



# Foursquare Church Australia

## Safe Churches Policy and Procedures

### Biblical Principles that Define our Child Safe Environment Policy

1. Foursquare Church Australia is committed to the nurturing of a safe and healthy environment for all members of the community, particularly within each local church, outreach and corporate event. The following biblical principles provide the basis for this policy statement:
  - 1.1. We have a duty of care towards each other (Matthew 19:19). This is not taken lightly and it is seen to be the responsibility of all members of the community. Jesus set a high standard of care and compassion for others and this is the desired aim within all of our community (Matthew 19:13-15).
  - 1.2. The Bible stresses the sacredness and preciousness of life (Psalm 139).
  - 1.3. The Bible stresses the significance of our responsibility to protect those who are vulnerable (Exodus 22:21-22; Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Jeremiah 22:2-4; James 1:27).

### Background to Policy Statement

2. Foursquare Church Australia takes very seriously the mandate from God to protect the vulnerable within our community, because of their powerlessness at times to protect themselves. This policy takes into consideration all the vulnerable people within our church communities, including children, young people, the elderly, individuals with disabilities and their carers and people who are emotionally and spiritually vulnerable (i.e. all individuals under authority of church leadership).

Foursquare Church Australia is aware and supports that all individuals have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected and valued. We are also aware that Australia at State and Commonwealth level, there are laws stipulating this. It should be noted that this policy should be read in conjunction with Child Safe Environment Policy, Code of Conduct, Working with Children Check Policy and Complaints and Grievance Policy.

The aims of this policy are:

- 2.1. To minimise the risk of abuse, misconduct and misuse of power within the local church, outreach and other events.
- 2.2. To ensure that all cases of suspected abuse or misconduct are handled in a consistent, unbiased and thorough manner.
- 2.3. Foursquare Church Australia promotes respect, fairness and consideration for all members of the community
- 2.4. To ensure that leaders and programs within the community are functioning in a way that provides protection for all members of the community.

- 2.5. To ensure that all people within our communities are respected and valued regardless of their age, country of origin, gender, cultural heritage, ability or background.
- 2.6. Foursquare Church Australia acknowledge that through accountability and layers of protocol, we are able to work together to provide a safe environment for vulnerable members of our communities.
- 2.7. Foursquare Church Australia recognises the significance of training and induction in the area of maintaining a safe community for everyone.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Safe Environment, Working with Children Check Policy, the Code of Conduct and the Complaints and Grievance Policy.

## Policy

3. Foursquare Church Australia is committed to the following in order to develop and maintain a safe environment for everyone within our church communities:
  - 3.1. Foursquare Church Australia is committed to having safe leaders, through:
    - 3.1.1. Safe recruitment of leaders
    - 3.1.2. Adequate training of leaders
    - 3.1.3. Adequate supervision of leaders
    - 3.1.4. Appropriate responses to allegations of risk of harm (abuse or neglect) and ministry misconduct
  - 3.2. Foursquare Church Australia is committed to having safe church, outreach and other events program, through:
    - 3.2.1. Ensuring that the environment is free from physical (including sexual), emotional, spiritual abuse
    - 3.2.2. Ensuring that risk to safety is minimised in each environment through due care and diligence (including risk management assessment checklists being completed regularly on the physical environment)
  - 3.3. This policy applies to all pastors, elders, workers, volunteers associated with any ministry associated with Foursquare Church Australia. This policy takes into consideration the following:
    - 3.3.1. The Commission for Children and Young People Act
    - 3.3.2. Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act
    - 3.3.3. Working with Children Check
    - 3.3.4. The Ombudsman Act
    - 3.3.5. Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection)
    - 3.3.6. Children Legislation Amendment 2009

## Procedure

4. The following procedure is outlined for all local level Foursquare Churches, outreaches and other events to enforce:
  - 4.1. Foursquare Church Australia will endeavour to:
    - 4.1.1. Provide a recognised Child Safety Contact Person (details available at [www.foursquareaustralia.org](http://www.foursquareaustralia.org)), who will also act on behalf of situation involving other vulnerable members of our communities
    - 4.1.2. Exercise its duty of care to protect individuals from abuse or neglect, by:
      - 4.1.2.1. Screening workers and volunteers through the local church

- 4.1.2.2. Training pastors and leaders in this area
  - 4.1.2.3. Protecting workers and volunteers from false allegations of abuse or neglect
  - 4.1.2.4. Acting on obligations to maintain accurate records regarding individuals who work and volunteer with prohibited persons
  - 4.1.2.5. Providing training for members of the community on the Foursquare Church Australia policies and procedures
  - 4.1.2.6. Ensuring that procedures are in place to minimise harmful behaviour through establishing a Code of Conduct
  - 4.1.2.7. Encouraging all church workers, volunteers and members to abstain from placing themselves in a situation which may be liable to result in harm for individuals.
- 4.2. Foursquare Church Australia is committed to exercising its duty of care to all members of our community and beyond through creating an environment which is void of abuse or neglect and is safe and supportive of everyone. Appropriate duty of care will include:
- 4.2.1. Being vigilant at all times to establish awareness of the need to be safe
  - 4.2.2. Providing adequate supervision at events
  - 4.2.3. Making sure that people are aware of what is acceptable behaviour through implementing a Code of Conduct
  - 4.2.4. Having appropriate strategies in place to deal with complaints and allegations within the local church, outreach or other event context
  - 4.2.5. Identifying situations of suspected breach in this area
  - 4.2.6. Supporting individuals who are the alleged victims of abuse
  - 4.2.7. Supporting families related to an alleged victims of abuse
  - 4.2.8. Supporting others in the community who are witnesses of abuse
  - 4.2.9. Fostering an environment of mutual trust, respect and support
  - 4.2.10. Looking at situations in an impartial manner and notifying appropriate agencies as appropriate
- 4.3. Policies related to safe environments and related policies will be available on the website and dispersed to all pastors at regular intervals.
- 4.4. Should a complaint arise, the following should be observed:
- 4.4.1. All complaints should be documented with accurate notes (with time, place, date, people present, and an outline of what is said)
  - 4.4.2. Should the complaint be made regarding the Senior Pastor of a local church, outreach or event, this should be handled by the Child Safety Contact Person, who should be notified as soon as possible.
  - 4.4.3. Should the complaint be made regarding a different worker, volunteer, member or visitor of the local church, outreach or event, the senior pastor would be responsible for reporting, whoever they may request the support of the Child Safety Contact Person, even if the individual involved is not a child.
  - 4.4.4. Should the complaint be made regarding a person or persons outside of the local church, outreach or event, the senior pastor would be responsible for reporting, whoever they may request the support of the Child Safety Contact Person.
- 4.5. Reporting a situation of alleged abuse or neglect:
- 4.5.1. It is not the responsibility of any individual of the Foursquare Church Australia to investigate alleged incidents of abuse or neglect but rather, to report them to the appropriate agencies.

- 4.5.2. An interview (formal or informal based on the age and situation) should be conducted to establish facts needed to make a report only but not necessarily to minimise or highlight the situation.
- 4.5.3. Alleged incidents of abuse or neglect should be reported to the appropriate agencies (DoCS, Police, Ombudsman).
- 4.5.4. These allegations should not be discussed with other people within the community without specific reason. Outside of this the privacy of all involved should be protected as much as possible.
- 4.5.5. All situations of alleged abuse should also be reported to the Child Safety Contact Person within Foursquare Church Australia.
- 4.5.6. Should the allegation be relating to a Church worker (directly employed by the church), the Child Safety Contact Person or the Senior Pastor will contact the Ombudsman, as well as the other relevant agencies.
- 4.5.7. If the person of the allegation is a Church worker or volunteer, they may be informed following the reporting being complete, of the allegation (if appropriate). They may be informed of the substance of the report and any investigation. They should be informed that they may put their case forward either verbally or in writing to the Child Safety Contact Person and the person carrying out the investigation. They may also be informed of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman if they are not satisfied with how the allegation was handled.
- 4.5.8. It is the responsibility of the Senior Pastor or where appropriate the Child Safety Contact Person to ensure that all relevant individuals, including children, families, and alleged perpetrators are receiving appropriate counsel and support.
- 4.6. It is important that the rights of all individuals are respected relating to all alleged victims. To this effect, the following should be applied at all times:
  - 4.6.1. Strict confidentiality should be maintained at all times
  - 4.6.2. Impartiality should be maintained at all times
  - 4.6.3. All parties involved should be given adequate time to respond to the alleged abuse
  - 4.6.4. Steps should be taken to provide protection to the person who made the allegations and the person who the allegations concerned
  - 4.6.5. All reasonable information should be gathered prior to the report being made to assist investigations
  - 4.6.6. No person will decide a case to which they have a conflict of interest
  - 4.6.7. Report will be made without any delay
- 4.7. All information gained regarding alleged abuse should be well maintained. Information should be kept in a secure location under the direction of the Senior Pastor or the Child Safety Contact Person in order to be provided to other appropriate people should the need arise.