

## **GCBC Child Safe Guidelines 2023:**

The Victorian government has updated the child safe legislation in 2022 with 11 new standards. These 11 new standards apply to all who attend GCBC and are in contact with children (A child is someone under the age of 18). GCBC is subject to the Reportable Conduct Scheme and obligated to comply with the new standards. These standards serve as an extension to the **GCBC 'Safe Church Program' (SCP)** and is applicable to all who attend GCBC including Elders, members, delegates, and visitors. The foundation our commitment is based primarily on:

- The Gospel of Jesus Christ,
- The promotion of a safe environment for all children attending GCBC, as well as Victorian legislation,
- Minimising risk and danger to children attending GCBC and to manage all critical incidents.

This document has been developed to assist GCBC attendees to understand, comply and be committed to best practices on providing safety to all children (as per legislation). In adopting this document, we wish to emphasize the importance of the protection any Child at GCBC. It is our hope that all GCBC personnel will always be vigilant in protecting the child's rights

### **Guidelines:**

It is expected that we all follow GCBC's Child Safe Code Of Conduct guidelines:

- Two Inducted GCBC members (minimum) shall be with any child at all times whilst at GCBC.
- Only approved and inducted child safe teams are to serve children in any capacity.
- Keep calm around children when things go wrong. Speak to an Elder / child safe officer privately.
- Non-inducted persons are NOT permitted to serve any children in any GCBC ministry.
- Where possible a parent is to accompany their child to all toilet breaks at the rear of GCBC building.

### **Boundaries:**

God established boundaries by separating day - night, sea-land, animal to its own kind and boundaries in **Gen 3:16** *"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.* This boundary was violated and there was a broken relationship with God. Hence, boundaries allow us to develop trust, relationships and reduce harm. Our lives today is still determined by Code of Conduct boundaries including (but not limited to) spiritual, physical, emotional, sexual, language. Our ministry boundaries over how we care, serve and interact with children who attend . These include:

- What we can say to children
- How we speak to children.
- What can we do with children.
- Our body language around children.
- Should we touch or not touch children.

### **Boundaries - interacting with children:**

As a church we respect a child's personal space and we do not want to stumble or offend any child who enters our church. We believe that a child's body belongs to them, and no one can touch it without their permission.

Things to consider when dealing with children at GCBC, before crossing a boundary with a child:

- Is it wise to cross this Boundary with the child?
- Is this Boundary-crossing for the good of the child?
- Is it the right place and time to cross this Boundary?
- Is this Boundary-crossing helpful to the child?
- Do not cross any boundaries without the child's consent.
- Wisdom and caution are necessary depending on your relationship with the child, the family and whether you have the child's and parent's consent.

## **Code of Conduct Commitment 2023:**

- I commit to respect children's emotions, minds, space, and bodies.
- I commit to be compassionate to the child in my responses if there is any allegations put forward.
- I commit to offer assistance, protection, and care without passing judgment or prejudicing the rights of the alleged offender. I will contact asap an Elder and Child Safe officer and acknowledge that concealing the truth is contrary to the character of God, unfair to victims and unhelpful to offenders.
- We acknowledge the personal and public difficulties that a false, misconceived, malicious or vexatious allegation can cause for the person accused. We will take whatever steps are possible to address these difficulties by involving Elders and Child Safe officer.
- I acknowledge to be aware of my legal responsibilities and obligations in relation to prevention, reporting and processing requirements and seek to meet them at all times.
- I commit to make GCBC a place of safety and refuge for all children, where they will be and feel safe from any threat when at GCBC or involved in GCBC ministries or accessing services provided by the church.
- I commit to being a welcoming and inclusive greeter to all children and to conduct myself in a manner that is consistent with the values of GCBC and treat children equally with respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, language, religion, other status.
- I commit to follow and report any concerns of child abuse in accordance with GCBC's child protection procedures and take responsibility for ensuring I do not place myself in a position where there is a risk to myself or the child.
- I commit to ensure that another person is present with me when serving or caring for any child attending GCBC and to be mindful of my behaviour, actions, and touching any child without their approval.
- I commit to always ensure my language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory, avoid favouritism and will challenge, stop, and report unacceptable behaviour towards children (and all who attend GCBC).
- I commit to not do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, E.g., taking a child to the toilet.
- I will not release/discuss personal confidential information about a child.
- I will not allow allegations of suspected abuse or risk of harm or disclosures go unreported.
- I will not make inappropriate promises to children particularly in relation to confidentiality and will not jump to conclusions about others and exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- I acknowledge that I have been made aware by people in positions of authority within the church and/or working with children of my appropriate conduct and boundaries and I commit to make these changes in the way I relate to children and young people and others, as a result.
- I agree with the Elders that GCBC is to be a place where abuse can be disclosed and have it dealt with effectively.
- I agree to follow the established prevention code of conduct strategies which includes screening, sound selection procedures, risk identification and management, education, support, supervision, and training.
- I acknowledge that people in a position of authority within the church, be it real or perceived, paid or unpaid, have a moral and spiritual responsibility towards those over me and the children whom they have authority.
- I acknowledge the trust given to me by GCBC to take part in the variety of church ministries and therefore commit myself to striving to ensure that all my actions are both God glorifying and legally and morally upright.

## ChildSafe Commitment

- I will behave at all-times consistent with the code of conduct within this document.
- I will immediately report any breach to the Safety Officer or Elder as appropriate.
- I am aware that GCBC expects me to uphold these standards at all times.
- I have read this document and had opportunity to discuss its contents with the Child Safe Officer.

By signing this document, I hereby declare that I have read all of the above, fully understand, and agree with the contents and to follow this agreement.

Name:

Signature:

print name

Date:

*Once complete please return via email to [childsafecofficer@gracebiblechurch.org.au](mailto:childsafecofficer@gracebiblechurch.org.au)*