

SAFE MINISTRY CHILD SAFE POLICY

Lighthouse Church is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children. Children can expect to be safe and protected, to be respected and listened to, and to have their particular needs addressed in church activities.

We are committed to developing and implementing a child safe culture that supports the prevention and reporting of risk and abuse.

Purpose

This policy is designed to inform families, members, visitors and the community about what they can expect from Lighthouse Church in relation to the ensuring child safety and wellbeing at church related activities and events.

Supporting children

Lighthouse Church supports the active participation of children in our organisation. We listen to and respect the views of children and young people, and involve them in decisions that affect them. We aim to understand and meet their individual needs to enable them to enjoy and participate in church activities and events to the best of their ability.

Selecting and supporting ministry workers

Lighthouse Church has a documented procedure for selecting, screening and training all children's and youth ministry workers before they start in children's ministry, and throughout their period of service.

Ministry workers have an appointed ministry leader, and are provided with detailed policies and procedures (including a Code of Conduct) to guide behaviour and set clear expectations to ensure the enjoyment, safety and wellbeing of children in church activities and events.

Our child safe culture

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. We aim to consider safety in every aspect of organisational leadership, decision making and governance.

We actively assess and address risks associated with church activities and events. We encourage everyone involved in church to raise opportunities for improvement, and provide regular formal opportunities for consultation with children and families, members and ministry workers, and others involved in church.

Our primary child safety rule is that a children's/youth ministry worker should never be alone with a child or young person. Our procedures provide extensive guidance to ensure this is possible and followed in all activities, in all contexts, all the time.

Ministry workers are trained in the types of unacceptable behaviour towards children, and indicators that a child may be at risk of harm. We have clear reporting procedures for ministry workers to report their concerns about any aspect of service provision, and any behaviour that may be considered misconduct.

Communication

Children and families are encouraged to provide feedback or raise concerns relating to the care of their child, content of the teaching program or other aspect of children/youth ministry with the ministry leader. This provides opportunities for us to consider how we can make improvements to our programs and better meet the needs of children and young people in our care.

Concerns or complaints relating to instances where our Child Safe Code of Conduct has not been followed, or where a child may be at risk of harm or abuse should be reported directly to our Safe Ministry Representative safeministry@lighthouse.net.au

Our ministry workers receive a copy of our child safe policy and procedures as part of their safe ministry training. Children, families, members, visitors and the community can access our child safe policy and procedures, and Code of Conduct on our website: <https://www.lighthouse.net.au/policies-and-procedures/>

Review

Our child safe policy and procedures, and Code of Conduct, are reviewed at least annually to incorporate any changes to legislation or requirements, and incorporated improvements based on feedback and suggestions for children, their families, ministry workers and others involved in church activities and events.