



Epping Baptist Church

Honouring God. Following Jesus. Serving Others.

Safe Church Policy

Adopted by the diaconate of Epping Baptist Church on 27th May 2018

God calls His body to minister to vulnerable people and identified classes of vulnerable people who were to be protected and given special care and treatment in society because of their powerlessness (Exodus 22:21-22, Deuteronomy 10:17-19, Jeremiah 22:2-4, James 1:27).

We affirm all people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected, and have their views and opinions valued at all times.

The Epping Baptist Church **Safe Church Policy** has been developed to help live out this Biblical mandate and fulfil our responsibilities under Australian legislation.

POLICY AIMS

- To minimise the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power.
- To ensure all cases of suspected abuse and ministry misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- To ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- To ensure that all people are respected and valued.

EPHING BAPTIST CHURCH COMMITS TO

a) *Safe recruitment of leaders.*

- We will screen all prospective leaders in our ministries, before they are appointed. (ie. relevant working with children's check, vulnerable people, police check as required)
- We will have a minimum church attendance policy of 6 months for all prospective volunteer leaders.

b) *Adequate training of leaders.*

- We require that all leaders with ministry responsibility for children or young people attend a Creating Safe Spaces (or SCTA endorsed) Awareness workshop within their first 6 months of ministry and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.
- We require all leaders to attend additional ministry-specific training as required.

c) *Continual supervision of leaders.*

- We commit to ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for leaders.
- All leaders will agree to follow the Leader's Code of Conduct.

d) *Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious ministry misconduct.*

- All leaders will report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, according to our church procedures
- Where a leader has an allegation of ministry misconduct made against them we will provide support to alleged victims and perpetrators and seek appropriate denominational help from the Baptist Association Ministry Standards Manager on 1300 647 780 for a just and fair resolution.

e) *Safe environments in our ministry programs.*

- We will serve participants as servants of Christ, committed to the good news of Jesus and leading in spiritually non-abusive ways.
- We will encourage participants to contribute to the development of programs and activities in which they participate, fostering and valuing their ideas to maintain a safe environment.
- We will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.
- All leaders will discharge their duty of care through the use of forms, checklists and templates for establishment and maintenance of safe environments in our church.
- A Safety Person/Team will be appointed to establish and maintain: WHS, fire safety, building safety, first aid, food safety, safe transport, incident and emergency procedures, and implement the approval for ministry process.
- A Safe Church Concerns Team (preferably including at least one male and one female) will be appointed to assist the church with Safe Church compliance requirements and to ensure any reports of harm are reported appropriately.

DEFINITIONS

Child: a person who is under the age of 16 years

Young Person: a person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years

Vulnerable Adults: those who are classed 'at risk' due to Poor physical or mental health (eg., conditions such as dementia) and social factors such as isolation

Safe Environment: discharges duty of care by taking steps to keep all those in our care safe, including e.g. spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional abuse (including bullying) or neglect.

The WHS Person/Team: is responsible for the oversight and implementation of the WHS & supporting documentation and process in the church.

Safe Church Concerns Team: Safe church concerns reporting group within the local church.

Approval for Ministry: a process of written accountability, whereby the senior church leaders approve a program/event to take place in the church/organisation's name.

Ministry Coordinators: Oversee a program or a group of programs and or events in the church, for example the children and youth leaders. This is a role that should be undertaken by a senior church leader e.g. pastor, elder, deacon as is it contains significant positional power.

Safe Leader: has been through a recruitment process, understands their responsibilities, is supervised via Code of conduct and is an accountable team player.

Safe Ministry Program: all risks have been assessed and events thought through and planned. These programs have had permission to proceed from a ministry coordinator. The Safe ministry policy applies to all staff members and volunteer workers associated with any ministry in our church.