

# Safer Churches – Reporting and Response

At Generocity Church, we take our responsibility to protect children and young people very seriously. This section outlines our procedures for reporting child protection concerns and our strategies for responding to allegations or incidents.

## Procedures for Reporting Child Protection Concerns

### 1. Mandatory Reporting:

- All staff and volunteers must be aware of their mandatory reporting obligations as per ACC NSW legislation.
- Mandatory reporters must report suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as soon as reasonably possible: preferably within 24 hours of becoming aware of an alleged or perceived incident, or up to 5 working days for any alleged non-compliance with this policy or Generocity Church's Code of Conduct.

### 2. Reporting Process:

#### a. Report to Local Safer Churches Person/Team:

- Report concerns to one of the appointed Local Safer Churches People, except when a disclosure occurs at a program or event, or a Child's/Young Person's immediate safety is at risk (sexual and physical abuse).
- In cases of immediate danger to a child, contact the police immediately by calling 000.

#### b. Complete Documentation:

- Complete the Generocity Churches incident report as soon as possible after making a report.

- The Local Safer Churches Person/Team will keep a local church log, upholding privacy principles.

### c. Take Appropriate Action:

- The Local Safer Churches Person/Team will assist with:
  - Police/government Child Protection agency reporting

### 3. Reportable Conduct:

- If the allegation is made about any staff or volunteer, local procedures and laws must be followed and a report made available to Generocity Church, as soon as possible.
- The Senior Pastor or delegate is responsible for making these reports.

### 4. Confidentiality:

- All reports and the details of the reporting process must be kept strictly confidential to protect the privacy of all parties involved.
- Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis and as required by law.

# Response Strategies for Addressing Allegations or Incidents

## 1. Immediate Response:

- Ensure the immediate safety of the child or young person.
- If there is immediate danger, contact the police (000).
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by reporting.
- Do not confront the alleged perpetrator.

## 2. Internal Investigation:

- The Safe Ministry Officer/Team will conduct an internal investigation in accordance with the organisations policies (Safer Places, Risk Management, WHS etc).
- All investigations will be conducted fairly, impartially, and in a timely manner.
- The investigation process will be child-focused, upholding the rights of children and young people in line with Child Safe Standards.

### 3. Suspension of Duties:

- Any staff member or volunteer who is the subject of an allegation of abuse will be immediately suspended from all child-related duties pending the outcome of all investigations.

### 4. Support for Affected Parties:

- Provide appropriate support and pastoral care for all parties involved, including the child, the family, and the alleged perpetrator.
- Offer access to professional counselling services where necessary.

### 5. Cooperation with Authorities:

- Fully cooperate with police and other relevant authorities in their investigations.
- Provide all necessary information and assistance as required.

### 6. Communication:

- Maintain clear communication with all parties involved, keeping them informed of the process and decisions made, while respecting confidentiality requirements.

## **Roles and Responsibilities in Handling Child Protection Issues**

### 1. Governance Board:

- Endorse the Safe Ministry Framework.
- Assign responsibilities for the management of the Framework.
- Monitor and review the implementation of the Framework.
- Ensure disclosures of harm are reported to all relevant regulatory bodies.
- Fulfil relevant legislative 'head of agency roles' in child protection-related investigations.

### 2. Senior Pastor:

- Ensure all child protection policies and procedures are implemented and followed.
- Make final decisions on disciplinary actions based on investigation outcomes.
- Report to the church board on child protection matters.

### 3. Safe Ministry Officer/Team:

- Receive and document all reports of child protection concerns.
- Conduct initial risk assessments and determine appropriate actions.
- Liaise with relevant authorities and oversee internal investigations.
- Implement procedures in relation to responding to Safe Ministry concerns, including child protection.
- Receive reports of incidents and/or concerns of risk of harm in relation to children or workers.

### 4. Ministry Coordinators/Program Leaders:

- Implement child protection policies and related procedures applicable to their ministry program/events.
- Monitor workers they oversee to ensure they are acting safely and according to policy and procedure.
- Provide reasonable instruction to workers regarding the provision of safe environments.
- Report to the Safe Ministry Officer any suspicions, allegations, incidents, or potential breaches of the relevant code of conduct.

### 5. All Staff and Volunteers:

- Be vigilant in identifying signs of abuse or neglect.
- Report any concerns immediately to the Safe Ministry Officer/Team.
- Maintain confidentiality and follow all child protection procedures.
- Take reasonable care that their actions do not adversely affect others' health and safety.
- Report all incidents or hazards to the Health & Safety Officer (or to a Team Leader) as soon as practicable.

### 6. Church Board:

- Regularly review and update child protection policies and procedures.
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated for child protection training and implementation.

By implementing these comprehensive reporting and response procedures, Generocity Church demonstrates its commitment to creating a safe environment for all children and young people. We recognize that child protection is an ongoing responsibility, and we are dedicated to continuously improving our practices to ensure the highest standards of safety and care.

**Safer Churches - Child Protection Policy | Last Reviewed: May, 2025 | Approved By: GC Board**

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