

**Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued**

Warrandyte Community Church is an organisation that encourages children and young people to express their culture and cultural rights while feeling actively supported. All leadership, staff, volunteers, and community members acknowledge and appreciate all the strengths of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture and understand it's significance and importance to the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

The church ensures that racism is identified, confronted, and not tolerated. Any action that is required, is taken to the leadership, and dealt with in an appropriate manner. All our policies and procedures help to promote an inclusive environment for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families.

\*Cultural Safety: An environment that is safe for people where there is no assault, challenge, or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience, of learning, living, and working together with dignity and truly listening.



## **Child Safe Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture**

Creating a culture of child safety and wellbeing within our church is vital to lowering the risk of harm to children. Child abuse must be acknowledged, expectations of behaviour must be clearly explained and accepted, and strategies such as robust recruitment practices must be in place. By building a strong culture of child safety and wellbeing, we will reduce the risk of any child abuse taking place.

There's a high expectation that everyone at Warrandyte Community Church is committed to child safety and wellbeing. Starting from our leadership team, our staff and throughout all aspects of our church volunteers/community. Child safety is discussed often in forums such as staff & leadership meetings, demonstrating an understanding and expectation of safety in all areas. Leadership, staff & volunteers understand that child safety is a vital importance to the Church community. Record keeping & information shared is explained during staff induction and monitored closely in accordance with the law.

Our church Code of Conduct provides details and guidelines for the leadership, staff, and volunteers on what is expected behavioural standards and responsibilities. We have a Kids' Code of Conduct which is designed for the children and young people which uses appropriate language for them to understand what is expected behavioural standards and responsibilities for them.

Risk management strategies are implemented on a weekly basis through SMO (Safety Management Online). Any risks that arise must go through the appropriate person and be dealt with according to the SMO analysis. It's vital to prevent and identify any risks to children and young people by keeping up-to-date with changes to programs, environments and the children themselves. All staff and volunteers must hold a current WWCC (Working with Children Check).



## **Child Safe Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously**

At Warrandyte Community Church, we believe that every person has a right to feel safe. In order for this to happen, we need to ensure that all our children and young people know that they are a valuable part of our community and that we respect them and listen to their thoughts and opinions. We display Child Safe posters across our building with relevant information on the safety and participation for our children and young people to understand. Friendships are recognised and valued at the Church, with support and encouragement from the staff and volunteers.

All leadership, staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm or any kind of abuse and facilitate child-friendly ways for the children and young people to express their views, participate in decision making and raise any concerns they may have. Appropriate action is taken when and where required upon further investigation. It is against the law to withhold any information or hard evidence concerns about sexual abuse.

Warrandyte Community Church provides children and young people with the opportunities to participate in activities and discussions. This helps to strengthen confidence in the children and young people and encourages more engagement and positive growth.



## **Child Safe Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing**

Communication is an integral part of Warrandyte Community Church. It is important to involve the families in decision making when their child is involved. At the Church we keep the parents up to date with our policies and what our actions will be moving forward and how to support the child and the family if appropriate.

All the Child Safe policies are located on the Church website for easy access to all the families. There are posters and signage all around the Church promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. All the Child Safe Standards are written in appropriate language for children and young people to have an understanding. Any additional paperwork is located and stored in the Church office upon request. Any concerns or questions from the families and the wider community are openly communicated in a safe environment. If the families have any input in improving child safety at the Church, they are more than welcome to feel safe and included to do so.



## **Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice**

Warrandyte Community Church understands the diverse needs and circumstances of children and young people who are a part of the Church and the wider community linked in with the Church. Support and guidance are provided to those who are vulnerable and ask for assistance, making sure that actions and words always align with the Child Safe Standards. Families, children, and young people have access to the appropriate information upon request. Any concerns or complaints from the children themselves are taken very seriously and the appropriate paperwork in understandable language is available for them if the need arises.

Warrandyte Community Church is committed to paying particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, from cultural and linguistical diverse backgrounds, those unable to live at home and those who identify as LGBTQI+. We do this by being welcoming to everyone, providing a safe and inclusive environment, and consulting/listening to diverse people and what makes them feel safe.

All leadership, staff, and volunteers respond appropriately and sensitively. Any behaviour that doesn't align with our Child Safe Standards is unacceptable and will be taken to the leadership.

The Church pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. We aim to encourage children and young people to express their culture and cultural rights while feeling actively supported. The Church understands the significance and importance of safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.



## **Child Safe Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice**

All staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people of Warrandyte Community Church by:

- Adhering to our Child Safe Policy, and other relevant policies
- Having a current WWCC (Working with Children Check) & any other documentation required
- Taking reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse
- Treating every person with respect, including listening to, and valuing their ideas and opinions
- Welcoming and being inclusive of all children and their families
- Respecting cultural, religious and political differences and views, and acting in a culturally sensitive and safe way
  - Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability
- Listening to children and young people and responding to them appropriately
- Reporting and acting on any breaches of the Child Safe Standards
  - Attending an annual Child Safe Refresher



## **Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused**

Warrandyte Community Church is committed to being a child safe organisation that is child focused when processing complaints and concerns. The Church has a child focused complaint handling policy that is easily accessible through the Church office. The policy clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of the leadership, staff and volunteers and explains different approaches on how to deal with all the different types of complaints. It also goes into detail about how to handle breaches of relevant policies and/or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report. All our complaint handling policies and procedures are understood by the children and young people, families, leadership, staff, and volunteers and they are also culturally safe.

Any concerns or complaints are handled in a serious manner and responded to promptly and thoroughly. The appropriate people are informed, and all the paperwork is stored in a locked cabinet in the Church office.

The Church complies with all policies and procedures related to reporting any complaints or concerns. The policies and procedures that are in place address how to report any complaints or concerns to the relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting. In extreme cases, the Church co-operates with the law enforcement.

Report any form of abuse immediately!



## **Child Safe Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training**

Warrandyte Community Church encourages leadership, staff, and volunteers to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe. An annual Child Safe Refresher is mandatory for those who are staff and volunteer with children and young people at the Church. This helps to keep everyone up to date with any new standards or changes to existing standards and discuss how to recognise indicators of child harm which includes harm caused by other children and young people. This training is designed to teach volunteers and staff how to build culturally safe environments and promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.



## **Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed**

The online presence of Warrandyte Community Church is an integral part of reaching the wider community and growing the many ministries attached to the Church. All leadership, staff and volunteers are to identify and keep on top of any risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities. All of the Church's online platforms are used in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. The Risk Management Plans are set out on SMO (Safety Management Online) and they consider all the risks that are posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment. The Church utilises the RMP (Risk Management Plans) on a weekly basis to make sure everything is up to date and complies with the Child Safe Standards. Any third-party contractors and services that are involved with the Church in terms of children and young people must comply with our Child Safe Standards.



## **Child Safe Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved**

Warrandyte Community Church is committed to regularly checking, reviewing, and updated all policies and procedures to better improve the safety of children and young people. Any complaints, concerns and/or safety incidents are analysed to identify what took place and to evaluate if any risks can be obtained so the incident doesn't occur again. Incident report sheets are located on the Church office desk with a clear label. When completed, they get passed on to the appropriate person for further investigation and filed and locked away in the office. The appropriate people including the any families involved are notified of any incident reports that have been filed away.



## **Child Safe Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people**

Warrandyte Community Church regularly checks and updates all policies and procedures that relate to working with children and young people. All the policies are located on the website for easy access to anyone attending the Church or in the wider community. All Child Safe Standards are written in appropriate language for children and young people to have an understanding. Any additional paperwork is located and stored in the Church office upon request. Everyone who is involved in child safety procedures are consulted in the development of all the policies and procedures.

An annual Child Safe Refresher is mandatory for those who are staff and volunteer with children and young people at the Church. This helps to keep everyone up to date with any new standards and brings us all together to discuss or raise any concerns or questions regarding the Child Safety Standards. It's also a great reminder of the dos and don'ts of working with children and young people.

The Church Code of Conduct aims to protect children and young people and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing guidance and guidelines on how to best support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.



## Definitions

Child - Children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

Abuse - Can consist of one or more but is not restricted to the following;

Physical Abuse - Any non-accidental physical injury

Sexual Abuse - Any sexual act or threat to perform such upon another person, without consent (in adults) or upon a child in any circumstance.

Emotional & Psychological Abuse - The attitude of a person or persons which is directed towards another person or persons with the intent or consequence of causing negative emotional responses, which may be detrimental to a person's well-being and/or development.

Church - Warrandyte Community Church, 57 Yarra Street, Warrandyte, Victoria, 3113

Helper/Volunteer - Any unpaid person over the age of 16 who is invited by a Leader to assist or support them in their ministry.

Leader - Any person over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of people in their care whilst working in a recognised ministry of the church. This includes, but is not limited to:

Pastors

Small group/life group leaders

Youth Leaders

Kids' Church Leaders

Catering and Kitchen Team Leaders

Data Projection and Sound Desk Operator

Kids' Hope co-ordinator and mentors



## Definitions

Ministry - any activity or group that is organised by the church.

Ministry Leader - The person recognised and authorised by the church as having overall responsibility for a ministry.

Cultural Safety - An environment that is safe for people where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.