

GUNGAHLIN BIBLE CHURCH - SAFE MINISTRY POLICY

Aim

This policy outlines our commitment to the Bible's mandate to be proactive in the welcoming, spiritual nurture, protection, safety and care of those in our ministries of children, youth and vulnerable people¹. We also aim to enable and protect those ministering to children, youth and vulnerable people.

To build and maintain a safe community for our children, youth and vulnerable people, we are committed to ensuring that:

1. All Ministry Leaders and Ministry Assistants of our children's, youth and vulnerable people ministries are appropriately screened, trained and appointed,
2. All programs are led and run in a safe and appropriate manner,
3. There are clear reporting procedures in place, and
4. The Safe Ministry Supervisors and the Leadership Team at Gungahlin Bible Church reviews these policies and processes on an annual basis or more frequently if required.

1. Screening, Training and Appointing of Ministry Leaders

All Ministry Leaders involved in running programs for children, youth and vulnerable people on behalf of Gungahlin Bible Church, undergo a full screening and training process as outlined below:

1. All Ministry Leaders are current approved partners² of Gungahlin Bible Church and committed to regular³ attendance at church.
2. Appropriate Ministry Leaders will have provided references to confirm their character. Where possible the references of two previous churches would be suitable or an analysis of past experience of working with children or youth or vulnerable people.
3. Appointed Ministry Leaders working with children, youth or vulnerable people, must provide GBC with their Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) registration number and expiry date to be legally approved.
4. All Ministry Leaders must complete an approved training in child safety course which outlines appropriate behaviour as well as training in how to identify and report cases of abuse (e.g. www.childsafe.org.au). Ministry Leaders will be required to attend revision training every two to three years.
5. Ministry Leaders will be required to sign and agree to abide by a Code of Conduct.

Under no circumstances will a person with a criminal record of, or under investigation of, child abuse, molestation or similar offences be allowed to be involved in children's, youth or vulnerable people ministry.

2. Screening, Training and Appointing of Ministry Assistants

Ministry Assistants are those who are under 18 and who will work directly with Ministry Leaders.

Ministry Assistants provide support to Ministry Leaders in the running of groups and programs for children, youth and vulnerable people. All Ministry Assistants involved in helping programs for children, youth and vulnerable people on behalf of Gungahlin Bible Church, undergo this process as outlined below:

1. All Ministry Assistants are regular participants at Gungahlin Bible Church and are approved by one of the pastors for their role.
2. Ministry Assistants will be under direct supervision of a Ministry Leader who will be present with them at all times.
3. Ministry Assistants will be encouraged and supported to obtain a WWVP card as soon as they are eligible and to undertake appropriate child safe training. Assistants are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct with the help of the Ministry Leaders.

Under no circumstances will a person with a criminal record of, or under investigation of, child abuse, molestation or similar offences be allowed to be involved in children's, youth or vulnerable people ministry.

¹ Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Matthew 18:1-6; Mark 10:13-16

² Partners of GBC are those who are regular and committed to GBC and have been approved by the GBC Leadership Team as partners

³ Regular attendance at church means it is rare for the person to be absent from church.

3. Appropriate Behaviour and Guidelines for Safe Ministries

To provide for, build and maintain a safe community for our children, youth and vulnerable people where they may grow as followers of Jesus, we must ensure that our programs and events are safe and appropriate for those attending. For this to happen, all those ministering to children, youth and vulnerable people at Gungahlin Bible Church are to behave and act according to the values of the community, society and above all as followers of Jesus.

Our programs and events must be safe and appropriate to the children, youth and vulnerable people attending. Careful consideration will be made of things such as the activities chosen, the venue, safe ratios of supervision, appropriate child toileting practices, transportation, occupational health and safety, parental or guardian permission and confidentiality of records kept.

Guidelines for these safe practice procedures are highlighted and discussed in the approved training course.

To help maintain appropriate standards, all Ministry Leaders and Ministry Assistants will be given access to ongoing training and adequate supervision in their roles and responsibilities.

4. Reporting Procedure

If any Ministry Leader or Ministry Assistant suspect a child, youth or vulnerable people has experienced abuse they will not take action on their own or approach the alleged offender. Ministry Leaders or Ministry Assistants will raise the matter with one of the Gungahlin Bible Church Safe Ministry Supervisors (SMS).

The SMS will respond to all reports appropriately. Any allegations of criminal activity will be reported to ACT Police. Any allegations of child abuse or neglect will be reported to the ACT Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) at:

<https://form.act.gov.au/smartforms/csd/child-concern-report> or phone 1300 556 729.

The insurer of Gungahlin Bible Church will also be advised of any allegations of abuse.

The Leadership Team of Gungahlin Bible Church may also be required to report any allegations or convictions concerning child-related misconduct to the ACT Ombudsman for oversight.

5. Regular Review Periods

It is the responsibility of the Safe Ministry Supervisors and the Leadership Team to ensure that this policy and the Incident Response Process is implemented, maintained, and reviewed every two years or as required.

6. Safe Ministry Supervisors

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