



GUIDELINES FOR SAFE MINISTRY TO CHILDREN

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1. INTRODUCTION

These guidelines have been prepared to fulfil our church's commitment to make its communities safe places for the children who participate in its life and ministry. It reflects our pastoral, biblical, legal and moral responsibilities. It is to be read in conjunction with other safe ministry documents such as our [Safe Ministry Policy](#) and [Code of Conduct](#).

Jesus prioritised children and their safety (Matthew 18:2-7; 19:13-15). At City on a Hill, our desire for the next generation is that they have every opportunity to flourish and grow in their faith, without barriers that hinder or harm.

It is a requirement that all City on a Hill staff, volunteers and church attendees adhere to the guidelines outlined in this document, whether or not they are serving in a child specific ministry. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, this may include dismissal (in the case of staff) or removal from the ministry position (in the case of a volunteer).

1.1. DEFINITIONS

Child: any person who is under 18 years of age.

Leader: any person who is engaged in ministry to children.

Parent: parents, legal guardians and those appointed by parents and legal guardians to care for children e.g. grandparents, support workers.

Refer to the [Safe Ministry Terminology](#) document for more definitions.

1.2. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

City on a Hill encourages you to speak up regarding any concerns you may have, no matter how minor. You can raise your concerns informally with a staff member or other ministry leader at any time.

Leaders are required to make a formal report as soon as possible if:

- you become aware of any allegations of child abuse, or
- you have a concern for the safety of a child, or
- you notice anyone in our church community whose practice or behaviour is contrary to the expectations of behaviour set out in this and other safe ministry documents.

Reports can be made at cityonahill.com.au/safe-ministry or to any staff member, who is then required to submit the report.



If you believe a child is in immediate danger you are required to call 000.

As Christians we have an ethical duty to speak up for children. If a child discloses any form of abuse or harm to you:

- believe them and take what they say seriously, (children often have to disclose several times before they are believed),
- listen without passing judgement,
- make an assessment of immediate danger and take action to ensure safety,
- preserve evidence (this is particularly important for electronic evidence that can be easily and quickly deleted),
- maintain confidentiality (do not tell anyone who does not immediately need to know), and
- report the disclosure.

1.2.1. Failure to report legislation

Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence¹ has been committed by an adult against a child² has a legal obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose such information to police is a criminal offence in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

1.3. CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

City on a Hill is committed to being an organisation that upholds the [national principles for child safe organisations](#). Specifically, City on a Hill aligns its practices with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
3. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

¹ In New South Wales an offence is defined as sexual abuse, serious physical abuse or extreme neglect of a child. In Queensland and Victoria an offence is defined as sexual abuse only.

² For the purpose of failure to report laws, in Victoria a child is defined as a person under 16, in Queensland a child is a person under 16 or a person under 18 with an impairment of the mind, in New South Wales a child is a person under 18 years of age.



5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the child safe standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

2. BEHAVIOUR OF LEADERS

2.1. YOUR ROLE

When you are engaged in ministry to children you have responsibility for their safety and wellbeing whilst they are in your care. Ministry where children are involved requires absolute trustworthiness. While children should be able to trust and confide in you (and you should expect to develop relationships of this character with children), avoid fostering inappropriate dependence on the part of a child.

You have authority over children because of your position and power, your greater age, maturity, physical size and life experience. Abuse arises from the misuse of authority or power. Any form of child abuse is always wrong, and City on a Hill takes a zero tolerance stance.

You need to recognise your own limits and not undertake any ministry that is beyond your competence or training or that is not part of the role for which you have been or are being trained. A child who requires specialised help (e.g. counselling for depression, abuse or addiction) should be referred to an appropriately qualified person or agency.

2.2. EQUITY

Children are entitled to be safe and protected. We expect you to treat all children fairly, equally and with dignity. They have the right to be respected, listened to and their particular needs addressed in all our ministries. This is an outworking of Jesus' command to love your neighbour as yourself.



No child is to be discriminated against based on age, gender, race, colour, language, disability, religion, political or other opinion, sexual orientation, national or social origin or their inability to live at home. We have zero tolerance to racism and expect that incidents of racism will be reported and acted upon. Your actions and behaviour must be non-discriminatory and always in the best interests of the child. A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is to be encouraged and actively supported.

There are children who have unique needs. You are required to pay particular attention to the needs of children who may be:

- from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander background,
- living with a disability,
- from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds,
- are unable to live at home,
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex.

Note that paying particular attention to a child's needs is not the same as affirming the situation that has caused them to have such a need.

2.3. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Under no circumstances is any form of sexual behaviour to occur between, with, or in the presence of children participating in any of our ministries. Engaging in sexual behaviour with children in our churches is prohibited even if those involved are above the legal age of consent. Due to the inherent imbalance of power, children under the age of 16 cannot give consent to sexual activity.

Sexual behaviour needs to be interpreted widely, to encompass the entire range of actions that would reasonably be considered to be sexual in nature, including but not limited to:

- contact behaviour - such as sexual intercourse, kissing, fondling, sexual penetration or exploiting a child through prostitution,
- non-contact behaviour - such as flirting, sexual innuendo, inappropriate text messaging,
- use of electronic media (e.g. social media, instant messaging, email, internet) to transmit, produce, record or receive sexually based content involving children,
- inappropriate photography or exposure to pornography or nudity, and
- inappropriate conversations or conversations of a sexual nature with or in the presence of a child.

2.4. LANGUAGE AND TONE OF VOICE

Language and tone of voice used in the presence of children should:

- provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage or affirm them,



- not be harmful – in this respect, avoid language that is:
 - discriminatory, racist or sexist,
 - derogatory, belittling or negative,
 - intended to threaten or frighten, or
 - profane or sexual.

2.5. PHYSICAL CONTACT

Appropriate physical contact is important for children’s healthy development. In general, excluding circumstances such as immediate physical danger or a medical emergency, physical contact should:

- be initiated by the child or occur with their permission,
- be respectful of the child’s feelings and privacy, and
- be observable and accountable to other leaders.

Physical contact with children must be of a non-sexual nature and appropriate to the situation. Children may not be aware that they create a situation where physical contact could be construed as sexual in nature. It is your responsibility to be alert for such situations and to cease any inappropriate physical contact immediately. You are required to report any physical contact initiated by a child that is sexual and/or inappropriate, as soon as possible. This is to enable the situation to be managed in the interests of the safety of the child, yourself and others. Examples of appropriate and inappropriate physical contact are listed below. Inappropriate physical contact is not permitted under any circumstances.

Appropriate physical contact includes:

- bending down to the child’s eye level, speaking kindly and listening attentively,
- gaining permission before hugging a child and respecting their right to refuse,
- taking a young child’s hand and leading them to an activity,
- high fives and fist pumps,
- comforting a child by placing an arm around their shoulder and giving a gentle squeeze from the side,
- patting the child on the head, hand, back or shoulder in affirmation, and
- holding a preschool child who is crying, provided that they want to be held.

Inappropriate contact includes:

- kissing or coaxing a child to engage in physical contact towards you (i.e. hugs, kissing, sitting very close to you),
- extended hugging,
- any tickling,



- a child sitting on your lap except for an infant or toddler,
- touching any area of the body normally covered by a swimming costume, specifically the buttocks, thighs, breasts or groin areas,
- anything that would appear to a reasonable observer to have a sexual connotation,
- is intended to cause pain or distress to the child – for example corporal punishment,
- is overly physical –for example, wrestling, horseplay or other rough play,
- is unnecessary –for example, assisting with toileting when a child does not require assistance, and
- is initiated against the wishes of the child, except if such contact may be necessary to prevent injury to the child or to others.

If it is necessary to physically restrain a child then:

- it should be a last resort,
- the level of force used must be appropriate to the specific circumstances,
- be aimed solely at restraining the child to prevent harm to themselves or others, and
- reported as soon as possible at cityonahill.com.au/safe-ministry.

2.6. DISCIPLINE

Children are to be given information about the behaviour we expect from them, the behaviour they can expect from us and their right to safe participation in our ministries. However, there are times when it may be required to use appropriate behaviour management techniques to ensure:

- an effective and positive environment, and/or
- the safety and/or wellbeing of children and others participating in our ministries.

Leaders are required to use strategies that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of those involved. The child needs to be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their misbehaviour in a positive manner. Under no circumstances are you to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment (including words) that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.

2.7. GIFT GIVING

It may be appropriate to give gifts to children as long as the gift is directed to a group, not an individual. For example, gifts are appropriate as prizes as the gift is given in the context of a group activity, even though an individual receives the gift. Graduation and commencements are another example of appropriate gift giving.



Giving of gifts must be approved by the relevant ministry leader. Gifts should not be purchased with your personal funds but with City on a Hill funds. You are not to give gifts of a personal nature that encourages children to think they have an individual and special relationship with you. Singling out of an individual child to give a gift to is not permitted.

2.8. CLOTHING

Leaders must not wear clothes that are 'revealing or suggestive' or may be considered as inappropriate and/or offensive. Examples include: bare midriffs, strapless tops/dresses, mini-skirts, short shorts, muscle shirts and clothing with offensive slogans or logos. A person's attire is never an excuse for any type of sexual harassment or abuse.

Leaders should be clearly identifiable, particularly if there are other adults present who are not leaders. Where practicable, leaders are required to wear the appropriate City on a Hill t-shirt, name tag or lanyard whilst engaging in ministry.

2.9. USE, POSSESSION OR SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

Whilst engaged in ministry to children, leaders must not:

- use, possess or be under the influence of an illegal drug,
- use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol,
- supply or purchase alcohol or drugs (including tobacco and tobacco related products) or restricted substances to children, or
- be incapacitated by any other legal drug such as prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

2.10. BATHROOM, TOILETING AND CHANGE ROOM ARRANGEMENTS

Supervision of children in bathrooms and/or change rooms is required whilst balancing that requirement with a right to privacy. Specifically:

- avoid one-to-one situations with a child in a bathroom/change room area,
- leaders are not permitted to use the change room area while children and young people are present,
- provide the level of supervision required for preventing abuse by members of the public, or general misbehaviour, while also respecting a child's privacy,
- monitoring of bathroom/change room areas must be done by two leaders, leaders are to knock loudly and identify themselves prior to entering the area, and



- female leaders are not to enter male bathrooms/change rooms and male leaders are not to enter female bathrooms/change rooms.

Separate bathroom facilities designated only for children or young people should be provided where possible. If shared facilities are in use, leaders are to check the bathroom is vacant of adults before children or young people enter, then stand outside the toileting area and prevent adults from entering the area until all children or young people have exited.

If a child requires assistance with toileting, this assistance should be provided by the parent. If this is not possible, then two leaders must be present to provide that assistance. Leaders are not permitted to change nappies. Parents are to be contacted to change the wet or soiled nappy.

2.11. ONE ON ONE MINISTRIES (MENTORING, DISCIPLESHIP)

We want to encourage healthy and appropriate relationships with the children and young people we lead. Inevitably certain conversations will be and should be kept private. However, it is important that these relationships are transparent. Parents and other leaders should be aware of the relationships that exist even if they are not aware of every conversation.

One-on-one ministry to a child (e.g. mentoring of young people) is permitted provided that:

- the person conducting the ministry is 18 years of age or over,
- the person conducting the ministry is compliant with the Safe People Policy and has approval to conduct the ministry to the particular child by City on a Hill staff,
- the ministry is done in an age appropriate way and context,
- the ministry is done in an open physical environment in view of others (a public place or in a location with high visibility such as a church foyer, café or shopping centre), and
- the ministry has parental consent.

An ongoing discipleship/mentoring relationship must only be conducted with children 13 years of age or over. Do not invite or have children to your home or visit children in their home when no other adult is present.

2.12. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Interaction with children on digital platforms must only to be conducted as part of a formal City on a Hill ministry program and not for the purpose of personal friendship. The same principles apply to digital communication as to any other form of communication.



Communication with children using digital technology is only permitted with children in high school.

Communication with children using digital technology, is to be conducted:

- on an age appropriate medium (noting that many social media sites currently have a minimum age of 13 which will rise to 16 in late 2025),
- according to the terms of service of the provider,
- in an open manner, specifically that there are always at least three persons present (specifically, one child two leaders),
- with parental or guardian consent, and
- in line with City on a Hill policies and procedures including this document.

When communicating with a child using digital technology care should be taken to ensure that:

- it is an appropriate way to communicate with a child,
- it is an appropriate way to communicate about the matter (e.g. a text message is an appropriate way to communicate logistics for an upcoming event but is not an appropriate way to engage in pastoral care of a sensitive nature),
- you are sensitive to the impact of your words, images and actions on the child and any other person who may access it,
- you do not use sexually suggestive, sexually explicit or offensive language or images, and
- the circumstances of the communication, including the language and images used, do not suggest your relationship with the child is inappropriate.

There is a power imbalance that exists between leaders and the people they are ministering to. That power imbalance might make it difficult for a child to say 'no' when a leader initiates a friendship on social media. For that reason, leaders must not initiate social media friendships with children. Friend requests by children to leaders should be assessed on a case by case basis. Leaders are under no obligation to accept friend requests and should not do so unless engagement with the child on the digital platform can be done according to these guidelines and parental consent has been obtained.

Face-to-face interactions are the best way to build relationships with and minister to children and young people. Digital communication is not suitable for matters that are pastorally sensitive, emotionally charged or that require a back-and-forth conversation. In those cases, the conversation should be conducted in person. If a child initiates a pastoral conversation with a leader using a digital medium, the leader should seek to move the conversation to an in person context as soon as practical.

One on one digital communication *initiated by a leader to a child* is permissible provided that the communication is informational or of an administrative manner only. Communication topics outside of



this should not be initiated by a leader in this context. Avoid one on one digital communications that are likely to encourage a move into pastorally sensitive matters e.g. how can I pray for you this week? Such conversations should take place in person.

You must not delete digital interactions with children. Digital interactions with children must be disclosed to City on a Hill staff on request. Leaders must ensure their devices are secure by, at the least, having the latest software updates installed and running software to detect and remove malware.

You are not permitted to use digital platforms designed for anonymous communication, or for which no record of conversations exist (e.g. Snapchat), when communicating with children.

3. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

3.1. SCREENING AND SELECTION

Everyone serving in ministries that involve supervision of, or ministry to children must be formally appointed. The appointment process, including the background check and training requirements, are detailed in the [Safe People Policy](#).

Staff and Ministry Leaders must not appoint someone who has:

- been acquitted of a charge of an offence against a child,
- had a charge of an offence against a child not proceed,
- had a prohibited status under applicable child protection legislation lifted, or
- been the subject of church disciplinary proceedings involving child abuse.

Any application by a person meeting the above criteria must be referred to the [Safeguarding, Risk and Compliance Manager](#).

3.2. SUPERVISION/CHILD-ADULT RATIOS

The degree of supervision required will vary according to the type of activity, length of the activity, age and maturity of the children and the size of the group. Multiple leaders should always be present to ensure that supervision and accountability standards between leaders are maintained. **Never be alone with a child.**

When determining child-adult ratios:

- clearly distinguish the different levels of responsibility between you and any other leaders and ensure that these differences are understood,
- consider the extent of supervision required taking into account:



- the age, number, ability and gender mix of the children,
- the venue, time, duration and nature of the activity, and
- the individual characteristics and needs of children (particularly supervision requirements for children with additional needs),
- ensure all aspects of children's activities are open to observation, and
- ensure all activities have defined physical boundaries that are easily observed or patrolled.

Suggested ratios (after the minimum requirement of 2 adult leaders is met).

- Crèche and pre-schoolers low risk and on-site: 1 to 5.
- Primary age low risk and on-site: 1 to 7.
- Youth ministry low risk and on site: 1 to 10.

3.3. FIRST AID

It is expected that leaders will provide first aid within the limits of their competence and training. Leaders must not undertake first aid procedures which they are not competent to undertake.

It is a requirement that all ministries have at least one person qualified in first aid present along with an adequately stocked first aid kit. First aid kits must not contain medication, with the exception of medication supplied by those participating in the program for their own use.

Information should be obtained from parents or guardians about the particular physical and mental health or safety needs of children in your care (e.g. medical conditions), along with emergency contact details.

Leaders are permitted to assist children take medication that they have provided for their own use, as long as you have parental consent. Leaders are not permitted to prescribe medication (this includes over the counter medication like paracetamol) except under direction from a 000 operator or other suitably qualified person.

If first aid is required, a written report should be made as soon as practicable after the event using the [Incident and Hazard Form](#).

A suitably qualified person means someone trained in first aid and competent to administer first aid in the given situation.

3.3.1. Asthma Relievers

Leaders are permitted to administer asthma relieving medication (Ventolin and generic brand equivalents) but only under the guidance of the child's parents, a 000 representative or other suitably qualified person.



3.3.2. Epi-pens

Leaders with specific training in anaphylaxis management are permitted to administer an Epi-Pen in line with their training and competence. If leaders are not specifically trained in anaphylaxis management they are permitted to administer an Epi-Pen but only under guidance of the child's parents, a 000 representative or other suitably qualified person.

3.4. PARENTAL CONSENT

If a parent drops their child at an event with the obvious intention that they wish for their child to participate in the event, and the parent is aware of the nature and location of the event, then it can be assumed that parental consent has been given. If a parent requests that their child participate in an event or ministry then consent has been given in the request.

When children are taken away from venues where church ministry is normally conducted (e.g. youth group outing), parents must be informed in advance of the place and timing of the event and contact details of the ministry leader.

Written consent is required for all activities involving overnight stays and photography of children. Note the broad definition of a parent at the start of this document.

3.5. ACTIVITIES

Games or activities that emphasise gender, physical, intellectual, linguistic or cultural differences should be assessed for their appropriateness. Think about what message children may learn from the way events are organised and conducted. Consider games that are inclusive of all children.

Aural and visual materials, such as videos, films, computer games, graphics, photographs and lyrics, are to be reviewed in their entirety to ensure that any elements containing violence, sexual activity or lifestyle are appropriate for the intended audience and the values of the church. Exercise care if a film or computer game has been recommended by the Office of Film and Literature Classification as unsuitable for viewing or playing by children of a particular age (e.g. MA, M and PG classifications). In assessing whether something is suitable you should take into account the age of the youngest child present. MA rated material is not to be shown to children under 15. Parental permission is required for M and PG rated material.

To minimise the possibility of children being harmed, give careful consideration to any activities or games that require children to act alone or in pairs independent of leaders.



Ensure that no children's activity includes:

- secret initiation rites and ceremonies,
- nudity or engagement in sexual conduct, or
- media classified by the Office of Film and Literature Classification as being unsuitable for children, or
- the use or availability of any substance or product whose supply to or use by children is prohibited by law.

3.6. VENUE

Potential hazards are to be identified and minimised before embarking on any activity with children. This includes:

- being aware of the fire safety and evacuation procedures,
- ensuring that emergency exits are clearly marked and never obstructed or internally locked,
- ensuring the needs of children with disabilities are considered,
- not permitting smoking in any premises where the activity is held, and
- not knowingly permitting children with serious contagious diseases to attend the activity.

Venues should allow for the privacy of all parties to be respected, particularly when changing clothes, washing and toileting.

3.7. TRANSPORT

It is permissible for leaders to transport children but only directly to and from official City on a Hill ministries and events. Leaders are only permitted to transport children of high school age. Parents are to be informed of expected arrival times and locations. Two leaders should always be present in the vehicle when transporting children. When making transport arrangements, ensure that:

- all drivers or operators are licensed, screened, responsible, experienced and are not impaired by alcohol or any other mind-altering or addictive substance; and
- all motor vehicles and other forms of transport used are registered, insured, safe and fitted with appropriate child restraints or safety devices (e.g. seat belts, life jackets).

An appropriate licence includes a P2 licence ('green P'). Drivers with a learner permit or P1 ('red P') licence are not permitted to transport children.

3.8. OVERNIGHT STAYS/CAMPS

Factors to consider, prior to departure for individual participation in camps/overnight stays include:



- the length of time away from home is appropriate to the age, developmental stage and education level of the children,
- children feel comfortable and the camp is in their best interest, and
- factors that may hinder on a child's ability to cope or speak out if they are feeling unsafe or uncomfortable (including behavioural issues, medical conditions, cultural and language barriers, separation issues or a history of abuse).

When events require children to sleep over:

- male and female children must sleep in separate accommodation,
- where possible children should sleep with children of a similar age, and
- leaders must sleep in accommodation separate to the children.

Venues should allow for the privacy of all parties to be respected, particularly when changing clothes, washing and toileting.

Conduct of leaders during an overnight stay must be consistent with the practices and behaviours expected during delivery of other ministries. This includes:

- providing children and young people with privacy when bathing and dressing,
- observing appropriate dress standards when children and young people are present (such as no exposure to adult nudity),
- not allowing children or young people to be exposed to pornographic material,
- not leaving children and young people under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons such as venue staff, housemates, family members of leaders or friends,
- not involving sleeping arrangements that may compromise the safety of children and young people such as, unsupervised sleeping arrangements, or an adult sleeping in the same bed as a child,
- the right of children and young people to contact their parents, or others, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay, and
- parents expecting that their children can, if they wish, make contact.

3.9. USE OF EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

When you engage or use an external service provider for an activity (e.g. when you engage a specialist in outdoor education or a speaker for a camp), leaders should:

- make reasonable enquiries as to whether they have been screened and selected in accordance with civil and any church requirements,
- ensure that their contact with children does not extend beyond the reason for their engagement, and



- ensure that they are not left alone with a child.

3.10. PRESENCE OF NON-LEADERS

3.10.1. Parents

Parents of children are permitted to be present in children's ministry areas in order to attend to the needs of their own children. For example, settling a child at the start of creche. They must not function as a leader or assist leaders, they are only to attend to the needs of their own children. Parents must not initiate physical contact with other children. Parents functioning in this manner are not required to comply with the [Safe People Policy](#), but must comply with this document.

3.10.2. Support workers

Children with a disability may require the presence of a support worker during children's ministries. Support workers are permitted to be present to support a child. They are not required to comply with the [Safe People Policy](#) on condition that they are in possession of a [National Disability Insurance Scheme Worker Screening Check](#). It is the responsibility of the relevant ministry leader to ensure support workers have this check. Support workers are required to abide by all relevant policies including this document.

3.10.3. Observers

It is permissible for people thinking about becoming a leader to be present in a children's ministry as an observer. Observers are only required to comply with the Ministry Leader requirements of the [Safe People Policy](#) (which includes being in possession of a Working With Children Check). Observers are only to observe a maximum of two sessions and must not initiate physical contact with children.

3.11. CHILD HELPERS

City on a Hill encourages children to volunteer as helpers on rostered teams. Children are not to:

- be alone with other children,
- engage in one on one ministry such as discipleship/mentoring with other children,
- be involved in taking children to the toilet,
- drive other children or adults in their role as a volunteer,
- communicate one on one with other children using digital technology as a part of their volunteer role.

Children serving as volunteers are not to function as Ministry Leaders, rather as helpers, and are to be appropriately supervised. Those supervising the child (formally or informally) must have a Working With



Children Check. Refer to the [Safe People Policy](#) for further information, particularly regarding onboarding and background check requirements for children serving as volunteers.

3.12. FOOD

Refer to the [City Kids Snacks Policy](#) for guidelines surrounding the provision of food in children's ministries. This policy does not apply to youth ministries.

3.13. HEALTH AND ATTENDANCE

Refer to the [City Kids Health Policy](#) for the circumstances in which it is permissible to refuse to admit children to a ministry if they are ill.

3.14. PHOTOGRAPHY

Children can only be photographed, videoed (including livestreaming of services) and published in the following circumstances:

- parental permission has been obtained,
- in the case of a teenager, their permission must be obtained in addition to parental permission,
- the context is directly related to participation in our ministries, and
- the child is appropriately dressed.

Embarrassing or offensive photos or videos must not be either taken or shared.

3.15. ATTENDANCE

Each ministry is required to keep a register of attendance for all children and leaders in attendance. These attendance records are permanent records. This information must be stored in the designated IT system provided for this purpose, unless an exemption has been granted by the [Safeguarding, Risk and Compliance Manager](#). This information is confidential and should never be left where it can be accessed by unauthorised persons. Refer to our [Privacy Policy](#) for more information.

3.16. CHECK IN AND CHECK OUT PROCEDURES

Each ministry is required to establish procedures for the arrival and departure of children, which will vary according to the physical space and age of the children. Procedures must ensure that all children are accounted for during the program and depart with a parent. There must be a set start and end time that demarcates the period of responsibility that City on a Hill leaders have for the children. These procedures must be approved by the [Safeguarding, Risk and Compliance Manager](#).



3.17. INSURANCE RESTRICTIONS

The following activities are not covered by our insurance policies. Engaging in these activities is not permitted.

- Motor races, motor rallies, motocross or motor speed tests, motocross, trail bikes, dune buggies, quad bikes.
- Mountain Biking (on 'diamond' or 'double diamond' difficulty levels of terrain as assessed in the International Mountain Bicycling Association Australian Trail Difficulty Rating System.
- Rifle/firearms and other forms of shooting
- Hang-gliding, parachuting, hot air balloons, other aerial activities
- Scuba diving
- Vertical and horizontal bungee jumping
- Gladiator games
- Trapeze
- Martial arts, boxing
- Amusement arcades, parks and rides, commercial fairgrounds
- Bouncy/jumping castles and/or use of any inflatable devices (any location other than indoors)
- Competitive trampolining
- Fireworks or fire walking

The following activities are covered by our insurance policies on the condition that the activity is conducted and supervised by a duly licensed, skilled and qualified third-party operator, holding \$20,000,000 in public liability insurance.

- Go karts at commercially operated and licensed circuits
- Horse, pony riding and equestrian
- Canyoning
- Paintball / skirmish
- Water sports with power boats
- Zip-lines
- Non-competitive trampolining
- Archery

For clarity the following activities are covered by our insurance policies on condition that they are part of a structured program by appropriately qualified members of staff and following established risk assessment guidelines.

- Mountain Biking (below 'diamond' or 'double diamond' difficulty)



- Caving
- Water canoeing/kayaking/ rafting (above class 2 rapids)
- Abseiling, rock climbing (supported only)
- High ropes courses
- Rock walls
- Bouncy/jumping castles and/or use of any inflatable devices (when used indoors under competent adult supervision only)
- Non-combative 'boxercise' and self-defense training, as part of a camping or school program.

If you have any questions regarding this, please contact the [Safeguarding, Risk and Compliance Manager](#).

4. CONTACTS AND LINKS

4.1. *Safeguarding, Risk and Compliance Manager*

Email: compliance@cityonahill.com.au

Phone: 03 9640 0990

4.2. *Complaints and misconduct reporting*

Reports can be submitted in multiple ways:

- to any staff member, who is then required to submit a formal report,
- to the complaints management team at City on a Hill, or
- to our independent professional standards body, [Kooyoora](#).

How to report to the City on a Hill complaints management team

1. In writing by post to:
Safeguarding, Risk and Compliance Manager – City on a Hill
PO Box 664
Carlton South VIC 3053.
2. Via email to report@cityonahill.com.au.
3. By phone, call 03 9640 0990 and ask to speak to the Safeguarding, Risk and Compliance Manager.
4. On a web-based form located at cityonahill.com.au/safe-ministry.

How to report to Kooyoora

1. In writing by post to:
Director of Professional Standards
PO Box 329
Canterbury VIC 3126.
2. Via email to contact@kooyoora.org.au.
3. By phone, call 1800 135 246.



4.3. Acknowledgements

City on a Hill wishes to acknowledge the following organisations and their safeguarding material which have been invaluable in the creation of this document: [Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, Australian Childhood Foundation, Creating Safer Communities, Child Safe, Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment](#) and the [Anglican Diocese of Sydney Office of Safe Ministry](#).

APPENDIX 1: RECOGNISING THE CHARACTERISTICS AND EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE

Leaders need to be aware of the signs, symptoms and characteristics of child abuse and its impact on children. Abuse of a child can be categorised as emotional and psychological, grooming, physical, sexual, or spiritual. It can also arise from neglect, bullying or harassment.

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse if a child has:

- torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- difficulty, pain or blood in the genital area when walking, sitting, or using the bathroom,
- discharge from the penis or vagina,
- injuries (e.g., bruises, tearing, bleeding), itching, or swelling in the genital, vaginal, or anal area,
- urinary tract infections, yeast infections, sexually transmitted diseases,
- pregnancy.

It is not normal for children to engage in the following sexual behaviours:

- placing mouth on sex part,
- asking others to engage in sexual acts,
- trying to have intercourse or imitating intercourse,
- undressing others, especially if done forcefully,
- imitating sexual positions with dolls,
- inserting an object into vagina or anus, especially if child continues to do so despite pain,
- manually stimulating or having oral or genital contact with pets,
- making sexual sounds,
- inserting tongue in mouth when kissing.

Consider the possibility of physical abuse if you notice:

- frequent injuries of any kind (e.g., bruises, cuts, fractures, burns), especially if the child is unable to provide an adequate explanation of the cause of injury,
- injuries that appear in distinctive patterns such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns, or impressions of other instruments,
- injuries that present on both sides of the head or body, as accidental injuries typically only affect one side of the body.

Consider the possibility of neglect if a child:

- is obviously malnourished, listless, or fatigued,
- begs, steals, or hoards food or complains frequently of hunger,
- is consistently dirty or has severe body odor,
- lacks sufficient clothing for the weather,
- untreated illness, injuries, health (e.g., unfilled cavities) or serious educational needs,
- broken or missing eyeglasses, hearing aid, or other necessary aids or equipment,
- has an untreated need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention,
- stays at school outside of school hours,
- frequently absent or significant academic struggles,
- is inappropriately left unsupervised, or
- abuses alcohol or other drugs

Sexual abuse of a child is often preceded by grooming, although grooming in and of itself is also a crime characterised with trauma impacts regardless of whether further forms of abuse occur. Grooming actions are designed to establish an emotional connection to lower the child's inhibitions through the development of a relationship with the child, and increased opportunity to see the child. Grooming involves psychological manipulation that is usually very subtle, drawn out, calculated, controlling and premeditated. Typically, grooming occurs incrementally: accessing the victim's vulnerabilities, initiating and maintaining the abuse, and concealing the abuse. Grooming offences may target online or other electronic communications, subjecting children to child exploitation material, and/or using intoxicating substances to engage children for the purpose of sexual activity.

The sexual abuse of a child commonly has the following characteristics:

- it usually starts with something minor and gradually builds up to more involved behaviours through a process of grooming;
- it is secretive and generally known only to the abuser and victim making it extremely difficult to detect;



- it is perpetrated by someone known to the child and/or held in a position of trust by the child or their parents or guardians; and
- it is rarely a self-contained or one-off incident but rather part of an ongoing relationship that is recruiting, corrupting and distorting.

The abuse of a child commonly causes psychological and spiritual harm and is likely to lead to the impairment of their social, emotional, psychological, cognitive, spiritual and intellectual development and/or disturbed behaviour. Children who are maltreated in one way are at significantly increased risk of being maltreated in multiple ways.

The effects of child abuse extend well beyond the abuser and their primary victims. The families of the victim and abusers as well as their communities can also experience a high degree of distress when revelations of abuse emerge. Often, they can deny the disclosure and so reject the victim rather than face reality. Once the reality is confronted, the community will commonly experience profound shock, guilt about failing to protect the primary victim, deep hurt and disillusionment.

If you become aware of or have suspicions that grooming and/or abusive behaviour is taking place you must report this. Information on how to report is covered at [4.2 Complaints and misconduct reporting](#).

APPENDIX 2: RECOGNISING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SEXUAL OFFENDERS

Leaders need to be aware of the characteristics of sexual offenders. A sexual offender may be a friend, a family member, a neighbour, a peer, or a person in authority. Sexual offenders generally:

- look for and take situational opportunities;
- do not stop unless there is some intervening factor;
- believe or assert that the victim is complicit or a willing participant;
- attempt to deny, justify, minimise or excuse their behaviour by:
 - claiming their behaviour was an expression of love for the victim;
 - claiming their behaviour was a result of their childhood abuse;
 - claiming their behaviour was influenced by stress, the use of alcohol or other substances;
 - and
 - blaming the victim;
- enjoy the activity, despite claims to the contrary; and
- are repeat offenders.

People who sexually abuse children often utilize deception, authority, trust, or physical force/threats to gain access and control over children so they can perpetrate the abuse. The vast majority of those who



perpetrate abuse in any form are known by their victims. In a Christian community, offenders typically groom not only victims, but caregivers and all in the community to establish a perception of themselves as someone who would never abuse a child.

Abusers often use charm or other tactics to manipulate others. Targets of abuse often report feeling flattered and then later confused, upset, guilty, ashamed, and like it is all their fault. Victims should know that although it is normal to feel this way, abuse is never their fault. Those in positions of power and trust are responsible and able to respect appropriate boundaries.

Abusers are often skilled at explaining away concerning behaviour. Anyone who experiences or has information regarding concerning behaviour or a policy violation should speak up as soon as possible. All of us should be mindful of what is happening around us and speak up if anyone is demonstrating concerning behaviour, crossing boundaries, or violating City on a Hill policies in any way.

If you become aware of or have suspicions that a person is engaging in abusive behaviour you must report this. Information on how to report is covered at [4.2 Complaints and misconduct reporting](#).