Calvary Chapel Sydney

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

July 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 POLICY STATEMENT

Calvary Chapel Sydney is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its Congregants, Ministry Workers, and particularly children. The Church's Child Protection Policy & Procedures aims to prevent and reduce the risk of any occurrence of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, establishes proper accountability, and ensures a caring and appropriate response is taken should abuse occur.

1.2 SCOPE

The Child Protection Policy & Procedures apply to:

- All ministries authorised by or under the oversight of Calvary Chapel Sydney, whether or not the ministry meets at or away from the church premises.
- All Ministry Leaders, Teachers, Helpers within or enlisted by the Church.

1.3 AUTHORITY

This is the Child Protection Policy & Procedures of Calvary Chapel Sydney and has been adopted for use by the Calvary Chapel Sydney Board of Directors in July 2025.

The Calvary Chapel Sydney Board and the Children's Ministry Coordinator(s) are committed to implementing the Child Protection Policy & Procedures and training our Leaders in content and application.

1.4 DEFINITIONS

Child – any person under the age of 18 years

Abuse – may consist of one or more but is not restricted to the following:

- **Physical abuse**: any non-accidental physical injury resulting from the following practices such as hitting, punching, kicking (marks from belt buckles, fingers); shaking (particularly babies); burning (matches, lighters, cigarettes); biting, pinching, pulling hair; administering illicit drugs or alcohol.
- **Sexual abuse**: any sexual act or threat to perform such act upon or in view of another person. It occurs when a person misuses their authority to take advantage of another's trust to involve them in any sexual activity. It does not necessarily involve genital contact but is any act which erodes a sexual boundary. This includes any sexual touching, kissing, sending text messages, emails, or sending or viewing pictures of a sexual nature, supplying or viewing pornography. All manner of sexual arousal or intercourse falls within this category.
- **Emotional abuse**: the chronic attitude or behavior of a person directed towards another, or the creation of an environment which may erode a child's healthy development. Behaviours may include devaluing, threatening, ignoring, corrupting, isolating, mocking, name-calling, cursing, or violence in the children's presence.

- **Neglect**: characterised by the failure to provide for a Child's basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person's health or well-being.

Church – Calvary Chapel Sydney, Units 13-14 Enterprise Park, 9 Hoyle Avenue, Castle Hill, 2154, New South Wales.

Teacher or Helper – any person who has successfully undertaken the selection and screening process to work in the children's ministry and is qualified and serving in ministry in either a teaching or assistant role. These roles may be interchangeable and will be referred to as "Leaders."

Ministry Leader – any person who is responsible for the control and safety of Congregants, Children, Teachers, or Helpers in their care whilst holding a formal position of recognised ministry at the church. All Ministry Leaders must also successfully undertake the selection and screening process to work in the children's ministry.

Congregant – any person, including Children, who attend or participate in Church ministries.

Ministry – any organised activity that is authorised by the Church.

2. POLICY REVIEW

The Policy & Procedures will be reviewed annually at a Board meeting with the Children's Ministry Coordinator(s). Any proposed changes will be submitted to the Board for approval before implementation. Should a situation occur that warrants prompt attention, a special meeting may be called by the Chairman of the Board to review and amend the policy.

3. OBLIGATIONS

3.1 SPIRITUAL

The core beliefs of Calvary Chapel Sydney are based upon the truth of the Bible and the example of Jesus Christ. We are called to love and honour God in all we think, say, and do (**Deuteronomy 6:5**). We are called to love one another as Jesus has loved us (**John 15:12**). We are called to make disciples of all nations, leading by godly example as we submit to the commands of Christ (**Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Peter 1:5-8**).

3.2 LEGAL

Calvary Chapel Sydney and all those involved in ministry are subject to the Federal and State legislation of New South Wales, Australia. In particular, the Children's Guardian Act (2019) as amended November 2021; Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998; and Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014.

3.3. MORAL

Many actions may not be regarded as Abuse but are unacceptable behaviour for Ministry Leaders, Teachers, Helpers, Congregants, and Children. These include:

- Inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature
- Coarse language, especially that of a sexual nature
- Suggestive gestures or remarks
- Jokes of a sexual nature
- Inappropriate touching
- Inappropriate literature, movies, or games (M, MA, R, or X-rated material with children)
- Secretly filming without prior consent or knowledge

Ministry leaders will ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

4. SELECTION AND SCREENING

4.1 VOLUNTEER TEACHERS AND HELPERS (LEADERS)

Teachers, Helpers and Leaders involved in the Children's Ministry are to be carefully screened. Prior to commencing child-related ministry, the following precautions will be taken:

- Volunteer Teachers, Helpers and Leaders will be congregants of the Church, having regularly attended Calvary Chapel Sydney for at least six months.
- Volunteers will complete an application form which requests details of previous experience, questions to gauge spiritual fitness for the role, and the details of two referees and permission to contact them.
- Both referees will need to submit their signed recommendation forms. References will be checked and contacted by the interview panel.
- Volunteers will be required to attend an interview for the position of teachers, helpers or leaders in the Children's Ministry. The interview will be conducted by 2 members of the church leadership.
- A "Working with Children Check" which complies with the legislative requirements of New South Wales will be performed prior to the Teacher, Helper or Leader commencing their proposed role.
- Any Helper who provides assistance in the Children's Ministry must be supervised by the Teacher, while both are accountable to the Ministry Leader and the LORD.
- In the case where it is identified an applicant has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for child-related ministry.

4.2 PAID STAFF

Any person invited to be part of Church staff will undergo the same selection and screening process as volunteer Teachers, Helpers or Leaders. In addition, all applicants for paid positions will be subject to a police background check.

5. TRAINING

All Ministry Leaders, Teachers, and Helpers will be issued a copy of this policy and receive training in the content of this policy and the appropriate reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements.

6. A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Because incidents of abuse are unlikely to occur in front of another person, and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations, two qualified persons will always be present when working with or supervising children. Children at Year 5 and below will be signed in and out of class by their parents/guardians.

A Hallway monitor will be present in the foyer during the church service. This person will have a clear view of the hallway and the foyer area at church. They can monitor anyone entering the premises during the service. They will also check if the toilets are occupied by anyone else if a child requires to use the toilets during the service. This will always enable the required minimum of 2 adults to be present in the children's ministry area. If a congregant goes to use the toilets the hallway monitor can request that they wait for the child to finish in the toilet before they enter. The hallway monitor can also assist children's ministry workers by notifying parents if there is an issue with their child which they need to attend to during the service also enabling the minimum number of adults in the children's ministry areas.

Ministry Leaders, Teachers, or Helpers will not visit children in their homes unless a parent is present or another Leader accompanies them.

When transporting children, Leaders should never be alone with a child in a car. Where this is not practical, adult Leaders with parental consent may take children directly to and from arranged venues and will not spontaneously detour or make additional arrangements.

Adults and children are expected to respect each other's privacy during activities that require undressing, dressing, or changing clothes. Leaders will set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations. No Leader will be alone in a room with a child while either is changing.

Initiations, hazing, and secret ceremonies are prohibited. All aspects of every child-related programme will be open to observation by parents/guardians. Parents are allowed to accompany their children in class time, but they are not to be left alone with the class unless they have submitted the appropriate paperwork and have been approved as a Leader. They are not to interact with the children as a Teacher or Helper unless they have been screened.

Leaders have the right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at child-related activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

7. DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

It is not the responsibility of the Church or the Leaders to administer discipline (corporal) of a child. If a child does not abide by the rules and boundaries established by a Leader after expectations have been explained in a loving, positive way, the Leader will discuss the situation with the parent or guardian. A warning will also be given to the child that continued misbehaviour will mean removal from class.

If a child undermines or obstructs the care of other children, places other children at risk, or deliberately harms others, the child will be removed from class and referred back to their parent or guardian. Discussions will follow regarding what is required for the child to return to the Children's Ministry class.

8. REPORTING PROCEDURES

The Children's Ministry Coordinator has the specific duty of dealing with any allegations that arise. If the allegation is of a violent or sexual nature, the Senior Pastor should immediately be consulted. Documented reporting and escalation procedures are established in the Constitution for handling any sin, and abuse falls into that category. Legal requirements demand that if there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child has been or is suffering abuse, the Mandatory Reporter (Senior Pastor) must be notified immediately.

The Mandatory Reporter, as an employee of a non-government organisation, must immediately report the matter to the Child Protection Helpline (**133 627**) when it is believed a child is at risk of significant harm.

If the Mandatory Reporter needs assistance in using the Mandatory Reporter Guide, the KTS (Keep Them Safe) support line can be called on **1800 772 479**.

The Insurer of Calvary Chapel Sydney will also be contacted by a Director on the Board.

Reasonable grounds can be assumed when:

1. A child discloses that he or she has been abused, and/or
2. Someone close to a child (e.g. sibling, relative, close friend) discloses on behalf of that child.

The Police will also be notified if a child discloses an incident of abuse that has occurred somewhere other than the church (e.g. home or school).

If a disclosure of abuse is made, all ministry leaders, teachers, and helpers will take appropriate action. This includes:

- Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise the impact on the alleged victim. The matter should not be "swept under the carpet" or ignored.
- Not pushing the child to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to personally investigate the allegation.
- Assuring the child they are understood: their disclosure is being taken seriously; what has happened is not their fault; they were correct to disclose the abuse.
- Reporting the disclosure to the ministry leader who will notify the Mandatory Reporter. The alleged abuse will then be reported to the Child Protection Helpline and the insurer of Calvary Chapel Sydney.
- Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator.
- Not agreeing or promising "You will not tell anyone" if a child makes this request, as this is not possible. Only those who must be told should be.
- Maintaining confidentiality.

Any disclosures by a child, reports of suspected abuse and all details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly and the documents will be held in a secure location where a breach of privacy cannot occur. The church reserves the right to carry out church disciplinary procedures in accordance with the Constitution of the church. Where an allegation is made against an acting Leader, the Leader will be suspended from their role(s) in the Children's Ministry pending the outcome of all investigations.

9. ALCOHOL & DRUGS

The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs on church grounds or during an activity is not to be allowed or condoned by any Leader. Any child found to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs will have their parents/guardians contacted and be picked up or sent home immediately. Any child required to take prescription medication must provide a letter from their parents/guardian to the Ministry Leader.

NEW SOUTH WALES

PROHIBITED EMPLOYMENT DECLARATION

The *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* mandates the Department of Communities and Justice with the responsibility for the care and protection of children and young people in NSW where there are concerns about their safety, welfare and wellbeing.

Who is a Prohibited Person?

All people working in, or seeking to work in, child-related employment must declare whether they are a prohibited person. This includes volunteers and students on placement. It is an offence for prohibited persons to apply for, undertake or remain in child-related employment.

A prohibited person is a person convicted of committing a serious sex offence, or a

'registrable person'. A 'registrable person' is someone who has been found guilty of the following offences:

- murder of a child
- child related personal violence offence
- serious sexual offences
- indecency offences (punishable by imprisonment of 12 months or more)
- kidnapping
- child prostitution
- child pornography (possession, distribution or publication)
- attempt, conspiracy or incitement to commit the above offences

What is Child Related Employment?

Child-related employment is any work (paid or unpaid) of the following kinds that involve direct and unsupervised contact with children in the following areas:

- pre-schools, kindergartens, child care centres (including residential child care centres)
- refuges used by children
- clubs, associations etc. (including those of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature) which have a significant child membership
- religious organisations
- entertainment venues where the clientele is primarily children
- taxi services for the transport of children
- private tuition of children
- child health services
- counselling or other support services for children
- overnight camps for children
- babysitter or child minder arranged by a commercial agency
- in schools or other educational institutions (not being universities)
- on school buses
- fostering or other child care
- child protection services

All people in, or commencing, child-related employment must be asked by their employer if they are a prohibited person. Employers should clearly state in all information for child-related positions that Prohibited Persons are not eligible to apply.

As an employer, the Working With Children Check requires that you:

- don't employ prohibited persons in child-related employment;
- do Working With Children background checks;
- report relevant employment proceedings; and
- keep records and protect confidentiality

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Background checks are conducted by the NSW Commission for Children and Young

People and other Approved Screening Agencies.

Background checks are only mandatory for:

- preferred applicants for paid child-related employment
- a minister, priest, rabbi, mufti, or other like religious leader or spiritual official of a religion
- anyone seeking to provide foster care ('authorised care' to children)

Three specific checks are made for:

- relevant criminal records;
- relevant Apprehended Violence Orders; and
- relevant employment proceedings.

Any relevant records arising out of the background check will be assessed in terms of risk of employing the person in a child-related position. An assessment report is then forwarded on to the employer. The decision whether to employ a person always remains the employers.

Employers may conduct other criminal record checks as part of their employment screening process at their own discretion.

Cost of the Check

There is no charge for employers or applicants requesting a background check as part of the Working with Children Check.