

Child Safety Policy

Introduction

Pathway Church is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children and vulnerable people. We have zero tolerance for abuse.

Everyone working at Pathway Church is responsible for the care and protection of children and vulnerable people, and the reporting information about abuse.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To facilitate the prevention of child and vulnerable person abuse occurring within this church organisation;
2. To create and maintain an organisational culture of child and vulnerable person safety;
3. To prevent abuse within Pathway Church;
4. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs;
5. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the church organisation;
6. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse;
7. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

Policy

Pathway Church is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children and vulnerable people involved in its programs.

All people, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Pathway Church has zero tolerance for child and vulnerable person abuse. Everyone working at Pathway Church is responsible for the care and protection of the children and vulnerable people within our care and reporting information about suspected abuse.

Child and vulnerable person protection is a shared responsibility between Pathway Church, all employees, workers, volunteers, contractors and members of the organisation's communities.

Pathway Church supports and respects all people, staff and volunteers. Pathway Church is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for people living with a disability.

If any person believes a child or vulnerable person is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

Condition of Working with Children and Vulnerable People

The following conditions apply to all employees and volunteer workers in Pathway Church

- a) Formal initial training and ongoing refresher training is required for all teachers, leaders, child and youth workers, whether employer or voluntary, in order to hold and/or renew a Blue Card in the church and any associated support ministries.
- b) At least two references are required for anyone seeking to be employed or volunteer in the aforementioned or related categories. Holding a current Blue Card is also essential.
- c) No one with prior convictions relating to violent or sexually related offense will be employed or allowed to volunteer in any of the aforementioned categories in the church and any associated support ministries.
- d) We actively encourage the reporting of all sexual or non-sexual abuse to the church, and also to the relevant authorities. Keeping a written record of such reports on file is mandatory.
- e) Documented procedures are in place for reporting and dealing with complaints and/or reasonable suspicion of abuse. Reasonable suspicion means fair and practical reason to believe an incident involving sexual abuse has occurred based on either verbal communication, hearsay, rumour or observance of behaviour.
- f) Consequences include the automatic suspension of an employee or volunteer from work or other duties if they are under investigation (either internally or by the police) for committing sexual abuse. Automatic termination of employment or involvement within the church and supporting ministries will apply if found guilty of committing a sexual abuse offense (either by internal investigation or by a court).
- g) It is the responsibility for employees and/or volunteers to report reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse to the senior leadership of the church and any associated support ministries, and that the Police and our insurers will be notified.