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**CHILD SAFE POLICY**

**CP- 04**

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### **POLICY COMMITMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

It is the policy of Beenleigh and District Baptist Church (BDBC) to respect everyone as unique individuals created by God, and to give special attention to the care, protection and wellbeing of children and vulnerable persons. We will behave towards them in a manner that resembles and represents Christ's attitude and approach, providing an environment and ministry that promotes their spiritual, social, and physical safety and personal growth and development.

To this end we will promote a 'safe church' culture throughout our church, constantly communicating and reinforcing our commitment at all levels of our church's life and ministry.

Regarding the church's commitment to providing a safe environment for all, *especially children and vulnerable persons*, the church acknowledges that Australian Baptists have agreed to adopt **the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations** and that these principles represent 'best practices.'

Therefore, the church will have regard to and implement the following principles as integral to our strategy for cultivating a safe church environment and safe activities:

1. Embedding a 'safe church' perspective, safety, including child safety, in our church's culture, leadership and governance
2. Respecting children and vulnerable persons by giving them opportunities to participate and have a say in the decisions affecting them
3. Keeping families and communities informed and involved in the development of the church as a safe environment
4. Upholding equity and considering diverse needs and interests among children and vulnerable persons
5. Ensuring that people working with children and vulnerable persons are suitable and are properly supported
6. Keeping the processes for responding to complaints of sexual abuse focussed upon the needs and best interests of children and vulnerable persons

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7. Equipping staff and volunteers with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and vulnerable persons safe through continual education, training, and support
8. Managing physical and online environments to minimise the opportunity for abuse occurring
9. Continuously reviewing and improving the implementation of these principles for creating and maintain a safe church environment
10. Maintaining up to date policies and procedures that document how the church is a safe place for children and vulnerable persons

**1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of our 'Child Safety Policy' is to enable our church's leaders and workers to develop a safe church culture so that all people, involved in or who are attending our church's ministries and services, are safe from harm and able to grow in their relationship with God and others.

This document outlines our approach to the protection of people, particularly, children and vulnerable persons, so that we comply with relevant legislation, engage in best practices, and cultivate a safe church for spiritual growth and wellbeing.

**Our Child Safety Policy**

- (a) Commits us to providing a **safe environment** for all people especially children and vulnerable persons
- (b) Authorises a **Code of Conduct** for all persons engaged by the church, whether staff or volunteers, who will be in direct contact with children and vulnerable persons
- (c) Provides a **process for screening** and selecting persons who will attend or participate in ministries with children or vulnerable persons
- (d) Provides a process for **responding to disclosures of harm or misconduct** and for reporting to appropriate authorities
- (e) Sets out the **training and supervision requirements** for all who are engaged by the church; whether staff or volunteers, who are in direct face-to-face contact with children and vulnerable persons, in a leadership and / or decision-making role or attend or participate in ministries with children or vulnerable persons.

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- (f) Keeping the **processes for responding to complaints** of sexual abuse focussed upon the needs and best interests of children and vulnerable persons
- (g) **Equipping staff and volunteers** with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and vulnerable persons safe through continual education and training
- (h) Managing **physical and online environments** to minimise the opportunity for abuse occurring
- (i) **Continuously reviewing** and improving the implementation of these principles for creating and maintaining a safe church environment
- (j) **Maintaining up to date policies and procedures** that document how the church is a safe place for children and vulnerable persons
- (k) In accordance with **legislative changes in 2020** any adult who fails to disclose relevant information to a police officer is liable to criminal charges. Religious confession is not a reasonable excuse for failure to report.

**NOTE:** The Restore Church does not fall under the scope of this Governance Policy. Children or vulnerable people are not permitted to be part of the worship congregation in Restore. If a member of Restore Church has a child that cannot be minded elsewhere the Restore Pastor is responsible for finding suitable persons who possess a Blue Card to be minded in the main Church area while Restore are meeting. The Restore Pastor should liaise with the Church Child Safe Coordinator.

**2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- (a) This Child Safety Policy applies to the persons listed below, referred to in this Child Safety Policy as **staff and volunteers**
- (b) Any church leader who is making decisions affecting children or vulnerable persons
- (c) Any person engaged by the church to provide a service to the church, whether paid or voluntarily, and who while providing their service will be in direct contact with children or vulnerable persons
- (d) Any students or trainees undertaking an internship or field placement at the church and who as part of that internship or field placement will be in contact with children or vulnerable persons.

### 3. REFERENCES

- (a) Child Protection Act 1999
- (b) Criminal Code, (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and other Legislation Amendment Act 2020
- (c) Queensland Baptist Safe Church Strategy, 2021
- (d) Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 current on 5 July 2021
- (e) Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011- current in July 2017
- (f) Royal Commission, Creating child safe institutions (the 'ten standards'), July 2016
- (g) Royal Commission, Best practice principles in responding to complaints of child sexual abuse in institutional contexts, March 2016
- (h) Royal Commission Records and recordkeeping practices, Sep 2016
- (i) Australian Human Rights Commission, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, June 2018
- (j) ISO 31000:2009 Risk management – Principles and guidelines
- (k) **BBC Church Governance Policy CP-08 Risk Management**

### 4. DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Breach** is any action or inaction by an individual that fails to comply with any part of this Policy
- (b) **Children** or **child** refer to individuals or an individual who is under 18 years of age.
- (c) **Vulnerable persons** refer to individuals aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.
- (d) **Church Leaders** refers to persons appointed by the church according to its constitution as responsible and accountable to the church members for the governance of the church.
- (e) **Child Safety Coordinator** refers to the person appointed by the church leaders to manage the practical implementation of this policy under the guidance and directions of the church leaders.

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- (f) **Harm** is defined as ‘any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional well-being,’ Harm can be caused by a single act or omission or a series of acts and omissions.
- (g) **Mandatory reporters** are those professional persons deemed by the Child Protection Act 1999 to make a report to Child Safety if they have reasonable suspicions that a child has suffered, is suffering OR at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm.
- (h) **Person of Concern** refers to a person who:
- (i) has pleaded guilty to, been convicted of, or has admitted to a sexual criminal offence (including stalking offences).
  - (j) has been found to have sexually offended, arising through due diligence checks related to recruitment (screening).
  - (k) is currently charged with a sexual offence.
  - (l) has been the subject of an allegation of a sexual offence and this was not appropriately investigated
  - (m) has been found to have received an adverse risk assessment arising from sexual misconduct.
  - (n) Is deemed to be a risk to the safety of children and/or vulnerable adults because of an adverse risk assessment relating to sexual misconduct or other abuse-related misconduct (including grooming).
  - (o) exhibits constant wandering across other peoples’ sexual boundaries.
- (i) **Restricted person** is one who has convicted an offence reportable under the Child Care Act, has pleaded guilty to, been convicted of, or has admitted to a sexual criminal offence

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**5. PROCEDURE**

**PART ONE – RECRUITMENT, SCREENING, SUPPORT AND TRAINING**

**5.1 RECRUITMENT**

BDBC recognises the importance of recruiting staff and volunteers who have skills and attributes to fulfill the roles involved in working with vulnerable people.

- (a) To ensure this, all such roles will require an application form as an initial screening tool (Church Form CS-03). Any such roles that involve paid employment will be further defined by a position description and selection criteria.
- (b) When recruiting for roles involved in working with vulnerable people, applicants will be made aware (via the application form) that they are going to be subject to blue card screening, referee checks, identification verification, and that BDBC will request that the applicant disclose any information relevant to their eligibility to engage in activities involving vulnerable people, including if they are a Restricted Person.
- (c) BDBC will include information regarding Restricted Persons and Restricted Employment laws in position descriptions, application forms and any advertisements for roles working with vulnerable people.
- (d) Applicants for roles involved in working with vulnerable people at BDBC will be provided a copy of this policy when they receive an application form. This is to ensure they are fully informed of the requirements of this policy prior to applying.
- (e) Where certain roles require registration by Queensland Baptists, the applicant must also successfully pass the application process under those Registration Guidelines.
- (f) Where a job or role description has stipulated additional educational, skill or other requirements, the applicant is also required to satisfy these criteria before commencement.
- (g) Junior Leaders must be appropriately screened and trained; parental permission must be given using Church Child Safe Form CS-12 "Parental Permission."**



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**5.2 APPLICATION PROCESS**

- (a) The following application process applies to staff or volunteers engaging in face-to-face contact in any program or ministry with children or vulnerable persons:
- (i) Present a valid and current Blue Card or Exemption Card or commence the application process
  - (ii) Submit a written application as per the Volunteer (and Paid Staff) Application, **Church Form CS-03**
  - (iii) Provide the contact details of at least two referees
  - (iv) Attend an interview if deemed necessary by church leaders, in this case information would be recorded under the Referee check of **Church Form CS-03**
  - (v) Sign an agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct, **Church Form CS-04**.
- (b) Church Leaders' Obligations in the application process
- (i) Where a person makes an application to work with children and/or vulnerable persons, the Church Leaders must ensure the following criteria are met before accepting the application and allowing the applicant to be involved in any church activities that will bring them into contact with children or vulnerable persons.
  - (ii) Churches the applicant has attended (or has been involved or connected with) in the past five (5) years are contacted to ascertain whether there have been any alleged or actual incidents of harm involving the applicant. **Church Form CS-03**
  - (iii) In the case of a volunteer, the person has attended the church regularly for a minimum of six (6) months unless exceptional circumstances apply.
  - (iv) If the applicant has not obtained their Blue Card through the Church, the Church's Child Safety Coordinator must also arrange completion of a "Link an Applicant/Cardholder" to this Organisational Portal and submit to Blue Card Services (available from [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au)).

(c) **Agreement to comply with Church policies and code of conduct**

All staff and volunteers working with Children or in a leadership / decision making role must be provided with a copy of the *Church Child Safety Policy*, including the *Code of Conduct*. A signed copy of the *Code of Conduct* must be returned to the Church Child Safety Coordinator. The *Code of Conduct* is retained either in digital format or hard copy.

**5.3 SCREENING**

(a) **Persons requiring a Blue Card**

All staff and volunteers of BDBC must hold valid and current Blue Cards to attend or participate in any church activities that will bring them into direct face-to-face contact with children or vulnerable persons. BDBC will ensure that all staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable persons are **NOT** restricted persons as defined in Section 3 Definitions, point 9 above.

(b) **Persons with an Exemption Card**

All staff and volunteers who are police officers or registered teachers must hold a valid and current Exempt Card from Queensland Government Blue Card Services to attend or participate in in any church activities that will bring them into face-to-face contact with children or vulnerable persons.

(c) **Maintaining compliance with the Blue Card System**

The Church Child Safety Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the timely and accurate recording of information relating to the issuing of Blue Cards and Exemption Cards

The Church Child Safety Coordinator receives regular emails from **Safety Management Online**. The email details those blue card holders whose card requires renewing, and an email is sent to the person(s) concerned. The Blue Card authenticity must be checked against the Organisational Blue Card Portal before recording its information on the Blue Card Register.

- (d) BBC will comply with the requirements of the Blue Card System by:
- (i) Conducting an annual review, the Church Child Safety Coordinator will review the current BBC Blue Card Register against Qld Government Blue Card Organisational Portal **AND**
  - (ii) Against the SMO Register of people who have completed training and to determine accuracy and if changes are required.
  - (iii) Queensland Baptists require the “appointment status” of volunteers and staff to be reviewed every three years and the Ministry Team Leaders consulted if further checks are required.
  - (iv) The dates **must be changed** otherwise they are shown as “non-compliant” in the SMO Register.

**(e) Changes in circumstances affecting a Blue Card**

If there is a change in circumstances for staff or volunteers that might, (or will) affect their Blue Card status, then that person must:

- (i) notify the Church Child Safety Coordinator immediately; and
- (ii) notify the Queensland Government’s Blue Card Services.

**NOTE: The management of persons of concern, restricted persons or breaches will be managed as outlined in Part 2 of this Policy.**

- (f) The Church Child Safety Coordinator, in consultation with the Church Leaders, can require the person to discontinue attending or participating in any activities that will bring them into direct contact with children or vulnerable persons.

**5.4. SUPPORT AND TRAINING FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

- (a) All staff and / or volunteers involved in face-to-face ministry and those involved in leadership will complete child safe training provided by ***Safety Management Online***.

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- (b) In BBC those in a pastoral, leadership and / or decision-making roles will complete four modules of training every three years, Modules 1., 2., Leadership 1., 2.
- (c) Team Leaders will complete the four modules as above whereas Team Members will complete Modules 1 and 2 only.
- (d) Team Leaders and Team Members in Kids Church and Impakt Youth will be given copies of the following training documents as per the attachments to this policy below:

Attachment number	Adopted from QB Safe Church Guidelines	Name of document
1	Schedule 7	Fact Sheet on Sexual Grooming
2	Schedule 8	Indicators of Harm or Abuse

- (e) The Church Child Safety Coordinator must report to the church leaders and the annual church members’ meeting about the supervision, support and training of staff and volunteers.
- (f) Team Leaders may conduct child safety activities and receive input from children and young people in our Children’s Ministries. Children engage with resources such as Xenia Schembri’s *Brave Little Bear* book series ([www.attheark.org.au](http://www.attheark.org.au)), which are also made available for parents and guardians to borrow.
- (g) Kid’s Church Ministry Team Leader reviews annually the Children’s Code of Conduct (‘How we Behave in Kids’ Church/ Impakt Youth’) and Child Self Reporting Form CS-01, in consultation with the children and young people in our ministries.

**5.5 REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTACT WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS**

All staff and volunteers must:

- (a) abide by written position descriptions for Ministry Team Leaders detailing their responsibilities for themselves and their Team Members.

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- (b) comply with the Code of Conduct, **Church Form CS-02** while in contact with children or vulnerable persons.
- (c) complete a Volunteer Driver **Church Form WPS-02** if volunteering in activities requiring transportation of children, such as Impakt Youth or youth camps. Parents may transport the children of friends IF the parent has nominated them as a 'pick-up' person on the Registration Form
- (d) comply with the requirements of the Church Risk Management Policy, (CP-08) by completing a Risk Management Plan Form WPS-07 for the annual ministry program and for any high-risk activities or special events. **Refer to the Risk Management Policy for complete list of high-risk activities. The Senior Pastor is responsible for approving high-risk activities in consultation with Baptist Insurance Services.**
- (e) promote the participation and empowerment of children and vulnerable persons, recognising that attention needs to be given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and other vulnerable groups.
- (f) listen carefully and consider respectfully the input from children and vulnerable persons concerning decisions affecting them and what makes them feel safe or unsafe.
- (g) ensure children's personal information is treated in a confidential manner and in line with the Church Privacy Policy (CP-09) for the collection, storage, and use of information.
- (h) participate in Safe Church Training once every three years, (provided on-line through Safety Management Online), by Queensland Baptists and required by BDBC leadership and detailed in Section 5.3 above.

**5.6 ADULT TO CHILD/YOUNG PEOPLE RATIOS**

For the safety of children and young people in our ministries BDBC will conform to the following adult / child ratios.

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- (a) A standard adult to child ratio of 1:8 is adequate for Ministries, such as **Crèche** and **Kids' Church**, running during the same time as the church service, as parents and guardians are within easy reach if assistance is required.
- (b) For *Impakt Youth Studies*, a ratio of 1:15 is adequate. There should be a minimum of two adults supervising each children's ministry activity, i.e., no team leader or member can run a program alone
- (c) For **high-risk activities** and **special events**, the following **safety ratios** must be adhered to, as they fall outside of the normal scope of ministry activities. Ratios will need to be modified with consideration to various factors including special needs, behavioural issues, high risk activities such as swimming and cooking, high risk venues. Ministry Team Leaders must complete a Special Risk Assessment Church Form WPS-07. This form must be approved by either the Church Administrator or the Church Child Safety Co-ordinator before the event occurs.
- (d) Safety ratios:

<b>Age</b>	<b>Adult: Child Ratio</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Adult: Child Ratio</b>
Under 2 years old	1:3	10 to 12 years old	1:8
2 to 6 years old	1:5	13 to 15 years old	1:15
7 to 9 years old	1:6	16 and 17 years old	1:20

- (e) **Junior leaders < 18 years of age cannot be included in leader-to-child ratios.**

**PART TWO - MANAGING DISCLOSURES OR SUSPICION OF HARM**

**5.7. IDENTIFYING HARM OR SUSPICION OF HARM**

Each child's experience is different and depends on a range of factors including the child's age, the nature of the harm, how long the abuse has been occurring and their relationship to

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the abuser and their support networks. The abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional and / or psychological. Facts sheets attached to this policy provide greater in-depth information.

A suspicion of harm is when someone has a reasonable suspicion that a child had suffered, or is suffering, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm. A child has been, or may be, experiencing abuse may show behavioural, emotional, or physical signs of stress and abuse. There may also be other circumstances where there is a concern for a child's welfare, but it does not reach the threshold to be considered a disclosure or suspicion of harm.

BDBC has a duty of care to follow up any suspicions of harm or potential risk of harm to children in our care. We will do this by observing and recording the actions of children who might be at risk and reporting the concerns to the relevant authority.

1. A suspicion of harm exists if:
  - (a) A child tells you they have been harmed
  - (b) Someone else for example another child, parent tells you that harm has OR is likely to occur
  - (c) A child tells you they know someone who is being harmed (it is possible that they are referring to themselves).
  - (d) You are concerned at significant changes in the behaviour of a child, or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries, OR
  - (e) Harm is witnessed
  
2. In relation to suspicion of harm, ministry team leaders, volunteers working with children in BDBC will:
  - (a) Remain alert to any warning signs or indicators
  - (b) Pay close attention to changes in the child's behaviour, including feelings and words they use

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- (c) Make written notes, in consultation with the Church Child Safety Co-ordinator, in a non-judgemental and accurate manner
- (d) Assure the child that you have listened to them and will be acting on their behalf
- (e) Follow the directions below in reporting a disclosure or suspicion of harm

**5.8 MANAGING AND RECORDING A DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF HARM**

**1. Reporting a disclosure or suspicion of harm**

Mandatory reporting a child sexual offence committed in relation to a child under the Criminal Code of (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and other legislation becomes applicable to BDBC ministries and activities for children / vulnerable people regarding the reporting process.

Under the provisions of the Act, it is an offence not to report a belief (including disclosure or suspicion of) an offence of a sexual nature committed in relation to a child, even if the information was gained during religious confession.

This in effect **mandates reporting** of a child sexual offence for all adults and so by default includes all staff and volunteers engaged in BDBC ministries. Staff, ministry team leaders or volunteers in children's activities who have reasonable grounds that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child **MUST** immediately **report to the Police** as soon as reasonably practical. The Church Child Safety Co-ordinator and Senior Pastor will liaise with the person reporting at all stages in recording and reporting process

**2. Mandatory reporting – harm (other than a child sexual offence)**

The Child Protection Act 1999 requires certain professionals referred to as 'mandatory reporters' to report any reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered or is suffering an unacceptable risk of significant harm. Under the Act mandatory reporters are

- (a) Teachers
- (b) Doctors
- (c) Registered nurses
- (d) Police officers with child protection responsibilities



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- (e) A person performing a child advocate function under the Public Guardian Act 2014
- (f) Early childhood education and care professionals.

These individuals MUST report to Child Safety and should also report to Child Safety a reasonable suspicion if an unborn child may need protection where the harm or risk of harm relates to any other type of abuse or neglect under s13A of the Child Protection Act.

Staff and volunteers working with children at BBC who receive a disclosure or have a suspicion of harm, (other than a child sexual offence) are to liaise directly with the Church Child Safety Coordinator who will support and guide them through the reporting process.

**3. Non -Mandatory reporting (excludes child sexual offence)**

Any person is lawfully entitled to make a report if they are concerned for a child's welfare EVEN if they are not required to do so as a mandatory reporter. Anyone making a voluntary, (non-mandated) report is protected regarding confidentiality and immunity from legal liability.

When / if responding to a disclosure of harm staff and volunteers are reminded to:

- (a) Remain calm and listen attentively and non-judgementally
- (b) Ensure there is a private place to talk with at least two volunteers in attendance
- (c) Encourage the child to talk in their own words, DO NOT put words into their mouth, don't ask leading questions
- (d) Make sure you advise the child this cannot remain a 'secret' as it is important to get the right help
- (e) Reassure the child they have done the right thing and do not try to investigate or mediate an outcome
- (f) Consider if there are other barriers such as Aboriginal and / or Torres Straight Islands, cultural barriers, linguistic or other disabilities.
- (g) Follow this Policies procedure for reporting a disclosure of harm

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4. BDBC have the following forms to use when reporting a disclosure of harm. The Child Self-Reporting Form CS-01 can be used for young children and the Church Form CS-07 Record of Disclosure of Harm may be used for older children. The Church Child Safety Co-ordinator will provide guidance in the use of the forms.
5. The Church Child Safety Co-ordinator will consider whether there are requirements to report matters to the Queensland Police or Child Safety. The Church Child Safety Co-ordinator will use the following three-step process to assist in decision making:
  - (a) Consider if the disclosure or suspicions' need to be reported to Queensland Police, is the child in immediate danger, IF SO, contact the police by dialling 000
  - (b) Does the disclosure or reasonable suspicion of harm need to be reported to Child Safety, AND
  - (c) Consider whether referral is required to other support services including Family and Child Connect. Note: A mandatory reporter can refer a family without their consent, all others require the consent of the family.

#### **5.9. RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE**

Under the provision of the Child Sexual Offences Reform, 2020, Section 229BC Failure to report a child sexual offence committed in relation to a child becomes applicable to staff, ministry team leaders and volunteers of BDBC when providing children's activities.

Under the provisions of the Act, it is an offence **NOT** to report a belief, (including disclosure of a suspicion) of an offence of a sexual nature committed in relation to a child. This in effect **mandates** reporting of child sexual offences **by all adults and so by default includes all staff and volunteers engaged in BDBC** ministries and activities for children and vulnerable people.

#### **5.10. REPORTING PROCESS INVOLVING AN ALLEGED SEXUAL OFFENCE**

- (a) The following guidelines are for responding to and reporting disclosures or evidence of harm or misconduct (a breach of the Code of Conduct). The person who receives the

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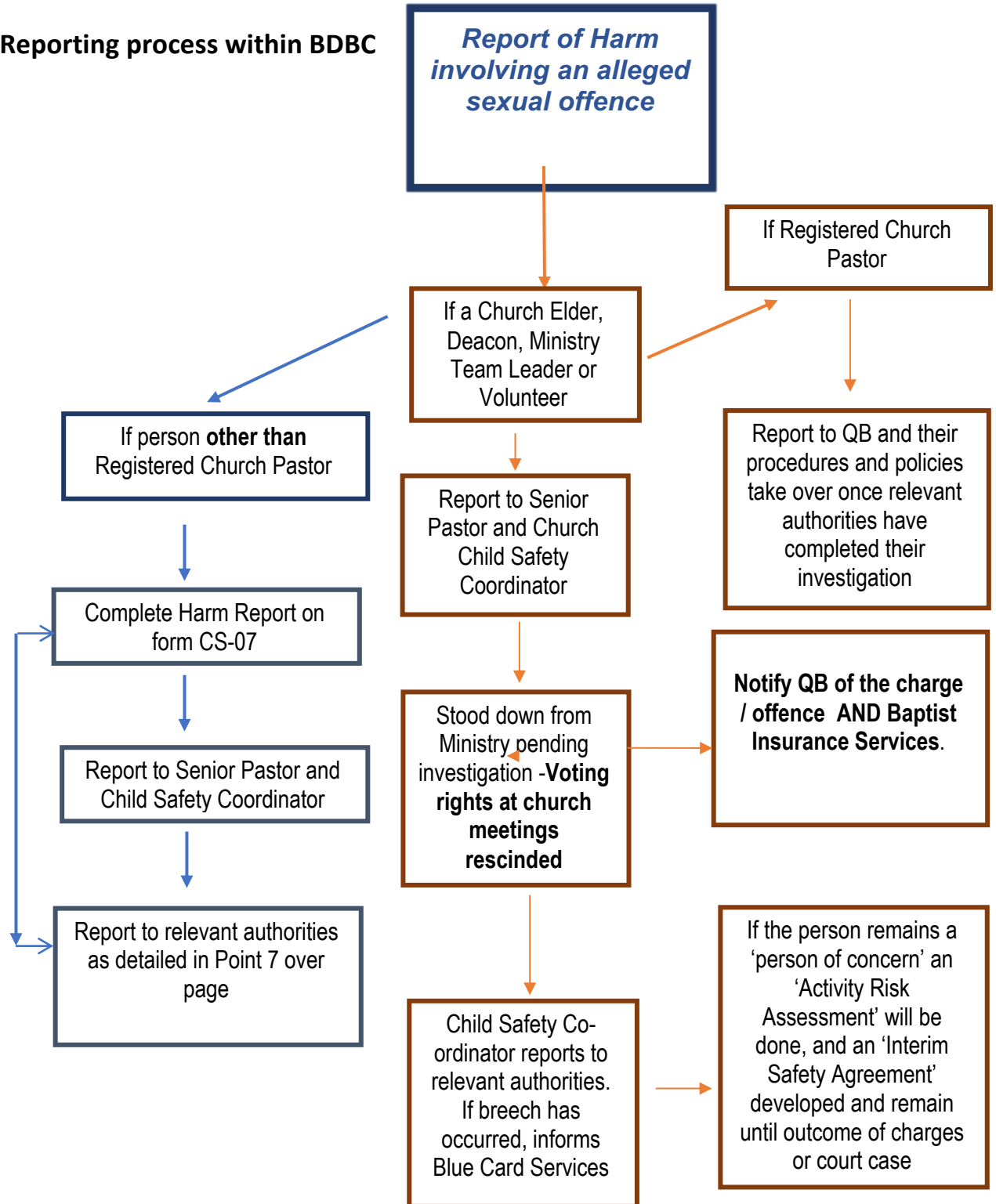
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disclosure or have suspicion of harm can report this directly to relevant authorities. However, staff and volunteers of BDBC working with children are asked to liaise with the Church Child Safety Co-ordinator, Senior Pastor who will guide them through and manage the reporting process. The person who receives a disclosure OR is reporting a

- (b) suspicion of harm will be involved in the reporting process to ensure integrity of the information reported.
- (c) The **following Flow chart in Section 5.10 below** depicts the reporting process for allegations relating to:
  - (i) Persons other than a registered Church Pastor
  - (ii) Allegations relating to an Elder, Deacon, Ministry team Leaders or volunteers, AND BBC Pastors.

**Reporting process within BDBC**



### **5.11 DOCUMENTATION PROCESS WITHIN BDBC**

Within BDBC the same Church Forms are used for reporting harm or disclosure of a sexual nature as well as mandatory reporting of a child at risk. The following are important to note:

- (a) In all cases where harm is disclosed, the best interests of the child or vulnerable person will be paramount, and BDBC's response will be clear and transparent to those affected
- (b) When a person discloses harm or misconduct, whether it took place recently or a long time ago we will respond with respect, compassion, and appropriate action.
- (c) Document the disclosure/ suspicion clearly and accurately including an accurate description of:
  - (i) The relevant dates, times, locations and who was present
  - (ii) Exactly what the person disclosing said using 'I said,' 'they said,' statements
  - (iii) The questions you asked,
  - (iv) Any comments made, and
  - (v) The actions taken following the disclosure.
- (d) The Church Child Safety Coordinator will assist with the use of Church Child Safe Forms using the 'Record of Disclosure' **Form CS-07**, and liaise with the person reporting, Senior Pastor, and Police. The Church Child Safety Coordinator will ensure that copies of reports are properly stored according to the Church Policy on Storage of Records.
- (e) The Church Child Safety Coordinator will assess and minimise any risks to a child, to children and to vulnerable persons, especially ensuring the safety and support of the child or adult who disclosed harm or misconduct. The Church Child Safety Coordinator will inform the child and / or adult disclosing harm or misconduct that the Church must report any allegations under mandatory reporting requirements.

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**NOTE: It is important to note that a person making a report is protected from liability under the Child Protection Act 1999 from civil or criminal legal actions and is not considered to have broken any code of conduct or ethics**

1. The Church Child Safety Coordinator will connect the child or person disclosing harm or misconduct with church staff and/or professionals identified by the church as competent to provide care and support during and after the process

**Senior Pastor: Office (07) 3807 3664**

**and after hours contact Church Child Safety Coordinator - 0412 435 483**

**During normal business hours – contact the Regional Intake Service:**

**Southeast Queensland: 1300 679 849**

**Brisbane: 1300 682 254**

**After hours and weekends: Contact Child Safety**

**after hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999**

2. Where we have reason to suspect that a child is experiencing harm or is at risk of experiencing harm or being neglected, or receive a disclosure of harm or misconduct, we will contact **Child Safety Services** and seek information and advice about how to proceed.
3. If the alleged misconduct or harm was perpetrated by a Registered Minister of Queensland Baptists (QB) then the Child Safety Coordinator or church leaders will also inform the Queensland Baptist Safe Church Officer or the Director of Pastoral Services for Queensland Baptist.

#### **5.12. PERSONS OF CONCERN WITHIN BDBC**

- (a) The person identified by the disclosure as harming and/or guilty of misconduct will be **stood down** from any ministry responsibilities that will bring them into contact with

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children or vulnerable persons while the matter is being investigated by the Senior Pastor, Church Child Safe Coordinator, Police, or a government department/agency, and until a determination about the matter has been made.

- (b) During this time the person identified in point (a) above will have their membership suspended and voting rights at any church meeting rescinded until the investigation is complete
- (c) We are also required to notify Queensland Baptist and Baptist Insurance Services of any allegations
- (d) The Child Safety Coordinator, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, will construct an **'Activity Risk Assessment'** taking into consideration all aspects of church life. An **'Interim Safety Agreement'** will determine the parameters regarding church attendance and participation by the person identified as a 'person of concern' by the disclosure. The 'person of concern' must agree to this as well as any court restrictions. Suitable church leaders will be named to shadow the person at any church activities and liaise with the 'person of concern' and ensure they are kept informed about the process.
- (e) Where a staff member or volunteer has breached a legislative requirement pertaining to the protection and welfare of children, or an obligation stipulated by the Blue Card Services, then the authority responsible for issuing the Blue Card will be notified.
- (f) If the misconduct identified by a disclosure is outside the scope of government legislation and regulations but is covered by the Code of Conduct or the Church's constitution, then the provisions of this policy and the church's constitution will be applied.

**5.13. MANAGING BREACHES OF THE CHURCH POLICY**

- (a) The Church Child Safe Co-ordinator is responsible for managing breaches of this policy, in the absence of the Church Child Safe Co-ordinator the Church Leadership will manage the breach and engage QB Safe Church Officer if necessary.

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- (b) Depending on the severity of the breach and the level of risk will determine the consequence. This may range from additional training, supervision, or periods of stand-down.
- (c) When the breach **DOES NOT** relate to disclosure of harm a Breach Incident Form CS-06 to be completed. The Child Safe Co-ordinator is to maintain a Breach Register and reports made to relevant authorities.

**5.14. REVIEW OF CHURCH CHILD SAFE POLICY**

In response to any changes in legislation, advice from Queensland Baptist or Blue Card Services, BBC will review this Policy in accordance with our Church Governance Policy on Documentation, (CP-01).

The Policy will also be reviewed for suitability following a disclosure of harm OR identification of a person of concern. BBC will record what worked well and what may need improvement.

As a commitment to ongoing improvement BBC has an internal audit program, detailed in Church Office Work Instructions and the Child Safety Policy is audited annually to ensure compliance

**6. RECORDS GENERATED**

Church form number	Name of document	Period of retention
CS-01	Child Self Reporting Form	45 years
CS-02	Code of Conduct	45 years
CS-03	Application working with children and Young People	45 years
Excel spreadsheet	Blue Card Register	45 years



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Church form number	Name of document	Period of retention
CS-06	Breach Incident Form	45 years
CS-07	Record of Disclosure of Harm or Misconduct	45 years
CS-08	Interim safety agreement	45 years
CS-11	Child Young Person Registration	45 years
<b>CS-12</b>	<b>Parental permission Leaders &lt; 18yrs</b>	<b>45 years</b>
CS-17	Family medical and personal information	45 years
CS-18	18+ Medical and Personal information	45 years
CS-20	Disclosure register	
WPS-02	Volunteer Driver's Form	45 years

**Attachments to Policy**

Attachment 1 - Fact sheet on sexual grooming

Attachment 2 - Indicators of abuse.

**7. REVISION & APPROVAL HISTORY**

Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval
February 2020	Draft 1-2	Queensland Baptist Safe Church Strategy adapted to Beenleigh District Baptist Church by Rose Gavin Voluntary Church Administrator in consultation with Church appointed Child Safety Co-ordinator. B.Hegi.
March 2020	0	Final document approved by Senior Pastor, Elder / Deacon Delegate and Church Administrator.
June 2020	1	Addition of Points 4 and 7 to Policy Commitment. Section 4, Definitions- addition of 'person of concern.' Section 5.2 changes to points 4 and 5. Section 5.4 Flowchart addition of vertical middle

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Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval
		<p>flowchart. Section 5.4 changes to points 3,4,8 and 9. Attachment 3 replaced with instructions regarding electronic communication during COVID safe period. Revised by, and approved for republishing by Ps Steve Twible, Rose Gavin, Church Administrator (Voluntary) and Church Child Safety Coordinator B.Hegi (Voluntary)</p>
November 2021	2	<p>Note all previous changes to the policy have been removed. New changes are identified by red font. Policy reviewed and changed by Rose Gavin (Administration volunteer) current Child Safe Coordinator in consultation with Belinda Hegi, former BDBC Child Safety Coordinator.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Addition of Point 11 to our Child Safety Policy, Section 1</li> <li>2- Latest Legislative change added to References Section 3, point 1</li> <li>3- Addition of further Definitions Section 4</li> <li>4- Additions to Screening process – blue cards Section 5.1</li> <li>5- Addition of Section 5.4, Suspicion of Harm</li> <li>6- Addition of Section 5.5, Mandatory Reporting</li> <li>7- Addition of Section 5.6 Responding to Disclosure</li> <li>8- Addition of Section 5.7 Reporting process of an alleged sexual offence</li> <li>9- Addition of Section 5.7 Reporting an alleged sexual offence</li> <li>10- Original flow chart Reporting Harm 5.4 renumbered to 5.8</li> <li>11- Addition of Section 5.9 Documentation process</li> <li>12- Addition of Section 5.10 Person of concern</li> <li>13- Addition of Section 5.11- Managing Breaches</li> <li>14- Addition of Reviewing of Church Child Safety Policy, Section 5.12</li> <li>15- Additional forms added to Section 6 Records generated</li> <li>16- Changes to Attachment 2, types of abuse expanded to include physiological, emotional abuse, neglect, and sexual exploitation</li> <li>17- Numerous forms re-numbered</li> </ol> <p>Policy changes approved by: Ps Steve Twible (Senior Pastor) and Katie Davis, (Church Administrator) on the 30 November 2021</p>

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Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval
February 2022	3	Section 5.2.5 and Section 5.3.7 – Training requirements changed from annual to once every three years by Ps Steve Twible and published by Rose Gavin, Church Child Safe Coordinator.
March 2022	4	<p>Former changes to the policy in red have been returned to black font. New changes in <b>red font</b> made to Policy to reflect requirements of Blue Card Compliance Team in relation to <i>8 Mandatory Requirements</i> aligned to the <i>10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations</i> adopted by QB. – Changes to the following sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>PART 1</b> - Section 5.1 – Recruitment</li> <li>2. Section 5.3 points 3 and 4 – screening re. Blue Cards</li> <li>3. Section 5.4 points 1-4- Support and training</li> <li>4. Section 5.5.1 Role of the Ministry Team Leader and point 8 Safe Church Training</li> <li>5. Section 5.5.2 – point 3 Risk assessments</li> <li>6. <b>PART 2</b> - Section 5.7 – Suspicion of Harm</li> <li>7. Section 5.8.1 – Reporting a disclosure or suspicion</li> <li>8. Section 5.8.3 – Non-mandatory reporting excluding sexual offence</li> <li>9. Section 5.15 – Review of Church Child Safe Policy</li> </ol> <p>Policy reviewed and revised by Rose Gavin, Church Child Safe Coordinator. Approved for release by Ps Steve Twible and Katie Davis, Administrator.</p>
July 2022	5	<p>Previous changes in red font returned to black font.</p> <p>Minor grammatical errors addressed as well as minor issues identified at the annual internal audit.</p> <p>Restore Church <b>excluded</b> from the Scope of this Policy – detailed in Section 1-Purpose and Scope</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Section 5.2 Recruitment – dot points 5 and 6 moved to Section 5.1 Application process. No change to wording</li> <li>2 Section 5.2 – Deletion of Church Form CS-06 now obsolete</li> <li>3. Addition of gender explanation to Attachment 3-Section 5.2 On-line dynamics</li> </ol>

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Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval
		Changes made by Rose Gavin, Child Safe Coordinator and approved by Katie Davis, Church Administrator.
August 2023	6	Former changes in <b>red font</b> have been returned to black font. Changes made by Rose Gavin, Church Child Safe Coordinator to Section 5.3.3 regarding the requirement by QB to review the appointment status of volunteers / staff every three years AND the addition of “those in Leadership” to Section 5.4.1 Approved by Katie Davis, Church Administrator.
January 2024	7	Former changes in <b>red font removed as per Revision 6 above.</b> Renumbering throughout policy – dot point to (a), (b) etc Removal of Attachment 3 relating to management during COVID_19 pandemic. Changes to <b>Section 5.10 and 5.12 (b) and (c)</b> membership suspended and voting rights at church meetings rescinded when the allegation is against a member of BDBC. Approved by Ps Steve Twible and Katie Davis, Church Administrator.
May 2024	8	Former changes in red above returned to black font. Changes to Section 5.1 (g) Parental Permission for Junior Leaders Section 5.6 ( e ) Safety ratios and Section 5.5 (d) addition of reference to high-risk activities by Rose Gavin, Child Safe Coordinator. Approved by Senior Pastor Jabin Mills and Church Administrator Katie Davis.

**ATTACHMENT 1 FACT SHEET ON SEXUAL GROOMING (Schedule 7- QB Safe Church Strategy)**

**A Training Resource**

A lot of information exists about how to respond to sexual abuse once it has been discovered. But the best way of protecting children from harm is to be aware of the behaviours that can lead to sexual abuse before it occurs. These behaviours are called 'grooming'. Organisations with unclear boundaries around contact with children can be magnets to people who wish to 'groom' children for sexual abuse (1). By learning about the strategies used to 'groom' children and their families and recognising them as inappropriate behaviours in your service you create an environment that will deter infiltration by sexual abusers (2).

**Sexual abuse thrives in secrecy and ignorance.** By being alert to potential danger signs, we are better able to understand the steps we can take to keep children as safe as possible.

**What is "Grooming?"**

Sexual abusers are often people we know; more than 8 out of 10 children (3) who are sexually abused know their abuser. They may hold responsible positions in their local community and can be personable or charismatic. Abusers come from all classes, ethnic and religious backgrounds and may be heterosexual or homosexual. Whilst a high percentage of abusers are men, some are also women (4). You cannot pick an abuser out in a crowd; however, you can identify behaviour that precipitates abuse. This behaviour is known as 'grooming' and research shows us that it can occur for up to 12 months before the actual sexual abuse take place (5).

Grooming is defined as communication with a child where this is an intention to meet and commit a sex offence (6). More generally it be the process by which an individual manipulates those around them – particularly, but not exclusively, the child – to provide opportunities to abuse and reduce the likelihood of being reported or discovered.

Research suggests that this process can be very deliberate, and while it can occur over a long period of time, sometimes this period is much shorter; there may not be any conscious motivation to sexually abuse a child until just before the abuse occurs. In both cases, there are often opportunities

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to observe and intervene, even before the would-be abuser is fully aware of what may become sexual intentions.

Unfortunately, identifying sexual grooming of children isn't always straightforward. Sometimes sexual abuse occurs as part of a pre-existing relationship in which there is genuine affection, which makes it a complex issue. But there are often clear signs that can be detected before the abuse occurs.

### **How Do People Groom Children for Sexual Abuse?**

**By getting close to children** – child sex offenders will often seek out adults and groom them to get access to their children. The sex offender can create a relationship built on trust or dependency and gain access to the children through it. Some befriend parents or carers who are facing difficulties or who are vulnerable themselves.

**By silencing children** – people who want to sexually abuse children may:

- (a) offer them gifts or treats, and sometimes combine these with threats about what will happen if the child says 'no' or tells someone
- (b) threaten them with exclusion from their peer group or loss of favour if they do not comply
- (c) make the child afraid of being hurt physically, or threaten what may happen to other people if the child tells
- (d) play on the child's embarrassment or guilt about what is happening, perhaps convincing them that no one will believe them
- (e) make the child believe he or she wanted it to happen.

### **Signs an Adult May Be Grooming a Child for Sexual Abuse:**

There may be cause for concern about the behaviour of an adult or young person if they:

- (a) Exhibit frequent physical affection such as kissing, hugging, stroking hair or wrestling even when the child clearly does not want it, or it is not required.

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- (b) Encourage child or children to sit on their lap and offer regular physical comfort or reassurance to a child without a recognised cause.
- (c) Seek out opportunities to be alone with a child with no interruptions.
- (d) Spend most of their spare time with children and have little interest in spending time with people their own age.
- (e) Solicit invitations to sports, events, or parties where a child will be.
- (f) Frequently arrive uninvited to places where the child or their family will be in a series of 'coincidences'.
- (g) Spend a lot of time around places like arcades, playgrounds, parks, and sports venues to get to know children so they are not seen as strangers.
- (h) Regularly offer support to the family members of the child such as offering to babysit children for free, transport children to events, and help at social occasions involving the child or take children on outings alone.
- (i) Offer to drive children home or collect children from events on a regular basis.
- (j) Frequently walk in on children in the bathroom or their bedrooms.
- (k) Treat a child or group of children as favoured, making them feel special compared with others in a group.
- (l) Find out as much as possible about the child and use that information to engage the child and drive a wedge between the child and any protective adults, e.g., parents, teachers, or coaches.
- (m) Purchase gifts or collect items of interest regularly for a specific child or group of children.
- (n) Tell secrets to a child and encourage the keeping of secrets.
- (o) Display ambiguous sexual behaviour, e.g., showing the child pictures of other children wearing swimsuits or less.
- (p) Display clearly inappropriate sexual behaviour, e.g., showing the child pornographic pictures, using explicit sexual language around children.

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### **What to do if Abuse is Suspected**

Where grooming is suspected, please advise your Safe Church Coordinator who will then take the matter further.

### **KEY POINTS TO NOTE:**

- (a) Child sexual abuse thrives in secrecy.
- (b) People who abuse children may spend up to 12 months 'grooming' a child before they commit a sexual act with them (7). However, the period spent grooming can also be short, with the impulse occurring not long before the abuse happens.
- (c) People do not just 'groom' children, they also 'groom' the adults around them.
- (d) Environments that have defined boundaries regarding appropriate behaviour are less likely to attract sexual abusers (8).
- (e) Educators, volunteers, and visitors to the service should follow defined protocols for appropriate behaviour or be excluded from the service.
- (f) Identification of sexual grooming of children in care centres can be a complex issue. The challenge is to be vigilant without creating a siege mentality.

### **References**

1. Understanding the Grooming or Entrapment Process, CPSU briefings
2. Wortley and Smallbone 2006
3. (ABS, 1996, 2004a)
4. Pritchard, 2004
5. Wortley and Smallbone 2000
6. As per point 1 above
7. Child Sexual Abuse in Queensland: Offender Characteristics and Modus Operandi
8. Understanding the Grooming or Entrapment *Process, CPSU briefings*

**Source – Network of Community Activities publication**



**ATTACHMENT 2 INDICATORS OF ABUSE. (Schedule 8 – QB Safe Church Strategy)**

**A Training Resource**

**What is child sexual abuse?**

Child sexual abuse occurs when an adult, stronger child or adolescent uses their power or authority to involve a child in sexual activity. Child sexual abuse can cause physical and emotional harm to a child. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal, or emotional and can include:

- (a) kissing or holding a child in a sexual manner
- (b) exposing a sexual body part to a child
- (c) having sexual relations with a child
- (d) talking in a sexually explicit way that is not age or developmentally appropriate
- (e) making obscene phone calls or remarks to a child
- (f) sending obscene mobile text messages or emails to a child
- (g) fondling a child in a sexual manner
- (h) persistently intruding on a child's privacy
- (i) penetrating the child's vagina or anus by either the penis, finger, or any other object
- (j) oral sex
- (k) rape
- (l) incest, having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner
- (m) forcing a child to watch a sexual act
- (n) child prostitution

**Types of abuse**

**Physical abuse**

- (a) Hitting, shaking, burns or scalding.
- (b) Causing bruises or fractures by excessive discipline.
- (c) Giving children alcohol, illegal drugs, or inappropriate medication.
- (d) Domestic and family violence.

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- (e) running away
- (f) destroying property
- (g) recurring themes of power or control in play.

**Sexual abuse**

A child may say things, do things or exhibit physical signs that are clues to sexual abuse, even if they do not disclose clear information. Some indicators of child sexual abuse may include:

- (a) displaying greater sexual knowledge than normally expected for their age or developmental level
- (b) inappropriate sexual play and behaviour with themselves, other children or dolls and toys
- (c) hints about sexual activity through actions or comments that are inappropriate to the child's age or developmental level
- (d) excessive masturbation or masturbation in public after kindergarten age
- (e) persistent bedwetting, urinating or soiling in clothes
- (f) persistent sexual themes in their drawings or play time
- (g) hurting or mutilating animals
- (h) creating stories, poems, or artwork about abuse
- (i) difficulty concentrating or being withdrawn or overly obedient
- (j) having unexpected redness, soreness or injury around the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus
- (k) having torn, stained or bloody clothing, especially underwear
- (l) Exposing children to sexual acts, adult magazines, or pornography
- (m) Kissing or holding a child in a sexual manner
- (n) Exposing sexual body parts to a child
- (o) Having sexual relations with a child under 16 years of age

**Neglect**

Some indicators of neglect include:

- (a) malnutrition, begging, stealing, or hoarding food

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- (b) poor hygiene, matted hair, dirty skin, or body odour
- (c) unattended physical or medical problems
- (d) comments from a child that no one is home to provide care
- (e) being constantly tired
- (f) frequent lateness or absence from school
- (g) inappropriate clothing, especially inadequate clothing in winter
- (h) frequent illness, infections, or sores
- (i) being left unsupervised for long periods.

**Psychological or emotional abuse**

- (a) Scapegoating a child
- (b) Persistent rejection or hostility
- (c) Constant yelling insults or criticism
- (d) Teasing or bullying / cyber bullying
- (e) Being withdrawn or overly obedient
- (f) Domestic and family violence
- (g) Feeling suicidal or having attempted suicide

Adults who fail to disclose relevant information to a police officer in circumstances where the information causes the adult to believe that a child sexual offence is being committed OR has been committed faces criminal charges.