

# **Safe Church Policy**

## **Finley Community Church Incorporated**

### **Aim of Safe Church Policy:**

The Bible expresses God's concern for the well-being of all people, especially the weak and vulnerable members of society. (ie. children) Christ's words and example provide a strong foundation for the church to be responsible and vigilant for all those in their care.

As those charged with leading and caring for others, we have a responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all under our care. All people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe and respected, irrespective of their gender, age, race, socio-economic background or ability.

Finley Community Church has the following goals:

- To minimise the risk of sexual and/or physical abuse, especially to children.
- To be pro-active in ensuring suitable guidelines are in place and followed to limit possible breaches of this policy.
- To ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and ministry misconduct are handled in a consistent, unbiased and thorough manner.

### **Safe Church Policy:**

1. You must not engage in or condone any behaviour of the following:

- child abuse,
- putting a child or young person at risk of harm,
- inappropriate sexualised behaviour,
- sexual misconduct,
- reportable conduct, and/or
- conduct that breaches this Policy.

2. You must take action to prevent, and report as required, the abovementioned behaviour/actions.

3. Sexualised behaviour is any behaviour that may reasonably be perceived to be of a sexual nature according to the standards of the person to whom it is directed.

4. Sexual misconduct includes any behaviour that could be reasonably considered to be inappropriate sexual behaviour, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, coercion or grooming of an adult or child.

5. Inappropriate sexual behaviour includes any behaviour that could be reasonably considered to be inappropriate or offensive sexual behaviour and/or acts, lewdness, or rudeness. Therefore, you will not among other things engage in or condone any of the following:

- nude swimming or other such activities,
- the production, distribution, possession of or accessing of pornographic material of any kind,
- viewing or reading, in print or otherwise, material of a sexually explicit nature, except for a legitimate purpose,
- participating in sexually explicit conversation via social media, chat rooms, or any other means.
- making jokes containing sexual references or innuendo's.

6. Sexual exploitation refers to any form of sexualised behaviour with an adult or child, whether or not there is consent and regardless of who initiated the behaviour, where that behaviour takes advantage of the person's vulnerabilities to acts of a sexual nature and/or inability to protect themselves from sexual abuse. Therefore, you will not among other things engage in or condone any of the following:

- behaviour or a pattern of behaviour aimed at the involvement of others in sexual acts,
- sexualised behaviour with a person below the age of consent,
- sexualised behaviour with a person with whom there is a supervisory or counselling relationship,
- taking advantage of the conscious or unconscious use of sexually provocative behaviour that some victims of abuse display,
- engaging the services of a prostitute, or soliciting or providing such services,
- asking, without legitimate reason, any questions about the intimate details of a person's sexual life or providing details of your own sexual life.

7. Sexual harassment means unwelcome sexualised behaviour in relation to an adult or child, where that person reasonably feels offended, belittled or threatened. Such behaviour may consist of a single incident or several incidents over a period of time. Therefore, you will not among other things engage in or condone:

- implicit or explicit demands or suggestions for sexual activities,
- making any gesture, action or comment of a sexual nature to a person or about a person in their presence,
- exposure to any form of sexually explicit or suggestive material, including but not limited to pornography of any kind,
- physical contact that is inappropriate to the situation or uncomfortable or confusing for the receiver, including kissing, hugging, touching, pinching, or aggressive physical conduct,
- generating or participating in inappropriate personal correspondence in respect of sexual or romantic feelings or that is in breach of this Policy,
- inappropriate giving of gifts, including those of a sexual, suggestive or romantic nature that is in breach of this Policy,
- inappropriate or unnecessary discussion of, or inquiry about, personal matters of a sexual nature,
- inappropriate intrusion of personal space or physical privacy, including being alone in a bedroom or bathroom or allowing inappropriate exposure during activities that require dressing or changing clothes,
- voyeurism,
- persistent following or stalking.

8. Coercion or grooming behaviour refers to physical and/or psychological actions aimed at establishing inappropriate sexual relationships. Coercion or grooming behaviour involves the manipulative cultivation of relationships with vulnerable adults and/or children. With regard to children:

- You will not visit a child in their own home unless a parent or minder is present or you visit with another person with parental permission.
- You will not conduct a camp or other activity involving overnight accommodation without approved and appropriate adult supervision.
- You will not provide any form of accommodation where there is not strict segregation by sex, with the exception of married couples and families. Supervision of children must be provided by a person of the same sex.
- You will ensure that any activity involving children is open to observation by parents and other adults with a legitimate interest.

9. The Prayer and Planning Committee of the Finley Community Church Incorporated may make temporary variations in respect to the details of the following. These temporary variations will be formally recorded by the Prayer and Planning Committee and will be made on a restricted basis for individuals/groups in specific circumstances for a specific period of time. Where no temporary variation is formally recorded, the following will apply without change:

- You will take care to ensure an appropriate balance of transparency and confidentiality so that the private concerns of others are not disclosed or revealed improperly. In ordinary circumstances, when you are providing pastoral care to, or working with members of the opposite sex, you will strive to do so in an open environment that allows visual surveillance and, where reasonable, have other people within hearing distance.
- You will not allow an adult to share accommodation with one child or young person only unless they are a parent or guardian of that child or young person, or the separation and privacy of all parties can be respected.
- You will not be alone with a child, whether indoors or outdoors, unless absolutely necessary, or suitable prior arrangements have been made.
- You will not take a child of the opposite sex to the toilet, unless absolutely necessary.
- You will not drive with one child alone, unless absolutely necessary.

10. Where specified provisions cannot be followed in an emergency, the circumstances of the emergency and the actions taken should be reported to the Prayer and Planning Committee of Finley Community Church Incorporated. Where the actions taken are not approved by the Prayer and Planning Committee, they will be considered to be a breach of this Code of Conduct.

11. Any deliberate breaches of this Code of Conduct are to be reported to the appropriate authorities as soon as possible.