**C3 CHURCH RYDE & REACH COMMUNITY INITIATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE DOCUMENT**

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## **TITLE:** **CHILD SAFE POLICY**

**DATE: JUNE 2025**

**C3 CHURCH RYDE & REACH COMMUNITY INITIATIVES CHILD SAFE POLICY**

**Updated:** March, 2025 **Written by:** Brooke Mitchell(Former Child Safety Officer)  
**Updated by:** Louise Brady, Keira Andrews and reviewed by Creating Safer Communities

**Related Policies:** Onboarding Policy (covers induction for paid workers and volunteers)

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 (Reach Community Initiative and church plants - C3 Rouse Hill & C3 Fairfield) that fall under its direct oversight. This document relates to legislated requirements for NSW only.

1. **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, particularly those that will directly affect them.

Children are aware of who they can talk to should they need to raise a concern. In the event that a concern is raised, they will be provided with adequate support and the concern will be addressed appropriately.

1. **RECRUITMENT**

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

To achieve this standard, we will use:

* Working With Children Check (WWCC) for all paid employees and for volunteers over 18 working directly with children
* References for those volunteering on a directly child related team (if a person has been in church for more than 12 months, 2 internal references will suffice. If a person has been in church for less than 12 months, 2 references external to our organisation must be provided).
* Code of Conduct/Self Declaration for all paid employees and volunteers (whether or not they are working directly with children - as per Child Safe Standard 7).
* Child Safe Training for all paid employees and volunteers (whether or not they are working directly with children - as per Child Safe Standard 7).
* Volunteers serving directly with children must complete child safe training **annually**. Those not serving directly with children must complete training **every 3 years** or as needed

If volunteers and employees complete these requirements, as verified by the Child Safety Team, they will be inducted into their paid role or volunteering team.

1. **PROCESS FOR REPORTING CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN**

All paid employees and volunteers are trained at induction and then yearly, regarding the process for reporting the disclosure of abuse, or in response to a concern, about the safety or welfare of a child or young person.

Everyone in our organisation should be confident that disclosures 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 disclosures or concerns within C3 Church Ryde.

All disclosures and concerns should be reported, including:

* Any direct disclosures of abuse
* Any disclosures that abuse is occurring in the home where a child or young person lives (even if it they are not being abused directly)
* The observation or disclosure of inappropriate behaviour around children and young people
* The suspicion of abuse or harm to a child or young person

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:** the process of building a relationship, trust and emotional connection in order to sexually abuse the child or young person.
  + Examples of grooming:
* Gaining a child’s trust by buying them special gifts or treats
* Spending time along with the child
* Showing the child favoritism by treating them differently or making them feel special
* Isolating the child from their family or friends
* **Children are present in a house where domestic violence (DV) is occurring**
  + **Domestic Violence:** violent or aggressive behaviour occurring within the home committed by someone in the victim’s domestic circle i.e., a family member, partner, spouse, ex-partner, etc.
  + Legally, a mandatory report must be made if you are made aware that a child is living in a home where DV is occurring

**REPORTING PROCESS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

* **If a child is in immediate danger, dial ‘000’**
* **For Direct Disclosures of Abuse:**

1. Listento the child/young person making the disclosure, and let them know you believe them.   
   - Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in speaking to you; then inform them that you need to tell people who will try to help them. Ensure that the child is not in immediate danger.
2. **Immediately** inform your Ministry Leader/Pastor, who will assist with making the relevant police and/or government reports
3. Make a record of the disclosure using the C3 Church Ryde Incident Report form (available from your Pastor).

* **Suspected Abuse:**
* If you suspect a child or young person is experiencing abuse or have concerns about their welfare, **immediately** inform your Ministry Leader/Pastor who will assist with making the relevant police and/or government reports. Make a record of the concern using the C3 Church Ryde Incident Report form (available from your Pastor).

A child/young person or any paid employee/volunteer can make a disclosure or raise a concern through a face-to-face meeting with the C3 Ryde Child Safety Team or by contacting them through the details below:

* **C3 Church Ryde Phone:** 02 9086 6900
* **Cathie Green:** Senior Pastor
* **Lou Brady:** Management Pastor

**Email:** [loubrady@c3churchryde.com.au](mailto:loubrady@c3churchryde.com.au)

* **Keira Andrews:** Child Safety Officer (CSO)  
  **Email:** [keiraandrews@c3churchryde.com.au](mailto:keiraandrews@c3churchryde.com.au)

**REPORTING PROCESS FOR PAID STAFF: NSW REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Paid employees and volunteers are legally mandatory reporters and must report concerns about the risk of significant harm to a child. Paid employees and volunteers report to one of the C3 Ryde staff or the CSO (Keira Andrews) who will then make a report to the appropriate bodies below:

**In addition to the steps below,** the incident must be recorded on an incident form and given to Keira Andrews.

1. **Police:**

* If a child is in immediate danger, call ‘000’.

1. **Creating Safer Communities Helpline:**

Contact the Creating Safer Communities Helpline for advice and assistance and/or to ensure that C3 is aware of all child-related matters of concern (**Please note:** contacting this helpline is not compulsory, it is optional)

* **Helpline Number:** 1800 070 511

1. **Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ):**

If you suspect a child is at risk of significant harm or abuse has been disclosed, you must report this to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). To report child abuse or neglect, please do so by using **one** of the methods below:

* **Phone DCJ:** 132 111 (24 hour service)
* OR **lodge an eReport** through the NSW website using the following link:
* [Mandatory eReport Link](https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/login/?startURL=%2Fs%2F%3Ft%3D1720590204960)
* **Login details:** see Keira Andrews

In the event you are unable to determine whether or not a mandatory report should be made, please consult the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) using the link below:

* **MRG Link:** [NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide](https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg)

1. **The Office of the Children’s Guardian:**

If an allegation is made against a paid employee, volunteer or contractor **(who currently holds a valid WWCC verified by C3 Church Ryde)**, a report must be made to the Office of the Children’s Guardian (OCG), under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Reportable conduct includes both criminal and non-criminal behaviour, namely:

* Significant emotional or psychological harm
* Significant neglect
* Physical violence
* Sexual offence and/or sexual misconduct
* Grooming
* Relevant offences such as failing to report child abuse and female genital mutilation.

It is recommended this be done on the first business day after the report of the event; refer to the numbers below:

* **OCG phone number:** (02) 8219 3600
* **Alternative number:** (02) 8219 3777

1. **OTHER LEGISLATION, INDUSTRY STANDARDS OR INTERNAL POLICIES**

**Other legislation:**

* Child Safe Standards 2023
* Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012
* Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

**Internal Policies:**

* C3 Australia Safe Church Manual (Includes C3 Australia Safe Church Policy)
* C3 Church Ryde Code of Conduct
* Problem and Conflict Resolution Policy
* Electronic Communication & 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; under no circumstances should an adult be left alone with a child or group of children
* Creche children (from 0 to 24 months of age)**: 1:4 (leaders:children)**
* Over 24 months and less than 36 months of age: **1:5**
* Aged 36 months of age or preschool: **1:10**
* Over preschool age (primary and high school students): **1:15**
* Higher ratios if activities are deemed risky or if excursions / off-sites take place

1. **COMMUNICATION**

* Our Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct is easily accessible on our website: [www.c3churchryde.com.au](http://www.c3churchryde.com.au)
* Our Child Safe Policy will be discussed during induction sessions for all new staff and volunteers
* Our policies, or parts thereof, will be mentioned at all gatherings of leaders.

**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).

If you have any questions about this Policy, please contact the C3 Church Ryde Child Safety Officer, Keira Andrews at [keiraandrews@c3churchryde.com.au](mailto:keiraandrews@c3churchryde.com.au)