



# German Lutheran Trinity Church Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## Name

### Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

The German Lutheran Trinity Church is committed to protecting the safety of all people within its programs, ministries and events.

All people, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, abilities and family/social background have equal rights to this protection.

All people have the right to be respected and valued as well as feel emotionally, physically and spiritually safe at all times.

This child protection policy applies to all working on behalf of the church or representing the church, including staff, including leadership, whether paid or unpaid, volunteers, helpers, students.

## Purpose

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse from occurring within Trinity
2. To demonstrate our church's commitment to provide and maintain a culture of safety and wellbeing for children and vulnerable people
3. To ensure that all who call Trinity their church community are aware of their responsibilities for identifying occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing and recognising abuse when it occurs.
4. To ensure a process exists for screening staff and volunteers
5. To provide a clear process for handling allegations of abuse which includes compliance with mandatory reporting requirements.
6. To provide guidance and ongoing training for staff and volunteers as to action that should be taken where abuse is suspected within or outside of the organisation.

These policies and procedures are to be read and implemented alongside relevant legislation related to the protection and welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

For the purposes of this policy a child is considered anyone up to the age of 18. All children are considered vulnerable. A vulnerable person is a person who is more susceptible to harm due to factors such as (but not limited to) advanced age, disability, illness, residency status, financial hardship, and experience of abuse.

## Scope

This policy:

- This child safe and wellbeing policy applies to all working on behalf of the church or representing the church, including staff, including leadership, whether paid or unpaid, volunteers, helpers, students.
- applies in all physical and online environments used by children during church activities.

## Statement of commitment to child safety

Trinity is committed to ministering to children, young people and vulnerable adults by providing a Church environment that is physically, emotionally and spiritually safe.



Trinity is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment for children, young people and vulnerable it's by the following safeguarding measures:

- Recruitment processes (screening, selection, Interviews etc.),
- Working with children checks (WWCC),
- Training
- Induction
- Supervision and Reviews.

The following values reflect the culture that we are committed to promoting within Trinity:

- Due diligence
- integrity
- Duty of care
- Transparency
- inclusivity
- Collaborative Ministry
- Christian ethics
- and the Gospels principles

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount and is everyone's responsibility as outlined in the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children.
- All children, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other organisations/agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We commit to

- Safe recruitment of leaders  
We will screen all prospective leaders in our ministry before they are appointed. Working with children checks, references etc.
- Adequate training
- Have a clear Code of Conduct  
We will adopt and implement Code of Conduct for all leaders and volunteers, including boundaries behaviour and expectations of interactions with children. All leaders will agree to follow our Code of Conduct.
- Continued supervision of leaders.  
We commit to ongoing training, supervision and support for leaders.
- Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious misconduct.  
All leaders will report disclosures or claims or suspicion of child abuse according to our procedure. We will listen to and believe children who raise concerns. We will ensure that procedures are clear and appropriate in responding to claims of abuse.  
Where a leader has an allegation of misconduct made against them, we will provide support to alleged victims and perpetrators and seek appropriate denominational help for a just and air resolution.
- Provide an open safe environment



We will afford participants a say in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas and encouraging participation. We will be accountable and transparent.

Trinity staff and volunteers recognise the rights of all children to feel safe and participate in our community. For this reason, we will encourage children:

- To express their views. We will listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them as we believe that a community that empowers and listens to them will help them feel safe enough to raise concerns.
- To 'have a say' about things that are important to them. Policies and practices that are shaped by children's views can better prevent harm to children.
- To exercise their rights. Rights are basic entitlements that belong to each person. We will endeavour to uphold and respect these rights, take a proactive role in educating children about their rights, and support them as they do so in a way that does not infringe and/or cause harm to the rights of others.

We are committed to teaching children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents/guardians, raise with us. Empowerment means building up children and strengthening their confidence in themselves and in the community. It involves equipping children with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions and enabling them to increase control of their lives as appropriate.

We will create a child-friendly environment, allowing people to raise their concerns in an appropriate manner. 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.

### **DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND EMPOWERMENT PRACTICE**

German Lutheran Trinity Church values diversity and inclusion, and we do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. For this reason, we commit to:

- Recognise children with disabilities are unique. We will not stereotype or make assumptions about a child's abilities but will work with the child and their carers to determine the best means of inclusion for them to feel safe and able to participate at a level in which is suitable for all.
- Recognise children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are unique. We will take steps to understand language and cultural needs and take diverse family structures and norms into account.
- Recognise some children are unable to live at home for unique reasons. We commit to understanding their unique circumstances and adjust our processes in a way that enables participation without creating obstacles which preclude them from being involved or further marginalised.
- Recognise identity development is a highly personal experience. We will welcome and value all children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, gender diverse and non-binary (LGTBQIA+) and take steps to protect them from abuse and harm. Because we believe God has called us to treat others with love and respect as bearers of His image, we will demonstrate love and acceptance
- Recognising the significance of First Nation Peoples (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders), we will endeavour to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of their culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children. We will take steps to uphold the right of children to enjoy and feel welcome and connected to their culture and community



## Roles and responsibilities

### Role of the Committee

The Trinity Committee has the role of making sure Trinity prioritizes children’s safety and that action is taken when anyone raises concerns about children’s safety.

The Committee will champion and model a child safe culture at Trinity. We encourage anyone involved with the church to report a child safety concern. The Committee will work to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns.

Everyone at the church has a role in identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm. The Committee will make sure that staff and volunteers are conducting risk assessments and taking action to manage risks in accordance with this policy. They will also ensure that appropriate child safety training for staff and volunteers is identified and completed.

The Committee will conduct an annual review of how effectively Trinity is delivering child safety and wellbeing. The input of people involved with German Lutheran Trinity Church will be sought as part of this review.

### Staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the church or Safe Church Training LCA and always follow the church’s child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Policy
- ensure children’s views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

## Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and children. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was approved by GLTC committee Date 6th March 2023

This policy was last reviewed on 6th March 2023

Signed [Signature], child safety officer

### Legal framework

This policy reflects legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children namely

- National Framework for Protecting Australia’s children “protecting Children is Everyone’s Business 2009-2020 (Commonwealth of Australia)
- Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic)



## Reporting procedure

In case of any misconduct or suspicion of any misconduct we encourage victims and witnesses to contact any person or organisation they trust:

In case of immediate danger call police 000.

Police		000
Church committee (will go to all members)	<a href="mailto:kirchenvorstand@kirche.org.au">kirchenvorstand@kirche.org.au</a>	
Pastor	<a href="mailto:pastor@kirche.org.au">pastor@kirche.org.au</a>	0493 537 316 03 9654 5743
Church office	<a href="mailto:admin@kirche.org.au">admin@kirche.org.au</a>	03 9654 5743
Safety officer	<a href="mailto:safe@kirche.org.au">safe@kirche.org.au</a>	
Child Protection Crisis Line, Department of Health and Human Services		13 12 78
Victims of Crime Helpline, Department of Justice and Regulation		1800 819 817
Crime stoppers, Victoria Police		1800 333 000
Witness Assistance Service, Office of Public Prosecutions Victoria		1800 641 927
Safe Space, Victoria Police		1300 364 522

If you become aware of any abuse, please inform immediately

- In case of imminent danger Police 000
- Parents, Family as appropriate
- Safety officer
- The church council
- Child Protection 131278

## Recruitment processes

- Screening: includes criminal record checks (often called “police checks”), identity checks
- Selection
- Interviews: targeted, behavioural-based interview questions
- References: verbal referee checks
- Working with children checks (WWCC),
- Training
- Induction
- Supervision and Reviews.



## Child Protection Code of Conduct

I, (insert name) agree that in the course of my association with the German Lutheran Trinity Church East Melbourne (Trinity),

### **I will:**

- Treat all children and young people with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, ability, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, birth or other status
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents, employees and volunteers
- Encourage children, young people, parents, employees and volunteers to speak up about issues that affect them
- Refrain from using corporal punishment on children
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with Trinity reporting process
- Comply with local, national and international child protection laws
- Ensure that, whenever possible, another adult is present when I am working with children, or in the proximity of children
- Advise my supervisor or church council of my involvement in any situation where my actions could be misinterpreted
- Advise my supervisor or church council if I am involved in any situation which would be likely to bring the organisation into disrepute, and
- Advise my supervisor or church council if I am investigated for any crime or charged with any criminal offence.
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be perceived as sexually suggestive
- Ensure images are honest representations of the situations and the facts

### **And I will not:**

- Use inappropriate language – whether of an offensive, discriminatory, demeaning, abusive or sexual nature – when speaking with or whilst in the presence of a child or young person
- Engage in behaviour to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade a child or young person, or otherwise emotionally abuse a child or young person
- Act in a sexually provocative manner or engage children in any form of sexual activity, including paying for sexual services
- Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way
- Condone or participate in, behaviour with children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Discriminate against or in favour of particular children to the exclusion of others
- Hire children for domestic or any other labour which is inappropriate for their age or development, interferes with their education or play, or places them at risk of injury
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves such as toileting them or changing their clothes
- Sleep in close proximity to any children unless it is absolutely necessary, in which case I will keep my supervisor/manager informed and ensure another adult is present, where possible (noting that this does not apply to my own children)
- Access or create sexually abusive images of children, and
- Use computers, mobile phones, video or digital cameras or any other technology for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children.

I confirm that I have read and understood Trinity's:



- Child Protection Policy, and
- Child Protection Code of Conduct.

**I agree to comply with the Policy and Code of Conduct.**

I understand that a breach of the Policy or Code may provide grounds for my employment with Trinity to be terminated. I also understand that a breach of the Policy or Code could result in criminal prosecution.

I understand that it is my responsibility, as a person engaged by Trinity, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that are abusive or exploitative of children or young people, or could be construed as such.

I authorize Trinity to undertake any necessary inquiries, including criminal record checks and reference checks, as part of my appointment or recruitment process.

I confirm my willingness to participate in training sessions on child protection.

Name of Staff Member:

Position:

Signed:

Date:

## Child Safe Code of Conduct

### Purpose

The Victorian Government introduced the Child Safe Standards (the standards), which are compulsory minimum standards for organisations that provide services for children (or are used by children) to help protect them from harm. The Standards require organisations that provide services for children to have a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

The Department of Justice and Regulation's (the department) Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines the child safe principles and minimum expectations for appropriate behaviour that all employees, consultants, contractors or volunteers (**staff**) engaged by the department must observe when in the company of children.

### Scope

The department's Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all staff of the department. It applies to a broad range of situations where interaction with children may occur. For example, the Child Safe Code of Conduct will apply when staff come into contact with children as part of their duties:

- in the youth justice system



- in the adult corrections systems through their parents or guardians
- who appear in court as a child witness
- through incidental contact (e.g. via home visits, children visiting Justice Service Centres)
- through services provided by funded agencies.

It is important that all staff are aware of the department's obligations under the department's **Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy**, whereby allegations of employee misconduct involving children can be made against an employee even if the conduct occurred outside of their work.

## Statement of commitment

The department:

- is committed to child safety and children's best interests
- has zero tolerance for child abuse and will take all allegations of reportable conduct and safety concerns very seriously, ensuring such conduct is dealt with in accordance with departmental policies and procedures
- will uphold the right of all children who come into contact with the department to feel safe and protected
- is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risk early, and removing and reducing these risks
- will actively work to listen to and empower children who come into contact with the department
- has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when there are concerns about a child's safety, which will be followed rigorously
- has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers
- is committed to providing training and educating staff and volunteers on child abuse risks
- is committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability
- considers the needs of same sex attracted and intersex children and young people, and recognises gender diversity in providing a safe environment.

This department requires all staff to uphold these commitments. The department has specific policies, procedures and training in place to achieve these commitments.

## Statement of code of conduct

The Child Safe Standards require organisations that provide services for children to have a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children. All staff of the department are required to observe the below child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

The following Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by staff towards children. It aims to protect children and reduce opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff (including volunteers and contractors) by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

Everyone in the department has a role to play – the Secretary, executive, leadership group, staff, volunteers, students and contractors – they need to understand their roles and be supported to take action.

## Child Safe Code of Conduct standards and obligations

All staff (including employees, consultants, contractors or volunteers) of the department are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children they come into contact with and must:





- adhere to the department's Child Safe Policy at all times and abide by the department's commitment and obligation to creating a child safe organisation
- treat children with respect, including valuing ideas and opinions
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse by being vigilant to signs of abuse
- provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children and young people
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all children
- work with children in an open and transparent way. For example, by ensuring that where appropriate, interactions with children can be observed by other adults
- disclose any information of charges, convictions of abuse and all other offence history in accordance with the department's Criminal Record Check policy
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse to the Child Safety Officer
- respect the privacy of children and their families and only disclose information to people on a need to know basis and in accordance with privacy legislation
- encourage children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Staff (including employees, consultants, contractors or volunteers) of the department must not:

- develop inappropriate relationships with children or young people
- display violence behaviour towards a child
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as inappropriate
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by allowing unnecessary one-adult/one-child encounters to occur)
- conduct a sexual relationship with a child or young person or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child or young person
- engage in open discussions of a mature nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate, offensive, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, culturally inappropriate or discriminatory language when speaking with, or in the presence of, a child or young person
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- use any computer, mobile phone, or video and digital camera to exploit or harass children or expose children to offensive or sexualised content
- exchange personal contact details with a child such as phone number, social networking sites or email address, unless necessary
- have contact with a child client or their family outside of the department, unless necessary (such as providing details to client's family regarding treatment).

All staff are obliged to report any breaches of this Code of Conduct to the Child Safety Officer or appropriate person. In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the department's Reportable Conduct Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All staff of the department who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with the relevant industrial instrument and/or relevant terms of engagement.

## Definitions

This Child Safe Code of Conduct is issued under the authority of the Secretary pursuant to the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.



The contents of this document represent the current Child Safe Code of Conduct of the department and reflect its current practices and experience.

This Code of Conduct is subject to biennial review and will be altered (and the alterations communicated to users) as, and when, appropriate in order to ensure that it remains current. Changes to this Code of Conduct can be requested by a business unit by presenting a suitable case to the Executive Director, People and Culture.

## **Contacts**

The following people may be contacted in relation to the matters arising under this policy:

### **Department of Justice and Regulation**

Child Safety Officer, email: [childsaf@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:childsaf@justice.vic.gov.au)

### **Commissioner for Children and Young People**

[Commissioner for Children and Young People's website](#) 