



The Lakes Evangelical Church

ABN: 40 227 130 382

*We seek to engage personally with everyone in our community
to help them start following Jesus, connect with his people,
grow in knowing Jesus and serve in love.*

Safe Ministry Policy

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Version	Date	Notes
1.0	March 2021	Policy Final Child Safety Policy
2.0	May 2022	Policy reviewed renamed Safe Ministry Policy
2.2	September 2022	Minor Updates to adjust procedures
2.3	February 2025	Updates to ensure policy is compliant with current NSW laws & regulations. Google Doc

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RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 Children's Guardian Act 2019
- Disability Act 2006
- National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations

OTHER REFERENCES

- Sydney Anglican Network's Safe Ministry Resources <http://www.psu.anglican.asn.au>
- Safe Ministry Training <http://safeministrytraining.com.au/>
- National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) www.ncca.org.au
- Office of the Children's Guardian: www.ocg.nsw.gov.au
- NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme
- NSW Child Safe Standards

1. INTRODUCTION

The Lakes Church is committed to providing an open, welcoming and safe environment for all children, young people and adults. Vulnerable people and children are entitled to be safe and protected. They have the right to be respected, listened to, and to have their particular needs addressed in church activities. The Lakes Church loves and values vulnerable people and children, as Jesus did.

This policy outlines the underlying principles that direct our approach to safeguarding vulnerable people involved with The Lakes Church. It applies to staff, leaders, pastors, coordinators, volunteers, trainees and anyone working on behalf of The Lakes Church. The Church Council in consultation with the Safe Ministries Working Group takes responsibility for ensuring these principles are reviewed regularly and embedded in the organisation culture at all levels.

2. CHRISTIAN RATIONALE

The Lakes Church acknowledges its responsibility before God to care for and protect the children, families and all other individuals who trust the Church to carry out its responsibilities and obligations with love and respect. (Love) always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (1 Corinthians 13:7)

3. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This policy establishes clear processes and expectations for staff, volunteers, and ministry leaders to safeguard children and vulnerable people, ensuring compliance with NSW legislation and biblical principles.

4. TABLE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities	Evidence of Compliance
The Church Council	
Oversee policy implementation and adherence	Safe Ministry Policy
Ensure recruitment aligns with Safe Ministry guidelines	Recruitment Records
Ensure complaint procedures are followed	Grievance and Complaints Policy
Senior Pastor	
Ensure Compliance with Screening Regulations	Working with Children Checks Staff training and delegation records
Report risks, child protection concerns, and abuse	Secure Church Records
Ensure mandatory reporting in line with NSW laws	Incident Reports
Safe Ministry Supervisor	
Keep Safe Ministry procedures updated	Review Schedule
Oversee screening and training of ministry workers	Meeting Records, File notes
Provide guidance on Safe Ministry matters	Training & policy updates
Ministry leaders	
Ensure all staff and volunteers are screened and trained	Register kept in secure location at church office
Provide induction and ongoing support for leaders.	Safe Ministry Policy, records
Report concerns per the Safe Ministry Incident Process	Incident Reports

5. COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARD VULNERABLE PEOPLE

We are committed to preventing harm, promoting safe environments, and upholding NSW and Federal laws in protecting children and vulnerable individuals. We ensure that all vulnerable people—including children, families, people with disabilities, and the elderly—are informed, involved in key decisions, and taken seriously. Their diverse needs are central to our leadership and culture.

6. COMMITMENT TO 10 CHILD SAFE STANDARDS¹

1. Standard 1: Child Safety in Leadership and Culture

- The Church Council and Pastoral Team are responsible for ensuring a strong commitment to child safety both inside and outside the organisation;
- Safe Ministry Supervisors are to oversee implementation and compliance of child safety policies; and
- Staff and volunteers must comply with codes of conduct that clearly describe how they interact with children.

2. Standard 2: Participation and Empowerment of Children

- Children are actively consulted with and encouraged to contribute to decisions about programs;
- Staff are to organise child-friendly ways for children to provide feedback and raise their concerns and issues; and
- Children are provided with access or links to child safe education designed to prevent abuse.

3. Standard 3: Families and Communities are Informed and Involved

- Policies are to be made available on the church website and communicated in print;
- Families are to be made aware of child safe procedures when their child is enrolled in children's programs; and
- Opportunities for parents to provide feedback and input are embedded in church practices.

4. Standard 4: Equity is Upheld and Diverse Needs Are Considered

- Staff and Volunteers are responsible for creating environments that are culturally safe for children and their families to ensure everyone feels welcomed and included;
- Staff, ministry leaders and The Church Council should develop and implement strategies and policies to support children with additional vulnerabilities; and
- All children are to be welcomed and celebrated and have access to child-friendly information about child-safeguarding.

5. Standard 5: People Working with Children Are Suitable and Supported

All ministry workers and volunteers must:

- Be regular participants and Partners at The Lakes Church;
- Provide referees confirming their suitability to work with vulnerable people;
- Complete an approved Safe Ministry Training Course annually (www.SafeMinistryTraining.com.au). This outlines appropriate behaviour including how to minimise the chances of harm and abuse, as well as training in how to identify and report cases of abuse;
- Participate in induction and ongoing supervision;
- Sign a Leader's Code of Conduct and agree to be held accountable for their actions; and
- Hold a valid and verified NSW Working With Children Check (WWCC).

6. Standard 6: Complaints Are Child-Focused

- The Church Council and Safe Ministry Supervisors are responsible for implementing a child-focused complaint handling system that is understood by children, staff, volunteers and families;
- Complaints will be taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly; and
- Where there is a legal obligation to report abuse, this is acted on promptly and appropriately (see below *Point 7: Commitment to Responding to Concerns and Complaints*).

¹ Office of the Children's Guardian: Implementing the Child Safe Scheme <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/>

7. Standard 7: Ongoing Training and Education

- All staff, ministry leaders and volunteers are to complete annual child protection training.
- Records of training attendance are to be kept and maintained; and
- The Church Council is responsible for ensuring that regular updates on legislation and child safety practices are shared.

8. Standard 8: Physical and Online Safety

- Ministry spaces are designed for open supervision of adults working with children;
- Online spaces and environments are to be used by staff and volunteers in accordance with Child Safe Code of Conduct and relevant child safe policies; and
- Staff and Ministry Leaders are to ensure that risk assessments are completed for events, camps and digital programs.

9. Standard 9: Continuous Review and Improvement

- The Safe Ministry Working Group reviews practices annually and updates policies accordingly;
- The Church Council along with the Safe Ministry Working Group are to identify new risks to children's safety and take proactive steps to minimise these; and
- The Safe Ministry Working Group should analyse complaints and incidents to identify causes and system failures and make changes which prevent harm to children.

10. Standard 10: Child Safe Documentation

- Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand by all including children;
- Staff, volunteers and ministry leaders participate in ongoing training to ensure they understand all policies and procedures; and
- Staff and Ministry Leaders model compliance with child safety policies.

7. COMMITMENT TO RESPONDING TO CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

1. **Creating an Open and Supportive Culture:** Staff, ministry leaders and volunteers will promote an environment where concerns about inappropriate behaviour can be raised without fear.
2. **Clear Communication:** Concerns can be reported to the Safe Ministry Supervisors or church leaders confidentially.
3. **Acknowledgment and Support:** Concerns are to be taken seriously and support is to be provided as soon as practical.
4. **Investigating Concerns and Complaints:** Concerns will be investigated fairly and confidentially, following the Safe Ministry Incident Management Process. The church will not attempt to resolve matters by itself if they involve criminal behaviour or serious allegations.
5. **Mandatory Reporting:** Concerns involving criminal activity, abuse, or serious misconduct will be reported to the relevant authorities. Child-related concerns will be reported to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, while allegations of criminal behaviour against a vulnerable person will be reported to the NSW Police.
6. **Confidentiality and Documentation:** All incident notes, including abuse disclosures, must be clearly documented with the date, time, factual details, actions taken, and any reports made. Records must remain confidential, securely stored, and include follow-up actions to ensure ongoing support and compliance with procedures.
7. **Regular Training and Awareness:** Ongoing training to ensure all staff, ministry leaders or volunteers understand their responsibilities in identifying and responding to concerns.

8. PROCEDURES

8.1 Appointment of Safe Ministry Supervisors

The Church Council will appoint at least four Safe Ministry Supervisors, ensuring representation in key areas: child protection and support for vulnerable individuals, including those with disabilities and older people.

The Church Council will appoint each Safe Ministry Supervisor for an initial 12-month term, with reviews conducted every two years following the Annual General Meeting.

At least one Safe Ministry Supervisor must be a member of The Church Council to ensure clear reporting and effective feedback.

8.2 Application of Policy

Refer to Safe Ministry Incident Management Process for the application of this policy.

9. POLICY DISTRIBUTION METHOD

- Staff are advised of all policies by email when they are approved, noted and minuted by The Church Council.
- The policy will be accessible on The Lakes Church website and internal document storage.
- This policy complies with the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, the Children's Guardian Act 2019, and all relevant NSW laws.
- This policy is reviewed every 3 years or earlier if legislation changes.

9.1 Appointment of Safe Ministry Supervisors

If the Mandatory Reporting Guide indicates that an external report is required, and the concern involves potential wrongdoing by an individual in their church role or the church as a whole, the senior pastor will inform The Lakes Church's insurer and provide a copy of the mandatory report.

Policy Number: ACSMLIND01, ACS Insurance. Policy underwritten by Co-Insurance

Email: claims@acsfinancial.com.au

Phone: 1800 531 734

Advice, instructions and action recommended by the insurer is to be documented and acted upon by the senior pastor as soon as possible.