



## **C3 CHURCH RYDE CHILD SAFE POLICY**

**DATE:** July 2022

**Written by:** Brooke Mitchell (Child Safe Officer)

**Revision date:**

We want children who participate in our kids and youth programs to have a safe and happy experience. We support and respect our children, their families and our workers.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Our policy guides paid employees and volunteers on how to behave when interacting and engaging with children in our church. The policy focuses on how we can build and maintain a child safe environment which is inclusive, transparent and promotes children's participation.

This policy and the following procedures apply to C3 Church Ryde and the related entities (church plants - C3 Rouse Hill, C3 Penrith) that fall under its direct oversight. This document relates to legislated requirements for NSW only.

### **2. CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION**

Our organisation supports the active participation of children in the programs, activities and services we offer. We provide a range of ways to allow children to provide feedback or raise concerns. We listen to their views, respect what they say and involve them when we make decisions, especially about matters that will directly affect them.

### **3. RECRUITMENT**

Our organisation will maintain a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process for our paid employees and volunteers.

To achieve this standard, we will use:

- Interviews
- Screening questionnaires
- References
- Working With Children Check (WWCC)
- Code of Conduct



If people satisfy these requirements according to the Ministry Leader or Pastor, they will be inducted into their paid role or volunteering team.

#### **4. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING**

All paid employees and child-related volunteers are trained at induction and then yearly, regarding the process of raising a complaint about the safety or welfare of a child or young person.

Everyone in our organisation should be confident that complaints or concerns about a child's safety will be dealt with immediately, honestly and fairly.

Detailed further below are processes for volunteers and paid employees to manage complaints or concerns within C3 Church Ryde.

The main types of child abuse are listed below, including some examples of physical and behavioural indicators:

- **Physical abuse:**
  - Bruises, fractures, burns, scarring, lacerations, poisoning.
  - Anxiety, fear of parents/fear of going home, nervous, aggressive, jumpy.
- **Sexual abuse:**
  - Inflammation, infection or injury to genital area, discomfort in urinating or frequent urinary tract infections, pregnancy.
  - Age-inappropriate sexualised behaviour, regressive behaviour such as bedwetting or speech loss, aggression, signs of depression, difficulties sleeping, anxiety.
- **Psychological/emotional abuse:**
  - Possible delays in physical and speech development.
  - Low self-esteem, nervousness, highly anxious, withdrawal, aggressive behaviours.
- **Neglect:**
  - Poor hygiene, frequently hungry, unsupervised for long periods, inappropriate clothing, medical needs not attended to.
  - Steals food, stays at school outside of school hours, abuses alcohol/drugs.
- **Grooming:**
  - Is the process of building a relationship, trust and emotional connection in order to sexually abuse the child or young person.
  - Examples of grooming are building the child's trust by buying them special gifts or treats, spending time alone with the child playing non-sexual games; showing the



child favouritism by treating them differently and making them feel special; isolating the child from family and friends.

All complaints should be reported, including:

- Disclosure of abuse
- Inappropriate behaviour around children and young people
- Suspicion of abuse or harm to a child or young person.

**Process for Volunteers to manage complaints:**

1. Listen to the child/young person making the complaint, and let them know you believe them.
2. **Immediately** inform your Ministry Leader/Pastor, or one of the Child Safety Contact Officers (see below).
3. Make a record of the complaint using the C3 Church Ryde Incident Report form (available from your Ministry Leader/Pastor).

A child or young person, or any paid employee/volunteer can make a complaint or raise a concern through a:

- Face to face meeting
- Phone call (02 9086 6900)
- Email (see email addresses below)

**C3 Church Ryde Child Safety Contact Officers:**

- **Cathie Green** - Senior Pastor  
Email: [cathiegreen@c3churchryde.com.au](mailto:cathiegreen@c3churchryde.com.au)
- **Brooke Mitchell** - HR, Child Safety and Compliance  
Email: [brookemitchell@c3churchryde.com.au](mailto:brookemitchell@c3churchryde.com.au)
- **Lou Brady** - Management Pastor  
Email: [loubrady@c3churchryde.com.au](mailto:loubrady@c3churchryde.com.au)
- **Samuel Achenbach** - Management Pastor  
Email: [samachenbach@c3churchryde.com.au](mailto:samachenbach@c3churchryde.com.au)



## **Process for Paid Employees to manage complaints - NSW Reporting requirements:**

### Department of Family and Community Services:

- Paid employees are legal mandatory reporters, and must report concerns about risk of significant harm to children to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). Phone 132 111 to report child abuse or neglect (24 hour service).

### Office of the Children's Guardian:

- C3 Church Ryde is a reporting body, and has a legal obligation to report findings of sexual misconduct and serious physical assault involving children by a child-related paid employee or volunteer (who holds a WWCC) to the Office of the Children's Guardian, under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- Under the legislation, reporting bodies must investigate allegations of such conduct to make an informed finding as to whether or not the conduct occurred.
- To determine whether or not the conduct meets the criteria, reporting bodies must consider the nature of the conduct itself and the context in which it occurred.
- If the investigation results in a finding that sexual misconduct or serious physical assault occurred, the reporting body must report this finding to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

## **Process for Paid Employees:**

The Child Safety Contact Officers will ensure the paid employee completes the following actions in a 24 hour timeline:

1. The child/young person making the complaint has been listened to.
2. Immediately inform one of the Child Safety Contact Officers.
3. Make a record of the complaint using the C3 Church Ryde Incident Report form (available from the Communication file in the office).
4. The paid employee will make a report to the Child Protection Helpline if the child is deemed to be at risk of significant harm (use the "Decision Tree" to help inform this decision): <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>
5. Print off correspondence from the Child Protection Helpline following the phone call. This will be filed electronically and in hard copy form, with the Incident Report.
6. If the complaint involves inappropriate behaviour and a breach of the Code of Conduct, the Management Pastor/Executive Team Pastor will take action in accordance with the internal discipline procedure (outlined in the Code of Conduct).



### **Pastoral Decisions:**

Historically the confusion between Pastoral Care and Child Protection has led to mistakes being made. In these highly stressful situations, staff and volunteers are reminded during training that they are not making a pastoral decision, but a child protection decision. The child always remains the priority.

## **5. TRAINING, SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION OF WORKERS**

- We promote respect, fairness and consideration for all workers.
- All workers have a team leader assigned to support and supervise their work.
- All new workers will receive a copy of child safe policies and procedures at induction, as well as being required to attend Child Safety training, and sign the Code of Conduct. The new worker will have the opportunity to ask questions and clarify their understanding of policies, procedures and topics covered in the training.
- All workers attend mandatory yearly, face to face training in Child Safety.
- Child safety is a standing agenda item at meetings and workers are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to the continuous improvement of child safe policies, procedures and practices in the workplace.

## **6. OTHER LEGISLATION, INDUSTRY STANDARDS OR INTERNAL POLICIES**

### **Other legislation:**

- Child Safe Standards 2022
- Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

### **Internal Policies:**

- C3 Church Ryde Code of Conduct
- Problem and Conflict Resolution Policy
- Electronic Communication Policy
- Social Media Policy

### **Child to Leader Ratios:**

We have a firm commitment at C3 Ryde to ensure that all children in our care are adequately supervised. In this regard, all of our ministries adhere to the standards set by



the relevant government authorities in regards to child-to-leader ratios. These ratios are as follows:

- A minimum of two adult leaders will be involved in any structured event or ministry activity
- A ratio of **1:4 (leaders:children)** for creche and pre-school aged children
- A ratio of **1:10** for preschool students
- A ratio of **1:15** for primary school students
- A ratio of **1:15** for high school students
- Higher ratios if activities are deemed risky or if excursions / off-sites take place

## **7. COMMUNICATION**

- Our Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct is easily accessible on our website: [www.c3churchryde.com.au](http://www.c3churchryde.com.au) as well as the Staff Intranet.
- Our Child Safe Policy will be discussed during induction sessions for all new staff and volunteers.
- Kids and parents joining our program/s will receive a copy of the Policy and Code of Conduct.

## **8. REVIEW**

The policy and guidelines will be reviewed every two years and incorporate comments and suggestions from our range of stakeholders (including workers, children and families).