



PINE STREET
CHURCH OF CHRIST

PROTECTION POLICY

2024

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CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Our Purpose	3
1.2 Policy Statement	3
1.3 Scope	3
1.4 Authority.....	3
1.5 Definitions.....	3
2.0 POLICY REVIEW.....	5
3.0 OBLIGATIONS.....	5
3.1 Spiritual.....	5
3.2 Legal	5
3.3 Ethical	5
4.0 SELECTION & SCREENING	5
4.1 Children’s activity Leader.....	5
4.2 Bible School Ministry Leader	6
4.3 Children’s Activity Helpers	6
4.4 Ministry Leader	6
4.5 Unsuitable Applicants	6
5.0 TRAINING	7
6.0 CODE OF CONDUCT	7
7.0 BLUE CARDS	7
8.0 REPORTING PROCEDURES	7
9.0 PLAN FOR MANAGING BREACHES	8
10.0 HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES	8
11.0 COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT	8
12.0 RECORDS.....	8
APPENDIX 1 – LEGAL OBLIGATIONS.....	10
APPENDIX 2 – APPLICATION FORM	11
APPENDIX 3 - CODE OF CONDUCT	14
APPENDIX 4 - DISCLOSURE OF HARM PROCEDURE	15
APPENDIX 5 – INCIDENT REPORT FORM.....	16
APPENDIX 6 – RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING FORM	17
APPENDIX 7 – LETTER: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS	18

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OUR PURPOSE

To glorify God through providing a secure family environment where each member is encouraged to grow in the service of Christ's Kingdom.

1.2 POLICY STATEMENT

The Pine Street church of Christ is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its Members, Visitors, Volunteers, Children, Aged and Vulnerable People, and Contractors.

The church's Client Protection Policy aims to reduce the risk of abuse occurring, and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should abuse occur.

1.3 SCOPE

This Client Protection Policy applies to:

- All Ministries authorized by or under control of the church, including those ministries undertaken at the church's premises; and
- All leaders within the church or engaged in the church

1.4 AUTHORITY

This Client Protection Policy of Pine Street church of Christ will be active from 1/1/2024 upon the acceptance of the church leadership.

We are committed to implementing the Client Protection Policy and training our Leaders in their content and application.

1.5 DEFINITIONS

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 assault, abuse or threat of a sexual nature, sexual molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation.
Emotional Abuse	The chronic attitude or behaviour of one person which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a person's self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include: Insulting, bullying, devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising or other extreme acts.
Neglect	Characterised by the failure to provide for basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person's health or development.
Child	Any person under the age of 18.

Vulnerable adult Refers to someone who: “is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illnesses or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against harm or exploitation by another person

Children’s Activity Leader

Any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 (or is under the age of 18 and is deemed by a leader in the church to meet BlueCard requirements) who is responsible for the control and safety of a Child placed in their care whilst holding a prescribed position in the church. This could include, but is not limited to, Bible School teachers, youth leaders, kids group organisers etc.

Children’s Activity Helper Any unpaid person over the age of 16 who is invited by a Children’s Activity Leader to assist them in their Ministry.

Church The Pine Street church of Christ, located at 33 Pine Street, Gympie, Queensland.

Leader Any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of members placed in their care whilst holding a formal position in a recognised Ministry of the church. A leader could include but is not limited to:

- Religious Practitioner,
- Small group Leaders,
- Counselors,
- Youth Leaders,
- Bible School Superintendents,
- Teachers,
- Kids’ Club Leaders,
- Scripture Teachers,
- Sports Coaches and Organisers.

Note: Whilst it is biblically recognised that the men of the church have the responsibility for leadership, in the context of this policy “leader” will include those who are responsible for organising and executing an activity, eg Bible school classes, ladies’ classes etc.

Members Any person, including children, who attends or participates in church Ministries.

Ministry Any organised activity that is authorised by the church. (This would include Sunday worship period).

Ministry Leader A suitably qualified man recognised and authorised by the church as head of a ministry to oversee the teaching of New Testament Christianity and related church activities pertaining to that ministry.

Bible School

Ministry Leader The Ministry Leader authorised and responsible for the overseeing of the Bible School Ministry, which is responsible for all child related activities. Bible School Ministry Leader is also responsible for the selection, recruitment and instruction of Children’s Activity Leaders.

Contractor A person or firm that undertakes a contract to provide materials or labour to perform a service or do a job:

2.0 POLICY REVIEW

This Client Protection Policy will be reviewed annually at the first business meeting of each new year. Church decision makers will inform the ministries involved when the date of review will occur, and any changes recommended by the ministries should be submitted in writing to the decision makers for consideration one month before the review date. This policy may be reviewed at any time if considered relevant.

Any proposed changes will be submitted to the Business Meeting for approval before being implemented.

3.0 OBLIGATIONS

3.1 SPIRITUAL

The core beliefs of the 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.

3.2 LEGAL

The church and its Leaders are subject to Federal and State legislation and principles established through common law, and are committed to adhering to all relevant legislation.

3.3 ETHICAL

Some actions may not be regarded as Abuse, but are unacceptable behaviour. 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 touching.
- Inappropriate literature (e.g. PG, M, MA, R or X rated material used with Children).
- Acts of violence committed by a leader in the course of an activity.

4.0 SELECTION & SCREENING

4.1 CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY LEADER

Children's Activity Leaders hold a position of high responsibility and therefore must be carefully selected and screened. Prior to commencing work, Children's Activity Leaders will:

- Be Members of the church and will have regularly attended the church for at least 6 months.
- Be deemed by the Bible School Ministry Leader to have understood the responsibility of the position and possess the skills necessary for the role
- Have read, understood and been trained in the Client Protection Policy
- Have a current Blue Card and this must be confirmed by the Blue Card Services Department (or if under the age of 18 and is deemed by the Bible School Ministry Leader to meet BlueCard requirements)
- Have read, understood and signed a Code of Conduct form (Appendix 3)

4.2 BIBLE SCHOOL MINISTRY LEADER

Bible School Ministry Leaders are to be appointed only after the following procedures have been carried out:

- When this position is vacant, a person will be nominated for the role by the general business meeting.
- Candidates must complete an application form (Appendix 2) which requests details of referees and permission to contact them.
- Referees will be checked and spoken with to establish the applicant's suitability for the role or position and the conversation will be documented and retained on file
- They must have a current Blue Card and this must be confirmed by the Blue Card Services Department
- They must have read, understood and signed a Code of Conduct form (Appendix 3)

4.3 CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY HELPERS

Helpers must be fully aware of the content of the Client Protection Policy before commencing duties.

Any Children's Activity 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 Children's Activity Helper must be satisfied of their maturity and their suitability for Children's Ministry.

4.4 MINISTRY LEADER

A suitably qualified man recognised and authorised by the church as head of a ministry to oversee the teaching of New Testament Christianity and related church activities pertaining to that ministry. They are responsible for providing a safe and stable environment for each of these activities. If these activities involve Children, the Bible School Ministry Leader is responsible for ensuring adequate Child safety measures are upheld. Ministry Leaders are required to consult Bible School Ministry Leaders to ensure all members are provided a safe environment. Prior to commencing work, Ministry Leaders will:

- Be Members of the church and will have regularly attended the church for at least 6 months.
- Have read, understood and been trained in the Client Protection Policy
- Have read, understood and signed a Code of Conduct form (Appendix 3)

4.5 UNSUITABLE APPLICANTS

Where the church has identified that an applicant has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for child related ministries (as a Bible School Ministry Leader, a Children's Activity Leader or a Children's Activity Helper). A sexual offence is any of the offences listed in Schedule 1 of the Corrective Services Act 2006. A violent offence is an offence where a victim suffers actual or threatened violence.

These offences do not preclude the applicant from serving in other Ministries and the church would welcome their contribution in more appropriate areas.

5.0 TRAINING

All Ministry Leaders, Children's Activity Leaders and Children's Activity Helpers will be issued with a copy of this policy and training by the Bible School Ministry Leader in:

- The content and application of the church's Policies & Procedures,
- Reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements.

6.0 CODE OF CONDUCT

All Children's Activity Leaders, Children's Activity Helpers, Bible School Ministry Leaders & Leaders will be issued with the Code of Conduct for interacting with children and young people (see Appendix 3) before commencing their roles. This code of conduct form must be read, understood and signed, and it will be retained on file.

7.0 BLUE CARDS

It is important to the Pine Street church of Christ that it complies at all times with the requirements of the Blue Card Services Department. As such, compliance with Chapter 8 of the Working with Children(Risk Management &Screening) Act 2000 (which regulates the Blue Card system) is to be maintained.

The Pine Street church of Christ requires all in a position of Bible School Ministry Leader to obtain and, if necessary, authorise a Blue Card. We will not:

- Allow volunteers to commence/continue duties until they have received their blue cards, nor
- Allow anyone to continue duties who
 - Withdraws their consent to employment screening
 - Has had their blue card suspended or cancelled
 - Has received a negative Blue Card notice

A register of all workers within child related activities and their Blue Card status is to be maintained at all times by the Bible School Ministry Leader

8.0 REPORTING PROCEDURES

The Pine Street church of Christ encourages the reporting of all abuse. We are committed to building an environment where either a victim or employee/volunteer feels able to report such abuse.

Upon a disclosure of harm or suspicion of harm, the Pine Street church of Christ will implement the **Disclosure of Harm Procedure** (See Appendix 4), including the completion of an **Incident Report Form** (See Appendix 5).

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a Child has been or is suffering abuse, the Police and the church's insurer will be contacted immediately.

Any disclosures by a Member, reports of suspected abuse and all details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly and the documents will be held in a secure location where a breach of privacy cannot occur. Members alerted to any allegations of harm are to consult the Bible School Ministry Leader and he will handle all documentation and oversee the reporting process. In the absence of the Bible School Ministry Leader or if the disclosures relates to the Bible School Ministry Leader. The disclosure report will to the Chairman of the Business Meeting.

The church reserves the right to carry out church disciplinary procedures in accordance with biblical principles.

Where an allegation is made the accused Leader will be automatically suspended from all ministry activities of the church pending the outcome of all investigations.

The automatic termination of their employment, or involvement with your organisation if found guilty of committing sexual abuse (either by an internal investigation or by a court)

9.0 PLAN FOR MANAGING BREACHES

A breach is any action or inaction by any member of our organisation, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of the Client Protection Policy.

In the case of a breach:

- All people concerned will be notified
- All people concerned will be able to provide their version of events
- The details of the breach will be recorded
- Matters discussed will be confidential
- A relevant outcome will be decided.

The specific nature of the breach will give insight on what the specific outcome will be. Outcomes may include but are not limited to:

- Emphasising the relevant component of the Client Protection Policy
- Further education or training
- Providing closer supervision
- Reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.

10.0 HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES

In the case of high risk activities or special events being conducted, a **Risk Management Planning Form** (See Appendix 6) will be completed by the organisers and all other relevant persons. In doing so, risks should be identified, considered and reduced. This Risk Management Plan is adapted from *Standards Australia's AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk management— Principles and guidelines*.

The Risk Management Plan will be reviewed after each event to analyse its effectiveness and efficiency.

11.0 COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

The Pine Street church of Christ recognises that a safe environment is more easily established and maintained when policies and procedures are communicated well to all persons involved. It is also important that these things are supported and respected.

To assist in communicating the child protection strategies in this policy, a letter providing information for parents and carers (See Appendix 7) will be on display at the front entrance to the building. In addition to each Leader and Helper receiving training of the Client Protection Policy during their induction, each Member will have access to the Client Protection Policy upon request.

12.0 RECORDS

All records will be securely retained. Documents will include all personnel employment, incident and investigation reports, liability insurance policies and other relevant incident-related correspondence. Records to be retained for no less than 50 years.

APPENDIX 1 – LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Legal requirements as given by the *Blue Card Services QLD*.

<i>Mandatory Requirements</i>	<i>Location</i>
1. A statement of commitment	Client Protection Policy – Section 1.2
2. A code of conduct for interacting with children and young people	Client Protection Policy – Section 7.0
3. Procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing people	Client Protection Policy – Section 4.0
4. Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines	Client Protection Policy – Section 8.0
5. A plan for managing breaches of the risk management policy	Client Protection Policy – Section 10.0
6. Policies and procedures for compliance with Chapter 8 of the Act	Client Protection Policy – Section 9.0
7. Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events	Client Protection Policy – Section 11.0
8. Strategies for communication and support	Client Protection Policy – Section 12.0

APPENDIX 2 – APPLICATION FORM

LEADER APPLICATION FORM

Position Applied For:

Personal Details

Full Name:

Home Ph.:

Mob Ph.:

Work Ph.:

Email Address:

Please list all **Places of Worship** that you have attended regularly in the last 3 years

Date (Approx.)	Place of Worship

Please list any **qualifications** you have that relate to working for the church.

Date	Qualification	Institution

Please provide any **experience** you have had that relates to working for the church.

Date	Organisation	Position

References

Please provide details of two people we can contact, who can comment on your suitability for this position:

First Referee

Full Name:

Home Ph.:

Mob Ph.:

Work Ph.:

Email Address:

Position & Organisation:

Second Referee

Full Name:

Home Ph.:

Mob Ph.:

Work Ph.:

Email Address:

Position & Organisation:

APPENDIX 3 - CODE OF CONDUCT

Statement of Commitment

The Pine Street church of Christ is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its Members, Visitors, Volunteers, Children, Aged and Vulnerable People. The church's Client Protection Policy aims to reduce the risk of abuse occurring, and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should abuse occur.

Who must comply with this code of conduct?

This Code of Conduct applies to all Helpers, Leaders and Bible School Ministry Leaders as defined in **Section 1.5** of the *Pine Street Church of Christ Client Protection Policy*.

Standards of Behaviour

Behaviour	Appropriate	Inappropriate
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Using encouraging and positive words and a pleasant tone of voiceOpen and honest communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Insults or name callingBullying, swearing or yellingSexually suggestive comments/jokes
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Showing a Christ-like exampleBuilding relationships based on trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">FavouritismContact outside of regular times without the parent's explicit permissionHarassment
Physical Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Allowing for personal spaceTouching due to medical emergency or protecting from physical harmNon-threatening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Violent or aggressive behaviour including hitting, kicking, slapping or pushingKissing or touching of a sexual nature
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All aspects of every activity will be open to observation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Using alcohol or other drugs before or during church activities"Initiation" activities and secret ceremoniesMale members only involved if the vulnerable person is female.

Please note, it is not the responsibility of the 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 their parent or guardian. At no time will a Leader administer any form of physical, emotional or mental discipline.

In the event that this code of conduct for interacting with children and young people is breached, actions will be taken in accordance with our organisation's plan for managing breaches of the Client Protection Policy.

"I have read, understood, and will act in accordance with the above code of conduct."

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

APPENDIX 4 - DISCLOSURE OF HARM PROCEDURE

RECEIVING A DISCLOSURE

Remain calm and find a private place to talk

Explain that they have done the right thing in telling you but that you'll need to tell someone who can keep them safe

Only ask questions to confirm the need to report the matter

Do not attempt to conduct your own investigation



DOCUMENTING A DISCLOSURE

Complete an Incident Report Form and include:

Time, date and place of disclosure

Accurate and detailed description of the disclosure and what actions have been taken

Date of report and signature



REPORTING A DISCLOSURE

Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) – 1800 811 810

Queensland Police Services – 4615 3000 (or in emergency – 000)

Believe Insurance (the church's insurer) – 9954 1311

APPENDIX 5 – INCIDENT REPORT FORM

To be used for documenting a disclosure or suspicion of harm.

Report completed by: _____	
Date: _____	Signature: _____

Disclosure made by _____(Their Name) on
_____ (Date) at _____ (location).

Description (including what happened, what was said and any actions taken):

APPENDIX 6 – RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING FORM

Describe the activity <i>Identify all elements of the event from beginning to end</i>	Identify Risks <i>Something that could happen that results in harm to a child or young person</i>	Analyse the Risk <i>(Likelihood/Consequences)</i>	Evaluate the Risk <i>The level of risk (according to the table below)</i>	Manage the Risk <i>Assess the options</i>	Review <i>Nominate who will review after the event/activity</i>

Determine likelihood of the risk by using the left hand column of the <i>Risk Analysis Matrix</i> (below). Use the impact information to determine the consequences level. Combine the Consequence and Likelihood ratings to arrive at the Risk Level (i.e. <i>Low, Medium, High or Critical</i>). CONSEQUENCES					
LIKELIHOOD	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
Very likely Expected to occur in most circumstances	Medium	Medium	High	Critical	Critical
Likely Will probably occur in most circumstances	Low	Medium	High	High	Critical
Possible Might occur at some time	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely Not expected to occur	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare Occurs in exceptional circumstances only	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

APPENDIX 7 – LETTER: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Information Regarding Child Services and Protection

Creating safe and supportive environments for children and young people is everyone's business. Our congregation is committed to providing the highest standard of service to children and young people and ensuring they are kept safe from harm. In order to create a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people, organisations must initiate and maintain ongoing planning and commitment.

In a safe and supportive environment, services and activities are provided so children and young people:

- feel safe and protected from harm
- feel encouraged to participate
- are consulted and respected, and
- have their best interests considered and upheld.

In accordance with the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000, the Pine Street church of Christ is required to have a written child and youth risk management strategy (called the **Client Protection Policy**) to protect the children and young people in our organisation from harm. The strategy will help ensure our organisation is a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people, by identifying and minimising risks. This includes working through the Blue Card system.

The child and youth risk management strategy addresses the following elements:

- a statement of commitment
- a code of conduct for interacting with children and young people
- procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers
- policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- a plan for managing breaches of the child and youth risk management strategy
- policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the Client Protection Policy and maintaining an employee register for blue cards
- risk management plans for high-risk activities and special events, and
- strategies for communication and support.

As a member, it is important that you feel involved and able to contribute to this work. If you would like more information about this or would like to obtain a copy of the Client Protection Policy, please see Mitchell Rutherford, or Selwyn Smith (call 0402 313 998, or email pinestreetcofchrist@gmail.com).