



OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy reflects the moral and ethical standards of the Movement pursuant to Article 16.1 of the United Constitution and forms part of the ACC Safer Churches strategy for the protection of all people in our churches.

The ACC Safer Churches strategy is outworked through the ACC Child Protection Policy and ACC Safer Churches Guidelines (minimum good practice standards).

This strategy is supported by training, personnel and sample resources for ACC churches to utilise and or customise, as found in the ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit (downloadable at www.acc.org.au).

It is a requirement of the ACC National and State Executives to adopt the ACC Child Protection Policy. ACC Constituent Churches are required to adopt this Policy and the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines (SC011) or use these as a minimum standard.

The structure of the ACC Safer Churches strategy is found in document SC002.

All ACC Safer Churches documentation, including definitions of relevant terminology used in this Policy and applicable legislation, can be accessed via the ACC website www.acc.org.au.

2. PURPOSE OF OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy:

- 2.1 Guides our work in establishing and maintaining safe environments for Children;
- 2.2 Underpins our biblical mandate to: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself;
- 2.3 Ensures that all workers (paid and volunteer) associated with our church fulfil their pastoral, and organisational responsibilities with regard to child protection;
- 2.4 Ensures compliance with legislation, and also with the intention of the legislation (including but not limited to the 10 National Child Safe Principles, child protection, work health and safety, and the governance standards of the ACNC), as it relates to protecting Children (see document SC003); and
- 2.5 Is otherwise known as the ACC National 'Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy'.

3. SCOPE

The ACC Child Protection Policy covers all ACC People including employees, volunteers, and contractors.

This includes persons identified in legislation as working with children (e.g. pastors, youth workers, chaplains, etc.), or providing services directed to a child (e.g. playgroup or youth group), or conducting activities that may involve a child (e.g. family or community events).

This also includes supervisors of persons who work with children, (e.g. church board

members, executive officers, and chaplain managers), irrespective of whether they actually work with children, irrespective of whether the member church has adopted ACC's policy as a minimum standard.

4. POLICY STATEMENTS

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5):

- 4.1 Upholding this policy, and the relevant state or territory Child Safe and Child Protection laws through the implementation of the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines;
- 4.2 Child safety and wellbeing in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment, and the right to be protected from harm by having a zero-tolerance stance for all forms of child abuse and maltreatment;
- 4.3 Empowering Children by engaging with Children and caregivers in relation to decisions that impact them, including inviting feedback as part of our services;
- 4.4 Recognising and responding to the diverse needs of all Children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and also the safety of Children with a disability as relevant in the local church setting;
- 4.5 Recognising the family as the primary means of providing for the nurture, care and protection of Children and to accord high priority to supporting and assisting the family to carry out its responsibilities to Children;
- 4.6 Ensuring that persons who have a Direct Role with Children within the Movement are appropriately selected, screened, trained, supervised and performing their responsibilities, including ongoing education and equipping;
- 4.7 Child-focused responses to all child safety concerns so that risks to a Child's wellbeing are quickly identified, and any necessary support, protection or care is promptly provided, including child-focused responses to allegations of risk of harm or harm in line with Safer Churches Guideline 8;
- 4.8 Providing for and promoting a child safe culture in both physical and online settings that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access an ACC program, service or managed facility;
- 4.9 Ensuring that ACC Constituent Churches regularly and frequently review, evaluate and improve child safe procedures and practices; and
- 4.10 Ensuring that ACC Constituent Churches have clear policy and procedural documentation that is up-to-date and readily available.

Note it is a serious breach of this policy for any ACC Person in our Movement to contravene the minimum standards set by this Policy, the minimum standards set by the related ACC Safer Churches Guidelines (SC011), or any regulation in law, in relation to the safety and protection of Children.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The ACC National Conference is responsible for the development and endorsement of the ACC Child Protection Policy. It delegates the implementation of the ACC Child Protection Policy to the ACC National and State Executives and Constituent Churches. The role of each entity in relation to the implementation and enforcement of the ACC Child Protection Policy is detailed in the table below.

In accordance with article 9.7 of the ACC United Constitution, in circumstances where the National Executive considers the interests of the Movement within a State are in serious jeopardy it may intervene so as to replace the role of the State Executive in all respects for such period as it determines.

Entity	Role/Responsibility
ACC National Executive	• Provide National leadership and promote the ACC commitment to the ACC Child Protection Policy, and the safety and wellbeing of Children within the ACC; • ACC National Executive (or its delegate) shall develop, implement and evaluate the ACC Child Protection Policy in accordance with the relevant state/territory legal obligations and make readily available to all ACC Churches and Credential holders current supporting documentation; • Review the ACC Child Protection Policy on a biennial cycle and update the Policy at National Conference in accordance with the ACC National Constitution. The National Executive may also review the policy at any time as required by legislation, regulations or organisational learnings that require a change to the ACC Child Protection Policy; • ACC National Executive (or its delegate) shall develop, implement and evaluate corresponding Child Protection Practice Guidelines (known as the 'ACC Safer Churches Guidelines' — SC011) in accordance with the relevant state/territory legal obligations and make readily available to all ACC Churches and Credential holder's current supporting documentation.
ACC State Executive	• The State Executive shall adopt and adhere to the ACC Child Protection Policy and ACC Safer Churches Guidelines; • Provide state/territory leadership and promote commitment to the ACC Child Protection Policy, and the safety and wellbeing of Children; • Assist and provide support to the National Executive in the fulfilment of the objectives of the ACC Child Protection Policy; • Appoint a State Safer Churches Officer/s who will be actively involved in the National Safer Churches team

	and proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified; and • Actively promote current ACC Safer Churches Policy and Guidelines, and relevant state/territory legislation.
Constituent Churches and Credential Holders	• Adopt the ACC Child Protection Policy (or one that uses the ACC Child Protection Policy as a minimum standard); • Adopt the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines (SC011) (or alternative guidelines that uses the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines as the minimum standard); • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging Children in support of this Policy; • Ensure all ACC People within the respective Constituent Church understand and adhere to their obligations in accordance with the ACC Child Protection Policy, including the implementation of the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines (SC011) as minimum standards; • Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of child protection, including regular (minimum annual) review, evaluation and improvement of child safe procedures and practices, and maintain clear policy and procedural documentation that is readily available; • ACC People will support all Children and their families in accordance with this Policy and the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines (SC0011) in the event that a Child is harmed by any ACC People; • It is acknowledged that not all Credential holders will have sufficient influence to achieve all these objectives with a Constituent Church, but it is expected, as a minimum, that a Senior Minister and/or their appointee/s will have such influence and that all Credential holders support and implement the Child Protection policy and Guidelines within their ministry context.

6. POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW

- 6.1 This Policy was revised and updated to reflect current legislative requirements in Australia in January 2025 (Version 2025:1).
- 6.2 It was approved by the National Conference for adoption and implementation in April 2025.
- 6.3 The Policy and Guidelines will be reviewed, as a minimum, by the National Executive at minimum every two years and as often as necessary, in order to remain compliant with new

legislation and insurance requirements.

- 6.4 ACC Constituent churches shall ensure that they have adopted all changes to the Policy and Guidelines annually.

7. SAFER CHURCHES TERMINOLOGY (AS USED IN THIS POLICY) is found in the ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit document SC001.