



# South-West Evangelical Church Safe Ministry Policy

Updated July 2022

## **Aim**

We are committed to the Biblical principle of providing safe ministry programs and actively preventing any kinds of abuse against children, youth and adults at South-West Evangelical Church. Our aim is that everyone within our church will be able to safely participate and contribute in appropriate ministry programs, and that they will be able to safely report any incidents of abuse or safety concerns. We will respond appropriately to all reports in the interest of all those involved.

To build and maintain a safe community for our children and vulnerable adults, we are committed to ensuring that;

1. all leaders are appropriately screened, trained and appointed,
2. all programs are led and run in a safe and appropriate manner,
3. there are clear procedures in place for dealing with incident reports and safety concerns, and
4. the leadership team regularly reviews these policies and processes.

## **1. Screening, Training & Appointing of Relevant Leaders**

All those involved in regular ministry to children and adults on behalf of South-West Evangelical Church undergo a full screening and training process as outlined below.

1. Relevant leaders will have been regular participants at South-West Evangelical Church for at least six months (or have been given special approval by the church leadership). They will be interviewed and have their potential roles and responsibilities clearly outlined for them.
2. Relevant leaders will have nominated referees (min. 2) to confirm their character. If they have worked with children or youth in the past as a volunteer or employee, previous organisations / churches or employers will also be contacted (min. 2) and they must provide their Working With Children Check number and Date of Birth to be allowed to work with children and young people. Those who are engaged as



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employees of SWEC will also be required to obtain a criminal record check.

3. Relevant leaders will have recently completed an approved Safe Ministry Training Course which outlines appropriate behaviour as well as training in how to identify and report cases of abuse (e.g. [www.safeministrycheck.com.au](http://www.safeministrycheck.com.au))

4. Relevant leaders will have committed to the leader's Code of Conduct and behave as followers of Jesus and be willing to be held accountable for their behaviour.

Under no circumstances will a person with a criminal record of child abuse, molestation or similar offences be allowed to be involved in children's or youth ministry and/or be engaged in any leadership in a paid or volunteer capacity at SWEC.

## **2. Appropriate Behaviour and Guidelines for Safe Ministries**

To provide for and maintain a safe community for our children and adults where they may grow as followers of Jesus, we will ensure that our programs and events are safe and appropriate for those attending. Careful consideration will be given to things such as the activities chosen, the venue, safe ratios of supervision, appropriate child toileting practices, transportation, work health and safety, parental or guardian permission and confidentiality of records kept.

Guidelines for these safe practice procedures are highlighted and discussed in the Safe Ministry Training Course.

To help maintain appropriate standards, we will give all relevant leaders access to ongoing training and adequate supervision in their roles and responsibilities.

All leaders are to complete annual safe ministry course refreshers.

## **3. Personal Complaints and Incident Reporting Procedure**

All incident reports or complaints about persons of concern will be immediately reported to, and handled by, the SWEC Safe Ministry Supervisors.

### *Safe Ministry Supervisors*

Peter Ko 0433 493 488 [pko@swec.org.au](mailto:pko@swec.org.au)

Stephen Fei 0402 533 500 [sfei@swec.org.au](mailto:sfei@swec.org.au)

Vania Tam 0421 060 915 [vchantam@yahoo.com.au](mailto:vchantam@yahoo.com.au)

Karen Ko 0413 318 297 [kko@swec.org.au](mailto:kko@swec.org.au)

Dominic Cheung 0466 110 456 [dcheung@swec.org.au](mailto:dcheung@swec.org.au)



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Jodie Cheung 0422 259 589 jodie.tangyan@gmail.com

The Safe Ministry Supervisors will respond to all incident reports and complaints about persons of concern by following the [South-West Evangelical Church Safe Ministry Incident Response Process](#). Any incidents of criminal activity (including child-to-child, adult-to-child and adult-to-adult) will be reported to police. Any incidents of child abuse will be reported to the NSW Government according to the [Online Mandatory Reporter Guide](#). The insurer of South West Evangelical church and the State Ombudsman may also be advised of any allegations of abuse. In certain incidents (as outlined in the Response Process) the Safe Ministry Supervisors will appoint an Independent Ministry Investigator to explore allegations of inappropriate behaviour.

#### **4. Regular Review Periods**

It is the responsibility of the church executive to ensure that this policy and the Incident Response Process is implemented, maintained, and reviewed every two years or as required. This policy is in accordance with the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157.

We welcome any questions or comments about this policy and the ways in which we carry it out.

#### **5. Photography, Video, Digital and Social Media**

Given the proliferation of digital photography, videography and social media, every care must be taken by volunteers and staff towards the protection of still and video images taken of children and young people.

5.1 Written parental permission is required from a parent or guardian of each child and young person at the beginning of each calendar year for the taking of official photography and video, approved by South West Evangelical Church. If permission is not granted for individual children or young persons, every precaution needs to be taken so that they are excluded from any photography or videography.

5.2 Church approved photography and video, in accordance with 5.1, can be published in official pages of the church's website or social media. They may not be published or distributed in any other context or on personal pages and social media sites.

5.3 Any other photography or video taken by any other person at church ministries, functions or events must only be of one's own family or with expressed permission from the parents of the child or young person. Every care must be taken with the personal sharing and online publishing of such photos and videos.



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5.4 While teenagers and young people, from time to time, will take photos and video of one another (e.g. in youth group), and not all photography or video taken and shared by children and young people can be reasonably vetted, all precaution must be taken by the leadership so that photos and footage taken will not in any way be offensive, sexual in nature, or used for bullying.

5.5 Adults are excluded from the allowances in 5.4 and are subject to 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 above. No unofficial photography and video is to be taken and distributed by the leadership of our children's or young people ministries.