



LIFEGATE SAFE CHURCH POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The LIFEGATE Safe Church Policy:

- 1.1** guides our work in establishing and maintaining safe environments for all people, including children and young people;
- 1.2** underpins our biblical mandate to: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and to love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40);
- 1.3** promotes and provides for the provision of services that foster the health and safety of all who access our church and/or programs;
- 1.4** includes our commitment to a zero tolerance for abuse;
- 1.5** ensures that all workers (paid and volunteer) associated with our church, fulfil their pastoral, denominational and local church organisational responsibilities; and
- 1.6** ensures compliance with legislation, and also with the intention of the legislation, as it relates to protecting people (including children and vulnerable adults), including but not limited to; the NSW Child Safe Standards, Working With Children, Mandatory Reporting, Failure to Report, Failure to Protect, Reportable conduct, criminal code, civil liability, and the ACNC governance standards.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- 2.1** Lifegate elders, pastors, staff, leaders and volunteers (paid & volunteer);
- 2.2** as specified herein, guests or hirers of the church and its facilities;
- 2.3** as specified herein, contractors, subcontractors, delivery persons or others engaged to provide services; and
- 2.4** as specified herein, our congregations and all who access our site and/or programs.

3. POLICY STATEMENTS

- 3.1** We acknowledge that all people have a right to feel and be safe through life-giving, harm-free interactions when engaging in LIFEGATE activities, events and programs, whether they be in person or online;

3.2 We commit to the safety and welfare of all people through the implementation and ongoing improvement of our LIFEGATE Safe Church Framework including:

- a)** safe and friendly physical, emotional and online ministry interactions where people are listened to, feel safe, accept challenges, develop faith and grow in connection with God and others,
- b)** safe and adequate recruitment, training, supervision, support and resourcing of our workers,
- c)** procedures for responding to all incidents, accidents, child protection and SafeChurch allegations (i.e. reports of misconduct and abuse), and
- d)** appropriate management of those persons who pose a known risk to other's health and safety, including physical, emotional and sexual risk to others.

3.3 In relation to our ministry with children and young people (0-17 years) we acknowledge:

- a)** the importance of participation and empowerment of children and young people by involving them in relation to decisions that impact them, including inviting feedback as part of our services,
- b)** the primary role of parents and caregivers as well as the role of children in child protection and will engage caregivers, and invite feedback as part of our procedures and interactions,
- b)** the shared responsibility of the whole community for child safety and welfare, including caregivers and our workers, and as such we will promote the role of parents and caregivers and the wider community in the shared responsibility of child safety,
- c)** the need for sensitivity and consideration of all people of Aboriginal, ethnically and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as any person with a disability,
- d)** the importance of providing for and promoting a child-safe culture in both physical and online settings, and
- e)** the importance of promoting caring attitudes and responses towards Children or Young People, so that the need for appropriate nurture, care and protection is understood, risks to a Child's wellbeing are quickly identified, and any necessary support, protection or care is promptly provided including child- focused responses to allegations of risk of harm.

3.4 It is a serious breach of this policy for any worker in our church to contravene this policy, any related procedure, or any regulation in law, in relation to the safety and protection of children and vulnerable people.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 ALL PEOPLE ON LIFEGATE SITES ARE TO:

- a) be respectful of all people, especially of children and the vulnerable (i.e. respect each other's rights to safe and friendly interactions at church)
- b) take all reasonable care for their own health and safety
- c) take reasonable care that their actions do not adversely affect others health and safety
- d) comply with all reasonable instructions from the church leadership

4.2 ALL WORKERS (Paid and Unpaid) ARE TO:

- a) encourage the participation and empowerment of all people in keeping themselves and others safe
- b) comply with church policies and procedures, including the LIFEGATE Code of Conduct relevant to their role
- c) report all child protection and other Safe Church (misconduct and abuse) concerns, immediately to their Leader (i.e. supervisor) or the Safe Church Team)
- d) report all incidents or hazards to the Health and Safety Team or Leader (i.e. supervisor) as soon as practicable
- e) in relation to ministry with children 0-17years of age:
 - listen to them and take seriously what they are saying;
 - talk with them about the kinds of behaviours, attitudes or 'culture' that they would like to promote in their group; and
 - encourage them to have input regarding the content and activities they would like to be part of their group.

4.3 ELDERS

- a) Primary duty of care, to ensure so far as is practicable the health and safety of all persons involved in the organisation,
- b) Assign responsibilities for the management of the LIFEGATE Safe Church Framework,
- c) Monitor and review the implementation of LIFEGATE Safe Church Framework,
- d) Ensure disclosures of harm are reported to all relevant regulatory bodies,
- e) Make determinations in relation to the Conflict Resolution and the Handling Complaints Against Workers procedures, and
- f) Designate the Senior Pastor as the Reportable Conduct 'head of relevant entity'.

4.4 SENIOR PASTOR and KEY AREA LEADERS

- a) Implementation of this policy and related procedures across all Church programs/events,
- b) Monitor leaders to ensure they are acting safely and according to policy, guidelines and procedures,
- c) Provide reasonable instruction to leaders regarding the provision of safe environments,
- d) Identify and report all risks and hazards to the Health & Safety Team,
- e) Manage incidents and Safe Church concerns according to procedure.

4.5 SAFE CHURCH TEAM

- a) **Assist with** implementation of the procedures in relation to responding to Safe Church concerns,
- b) Receive reports of incidents and/or concerns of risk of harm in relation to children or workers,
- c) Assist with the management of Safe Church concerns according to procedure,
- d) Maintain secure records in relation to the implementation of Safe Church Framework such as incident reports, screening, recruitment and training records,
- e) Ensure that communication of Safe Church Framework including digital (online) and signage on sites is present and up-to-date,
- f) Provide reports to the Elders.

4.6 HEALTH & SAFETY TEAM

- a) Write, review and implement WHS documentation such as policies and practices, including privacy policy and evacuation procedures,
- b) Receive notifications of hazards/incidents such as serious events and dangerous incidents,
- c) Notify Senior Pastor of any incidents such as serious events and dangerous incidents,
- d) Ensure incident reporting to insurers is completed (in relation to notifiable incidents),
- e) Address health and safety concerns within reasonable time frame,
- f) Undertake a site safety audit at regular intervals (minimum 2 times per year), and
- g) Provide reports to the Elders on WHS.

4.7 CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

- a) Provide Lifegate with all information as necessary to ensure the safety of the person in their care,
- b) Provide feedback to the leaders of the church about safety issues.

5. SAFE CHURCH PROCEDURES

This Policy is implemented through our LIFEGATE Safe Church Procedures.

6. SAFE CHURCH IMPLEMENTATION DOCUMENTATION:

See Safe Church Tab of our Website for our Implementation Documentation including Terminology, relevant legislation, Codes of Conduct, Ministry Area Specific requirements and Forms for implementation.

7. POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW

The Safe Church Framework was approved by the Elders on 15th May 2022 . The Framework will be reviewed, as a minimum, by the Elders annually and as necessary in order to remain compliant with new legislation.