



Leadership and Culture

Guidelines for Embedding Child Safety and Wellbeing in Leadership and Culture

The Church recognises that a child safe culture is built when safeguarding is visible, consistently reinforced, and embedded into everyday practice. Leadership behaviours, decisions and governance structures directly influence how safe Children feel within Church ministries and therefore, child safety must begin with leadership, governance and cultural considerations.

Leadership and culture require ongoing reflection, accountability and commitment. These guidelines seek to support Leaders, Staff and Volunteers at our Church to prioritise child safety, wellbeing and cultural safety in all aspects of Church life by giving practical examples of actions we might take to achieve this.

Leading and Modelling a Child Safe Culture

Leaders, Staff and Volunteers play a critical role in shaping a child safe culture by modelling behaviours that prioritise child safety, wellbeing and cultural safety in their interactions and decision-making. Some examples of how we might seek to do this include:

- Clearly communicate the Church's commitment to child safety, wellbeing and cultural safety – with a Statement of Commitment. Ensuring this Statement of Commitment is publicly available, visible and accessible, including in physical and online environments.
- Demonstrate respectful, appropriate and professional behaviour in all interactions with Children.
- Create environments where Children feel comfortable to be themselves and participate without pressure.
- Encourage speaking up and responding to concerns without blame or defensiveness.
- Challenge behaviours, attitudes or practices that undermine safety, dignity or inclusion.
- Reinforce that Child Safety and Wellbeing safeguarding is a shared responsibility across the Church.
- Create and uphold Codes of Conduct, which clearly set out expected behavioural standards and responsibilities for Leaders, Staff and Volunteers when working with Children, and make them accessible to Children, families and carers.
- Provide Leaders, Staff and Volunteers with regular training and support to understand and fulfil their Child Safety and Wellbeing safeguarding responsibilities, including cultural safety training and training on relevant child safety policies, Codes of Conduct and reporting procedures.

Governance, Oversight and Accountability

The Church Governance Group provides oversight of Child Safety and Wellbeing, including cultural safety and is responsible for ensuring safeguarding is embedded in leadership, governance and Church culture. This approach aligns with the QB Governance Framework, which identifies the Church Governance Group's responsibility to ensure the Church is Christ-centred, well-led, and safe and legal. Some examples of how we might seek to do this include:

- Approve and regularly review child safe safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Develop a Statement of Commitment for our church that will be publicly displayed.
- Develop appropriate Codes of Conduct for all those who are involved with children.
- Embed child safety, wellbeing and cultural safety into governance and leadership discussions, including through regular consideration and standing agenda items where appropriate.
- Appoint and support the Safe Spaces Coordinator and Team.
- Ensure Leaders understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Monitor safeguarding risks, concerns, incidents and improvement actions, including risks related to racism, unconscious bias and a lack of cultural safety, and take action to address identified issues.
- Reinforce accountability by addressing breaches of safeguarding expectations or Codes of Conduct in accordance with Church procedures.
- Where appropriate, governance structures support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to contribute to leadership and decision-making in meaningful ways.
- Seek advice and support from Queensland Baptists when required.

For further guidance, please see: *QB Governance Framework*.

Responding to Risks, Concerns and Harm

Leaders have a responsibility to respond to risks, concerns and harm in ways that are timely, transparent and focused on the safety and wellbeing of Children. Some examples of how we might seek to do this include:

- Take all child safe safeguarding concerns seriously and respond without delay, in line with Church procedures and reporting obligations.
- Follow Reportable Conduct and Complaints and Concerns Procedures.
- Act quickly to reduce risk and ensure Children are safe.
- Support Children, families, Staff and Volunteers affected by child safe safeguarding concerns.
- Document actions and decisions in a confidential and culturally safe manner, including actions taken to prevent recurrence.
- Ensure disclosures and suspicions of harm are reported within defined timeframes, with Leaders accountable for overseeing responses and outcomes.