



**CHRISTIAN REFORMED
CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA**

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People

A CHILD AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE PROTECTION POLICY & CODE OF CONDUCT (Short form)



OASIS
CHURCH

Approved by Oasis Church Council 4/4/2026

Section 1. CHILD AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE PROTECTION POLICY

1.1 Policy Statement: A Commitment to Child and Vulnerable People Protection

The purpose of this Policy is to guide Oasis Church in developing a culture that is protective of children and vulnerable people. Oasis Church is committed to welcoming children and their parents or carers and providing a 'child-safe'¹ environment, culture and programs for children and other vulnerable people who attend the services and other programs. Vulnerable people include children, young people, people with disabilities, anyone with mental health conditions and elderly people. We see such a commitment as flowing naturally from our vision and mission to operate according to biblical principles for living and for recognising the unique value and potential of every person, regardless of race, age, gender, ability or disability.

All children who come to Oasis Church have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of children in our care will be our first priority. The authorised leaders accept the responsibility of providing a safe and friendly environment where children are listened to, feel safe, have fun, accept challenges, learn and grow. This duty of care applies at all times, although when children attend church and remain with their parents, then the parents have the primary duty of care.

We recognise the particular need for sensitivity for children and vulnerable people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and take into consideration the needs of children and vulnerable people with disabilities and seek to include them and make them feel safe and welcome.

This Policy recognises both Federal and State legislation, as well as regulations and guidelines, and commits workers to responsibly and reasonably cooperating with Government departments, law enforcement and child protection agencies in any care proceedings. The operational principles of our Code of Conduct support and facilitate the protection of children and vulnerable people.

¹It is recognized that no organisation can guarantee the safety of children and other vulnerable people who are on site at a venue. The term 'child-safe' means that child safety is paramount to this organisation, that it has compliant policies and procedural documents and that risk identification and mitigation practices are embedded in the culture.

1.2 Scope:

The provisions and duties of care expressed in this Child Protection Policy apply to:

- People identified as Team Members (volunteers) supporting various ministries.
- Contractors engaged by Oasis Church who need to be on-site to perform services.
- Please note this document is the short form – a detailed Child Protection Policy and Procedure document must be used by the Church Leadership, staff employed by Oasis Church and Team Leaders supporting various ministries.

1.3 Authority

This Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy and Code of Conduct was revised and updated to reflect the most recent changes to State and Federal law and guidelines towards being a child-safe organisation.

It was approved by the church council/session and adopted for use by Oasis Church on 10/02/2025.

Section 2. CODE OF CONDUCT

2.1 Purpose

This **Code of Conduct** seeks to apply to the ethical standards that God expects of all people to the ministerial or pastoral relationship. People in various forms of recognised ministry are therefore expected to be examples and models of Christian faith and practice. It is the duty of any person in a ministry position not to use the influence or authority of their position for personal gain, whether that gain is financial or in terms of power, sexual gratification, or otherwise. This includes any action, verbal, written or electronic, physical or emotional that could be interpreted as emotional, sexual or other abuse, and applies especially when working with children and vulnerable people. We recognize the power differential between children and adults in ministry roles, and these guidelines seek to ensure that such a power is not used to harm children or any vulnerable people.

2.2 Our Commitment

Our commitment to expressing the love of Christ leads us to the view that all people should be able to live, work and learn in an environment that is free from abuse of any kind. Our commitment is to cultivate an environment and culture where a diversity of people, regardless of age, gender, race and culture can thrive and grow holistically. We are committed to Oasis Church being a safe place for all people, with a special focus on the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people.

This **Code of Conduct** aims to detail the standards of conduct expected by both paid staff and volunteer workers in the performance of their duties and to provide guidance

in areas where there is a need to make personal and ethical decisions.**2.3 Specific**

Expectations to Protect Children and Vulnerable from Abuse

All those who minister or work under the auspices of the church with children and vulnerable people should be fully aware of the **Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy** and **Code of Conduct**. Abusive behaviour towards children and vulnerable people will not be tolerated and any and all allegations will be reported and investigated. All people involved in the care of children and vulnerable people on behalf of Oasis Church must comply with the following requirements:

DO:

- contact the police if a child or vulnerable person is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone '000');
- adhere to the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy and Procedure and uphold Oasis Church's commitment to child safety at all times;
- take all reasonable steps to protect children and vulnerable people from abuse, recognising your duty of care;
- maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
- conduct yourself in a manner consistent with your position as an employee, volunteer, leader or contractor of Oasis Church and as a positive role model to children and vulnerable people;
- work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of Oasis Church;
- be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in your area;
- establish and maintain an environment that is safe for children and vulnerable people in the course of your work;
- be fair, considerate and honest with others;
- treat all children and vulnerable people with respect, fairness, compassion and encouragement and value their input and opinions regardless of race, colour, sex, language, culture or other differences;
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and vulnerable people;
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and vulnerable people, particularly if they tell you that they or another child or vulnerable person has been abused or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or vulnerable person;
- ensure (as far as practicable) that adults are not alone with a child, or, at least, observable by another adult;
- raise concerns about suspected abuse with the Child Protection Officer or a leader as soon as possible, using the procedure set out in Appendix 1;
- comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to reporting under legislation;

- record and act upon all allegations or suspicions of abuse, discrimination or harassment;
- if an allegation of child or vulnerable person abuse is made, ensure, as quickly as possible, the immediate and ongoing safety of the child or vulnerable person;
- be professional, consistent and responsible in all your actions;
- maintain strict impartiality;
- respect confidentiality when sharing information about children and vulnerable people in accordance with the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy and your reporting obligations.

DO NOT:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child or vulnerable person abuse;
- put a child or vulnerable person at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors for an improper reason);
- speak to a child or a vulnerable person in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Some examples are:
 - swearing or using inappropriate language in the presence of a child or vulnerable person;
 - yelling at a child or vulnerable person, except in an emergency situation where the child or vulnerable person's safety may be in danger;
 - dealing with a child or vulnerable person in anger; and
 - using hurtful sarcasm.
- discuss sexual activities with a child or vulnerable person, unless it is a specific job requirement and the person is trained or qualified to discuss these matters (and it is part of an approved program or activity);
- have private contact with a child or vulnerable person outside of church activities without the knowledge and/or consent of Oasis Church leadership or the child or vulnerable person's parent or guardian;
- have any online contact with a child or vulnerable person (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family (unless necessary and approved by the church and the child's parents/guardians, using an approved church email or social media account);
- use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account or social media to communicate with a child without parental knowledge;
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child or vulnerable person (unless necessary and approved by the church and the child's parents/guardians as the agreed form of communication);
- use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol while in the presence of or while supervising a child or vulnerable person (unless your contact with the child

is accidental/incidental and you are not performing your duties as directed by Oasis Church);

- use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of or while supervising a child or vulnerable person;
- provide or allow a child or vulnerable person to consume alcohol;
- provide or allow a child or vulnerable person to consume illegal drugs;
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or vulnerable person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
- engage in rough physical games, hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a child or vulnerable person in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive way;
- engage in any sexual contact with a child or vulnerable person;
- take a child or vulnerable person to your home or encourage meetings outside program activities (unless necessary and approved by the church and the child's parents/guardians);
- be naked in the presence of a child or vulnerable person;
- possess sexually explicit printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) in the presence of a child or vulnerable person;
- sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag, room or tent with a single child or vulnerable person;
- treat any child or vulnerable person disrespectfully, unfairly, harshly or discouragingly based on their age, gender, race, culture, disability or any other differences;
- engage in any activity with a child or vulnerable person that is likely to emotionally harm them (e.g. watch a movie that is age or content inappropriate for a child or vulnerable person);
- be alone with a child or vulnerable person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time, unless you are observable by another adult or it is unavoidable;
- develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or vulnerable person for your own needs;
- show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- use a photograph of or video a child or vulnerable person without the consent of the child or vulnerable person and his/her parents or guardians; or
- post content on public social media platforms that includes, but is not limited to, unsuitable or sexually suggestive attire, substance abuse, or hate speech. Ensure all posts comply with ChildSafe principles and church standards.
- do anything in contravention of Oasis Church policies, procedures or this Code.

DECLARATION

I, _____, have read the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy and Code of Conduct (short form) that express the intent of the church to protect and nurture children and other vulnerable people.

I agree to comply with these rules and expectations. I understand that if I breach the Code of Conduct or commit an act of serious misconduct or break the law, this may lead to my:

- suspension from duties during investigation of allegations against me;
- termination of employment without notice or payment in lieu (summary or instant dismissal); or
- being reported to the police and charged with a criminal offence.

Signed: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / 20____

Signed: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / 20____

ChildSafe Coordinator

APPENDIX 1

Complaint and Abuse Reporting Form

Please use the Form to report a Formal Complaint or Abuse of any kind towards yourself or another person, including a child.

When should this report be completed?

This report must be completed if:

1. There is an alleged illegal act, a participant sent home, serious leader dispute, damage or loss of property.
2. The situation relates to child or vulnerable people protection (disclosure of abuse, allegation of abuse, or report based on reasonable grounds).
3. You have a grievance about anything relating to the activities or buildings/physical environment of the church.
4. Other situations will require judgement and consultation with your organisation. In situations where doubt exists about the use of this report, complete a report.

What do I do with this report after I have completed it?

1. Check that all information is correct to the best of your knowledge.
2. Check that the appropriate signatures are given.
3. The Team Leader forwards the form to your Coordinator as soon as possible. More severe complaints require immediate reporting, while other reports should be submitted within seven days.

The **Report Concerns Form** can be accessed using this link:

<https://oasiscrc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/93003>

The **Incident Form** can be accessed using this link:

<https://oasiscrc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/860191>

Additional Information is available on the Safe Church Website - using this link:

<https://safechurchcrca.org.au/>

Record of review	
Date	Change
2/2/2026	Added clause regarding use of public social media platforms