

# Safe Ministry Policy



## **Introduction & Purpose**

Devonport Church of Christ is an affiliate of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania. The governing body of Devonport Church of Christ, the Council of Church Leaders, has established this policy to express the churches commitment to safeguarding vulnerable people involved with the church.

This document outlines the underlying principles that guide our approach and the strategies being implemented to embed a safeguarding culture in the organisation at all levels.<sup>1</sup> Because of the changing nature of the world and our organisation, Devonport Church of Christ commits to regularly reviewing and updating this policy to ensure its ongoing effectiveness, relevance and fulfilment of any Tasmanian and Federal laws to protect children and vulnerable people.<sup>2</sup>

## **Commitments**

### **1. Commitment to safeguard vulnerable people**

Devonport Church of Christ are committed to the Biblical call to actively prevent harm and abuse, and to ensure the safety and equity of everyone involved in our organisation with special concern for vulnerable people who face a higher risk of mistreatment.<sup>3</sup> This includes children and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, the elderly, people with disabilities, and people with identity and mental health challenges.<sup>4</sup>

It is important that all people involved in our organisation (including vulnerable people and children) are informed about their rights, invited to express their individual needs, participate in decisions which significantly affect them, and have their concerns taken seriously.<sup>5</sup> We also want families and communities who are involved in our organisation to be informed and involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people.<sup>6</sup> All people are encouraged to appropriately express their cultural backgrounds. Racism will not be tolerated within the organisation.

This policy (and further information for children, families and vulnerable people) is available on our website [www.devonportcoc.com.au/safety](http://www.devonportcoc.com.au/safety)

This material will help people in our community to better understand their shared responsibility to safeguard vulnerable people around our community and how to raise any concerns. We actively

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<sup>1</sup> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 1

<sup>2</sup> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, points, 9 & 10

<sup>3</sup> As an organisation that works with children, we are committed to the National Child Safe Principles. See <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles>

<sup>4</sup> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 4

<sup>5</sup> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 2.

<sup>6</sup> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 3

encourage everyone involved in our organisation to be involved in the effectiveness and ongoing improvement of our policies and safeguarding procedures.<sup>7</sup>

## **2. Commitment to respond to concerns**

We are committed to creating a culture where people feel safe and encouraged to raise concerns about their own or other people's safety.

Therefore, we encourage people at all levels of the organisation and in our community to report any concerns they have about the safety and wellbeing of people connected with Devonport Church of Christ. We are committed to listening well and handling all concerns seriously.

We will protect the confidentiality, dignity, health and well-being of all individuals involved in any concern raised. Any child-related issues will be managed with a focus on the interest of the child.<sup>8</sup>

All reports will be managed by the Devonport Church of Christ Safe Ministry Contacts.<sup>9</sup>

### **Safe Ministry Contacts**

Simona Piscioneri	03 6424 3441	<a href="mailto:simona@devonportcoc.com.au">simona@devonportcoc.com.au</a>
Matthew Atkins	03 6424 3441	<a href="mailto:matkins@devonport.tas.gov.au">matkins@devonport.tas.gov.au</a>

Safe Ministry Contacts are appointed by the Council of Church Leaders. When any concerns or allegations are raised, the Safe Ministry Contacts will follow the Safety Concerns of Vulnerable People Reporting Procedure which, depending on the circumstances, may involve reporting the concern or allegation to other entities like Tasmanian Police, the Tasmanian State Child Protection body, the Office of the Independent Regulator and the insurer of Devonport Church of Christ. In certain incidents the Safe Ministry Contacts will appoint an Independent Ministry Investigator to investigate allegations.

## **3. Commitment to screening and training**

We are committed to ensuring all volunteers at Devonport Church of Christ are appropriately screened, supported and trained.<sup>10</sup>

This means all members of the Council of Church Leaders, staff members, team leaders and volunteers involved in serving roles (including anyone working with or around children) must adhere to the following:

1. Be regular attendees at Devonport Church of Christ;
2. Complete an Application to Serve at Devonport Church of Christ.
3. Have a current "Working with Vulnerable People Registration".
4. Commit to the Devonport Church of Christ's Code of Conduct, including being willing to be held accountable for their behaviour.
5. Complete an approved safe ministry training course every 3 years which outlines appropriate behaviour, including how to minimise the chance of harm, as well as training in how to identify and report cases of abuse. The level of the course required is based on the volunteer's role.

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<sup>7</sup> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 8 & 3

<sup>8</sup> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 6

<sup>9</sup> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 10

<sup>10</sup> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, points 5, 7 & 8

Volunteers working with children, youth and leading small groups must also provide referees who can confirm they are suitable to work with vulnerable people.

National Police Checks are required for Staff and members of the Council of Church Leaders every 3 years.

No-one with a criminal record of child abuse, molestation or similar offences is allowed to attend Devonport Church of Christ.

#### **4. Commitment to safe and accessible programs**

We are committed to ensuring that our physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing for all involved.<sup>11</sup> Careful consideration will be given to the activities chosen, the venue, safe ratios of supervision, appropriate toileting practices, transportation, work health and safety, parental or guardian permission and confidentiality of records kept.

Devonport Church of Christ will have regular team meetings to help establish a safeguarding culture and provide ongoing training and supervision to leaders and volunteers in those roles. Position descriptions for volunteers will give clear expectations of responsibilities.<sup>12</sup>

This policy has been developed in adherence to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and in response to the Churches of Christ Vic / Tas Safe Places Policy.

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<sup>11</sup> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 8

<sup>12</sup> National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, points 1, 7, 8.

