

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH LEADERS**

Gungahlin Bible Church acknowledges that everyone who attends our church will be encouraged to grow in their spiritual maturity and at the same time, protected from spiritual, physical and emotional harm. Children and young people are particularly vulnerable and all those exercising a pastoral ministry have responsibility for their safety and welfare. This Code of Conduct sets out your responsibilities in serving in children and youth ministries and should be read in conjunction with the Gungahlin Bible Church Partnership Agreement, the Safe Ministry Policy, and Incident Response Process and Reporting Procedure. It applies to all church leaders, pastors, ministry leaders, assistants and volunteers.

### **I commit to the following ministry standards:**

- ***Respect the personhood of all people and especially children, young people and the vulnerable:*** I will never abuse children or cultivate relationships to cloak abuse of children or young people. I will never touch a child or young person in a manner which is inappropriate given their age, gender or cultural background (Note: limited physical restraint may be appropriate only in order to protect young children from harm).
- ***Maintain appropriate pastoral care boundaries:*** I will never have a child or young person at my home or visit a child or young person at their home when no other adult is present and will not meet with a child or young person outside of church activities, except with the permission of a parent or guardian.
- ***Avoid high risk situations:*** I will never be alone with a child or young person away from the presence of other adults. I will never help children in ways that involve intimate care if the child is capable of doing it on his or her own (such as toileting, changing clothes).
- ***Maintain healthy relationships:*** I will never physically discipline a child or young person. I will never make drugs, alcohol or cigarettes available to children or young people. I will never engage in any contact with a child or young person that is secretive, whether physical or through electronic media. I will never become romantically involved with any young person in the student, youth or children's ministries.
- ***Demonstrate courtesy and respect for children and young people:*** I will allow and encourage children and young people to participate in activities. I will treat all people fairly and impartially in words and actions.
- ***Implement a duty of care:*** I will exercise due care for the safety and well-being of children and young people for whom I am responsible. I will refrain from taking unauthorised photos, movies or recordings of children or young people without parental/guardian consent.
- ***Participate in training:*** I will attend or participate in relevant training including that related to child safety.
- ***Report abusive or inappropriate behaviours:*** I will abide by and follow the Gungahlin Bible Church Safe Ministry Policy and report any behaviours that could be considered abusive or concerning to the appropriate authorities.

**When the code is breached:**

- I. *Minor or unknown violations*: when a minor breach occurs which presents no clear risk of abuse or neglect then the Safe Ministry Supervisor will remind you of your responsibilities under this Code of Conduct and you will be offered further training and support.
- II. *Moderate*: where the behaviour is considered to be potentially inappropriate or was done without reasonable thought or in haste you will be placed under the direct mentorship of a member of the Leadership Team and you may be required to stand aside from your ministry responsibilities.
- III. *Substantial and/or constant violations*: where breaches occur which are considered to place a child at risk of abuse or neglect and/or where a leader refuses to modify their behaviour:
  - a) The matter may be reported to the appropriate authorities including the ACT Police, the ACT Child and Youth Protection Services and the ACT Ombudsman
  - b) The ministry leader or member will be offered appropriate counselling and pastoral support
  - c) The ministry leader or member will be stood down from all their ministry responsibilities until the Leadership Team is satisfied the leader's behaviour has changed and any investigations have been completed by the appropriate authorities
- IV. *Severe or breaches of law or allegations of abuse and neglect or serious misconduct*: are to be followed as per the Gungahlin Bible Church Incident Response Process and Reporting Procedure.