised 1:1 contact with children or young people.
3. Develop skills of workers, it is recommended that there is adequate provision for developing workers. This may include things like regular team meetings and through in-house in-services and external training events.

## **GUIDELINE 7**

### **RESPONDING TO CONFLICTS, AND/OR ALLEGATIONS AGAINST C3 WORKERS**

As an outworking of policy statements:

We commit to the welfare of all people through the implementation and ongoing improvement of our Safe Church Guidelines including:

- a. Appropriate and expedient responses to all incidents, accidents, child protection and/or Safe Church (misconduct & abuse) concerns.
- b. C3 workers shall make an appropriate report to the relevant government agency/department (e.g., police, child protection, children's guardian/commission) and we recommend contacting the Safe Church Helpline (1800 070 511 AEST).
- c. C3 workers shall work through an appropriate process which affords natural justice to all parties.
- d. In all instances, it is recommended that churches consider the pastoral, legal and insurance implications of the conflict or allegation and respond with transparency and accountability.
- e. C3 Australia Ministry Standards investigation procedures shall be used in all allegations of serious misconduct against credential holders.

## **GUIDELINE 8**

### **COMPLIANCE WITH WHS/OHS**

We acknowledge that all people have a right to feel and be safe, and to experience life-giving, harm-free interactions when engaging in C3 activities, events, and programs.

- a. It is recommended that each Church:
  - Elect a Health & Safety Team to oversee implementation of WHS compliance.
  - Write and implement Health and Safety policies, including a privacy policy and evacuation procedures.
  - Keep health and Safety on the agenda at the church's Executive Committee meetings.
  - Notify incidents such as serious events and critical/dangerous incidents within a prescribed period to the Health and Safety Team.
  - Address health and Safety concerns within a timely manner of the concern being communicated to the Health & Safety Team.
  - Use incident report documentation to report serious incidents.

- Ensure all workers know and follow church guidelines for responding to risk of harm concerns.
- Have the Health and Safety Team undertake a safe environment audit regularly.

## **GUIDELINE 9**

### **SAFE ENVIRONMENTS**

#### **a. SAFE SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS IN CHURCH PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**

As an outworking of policy statements:

We acknowledge that all people have a right to feel and be safe, and to experience life-giving, harm-free interactions when engaging in C3 ministries/activities, programs, and events:

The church shall provide safe environments including a commitment to:

- servant leadership in our church to all people,
- not engage in spiritually and emotionally abusive practices,
- upholding National Privacy Act principles,
- respect for diversity ethnically, e.g., the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse Backgrounds,
- the safety of people with a disability.

#### **b. SAFE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS**

As an outworking of policy statements:

We commit to the welfare of all people through the implementation and on-going improvement of our Safe Church Documentation which includes:

- safe and friendly environments where people are listened to, feel safe, accept challenges, develop faith and grow in connections with God and others.
- Churches shall appropriately risk manage physical environments, including but not limited to; first aid, transportation, food safety, supervision numbers, management of high-risk activities. Fire and emergency.

#### **c. SAFE ONLINE AND DIGITAL PRACTICES**

We acknowledge that the use of electronic media for communicating is part of everyday life, as such, as an outworking of policy statements:

We acknowledge that all people have a right to feel and be safe, and to experience life-giving, harm free, interactions when engaging in C3 Monash ministries/activities, programs, and events.

1. C3 workers 'shall' be mindful of the position of trust they hold by actively being safe in all online and digital interactions, including maintaining transparency and accountability in the use of electronic communications especially with children or young people as far as is practical, that is as a team, not as individuals, e.g., group emails/text messages/Facebook, not sending electronic communication that attempts to hide their identity or represent the sender as someone else.
2. C3 workers 'shall' not transmit, download, or store any communication that is: discriminatory or harassing, derogatory, obscene, sexually explicit, or pornographic, defamatory, threatening, for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to the Code of Conduct. In the case where C3 workers received such communication from any C3 worker or other C3 church attendee, they will report this to their Safe Church Contact, Pastor, or Safe Church Helpline.
3. It is 'recommended' that communication with children under 16 occur with the knowledge of the parent/s or carer/s of the child or young person.

## **GUIDELINE 10**

### **RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS**

As an outworking of policy statements:

We commit to the welfare of all people through the implementation and ongoing improvement of our Safe Church Guidelines including

- appropriate and expedient responses to all incidents, accidents, child protection and/or safe church (misconduct and abuse) concerns.

- a. C3 workers 'shall'
  - i. Respond to incidents appropriately and promptly and take appropriate follow up action.
  - ii. Use of report forms: injuries or accidents requiring secondary medical attention e.g., visit to the doctor or medical centre, are to be written up on an incident report (*see also C3 Monash Incident Report Procedure*).
  - iii. Incidents of a serious nature need to be reported to our insurer.
- b. It is 'recommended' that all incidents in relation to children are reported to parents and/or cares of children and young people, and in instances where the impact has been felt by a wider group, report, with the permission of those involved in the incident, to the wider concerned group.