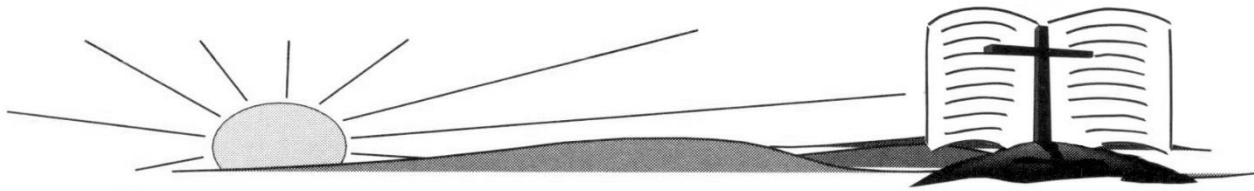


Christian Reformed Church Of Geelong



*God the same, yesterday, today and forever*

# Child Safety Policy

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF  
GEELONG



**Version 1.0 [March 2017]**

## Statement of principles

Within the church community, the following principles will underpin the protection and safety of children and young people and the development of church policies, practices and procedures:

1. Children are made in God's image and, as such, are entitled to a fundamental respect for their personhood. (Gen 1:26-27)
2. All adults have a God-given responsibility to care for children and to protect them from any kind of abuse, as well as to positively promote their welfare. (Exo 20:12-17; Mat 22:39; John 13:34-35)
3. Recognising a child's vulnerability to harm, we, as God's people, are to uphold the welfare of children and to protect them in all situations and environments to the best of our God-given ability. (Mat 18:6; Mk 9:42; Lk 17:2)
4. The value of the family is to be respected but not to the detriment of the wellbeing of the child at risk.
5. The rights of families are also to be acknowledged and respected throughout the processes that arise from notification of child abuse.
6. Church leaders who have access to information regarding suspected or disclosed child abuse, must observe appropriate confidentiality in relation to the matter.
7. All persons involved in the notification procedure must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
8. Investigation of concerns about child abuse and neglect must be left to those with the statutory responsibility for investigation.
9. All relevant state legislation regarding violence, molestation, abuse and harassment will be complied with

There is no doubt that children and young people have the right to feel safe in church related activities. There is no excuse for leaders working with children abusing their position of trust. At the same time, leaders also have a right to feel safe and know that they are not going to be asked (or directed) to place themselves in vulnerable positions.

To ensure quality care, leaders working with children and young people are encouraged to apply each section of this protocol whenever and wherever applicable.

### Version History:

Version	Revisions	Approval Date	Approved by
1.0	Adoption of Childsafe SP3 procedures and policy	01/03/2017	Church Council

## **Introduction**

1. The Christian Reformed Church of Geelong ('CRC Geelong') is committed to providing a child-safe and child-friendly environment.
2. CRC Geelong adopts the ChildSafe SP3 system and is committed to sound implementation of it. This policy is intended to help CRC Geelong achieve this.
3. This policy must be followed by every person involved in ministry in CRC Geelong. A ministry is any activity authorised by CRC Geelong. This policy will be made available to the members and visitors, and placed on the church website.
4. For the purpose of this policy a child is a person under the age of 18 years.

## **The People Responsible**

5. CRC Geelong Church Council accepts ultimate responsibility for ensuring CRC Geelong is child-safe.
6. Church Council appoints the Risk Management Officer ('RMO')/ Childsafe Coordinator ('CSC') as set out in Item 1, Schedule 1. The RMO/CSC is responsible for overseeing the integration of ChildSafe SP3 into CRC Geelong as a whole, and reporting quarterly to Church Council on this.
7. Church Council appoints the Designated Contact Person/s ('DCP/s') as set out in Item 2, Schedule 1. A DCP may be approached by anyone in the congregation who has any concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child, or the neglect or unsafe practices of a leader or church worker.
8. Team Leaders are the people in CRC Geelong, who hold recognised paid or volunteer positions in, or who are responsible for, Team Members and participants in Church ministries.
9. Team Members are unpaid people who are invited by Team Leaders to assist them in their ministry. Persons under 18 are 'Junior Team Members' and cannot be left solely responsible for the supervision of children or young people

## **Screening**

10. A person must have a valid Working with Children Check, and be screened (including police checks and reference checks) in accordance with the Appointment Procedure before serving in any ministry position listed in Item 4, Schedule 1. Persons serving in any volunteer position listed in Item 5, Schedule 1 may be requested to obtain a Working with Children Check.
11. Persons who hold a valid Working with Children Check but have been previously charged but not convicted of a violent or sexually-related offence shall not be involved in or work in immediate proximity to child-related programs without the review and approval of the Chair of Church Council, the Minister (or another elder in times of vacancy) and the RMO.

## **Training**

12. The RMO, CSC, Team Leaders and Team Members must be trained (face-to-face and online) in accordance with the Training Procedure.
13. The RMO must maintain a training register. Refresher training must be held yearly. Those who have not attended training within the last 24 months will not be permitted to continue in their position.

## Accountability

14. No-one is accountable to themselves. Everyone is accountable to someone-else.
15. A Team Member or Team Leader cannot go ahead with an activity unless 'Permission to-Proceed' has been granted by the RMO using the Permission to Proceed Procedure. This is a critical, foundational principle for all ministries at CRC Geelong.

## General Rules for Conduct

16. Every person involved in ministry at CRC Geelong must treat the safety and care of children as paramount.
17. CRC Geelong adopts the Code of Practice set out in pages 15 -28 of the SP3 Team Members Guide. Each person involved in ministry in CRC Geelong, including every Team Member, Team Leader and Coordinator, must comply with the Code of Practice. Failure to do so will result in discipline under the Discipline Procedure.
18. Church Council appoints the Media Spokesperson as set out in Item 3, Schedule 1. This is the only person authorised to speak to the media in relation to any CRC Geelong ministry. No other person should speak to the media.

## Incident Reporting

19. Allegations of abuse are very serious and require a high degree of care when handling. Children should be believed. Every adult is legally responsible for ensuring that the matter is reported to the appropriate authorities. Consultation with the designated contact person/s is strongly encouraged. The CRC Geelong protocol must be followed.
20. Incidents must be reported in accordance with the Incident Reporting Procedure and where applicable investigated in accordance with the Investigations Procedure. Steps must be taken to ensure the safety of children while an investigation is underway. NB. No investigation regarding allegations of sexual abuse may be undertaken at local church level until the Police have been notified and their investigation is complete

## Record-keeping

21. Information and documents that contain personal information must be stored confidentially and securely [in accordance with CRC Geelong Privacy Policy *[to be developed in 2017]*].

## Other documents

22. The procedures and other documents that will be used by CRC Geelong to implement this policy are set out in Items 6 and 7 in Schedule 1.

## Review

23. This policy must be reviewed and updated annually. The person responsible for this is named in Item 8 of Schedule 1.

This policy was adopted by resolution of the CRC Geelong on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

Colin Warren.....  
Church Council Chairman

Bert Moritz.....  
Church Council Clerk