

**PEOPLE PROTECTION
and
RISK MANAGEMENT**

 **wesleyan** METHODIST CHURCH

AXIS Church

January 2024

People Protection and Risk Management

Purpose

This policy aims

- to prevent foreseeable harm to all participants of church activities with a focus on children, young people and vulnerable people.
- to ensure that all volunteers who work within the church are assessed for their suitability to work with children under the principles for Child Safe organisations.
- to ensure that all people involved with the operations of the church are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the above.

Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers, church activity leaders, church employees, Local Board of Administration (LBA) members, congregational members, parents, guardians, visitors – everyone involved in Wesleyan Methodist church activities as a leader, helper or participant.

Commitment

Governance and leadership

In our church, strong and clear governance arrangements allow leaders to ensure child safety is a focus within their ministry. This also supports vulnerable adults and all participants in ministries.

Leadership promotes the maintenance of a culture of safety for all with a particular focus on children and influences and guides the thinking and behaviour of LBA members, ministry leaders, staff, volunteers, children, parents, carers. There is an ongoing review and commitment to continuous improvement with this document being updated annually. This document and annual training specify how our church meets its duty of care and responsibilities.

Governance sets informed direction, oversees activity, and supports planning and decisions that are focussed, clear and well communicated.

Our church

- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all people who participate in our activities and services with a particular focus on children, young people and vulnerable people.
- will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment and activities for children, young people and vulnerable people through
 - o maintaining a safe environment by minimising site risks
 - o undertaking activities in a considered and responsible manner
 - o providing assistance to participate
 - o providing support in the event of an injury
 - o reviewing and approving this document annually at a LBA meeting
 - o reviewing this document following any incident, to address and minimise future risks
 - o carefully selecting, screening and monitoring all those interacting with children
 - o ensuring that a Code of Conduct Declaration is promoted and required of all leaders and helpers



- o requiring all leaders and adults working with children to have current clearance (WWCC/WWVP, Exemption or Police check)

Our employees and volunteers will

- treat all people with respect and understanding and address their concerns at all times.
- participate in training annually and at other times as needed
- make an initial and then annual declaration to the church's Code of Conduct
- make an annual commitment to their appointed role in the church
- hold a positive notice (WWCC/WWVP, or Police check) **before** they take up their role

Code of Conduct

All of our employees and volunteers are expected to abide by the WMC Code of Conduct.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church Code of Conduct is defined in 7.4 of the Policies and Procedures of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

This establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children and others.

Ethical principles and values guide behaviour. A discussion of these with leaders and volunteers can underpin an understanding and commitment to the Code of Conduct.

Ethical Principles:

- Cardinal virtues: prudence, courage, temperance, justice
- Theological virtues: faith, hope and charity

Values

- | | |
|---------|-----------|
| ● Grace | ● Justice |
| ● Hope | ● Joy |
| ● Faith | ● Service |
| ● Love | ● Peace |

The signed declaration by each leader to adhere to the appropriate Codes of Conduct will be required annually.

The standards below and our annual training, set clear guidance of appropriate conduct and behaviour, detail acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, detail the consequences of non-compliance, and reinforce the need to act on concerns or allegations. Our annual training is informed by risks identified at our site.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

(Australian Human Rights Commission)

By embracing the National Principles, our church strives to create a culture, adopt strategies, and take action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people. We consciously and systematically:

- Create an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are the centre of thought, values and actions.
- Place emphasis on genuine engagement with, and valuing of, children
- Create conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people
- Create conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm
- Respond to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm.



Principles

It is required that these principles be intrinsic in our church practices.

1. Child safety and wellbeing are embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes for complaints and concerns about children are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the National Child Safe Principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Standards of behaviour

Language

Use positive, affirming words Provide open and honest feedback	Not bullying, intimidating or personally insulting language Not sexually suggestive comments or jokes
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Relationships

Be a positive role model Build relationships based on trust	Not showing favouritism Not developing inappropriate contact away from church activities
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Physical contact

Respect the right not to be touched Allow for personal space	Not touching in a sexual manner Not touching violently or aggressively
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Charter of Commitment

To encourage the engagement of all people in our church, the following expectations underpin all activity.

Respect:

We will treat everyone equally no matter where they are from or who they are. We will make sure everyone feels included and welcome.

Inform:

We will give you information about your physical, emotional, and online safety, and what to do if you feel unsafe.

Give you a voice:

We will make sure there are ways for you to have a say and be involved.

Help:

We will listen and act on what you tell us. We will help you with your hopes and dreams as well as your worries and fears.

Trust:

You can trust that we will care about your needs and feelings and will support you. We will continue to get better at what we do.

Safety:

We will make our place happy and comfortable for you.



Responsibilities

The Pastor is

- accountable for the governance of all activities and the detection and prevention of abuse.
- responsible for establishing systems and practices to promote safety.
- responsible for the implementation of this policy and the document “Policies and Procedures of the Wesleyan Methodist Church”.
- responsible for recruitment and screening practices.
- ensuring that new staff/volunteers are given induction, annual training, and ongoing support/guidance.
- responsible for maintaining their own clearance to work in a child related organisation and completing an Annual Service Report and Code of Conduct Declaration.

The Church Board

- contributes to the development of safe practices.
- supports the pastor in the completion of responsibilities.
- will stand down any leader accused of serious misconduct.
- will implement the processes described in our Complaint Handling Policy when a complaint is received.
- will complete a risk assessment and develop a covenant agreement with known previous offenders wanting to attend church activities.
- members will maintain their own clearance and suitability to lead in a child related organisation.

The Ministry Leader

- will be a positive role model to children and young people who access our ministries.
- will commit to the Code of Conduct expectations and standards.
- promotes safety as a key priority.
- will gain the approval of the Pastor and Church LBA for all high-risk activities.
- assesses and mitigates risk.
- conducts a risk assessment for every activity.
- will respect those in their care and only share personal information about individuals legally and judiciously.
- will maintain the confidentiality of documented and verbal information.
- will focus on the positive development and protection of our children, young people and vulnerable people before any self-interest.
- will fulfill their role as mandatory reporters of any reasonable belief of abuse or safety risk of a child.
- will hold a current clearance to work/volunteer in a child related organisation and complete annually the Leaders and Assistants Personal Details/Declaration form and Code of Conduct declaration.



Implementation Policies and Strategies

Risk Management Process

1. Description and location of each event element: Each major part of an activity must be identified. One way to describe this is as a sequence of events. The location of the risk is anywhere that an activity of our church is being conducted. The description is therefore about an **activity** and a **site** where the activity will occur.
2. Identify the Potential Risks (activity and site): Each significant possibility of harm should be identified.
3. Risk Analysis (contributing factors): There are several dimensions of activity risks that must be considered. The degree of risk is impacted by factors such as age, maturity, competence, physical stature, gender, self-control, physical/ social/ emotional/ mental health and the location of the activity. In planning program activities, the safe participation of all must be considered with no individual participant feeling marginalized or placed at high risk.
4. Quantify the risk: This provides a measure of the risk and determines whether an activity can proceed. It is a consideration of consequence and likelihood.
5. Proactive and reactive measures to remove or reduce risk: The reduction of risk requires a commitment to and ownership of a safe environment and safe practices. It is everyone's responsibility to identify risks in our site and
 1. immediately reduce the threat by isolating the area or eliminating the risk.
 2. report the risk and action taken to the safety officer/ pastor.The reduction of activity risks requires the coordination with parents/guardians and the vigilance of all leaders and assistants participating in the activity. It is the leaders' and assistants' responsibility to
 1. seek information from parents/guardians that may impact on safe participation.
 2. take appropriate direct intervention to prevent/minimize injury.
 3. report to the key leader any concerns or issues related to safety.
 4. maintain effective supervision at all times.
6. Review: Ongoing review is undertaken to ensure that our church promotes safety and risk assessments for individual events making the risk assessment an effective tool/process. Reviewing controls and responsibilities can be useful for future planning.

Guidelines and Rules

1. Procedures and guidelines contained in Policies and Procedures of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and other support documents are to be implemented within the context and circumstances of activities through utilising wise discernment.
2. Policies and legal requirements contained in Policies and Procedures of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and community documents are to be followed diligently. Failure to comply with obligations can put our people at risk and result in penalties for our church and individuals.



Related Organisational Policies and Procedures

Our Local Church Policies and Procedures

People Protection and Risk Management	First Aid
Privacy Policy	Person of Concern
Complaint Management Policy	Hygiene/Cleaning
Emergency Evacuation	Chemical Storage
Lock Down	Position Descriptions (paid employees)
Safety Audit	Role Descriptions (volunteer positions)
Induction	Leaders and Assistants Personal Details and Declaration
Food Safety	

Wesleyan Methodist Church Policies

The following policies from “Policies and Procedures of the Wesleyan Methodist Church” need to be implemented in conjunction with this People Protection and Risk Management policy. The topics below should inform the Annual Training.

7:3 Definitions	7:18 Injury – Response
7:4 Code of Conduct	7:19 Transport
7:5 Ethical Behaviour	7:20 Emergency Plan
7:6 Privacy Policy	7:21 Food Safety
7:8 Abuse Reporting Procedures, Handling Disclosures	7:27 Child Protection and Risk Management
7:10 Selection and Screening of Workers	13:8 Complaint Handling Policy

Resources

The following resources from the National Website that support this policy include:

Compliance 1: WWCC	Leaders and Assistants Personal Details and Declaration
Compliance 3: Code of Conduct Training	Role Description(s)
Code of Conduct - declaration	Position Description(s)
Compliance 6: Governance and Accountability	Accident Report
Compliance 10: Social Media	First Aid Advice
Annual Safety Training	Incident Report
Staff Induction Program	Risk Assessment
Children and Young Person Details	Safety Officer Checklist
Cyber Security Guidelines	Annual Compliance Audit
Human Rights Protections	
Problem sexual behaviours & sexually abusive behaviours	
Conflict of Interest Policy	

