



# **Child Protection Policy**

**and**

# **Procedures**

Adopted 31 July, 2016  
Last reviewed 3 June, 2020

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Policy Statement

CrossPoint Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its members, leaders, and particularly for children.

The CrossPoint Church Child Protection Policy & Procedures aims to reduce the risk of abuse occurring, and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should abuse occur.

### 1.2 Scope

The Policy & Procedures apply to:

- All ministries authorised by or under the control of CrossPoint Church, including those ministries undertaken at CrossPoint Church's premises or away from those premises.
- All leaders within CrossPoint Church or engaged by CrossPoint Church.

### 1.3 Authority

This is the Child Protection Policy & Procedures of CrossPoint Church and was adopted for use by the congregation of CrossPoint Church on 31 July, 2016.

The elders of CrossPoint Church are committed to implementing the Policy & Procedures and training our leaders in its content and application.

### 1.4 Definitions

**Child** – Any person under the age of 18.

**Abuse** – Can consist of one or more of but is not restricted to the following:

**Physical abuse** – Any non-accidental physical injury.

**Sexual abuse** – Any sexual act or threat to perform such upon another person. It occurs when a person uses his/her power and authority to take advantage of another's trust to involve him/her in sexual activity. It does not necessarily involve genital contact but is any act which erodes the sexual boundary between two persons. It may appear consensual but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential.

**Emotional abuse** – The chronic attitude or behaviour of one person which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which is detrimental to a person's development.

**Neglect** – Any serious omission or commission which jeopardizes or impairs a person's development.

**Place of worship** – The CrossPoint Church place of worship, located at 5/220 Toogood Road, Bayview Heights, QLD, 4868, Australia.

**Helpers** – Any unpaid person up to age 17 who is invited by a leader to assist in his/her ministry.

**Leader** – Any person (paid or unpaid) age 18 or over who is responsible for the control and safety of members placed in his/her care while holding a position in a recognised ministry of CrossPoint Church. A leader could include but is not limited to:

- Religious practioner
- Small group leaders
- Music, drama or other ministry leaders
- Counsellors
- Youth leaders
- Jr. Church superintendents
- Teachers
- Kid's Club leaders
- Religious Education instructors
- Sports coaches and organisers

**Members** – Any person, including children, who regularly attends or participates in CrossPoint Church ministries.

**Ministry** – Any organised activity that is authorised by CrossPoint Church.

**Ministry leader** – The person recognised and authorised by CrossPoint Church as head of a ministry.

## 2. EXTERNAL POLICIES

We acknowledge that some ministries at CrossPoint Church might have external affiliation with other organisations. These organisations may have policies governing the issues of member and/or child safety and abuse. This Policy & Procedures is not intended to replace or conflict with the other policies, but instead to operate in conjunction with them.

## 3. POLICY REVIEW

The Policy & Procedures will be reviewed annually by the CrossPoint Church elders with consideration to the matters raised by relevant ministry leaders. Relevant ministry leaders will be notified of updates made by the elders.

### **4. OBLIGATIONS**

#### **4.1 Spiritual**

The core beliefs of CrossPoint Church require us to treat all people with love and dignity and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

#### **4.2 Legal**

CrossPoint Church and its leaders are subject to Federal and State legislation and principles established through common law.

#### **4.3 Ethical**

Some actions may not be regarded as abuse, but are unacceptable behaviour for CrossPoint Church Leaders. These include:

- Inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature
- Coarse language, especially that of a sexual nature
- Suggestive gestures or remarks
- Jokes of a sexual nature
- Inappropriate, but accidental touching
- Inappropriate literature (e.g. PG, M, MA, R or X rated material used with young Children)
- Acts of violence committed by a leader in the course of an activity

The age of individuals is recognised as one of the determinants in deciding what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Ministry leaders will ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

### **5. SELECTION & SCREENING**

#### **5.1 Leaders**

Leaders involved in children's ministry must be carefully selected. Prior to leaders commencing child-related ministries, the following precautions will be taken:

- Volunteer leaders will have regularly attended CrossPoint Church for at least 6 months.
- A Positive Notice Blue Card must be on file prior to the leader commencing his/her role.

- The leader will be required to sign a statement indicating full disclosure of past offenses as well as knowledge of and commitment to our Policy & Procedures.

Where CrossPoint Church has identified that an applicant has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence toward a child, that candidate cannot, under any circumstances, be authorised for involvement in child related ministries.

These offences do not preclude the applicant from serving in other ministries and CrossPoint Church would welcome his/her contribution in more appropriate areas.

### **5.2 Helpers**

Helpers are expected to have an awareness of the content of the Policy & Procedures and be prepared to work within them.

Any helper who provides assistance in a children's ministry must be supervised by a leader at all times and will be accountable to that leader.

Leaders who accept the assistance of a helper must be satisfied of the helper's maturity and his/her suitability for children's ministry.

## **6. TRAINING**

All leaders will be directed to a copy of this Policy & Procedures and will receive training in the content and application of the Child Protection Policy & Procedures.

## **7. A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

Incidents of abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons, two leaders will always be present when working with or supervising children unless such work/supervision is in a public setting.

Leaders will not visit children in their homes unless a parent is present or another leader accompanies them.

When transporting children, a leader should never be alone with a single child in a car. Where this is not practical, leaders will take children directly to and from arranged venues and will not spontaneously detour or make additional arrangements.

Personal counselling is to be carried out in a public setting.

Leaders will respect a member's feelings and privacy when engaging in physical contact of any kind.

Adults and children are expected to respect each other's privacy during activities that require undressing, dressing, or changing clothes. Leaders will set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations. No leader will be alone in a room with a child while either is changing.

Initiations and secret ceremonies are prohibited. All aspects of every child-related programme will be open to observation by parents/guardians.

Leaders have the right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at child-related activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

## **8. DISCIPLINING CHILDREN**

It is not the responsibility of CrossPoint Church or its leaders to discipline a child. If a child does not abide by the rules set down by the leader, or is an obstruction to the care of other children or may cause harm to other children, the child will be removed and referred back to his/her parent or guardian.

At no time will a leader administer any form of physical discipline; however, physical restraint may be appropriate where it is necessary for the protection of the child or of others.

## **9. ALCOHOL & DRUGS**

The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs by minors on CrossPoint Church grounds or during an activity is not to be condoned by any leader. Any child found to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is to be counselled and the parents/guardians contacted so the child can be returned home.

Any child required to take prescription medication will provide a letter from the parents/guardians to the ministry leader.

## **10. REPORTING PROCEDURES**

### **10.1 The Independent Person**

An Independent Person will be appointed by the elders of CrossPoint Church for the purpose of providing independent consultation to those who may feel uncomfortable raising issues with CrossPoint Church leadership or where the leadership are the subject of the complaint or concern.

## 10.2 Procedures

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child has been or is suffering abuse, the following procedures are to be followed without exception.

### 1. Protect the child.

The wellbeing of the child is always paramount. Ensure the child is not presently in danger. Where the child is at *immediate* risk of harm, remove the child from danger and where this is not possible, contact 000 immediately.

### 2. Report the incident.

Any incident involving abuse of a child, whether observed or suspected, should be reported up the chain of authority. The chain of authority, in ascending order, is:

- Leader
- Ministry leader
- Elder
- Independent Person
- Police/Department of Child Safety

Reports will ideally be made within CrossPoint Church first; however, it is always acceptable to go directly to the Independent Person, the Police, or the Department of Child Safety as the circumstances dictate.

### 3. Notification of elders/Independent Person.

The person receiving a report of observed or suspected child abuse is obligated *in every instance* to notify the elders and/or the Independent Person of that report. No one is to make a judgement on his/her own.

### 4. Documentation/Notification.

The elders and/or the Independent Person will promptly document the report and determine the course of action to be taken. Where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion of child abuse, the Police and/or the Department of Child Safety as well as the church's insurer will be notified *promptly*. In some cases, relevant ministry leaders will also be notified. If the report involves allegations against someone involved with CrossPoint Church, the relevant person/s will be suspended from further work with children until the matter has been satisfactorily resolved.



5. Investigation.

Where an internal investigation is deemed necessary, such investigation will follow appropriate reports to the State authorities and will, where an external investigation is taking place, be carried out after the completion of the external investigation.

**10.3 Contact details**

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child has been or is suffering abuse, the procedures set out under section 10.2 should be carefully followed regardless of where the abuse is or may be occurring. The following is the relevant contact information.

The phone number for the **Police** is 07 4030 7000 (Cairns Police) or 131 444 (Policelink) or in the case of an emergency 000.

The phone number for the **Department of Child Safety** is 1 300 684 062 (business hours) or 1 800 177 135 (after hours).

The phone numbers for our **elders** is kept up-to-date on the CrossPoint Church website.

The phone number for **Ansvar**, our insurer, is 1 300 650 540.

The phone number for our **Independent Person** (Rev. Chris Forder, Assistant Minister at The Good Shepherd Anglican Church) is 07 4053 2019.

The phone number for **Child Wise**, a non-profit abuse prevention organisation, is 1 300 244 539.

**10.4 Additional matters**

Reasonable grounds can be assumed when:

1. A child discloses that he or she has been abused, and/or
2. Someone close to a child (e.g. sibling, relative, close friend) discloses on behalf of that child, and/or
3. The child engages in unusual behaviour, or exhibits injuries, that suggest abuse may be occurring, and/or
4. Abuse of a child is observed.

If a disclosure of abuse is made, the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate pastoral care to the one making the disclosure. This will include:

- Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise its impact on the alleged victim. The matter should not be swept under the carpet.
- Not pushing the child to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation.
- Assuring the person that his/her disclosure is being taken seriously, that the child is not at fault, and that he/she is correct in disclosing the incident.
- Maintaining confidentiality.

CrossPoint Church reserves the right to carry out disciplinary procedures in accordance with the constitution of CrossPoint Church.