



Wandin Baptist Church  
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<http://wandinbaptistchurch.com.au/>

## **WBC SAFE CHURCH AND CHILD SAFE POLICY**

Our Mission Statement is "Discovering God's love and sharing it with others"

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

This policy has been developed to help WBC live out its vision and its responsibilities under Victorian legislation.

Protection of vulnerable persons involved in WBC activities is the responsibility of WBC.

This policy has the following goals:

- To minimise the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power within WBC;
- To ensure that all cases of actual or suspected abuse and ministry misconduct at WBC are handled in a consistent, unbiased and thorough manner;
- In line with our mission statement, to ensure that all people in WBC or taking part in WBC activities are respected and valued, irrespective of their gender, age, country of origin, cultural heritage, sexuality, socio-economic background or ability;
- To demonstrate the strong commitment of WBC to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

This policy applies to all persons involved in WBC services, programs and activities.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the WBC Safe Church and Child Safe Procedures.

Please Refer to the Procedures for the glossary of definitions.

### **1. SAFE CHURCH**

#### **1.1 Safe Leaders**

We commit to:

##### **a. Safe recruitment of leaders and volunteers.**

- We will screen all persons appointed to ministry with vulnerable persons before they are appointed to that role. For those working with children, we will recruit in accordance with the Child Safety part of this policy

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- We will have a minimum 6month church attendance requirement for all prospective volunteer leaders.

**b. Adequate training of leaders.**

- We require that all WBC leaders attend a safe church awareness workshop within their first year of ministry and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.
- We require all WBC leaders to attend additional ministry-specific training as decided by the Leadership Team.

**c. Continued supervision of leaders.**

- We commit to ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for leaders.
- All leaders will agree to follow the Code of Conduct in the Safe Church and Child Safe Procedures.

**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 relevant legislation, by using the procedure in the Safe Church Procedures.
- Where a leader has an allegation of ministry misconduct made against them the Baptist Union of Victoria Complaints Process will be followed.

## **2. SAFE PROGRAMS**

We commit to:

**a. Emotionally safe environments.**

We will offer participants, including children, the opportunity to provide input in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas, and encouraging participation in all areas of the life of WBC, as far as is sensible and practical.

We will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.

**b. Safe physical environments.**

All leaders will follow any WBC health and safety procedures.

Leaders will use any forms, checklists and templates in the Health and Safety Procedures for establishment and maintenance of safe environments in WBC.

**c. Church Safety Team**

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The WBC acting Administration Officer is June Weeks responsible for health and safety procedures of WBC. Its responsibilities include, among other things, fire safety, building safety, critical incident and emergency recommendations. Program leaders are responsible for risk assessment of their activities.

The Leadership Team will appoint a Safe Ministry Concerns Person (SMCP) and be reviewed on an annual basis. The SMPC will, among other things, receive and deal with reports of abuse in accordance with WBC reporting procedures.

#### **d. Approval for Ministry**

Leaders are to observe any ministry approval process approved by the Leadership Team from time to time.

### **3. CHILD SAFETY**

#### **a. Commitment to child safety**

All children who come to WBC have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our priority and we have a zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe.

This policy applies to all staff, Leaders, volunteers, children and individuals involved in WBC.

#### **b. Children's rights to safety and participation**

WBC staff and volunteers encourage children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them.

We actively encourage all children who participate in WBC activities to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concern's children, or their parents, raise with us.

#### **c. Valuing diversity**

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation

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#### **d. Recruiting staff**

WBC applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff.

We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and require Working with Children Checks for relevant positions.

Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all Position Descriptions.

#### **e. Supporting staff and volunteers**

WBC seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers.

We provide support and supervision, so staff and volunteers feel valued, respected and fairly treated.

We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training and guidance on the requirements of the Code of conduct.

#### **f. Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

We have appointed a Child Safety Person with the specific responsibility for responding to any child safety complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children.

Our complaints processes are outlined in the Safe Church Procedures.

#### **g. Risk Management**

We recognize the importance of a risk management approach to minimizing the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

### **4. DOCUMENT CONTROL**

| <b>Term</b>          | <b>Definition</b>                            |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Document Name</b> | WBCSC002 - Safe Church and Child Safe Policy |

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| <b>Applies to</b>                                      | All staff, Leaders, Heads of Departments and Volunteers at WBC.  |
| <b>Document no.</b>                                    | WBCSC002   |
| <b>Version:</b>  | V1.0   |
| <b>Approval party</b>                                  | WBC Leadership Team  |
| <b>R e s p o n s i b l e<br/>Manager</b>               | WBC Leadership Team  |
| <b>Persons to be notified of changes post-approval</b> | All staff, Leaders, Heads of Departments and Volunteers at WBC.  |
| <b>Review date</b>                                     | <b>By 01 May 2022</b> , or in accordance with applicable legislative or regulatory changes.  |
| <b>Material associated documents</b>                   | The following documents are material to this procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WBCSC001 – Safe church implementation guide</li> <li>• WBCSC002 – Safe Church and Child Safe Policy</li> <li>• WBCSC003 – Safe Church and child safe procedures</li> </ul> |

## Version Control and change history

| Version    | Date approved | Date Superseded | Amendment |
|------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------|
| <b>1.0</b> | 24 May 2020   |                 |           |
|            |               |                 |           |
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