



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

2019/2020

An initiative of Deo Gloria Family of Churches



Why a policy?

The Bible consistently expresses God's concern for the well-being of the weak and powerless members of society. Christ's words and example provide a strong rationale for churches being responsible for all those in their care. Deo Gloria Family of Churches takes this responsibility very seriously.

As those charged with leading and caring for others in ministry, we have a responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all under our care. All people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected and have their views and opinions valued at all times.

We also live in a country that legislate for people's safety, particularly in the area of child protection. This Safeguarding Policy has been developed to help us live out our biblical mandate and our responsibilities under WA legislation.

Our Safeguarding Policy has the following goals:

- To minimize the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power within the church.
- To ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and ministry misconduct are handled in a consistent, unbiased and thorough manner.
- To ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- To ensure that all people are respected and valued, irrespective of their gender, age, country of origin, cultural heritage, socio-economic background or ability.

Safe Leaders

We commit to:

a) *Safe Recruitment of Leaders*

- We will recruit leaders according to the Biblical principles found in 1 Timothy 3:1-13
- We will recruit leaders using the Deo Gloria Family of Churches Application for Safeguarding Leadership.
- We will screen all prospective leaders before they are appointed.
- We will require all leaders in child-related ministry to also obtain a WA Working with Children Check.

b) Adequate Training of Leaders

- We require that all leaders attend a Safeguarding Awareness workshop within their first year of ministry and to attend a refresher workshop every three years.
- We require all leaders to attend additional ministry specific departmental training as required by individual churches and ministries.

c) Continued Supervision of Leaders

- We commit to ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for leaders.
- We require all leaders to agree to follow the Code of Good Leadership Conduct.

d) Responding to allegations of suspected abuse

- We require all leaders to report disclosure or suspicions of child abuse, using the procedure in the Safeguarding Awareness Manual. We will listen to and believe children who raise concerns.
- We will ensure that procedures are clear and appropriate in responding to allegations of abuse.
- Where a leader has an allegation of misconduct made against them, the Deo Gloria Family of Churches Response to Complaint protocols will be followed.

Safe Programs

We commit to:

a) Safe Emotional Environments

- We will give opportunity to all people, including children, to provide input into the programs and the activities in which they are to participate, by fostering and valuing their ideas. We encourage participation in all areas of the life of the church, as far as is sensible and practical.
- We will endeavour to obtain information relating to the program participants, including children's information to help meet their physical and emotional needs.
- We will require those in ministry leadership to be nurturing and affirming in their ministry interactions.

b) Safe Physical Environments

- We require all leaders to establish safe physical environments as outlined in the Safeguarding Awareness workbook.
- We require Ministry Leaders to exercise a duty of care using forms, checklists and templates made available through the Safeguarding

Awareness workbook and www.deogloria.org.au for establishment and maintenance of safe ministry environments.

- We require a Safeguarding Representative/Team to be appointed in each congregation to ensure that the following areas are incorporated into establishing and maintaining a safe physical environment:
 - Fire safety;
 - Venue safety;
 - First Aid;
 - Food Safety Practices;
 - Risk assessment for activities;
 - Adequate ministry supervision for activities;
 - Transport protocols;
 - Critical Incident and emergency protocols
 - Ministry Review
- We require Ministry Leaders to complete a Ministry/Program/Event Application to Proceed form and obtain a Permission to Proceed annually.

Helpful Definitions

Abuse	Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Physical abuse – Emotional abuse – Family violence – Sexual abuse – Grooming – Neglect – Bullying – Spiritual abuse – Financial abuse
Child	A person who is under the age of 18 years.
Safe Environment:	Where duty of care is discharged by taking steps to keep all those in our care safe e.g. from spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional abuse (including bullying) or neglect.
The Safety Team/Representative:	Responsible for the oversight of the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and supporting documentation and processes in their church.
Application to Proceed:	Written process of accountability, program overview and risk assessment, safety plans and management.
Permission to Proceed:	Review of Application to Proceed and granting of permission for that program to proceed under the church's name by the Board of Elders.

Safe Leader:	Has been through a recruitment process, understands responsibilities, is supervised and is an accountable team player.
Safe Program:	All risks have been assessed and events thought through and planned. These programs have had permission to proceed from Board of Elders.
Ministry Leaders:	Responsible for individual ministry teams and programs. They jointly recruit team members/volunteers and complete safety management plans for their individual programs.
Team Members/Volunteer:	Any unpaid person responsible for working within their ministry team to minister in the context of the programs.
Vulnerable Person:	A person who may be considered to be susceptible to abuse or exploitation based on factors such as their age, health status (physical or mental), grief, previous experience of abuse, social isolation or financial hardship. In this sense vulnerability can be temporary or permanent.
SCTA:	Safe Church Training Agreement under the National Council of Churches in Australia.

The Safeguarding Policy applies to all pastors, elders, staff members and volunteer workers associated with the ministry in Deo Gloria Family of Churches.

The Safeguarding Policy takes into account the Child and Community Services Act 2004.

Disciplining Children

It is not the responsibility of Deo Gloria Family of Churches or its members, staff, volunteers or leaders to discipline a child. If a child does not abide by the rules as set out in the Children's Code of Conduct or becomes an obstruction to the care of other children and members and may cause harm, the child will be removed and referred back to their parent and guardian. Leaders will at all times adhere to the Code of Good Leadership Conduct.

Legal Framework

National Guidelines:

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children "Protecting Children is Everyone's Business" 2009 – 2020 (Commonwealth of Australia)

Local Legislation:

- Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)

Working with Children Checks:

- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)

More information

The Safeguarding Policy is supported by:

- Safe Church National Training System
- Safeguarding Awareness Workbook
- Code of Good Leadership Conduct
- Risk Management & Safe Environment Guidelines

Contact Information

Department of Child Protection

(08) 9222 2555 / www.dcp.wa.gov.au

Department of Local Government & Communities

(08) 6551 8700 / www.dlhc.wa.gov.au

National Kids Help Line

1800 55 1800 / www.kidshelp.com.au

Life Line

131 114 / www.lifelinewa.org.au

Disclaimer:

These guidelines have been endorsed by the Deo Gloria Family of Churches for use in churches and associated organisations. However, due to the autonomy of the local church, we cannot demand that our churches implement the Safeguarding Policy.

In any legal proceedings, you may be asked if any such recommendations exist and if so, whether they were followed. As such, we strongly urge you to implement this policy.