



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Contents

Policy Statement.....	1
Scope.....	2
Our Commitment.....	2
Roles and Responsibilities	2
Child Safe Standards.....	3
Related Legislation.....	7
Related Documents	7
Document Control	7

Policy Statement

The aim of our Strategic Plan is:

“To glorify God by helping people discover Jesus, develop spiritually and make disciples wherever they go.”

Theological reflection

As a church community rooted in the love and teachings of Jesus Christ, we believe every person is made in the image of God and is deserving of safety, respect and dignity. We recognise our sacred responsibility to protect and spiritually grow those who are most vulnerable amongst us – especially children and vulnerable adults.

In all that we do, we seek to follow Jesus Christ’s example of love, compassion and justice. We believe safeguarding is not only a legal duty, but a calling rooted in the heart of the Gospel.

“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” Mark 10:14

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.” Proverbs 31 v8

NWBC Safeguarding Policy represents our binding and public commitment to ensuring our practices and processes support and maintain safety for children and vulnerable adults at all times.

Our policy has the following goals:

- to minimise the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power within NWBC.
- to ensure that all cases of actual or suspected abuse and ministry misconduct at NWBC are managed in a timely, impartial and thorough manner.
- to demonstrate the strong commitment of NWBC to the safety of children and vulnerable adults and to provide an outline of the policies and practices developed to keep everyone safe from any harm or abuse.



- In line with our mission statement, we ensure that all people in NWBC or taking part in NWBC activities are respected and valued.

Scope

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

This policy supports the *NWBC Safeguarding Procedure*.

Please refer to the *NWBC Safeguarding Procedure* for the glossary of definitions.

Our Commitment

NWBC is committed to embedding a culture of safeguarding in its governance, ministry and practice that is based on human rights principles to ensure all people are kept safe, treated equally with dignity and all cultures are respected.

NWBC has a zero-tolerance to all forms of abuse, neglect, harm or risk of harm of any kind within any of its ministry, program environments or activities, or by any person working for or with NWBC.

Our commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults also extends to the safety of our staff to whom we provide the knowledge, skills and support to safely engage with them.

This commitment is made and understood by all staff engaged by and with NWBC and crosses all ministry environments.

NWBC holds all of its staff accountable to ensuring children and vulnerable adults are protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, harm or risk of harm.

NB: The term “children” herewith refers to children and young people under the age of 18 years old.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Leadership team	• Supports embedding a culture of safeguarding at NWBC. • Monitors compliance with child safe and safeguarding protocols as set out by statutory legislation and the Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV). • Reviews and approves the Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Procedure documents. • Reports on notifiable safeguarding concerns to the Board and BUV. • Has safeguarding as a standing agenda item. • Has safeguarding as a standing agenda item at Members meetings. • Appoints the Safeguarding Contact Person and members to the Safeguarding Sub-Committee.
Senior Pastor	• Is deemed the ‘Principal Officer’ who will oversee compliance of the Reportable Conduct Scheme. • Reports all safeguarding concerns to the leadership team. • Provides pastoral care to victims and perpetrators as needed.



Sub-Committee	• Oversees the embedding of a safeguarding culture in accordance with legislative compliance and BUV requirements. • Leadership representative provides updates to the leadership team.
Ministry Leaders	• Oversee the implementation of a safeguarding culture within their respective ministries. • Consult with the Safeguarding Contact Person in relation to all safeguarding matters under the Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Procedure. • Ensure safeguarding training and integrity checks, e.g. WWCC and Police clearance (where relevant) of ministry partners are current. • Ensure compliance with safeguarding policy and procedure protocols. • Ensure partners are skilled and knowledgeable in engaging with children and vulnerable adults. They are safeguarding-aware. • Ensure upward reporting of all instances of harm and abuse including to the Safeguarding Contact Person.
Ministry Partners	• Understand the notion of safeguarding; are familiar with the Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Procedure documents; and understand their obligation to comply with requirements as set out in these documents. • Report all instances of harm and abuse as they become aware to a Ministry Leader or the Safeguarding Contact Person.
Safeguarding Contact Person	• Is designated by the Leadership team to act on safeguarding matters. • Makes notifications of reportable conduct to statutory authorities, such as the Commission for Children and Young People, Police and Child Protection. • Keeps all safeguarding resources up to date and relevant. • Ensures a culture of safeguarding is embedded and adhered to at NWBC.
Administration team	• Responsible for work health and safety procedures, which include fire safety, building safety, critical incident, and emergency recommendations. • Administrative duties integral to the functioning of the church.

Child Safe Standards

NWBC complies with the Victorian 11 Child Safe Standards¹ and recognises that these Standards are fundamental to building a culture that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children AND vulnerable adults when engaging with us.

¹ Commission for Children and Young People (Vic)



1. Establishing a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

1.1 A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.

1.2 Strategies are embedded within NWBC which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.

1.3 Measures are adopted by NWBC to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.

1.4 NWBC actively supports and will facilitate participation and inclusion by Aboriginal children, young people, and their families.

1.5 All of NWBC policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

2. Safety and wellbeing is embedded in NWBC leadership, governance and culture.

2.1 NWBC makes a public commitment to child safety and the safety of vulnerable adults.

2.2 A safeguarding culture is championed and modelled at all levels of NWBC.

2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the *Safeguarding Policy* at all levels within NWBC.

2.4 The Safeguarding Code of Conduct provides guidelines for all staff on expected behaviour standards and responsibilities.

2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying, and mitigating risks to children and young people and vulnerable adults.

2.6 Staff understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

2.7 Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at all levels within NWBC.

3. Children are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

3.1 Children are informed about their rights, including to safety, information and participation.

3.2 The importance of friendship is recognised and support from peers encouraged through training and education, to help staff enable children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.

3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.



3.4 Staff are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.

3.5 NWBC has strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting safeguarding.

4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their children.

4.2 NWBC engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its safeguarding approach and relevant information is accessible.

4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of NWBC policies and practices which are made available for review at member meetings prior to adoption.

4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about NWBC operations and governance.

5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

5.1 NWBC is blessed with a truly diverse church community and acknowledges their right to a culturally safe space where they can feel respected and heard.

5.2 NWBC pays particular attention to the diverse circumstances of children and is responsive to their needs.

5.3 The needs of vulnerable adults are acknowledged and respected.

5.4 Children and vulnerable adults have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, reference checks and staff pre-employment screening, emphasises a safeguarding culture at NWBC.

6.2 Staff have current Working with Children Checks or equivalent and a Police Check as required.

6.3 All staff receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children, young people and vulnerable adults, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.

6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on safeguarding children, young people, vulnerable adults and pastoral support.

7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

7.1 NWBC has accessible, child-focused complaint handling protocols in place, which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership and staff to dealing with abuse, complaints, breaches of the Code of Conduct, and obligations to act and report.



7.2 Effective complaints management processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and partners, and are culturally safe.

7.3 Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

7.4 NWBC has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.

7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

8. Staff and partners are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

8.1 Staff are trained and supported to effectively implement NWBC's *Safeguarding Policy*.

8.2 Staff receive training and information to recognise indicators of harm including harm caused by other children and young people.

8.3 Staff receive training and information to respond effectively to safeguarding matters and support their peers who disclose harm.

8.4 Staff receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

9 Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

9.1 Staff and partners identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with NWBC's *Safeguarding Code of Conduct*.

9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by people involved, activities and the physical environment.

9.4 Persons of concern within NWBC will be required to have an *Individual Accountability and Safety Agreement* and assigned an accountability group of no less than two members from within the church.

9.5 When contracting facilities and services from third parties NWBC has procurement requirements that ensure the safety of children and young people.

10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

10.1 NWBC regularly reviews, evaluates and improves safeguarding practices.

10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

10.3 NWBC reports on the findings of reviews to staff, community and families and where relevant to young people.



11. Policies and procedures document how NWBC is safe for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards and its relevance to vulnerable adults.

11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.

11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.

11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.

11.5 Staff understand and implement policies and procedures.

Related Legislation

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)

Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)

Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)

Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021

Victorian Crimes Act 1985 (Vic) (Section 49B, 49C, 327)

Children Legislation Amendment Act 2019 – Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Related Documents

NWBCCS001 – *Safe Church Implementation Guide*

NWBCCS003 – *Safeguarding Procedure*

Document Control

Term	Definition
Document Name	Safeguarding Policy
Document no.	NWBCSC002
Version:	v2
Document Owner	NWBC Leadership Team
Approval Party	NWBC Leadership Team



Amendments	Reviewed and redrafted – March 2025
Review date	By 01 Jul 2026 , or in accordance with applicable legislative or regulatory changes.
Persons to be notified of changes post-approval	All staff, Leaders, Heads of Departments and Partners at NWBC.

Version Control and change history

Version	Date approved	Date Superseded	Amendment
1	21 May 2019	9 April 2025	Whole Policy review
2			Policy name change Roles renamed Sub-Committee included in Roles and Responsibilities