

CHURCH CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
WAGIN VINEYARD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
“Loving Children Like Jesus”
Created 9th January, 2017
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PURPOSE

We are committed to introducing children and youth to Jesus Christ in a safe, secure and loving environment. Therefore, we have written, adopted and implemented a child protection policy that reflects our desire and dedication to protect children and youth from abuse and to stop abuse when we become aware of it.

DEFINITIONS

Abuse - Any act (including neglect) that endangers the physical or emotional health or development of a child or youth. Abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. See examples in Appendix B.

Child - Any person under 9 years of age.

Church – Wagin Vineyard Christian Fellowship

Coordinator - Staff member(s) appointed by the senior pastor to oversee the children and youth ministries.

Ministries - All events and activities that are coordinated by the staff of the church in the performance of their duties.

Policy - This Child Protection Policy

Staff - Any person employed by the church who participates in the children or youth ministries in the performance of their duties.

Volunteers - Any person not employed by the church who participates in the children or youth ministries.

Youth - Any person between 9 and 17 years of age.

WHO MUST COMPLY WITH THIS POLICY

All staff and volunteers who participate in the children and youth ministries of the church must comply with this Policy.

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This Policy covers the following items: recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers, training, support and supervision, mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse, and the church’s code of conduct.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Policy –

All staff and volunteers must be investigated and approved by the senior pastor and coordinator before participating in children or youth ministries.

Procedure –

1. All applicants must have attended the church as a regular member for at least 6 months before being allowed to participate in children or youth ministries.
2. An applicant will submit the following material for review by the coordinator and senior pastor:
 - a) A “Working With Children’s Check” issued in the applicant’s name by the Western Australian Government
 - (b) A signed declaration that the applicant has read, understood and agreed to be bound by this Policy (as outlined in Appendix A).
3. The coordinator will ask the applicant if they have ever been involved in or accused of any untoward acts of child abuse. The applicant’s response will be noted and provided to the senior pastor.
4. The coordinator and senior pastor will review the information provided and make a determination of the applicant’s suitability. All of the applicant’s information will be held in strictest confidence and will not be made available to any other person.
5. The applicant will not be allowed to participate in children and youth ministries until the senior pastor has approved their suitability
6. The referees on the application will be contacted as to the suitability of the applicant.
7. A register of all applications will be stored on church premises along with copies of the applicants’ Working With Children’s Check Card (WWCC), their signed declaration, and notes regarding their acceptance or denial of suitability by the senior pastor.
8. Coordinators will keep a register of the expiration dates of the WWCC Cards of staff and volunteers, and ensure the WWCC Cards are kept valid.

TRAINING

Policy -

The church will facilitate ongoing education for its staff and volunteers as necessary to ensure compliance with this Policy.

Procedure –

1. Coordinators will annually facilitate an educational session at the beginning of the calendar year for all staff and volunteers. The session will include a review of this Policy and the Code of Conduct.
2. All staff and volunteers who commence their participation in children and youth ministries during the calendar year will receive training from the coordinator on this Policy.
3. All staff and volunteers will sign an acknowledgement that they attended the education session. Their continued participation will be conditional upon their attendance to these sessions.
4. Coordinators will advise the senior pastor in writing of their compliance with this training procedure for all staff and volunteers who participate in the children and youth ministries.

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Policy –

The church will provide ongoing accountability and feedback to staff and volunteers to ensure their performance complies with this Policy.

Procedures –

1. All staff will have formal performance appraisals annually with the senior pastor

2. Staff will participate in education and training programs to improve their knowledge of child abuse and best practice in responding to allegations of child abuse.
3. Coordinators will formally observe new staff and volunteers within 6 months of commencement and submit their review to the senior pastor, as deemed necessary
4. Staff and volunteers will be encouraged by the coordinators to ask questions and provide feedback to the coordinator and/or senior pastor.

MANDATORY REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Policy –

The church has a moral responsibility to review all suspected instances of child abuse and notify child protection agencies where necessary.

Procedures –

1. If a staff member or volunteer suspects abuse, they are to report to the coordinator or senior pastor immediately. There are various ways in which you may become aware of abuse, such as:
 - a. A child discloses (tells you he/she has been physically or sexually abused);
 - b. Someone else tells you (another child, sibling, relative, friend of the family); or
 - c. Observation of the child's behaviour or knowledge of children generally leads to suspicion.
2. The child is not to be interviewed by any staff member or volunteer.
3. If a child discloses abuse to a staff member or volunteer, then the staff member or volunteer should:
 - a. Look at the child directly.
 - b. Accept what the child says and tell them that you believe them.
 - c. Be aware while you listen that the child may have been threatened.
 - d. Do not press for information or ask leading questions (e.g., Did they touch you?).
 - e. Reassure the child that they are right to tell you and that you take what they say to you very seriously
 - f. Let the child know what you are going to do next, who you are going to tell, and roughly what will happen next.
 - g. Stay calm – do not overreact.
 - h. Call the police if the child is in immediate danger.
4. The staff member or volunteer will keep their suspicion completely confidential and not disclose it to any other person other than the coordinator, senior pastor and proper legal authorities.
5. A suspected child abuse report will be written by the staff member or volunteer and provided to the coordinator or senior pastor within 24 hours of the staff member or volunteer becoming aware of the suspected abuse (see Appendix C).
6. The coordinator and senior pastor will determine the proper steps to report the suspected abuse to a designated reporting agency.
7. Any staff member or volunteer accused of child abuse will be immediately suspended of their responsibilities. Staff members will be suspended with pay.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Policy

All children and youth will be cared for in a secure and transparent manner.

1. Teaching environment

- a. The Two Adult Rule – One experienced adult will be present in a classroom at all times with at least one helper. An adult helper is preferred.
- b. An attendance roll will be taken at the commencement of all classroom times.
- c. Parents have free access to their children in the classroom at all times.
- d. The crèche door will be securely shut at all times and windows will be kept clear so parents can see freely in to the room.
- e. Any child or youth under 13 leaving the classroom must be accompanied by an adult teacher or adult helper.
- f. Children must be picked up by their parents, or guardian at the completion of the ministry time where parents sign them out.
- g. Youth must be returned to parents under supervision by adult teacher or adult helper.
- h. Crèche children should only be picked up by the person who dropped them off or an adult nominated by that person (not siblings or other adults) and signed out by said adult/guardian.
- i. People wandering around or acting in a suspicious manner are to be reported to the coordinator or senior pastor

2. Touching and interaction

- a. Staff and volunteers will always use language that affirms the children and youth as important members of the community.
- b. All staff and volunteers will refrain from touching a child or youth in an inappropriate manner. Appropriate touching includes brief hugs, light touches on the shoulder and a flat hand lightly placed on head or back. It is not permitted to touch a child or youth in an area that would normally be covered by swimming bathers.
- c. It is not permitted to kiss or tickle a child or youth, or do anything that is potentially sexual in nature.
- d. No physical punishment is to be administered by any staff member or volunteer
- e. An aggressive child or youth may be restrained by light holding of the wrists to prevent physical harm to themselves or others

3. Toilet use

- a. Children in the crèche will be taken to their parents to be escorted to the toilets or to have their nappies changed.
- b. Any child or youth under 13 going to the toilet must be accompanied by a female adult teacher or female adult helper.

4. Ministry activities off church premises

- a. For all ministry activities off church premises, there will be a ratio of no less than one adult to every 8 youth and a ratio of one adult to every 4 children.
- b. Drivers will not transport a child or youth without another person in the car at all times.

5. Camps

- a. Where possible, leaders will supervise children and youth of the same sex.
- b. For sleeping arrangements, supervision will be given by leaders of the same sex (two leaders where possible).
- c. Children and youth are not allowed to get into bed with another camper or with a leader.
- d. Children and youth of the opposite sex will not share a bedroom after age 5.
- e. Access to bathrooms, toilets or bunkrooms of the opposite sex is not allowed by leaders or campers (except for leaders where there is an extreme emergency).
- f. Health and safety rules of the campsite being used will be adhered to.

g. Medical and safety (eg. swimming) forms must be filled out for activities longer than three hours for children or five hours for youth.

6. Telephone and Electronics Media

- a. All staff and volunteers who are involved in youth ministry shall use respect when communicating via telephone and electronic media with youth.

Particularly they shall:

- a. NOT SEND private messages to or engage in private chats with youth who attend youth ministry activities of the Church, on facebook, Instagram or any other form of social media. SNAP CHAT app is not an approved form of communication for Youth Leaders to use at any time. See **(Appendix E) for signed approvals by parents/guardians.**
- b. Always include another youth leader in any electronic communication. Always ensure another relevant leader/parent can view (is copied in on) all electronic communications.
- c. Not send private text messages or private communication on telephones, unless there has been signed approval given by a parent/ guardian by completion of the Electronic Communication Disclosure Form. See **(Appendix E) for signed approvals by parents/guardians.**

APPENDIX A

DECLARATION

To be signed by all staff, volunteers, leaders and helpers involved in the area of children and youth at Wagin Vineyard Christian Fellowship, including volunteer drivers.

A copy to be kept by the worker and on church file.

Name of worker: _____

Position: _____

Declaration:

I declare that:

1. I am able to accept the leadership of the Senior Pastor and his appointed leaders under whom I will be working.
2. I will work within the procedure as laid out in this child protection policy document.
3. I have not been accused or convicted of any offence involving physical or sexual abuse of children or youth.
4. I understand that if a complaint be levelled against me while engaged in any church activity, the police or other legal authority will automatically be asked to investigate.
5. I hereby give my full permission for the Police or Commissioner for Children and Young People to do a check on convictions of child or youth abuse and sexual offences
6. I hereby declare that all information given is true and correct.
7. Referees: (someone who has known you at least five years)

Name Phone number

Name Phone number

Name Phone number

Signed: _____

Print name: _____

Date: _____

Code of Conduct for Employee and Volunteers

Statement of Commitment

Wagin Vineyard Christian Fellowship is committed to ensuring that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and youth are maintained at all times during their participation in activities run by Wagin Vineyard Christian Fellowship.

Wagin Vineyard Christian Fellowship aims to promote a safe environment for all children and young people and to assist all paid employees and volunteers to recognise child abuse and neglect and follow the appropriate notification procedures when reporting alleged abuse.

Who must comply with the code of conduct?

This code of conduct applies to all paid employees, volunteers and visitors who enter our premises and Children's areas.

The standards of Appropriate Behaviour

Behaviour	Appropriate	Inappropriate
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Using encouraging /positive words and a pleasant tone of voiceOpen and honest communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Insults, criticisms or name callingBullying, swearing or yellingSexually suggestive comments / jokes
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Being a positive role modelBuilding relationships based on trustEmpowering children to share in decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Favouritism or giving giftsSpending excessive amounts of time alone with childrenContact outside of working hours (either by physical or via email/phone)Bullying, harassment'Grooming' children or young people
Physical Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Allowing for personal spaceTouching due to medical emergency or protecting from physical harmNon-threatening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Violent or aggressive behaviour including hitting, kicking, slapping or pushingKissing or touching or a sexual nature consistent with 'grooming'
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Appropriate attire/clothing for roleUse of internet/mobile phone for work related purposes only	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Using alcohol or other substances before or during workInappropriate clothingSending inappropriate emails

In the event that the code of conduct for interacting with children and young people is breached, actions will be taken in accordance with our organisation's plan for managing breaches of the child and youth risk management strategy.

"I have read, understood, and will act in accordance with the above code of conduct."

Name : _____ **Signature :** _____ **Date :** _____

APPENDIX B

DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE

Child Abuse

Child abuse is a term commonly used to refer to different types of child maltreatment, either as a single event or a series of incidents. It includes physical assault, social assault, emotional abuse and neglect.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse refers to the non-accidental injury to a child by a parent, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child.

Indicators of physical abuse in children:

- Bruises or welts
- Bite marks and scratches where the bruise may show a print of teeth
- Explanation offered by the child is inconsistent with the injury
- Dislocations, sprains or twisting
- Burns and scalds
- Wariness of adult contacts
- Inappropriate clothing, eg. long sleeves on a hot day
- Fear of parents
- Fear of going home
- Ready attachment to strangers

Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child. Adults or adolescents who perpetrate child sexual abuse exploit the dependence and immaturity of children. Coercion, which may be physical or psychological, is intrinsic to sexual abuse and differentiates it from consensual peer sexual activity.

Indicators of sexual abuse in children:

- Direct or indirect disclosure
- Describing sexual acts
- Overtly sexual themes in artwork, play or writing
- Persistent running away from home
- Anorexia or over-eating
- Going to bed fully clothed
- Regression in developmental achievements
- Child being in contact with a known offender
- Unexplained accumulation of money and gifts
- Bleeding from vagina, external genitalia or anus
- Injuries such as tears or bruising to the genitalia or anus
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen and thighs
- Sophisticated or unusual sexual behaviour or knowledge
- Persistent habit disorders, eg. Sucking, biting, rocking
- Self-destructive behaviours, eg. Suicide attempts, substance abuse, self-mutilation.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse encompasses a range of behaviours that harm a child, including exposing a child to

domestic violence. It is behaviour by a parent or caregiver which can destroy a child's confidence, resulting in significant emotional deprivation or trauma. It involves impairment of a child's social, emotional, cognitive or intellectual development and/or disturbance of a child's behaviour.

Indicators of emotional abuse in children:

- Feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves
- Extremely low self-esteem
- Compliant, passive, withdrawn, tearful
- Inability to value others
- Serious difficulties with peer and/or other relations
- Extreme attention seeking behaviour

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is violence, abuse and intimidatory behaviour perpetrated by one person against another in a personal, intimate relationship. Domestic violence has a profound effect on children and constitutes a form of abuse. Children can be affected by being exposed to violence in the parental relationship, by becoming victims of violence, or a combination of the two.

Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child is harmed by the failure to provide the basic physical and emotional necessities of life.

Indicators of neglect in children:

- Poor standards in hygiene leading to social isolation
- Scavenging or stealing food
- Extended stays at school, public areas, other homes
- Being focussed on basic survival
- Extreme longing for adult affection
- A flat and superficial way of relating, lacking a sense of genuine interaction
- Anxiety about being dropped or abandoned
- Self comforting behaviours, eg. Rocking, sucking.

APPENDIX C

REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

(must be completed within 24 hours of disclosure or suspicion)

Do not interrogate the child in order to obtain this information

Name of child: _____

Age: _____

Street: _____

Suburb: _____

State: _____ Postcode _____

Phone: _____

Name of report writer: _____

Street: _____

Suburb: _____

State: _____ Postcode _____

Phone (home): _____ Phone (work): _____

Name of church group: _____

Disclosure made (reason for reporting):

Date, time and place disclosure was made:

Have parents been informed (if appropriate)?

Yes No

Signed (report writer): _____

Signed (senior pastor/children's coordinator): _____

Date: _____

**APPENDIX D
Driver Code of Conduct**

Name: _____

Current Drivers License Number: _____

Expiry Date: _____

Class of License (please circle): Provisional Open (manual/auto)

Car Insurance:

Comprehensive (Name of Insurer): _____

Car Registration Number: _____ Licence expiry: _____

Car Model: _____ Car Make: _____ Car Year: _____

Please give details of any accidents and/or traffic offences you have been convicted of in the last five years:

Event Details: _____

Event Organiser/Director: _____

Code of Conduct:

I will abide by all Western Australian Transport and Government road rules

I will only drive if I have compulsory third party insurance

I will only drive to destinations instructed by the event organiser.

I will not drive after taking alcohol or illegal substances

I will not have passengers drive with me who have not been given permission from both their parents and the event director.

Drivers Consent:

I agree to abide by the above points stated in the Code of Conduct. I understand that while driving for this event named above, that any loss/damage to my vehicle is not covered by Wagin Vineyard Christian Fellowship or by the event organiser. I declare that the above information is a true record of my current driving conditions and vehicle.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

APPENDIX E

Youth Electronic Communication Disclosure (For Parents)

Please initial underneath the leaders to whom you give consent for the activities listed.

I give permission for the following people to interact with my child in the following ways:

	Communicate with your child via			Communicate with your child via		To “Catch Up” with your child in a public place (not alone)	Drive your child to or from an official WVCF activity (not alone)
	Texting	Email	Phone	Facebook	Instagram		
Name Youth Leader							
Name Youth Leader							
Name Youth Leader							
Name Youth Leader							

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will a LEADER contact your child using PRIVATE MESSAGE on any social media or use SNAP CHAT as a contact tool.

Please initial underneath every box for the activity for which you give consent

I give permission for photographs of my child to be taken and displayed in the following ways:

For photos/ videos of your child to be posted on:

- WVCF promotional material/publications
- WVCF Church displays
- WVCF Facebook Page (public page)
- WVCF website

Youth’s Name: _____

Parents Name: _____

Parents Signature: _____

SAFETY NOTICE FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Children's Ministry:

Safety Notice

ATTENTION: Parents of Primary-Age Group, Pre-school Group and Crèche

This notice is to ensure that you know, understand & abide by the children's ministry signing in system.

How the system works:

- * All children need to be signed in by an adult.
- * Children cannot be signed in until 10 minutes before Children's activity starts.
- * Once signed into children ministry, children are under the supervision of the kids ministry leaders. They can only leave the room with permission & accompanied by a leader.
- * At the end of the session Children need to be signed out.
- * Once signed out children are in the care & watchful eye of their parents. This means that, children cannot be left in the children's ministry rooms once they have been signed out. They also cannot find their own way out to their parents.

The reason we do this:

- * We want to ensure your children are safe.
- * We need to know when we are responsible for your children & when they are no longer under our supervision.

* We need records of the numbers of children in the rooms & their names, in case of emergency. The church is a large building, with many things happening at once. It is important that children are supervised at all times when at church. If not in the care of the kids ministry team, they need to be seen & supervised by parents.

The areas we would particularly ask you to be extra aware of are:

- Toilet area (& corridors surrounding).
- Car park (particularly around the side & corners of buildings where little people cannot be seen)
- Kitchen- this area is out of bounds to children. We also ask you to be aware of the urns with hot water that are positioned near the kitchen. We prefer if children are not permitted to help themselves to hot water (even if they are capable themselves, it sets an example for younger children that may be harmful).
- Any secluded rooms- children should not be left unattended or with an unknown adult in any room including children's rooms.

Thank you for your attention. We love having your children as part of our Kids ministry and are striving to do our best so that they are safe & happy while at church. We trust you will do the same. If you have any further questions talk to our Pastor.