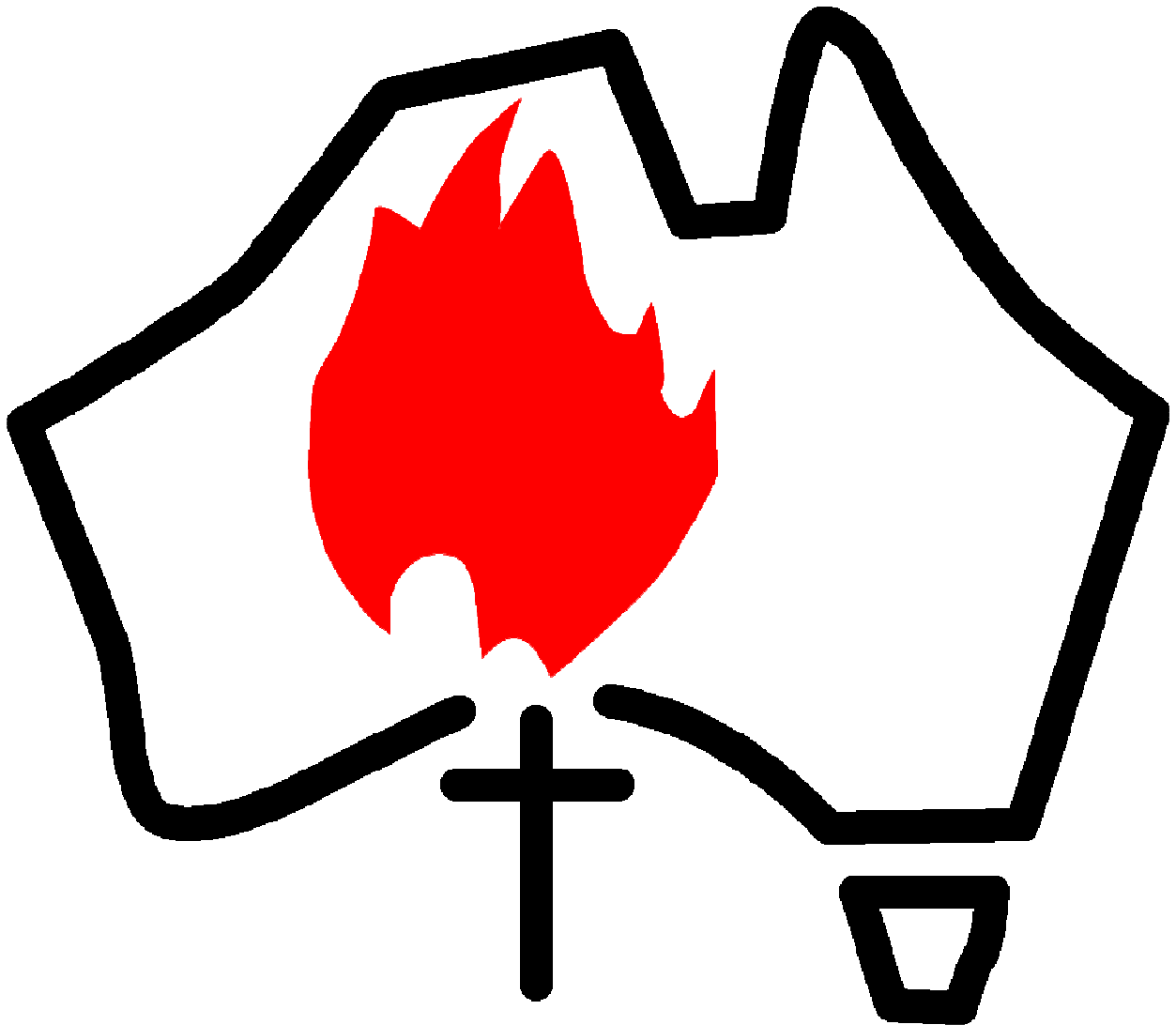


CHILD PROTECTION RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

of
Grace community Church (a WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH)

January 2007



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Purpose

This strategy is focused on the enhancement of the safety and protection of children and young people participating in the activities of our church and fulfilling *The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* (Qld) requirement to develop an annual risk management strategy.

However, in implementing this goal, the safety of all people involved in our activities is also promoted. Therefore, some processes should be applied to all activities for people of all ages.

The aim of our Risk Management Strategy is to prevent things from going wrong, limit the amount of harm possible and reduce our liability if harm does eventuate.

References

Commission for Children and Young People Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006

<http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/SLS/2006/06SL102.pdf>

Child Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2004

Amendment Regulation (No 1) 2006

Statement of Commitment

Grace Community Church is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who participate in our activities. Our leaders and assistants will treat them with respect and understanding at all times. To ensure they are kept safe from harm, the following actions will be taken:

- Screen all workers and volunteers interacting with children and young people

- Provide oversight of the interactions with children and young people

- Provide guidance/training for leaders and assistants

- Implement consistent procedures

- Undertake strategies to eliminate or minimize the occurrence and impact of injury

Definitions

Children and Young People – under 18 years old

Blue Card – a requirement before any volunteer or paid worker can have a supervisory or support role of children and young people in our church

Safety is the protection from harm

Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm is caused by abuse or neglect.

Abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional.

Neglect is the failure to provide for basic needs.

Negligence can be an act of omission or reckless behaviour.

Risk Management involves identifying and assessing all potential sources of harm, and taking steps to decrease the likelihood that harm will occur.

Leaders and Assistants are any people, paid or volunteers, who undertake any role in our church

Compliance Statement

The implementation of this strategy is the responsibility of our Pastor, leaders, and assistants within all activities of our church. All participants in or those utilizing an activity of our church are requested to support the effective application of the processes and procedures.

Scope

This policy will be particularly enacted for the following activities.

- Appointing leaders

- Governance

- Planning and implementing activities

Child Safety Policy

Expectations of leaders and assistants

We have a responsibility to ensure that the programs we organize for children are run in the safest possible manner, whether they are 'on-site' at the church building or 'off-site' at other locations.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all involved to support a safe environment. However, some extra responsibilities occur for certain roles.

The **Pastor** has an overall responsibility for everything that occurs in the name of our church. Therefore there is a governance role to keep well informed and maintain oversight of all leaders, activities and sites. The **Leader** of a group has an overall responsibility for everything that occurs within that group. Therefore there is a responsibility for developing a safe program that has the approval of the Pastor and Board. In implementing the program, the leader is responsible for directing helpers and assistants to maintain the safety of all. Any risk that needs further follow up to minimize should be referred to the Pastor/Safety Officer.

The leader is responsible for maintaining a register of children's details and the attendance roll. (See Appendix) The leader must keep the Pastor/Safety Officer informed of any site issues or incidents of concern. Records of injury are recorded formally using the Accident Report (see Appendix) which has replaced the previously used Incident Book.

The **Leader and Assistants** of a group have operational responsibility for the activity of the group. During an activity, it is their responsibility for maintaining oversight of all participants. This includes ensuring that all participants are accounted for and that no unauthorized person has access to a child.

It is their responsibility to maintain an appropriate relationship and interaction with the child or young person. It is the helper's role to support the leader to achieve his or her responsibilities

The **Participant** has a responsibility to maintain the safety and well being of self and others. He or she is required to subject themselves to the safety instructions of the appointed leaders.

The **Safety Officer** has the responsibility for organizing safety audits, taking reports about issues and initiating responses to problems.

The **First Aid Officers** are responsible for maintaining their qualifications, being available for church activities and ensuring that the first aid kit is kept in good order.

Practices and Procedures

Upon entering a site, it is the leader's responsibility to check for any hazard or potential hazard. The leader must make certain that all equipment to be used is in safe working order and that programs are undertaken in a safe and supportive manner. It is the leader's responsibility to eliminate, isolate or minimize a hazard.

Acceptable and unacceptable practices

Unacceptable practices are any activity that

- is not covered by our National Insurance Policy or for which a separate insurance cover has not been arranged,
- has the potential to marginalize, abuse or have a destructive impact on a participant,
- places a child or young person at moral or ethical risk,
- uses physical force to achieve compliance (restraint is a last resort response used only to prevent injury)
- has a high level of risk for any individual

Acceptable practices are any activity that

- enhances the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual growth of a child or young person,
- is approved by the church board and pastor,
- engages the support of parents/guardians in the behaviour management of a child.

Injury – Preparation, Response

Every program/activity of the church must have access to a First Aid officer and a first aid kit. The greater the risk of an activity, the greater is the responsibility for providing support.

- Off site activities e.g. camps must have an appointed First Aid Officer with a current Senior First Aid qualification.
- Our church has a nominated Safety Officer to coordinate safety audits, maintain equipment and provide advice to leaders. (See Appendix)
- Any injury requiring any form of treatment should be reported to the child's parent/guardian. (See Appendix)
- The details of any Minor injury requiring treatment must be recorded as an Accident Report and a copy kept in the Church files. (See Appendix)
- The details of any Major injury that requires doctor or hospital treatment, must be also reported to the District Office using the Accident Report. (See Appendix)
- Major injury reports are completed for people of all ages.

Promotion of strategy

New leaders, assistants and helpers must receive induction in relation to this strategy before taking up a position of responsibility.

Review of plan

Our Pastor and all appointed leaders must be involved in a review of this strategy annually while preparing the year's activities. This is a requirement of The Commission for Children and Young People.

Code of Conduct

Values and principles

Our church

- Appoints only members to positions of leadership for children and young people. Assistants can be non members.
- Values and prayerfully supports our leaders

Our leaders

- Will be positive role models to children and young people who access our ministries
- Recognize that all forms of harm (physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual, exploitation and neglect) are unacceptable
- Will respect those in their care and only share personal information about individuals legally and judiciously
- Will focus on the positive development and protection of our children and young people before any self interest

Compliance

Our church board

- Will stand down any leader accused of serious misconduct
- Will provide guidance and counseling to support appropriate leader behaviour

Our leaders

- Will subject themselves to the authority of the church board
- Will withdraw from leadership if they no longer adhere to the required standards

Risk Management Process

The Australian and New Zealand Standard for Risk Management outlines a seven step process.

1. Establish the context

Risk management is the minimization of the likelihood or severity of an accident or injury. The location of the risk is anywhere that an activity of our church is being conducted. The risk is therefore an activity and/or a site in which there is the potential of injury. All activities and sites present a level of risk which varies depending on a wide range of factors.

2. Identify the risks

There are several dimensions of **activity** risks that must be considered. The degree of risk is impacted by factors such as age, maturity, competence, physical stature, gender, self control, physical/ social/ emotional/ mental health. In planning program activities, the safe participation of all must be considered with no individual participant feeling marginalized or placed at high risk.

Potentially high risk activities must be approved by the Pastor and Church Board. For these and special events, extra insurance cover may be required. In preparing for a high risk activity, contingency plans must be developed to minimize the risk and to respond to any possible injury.

There are several types of **site** risks and for each, inspections/audits are conducted. These audits are formally completed annually with written reports completed.

An electrical safety audit is the testing of appliances and electrical fittings to ensure safe functioning is occurring. For example: urns, heaters, extension cords, power boards, power switches, emergency exit lighting ...

An equipment audit is the inspection of non-fixed equipment to confirm its safe condition. For example: sports equipment, trolleys, chairs, toys, fire extinguishers, first aid boxes ...

A building audit is the inspection of all structures and built ins to ensure that no hazard occurs: buildings, floor coverings, stairs and railings, sheds, play equipment and surrounds, pathways, access areas, head or limb entrapment, fall heights ...

A grounds audit is the inspection of the natural features to reduce hazard. For example: dead tree branches, poisonous plants, loose gravel/stones, uneven ground, play area surfaces, litter/ rubbish/ foreign objects ...

However, an assessment of the site risk must be made every time the site is entered. This can be accomplished relatively quickly with an overall visual assessment but may also include more detailed examination of high risk areas e.g. toilets, playground equipment/ open grounds. It is the leader's responsibility to ensure that the site is left in a safe condition.

The frequency of periodic inspections/audits is determined by the age of buildings and facilities, the type of activities being undertaken, the environmental and climatic features, and the age profile and attributes of people using the site.

3. Analyze the risks

For each type of **site** hazard, the observed use or storage of the equipment/structure should be considered. For example:

- Electrical appliances in wet areas
- Tripping hazards
- Equipment stored in passageways
- Chair stack heights
- Blocked or obstructed exits
- Unsecured objects leaning against walls and fences
- Sharp or otherwise dangerous objects near play areas
- Loose power leads/cables
- Reduction of fire hazards ...

4. Evaluate the risks

Although the ownership of a site increases the accountability for safety maintenance, a significant responsibility is placed on the user/ hirer to ensure that a safe environment is sustained. It is therefore each leader's responsibility to reduce, minimize or eliminate site and activity risks.

Our church insurance policy covers the accidental injury of children and young people. However there are a number of exceptions which must be considered. These are water skiing and similar events, abseiling, archery, flying foxes, horse riding, shooting, rock climbing or climbing walls, rafting up to Grade 2 rapids, canoeing, beach activities, ice skating, BMX, skate boarding, roller blading/ skating, bonfires. Some of these activities are covered only when they are run by appropriately skilled, experienced and qualified members and/or appropriately skilled experienced and qualified external contractors, who have the appropriate insurances in place to protect members. Advice must be obtained from District Office prior to organising these types of activities for your group (to ensure they fit within the Insurer's guidelines).

In conjunction with safety audits, safety procedures and practices must be followed. This includes emergency evacuation procedures and rules/guidelines for the use of the site and equipment.

5. Treat the risks

The reduction of risk requires a commitment to and ownership of a safe environment and safe practices. It is everyone's responsibility to identify risks in our **site** and

- immediately reduce the threat by isolating the area or eliminating the risk
- report the risk and action taken to the safety officer/ pastor.

The reduction of **activity** risks requires the coordination with parents/guardians and the vigilance of all leaders and assistants participating in the activity. It is the leaders and assistants responsibility to

- seek information from parents/guardians that may impact on safe participation
- take appropriate direct intervention to prevent/minimize injury
- report to the leader any concerns or issues related to safety.

6. Monitor and control measures

Our safety officer is responsible for the coordination and the preservation of a safe environment through the assessment of risk and the addressal of deficits. It is essential to follow our clearly defined process (in 5) so that any observed **site** risk will be dealt with in a prudent and timely fashion.

The church board and Pastor are responsible for approving program **activities**. Therefore the communication of program activities in a timely manner is essential.

7. Communicate and consult

The process for reporting observed risks should be understood by all regular users of the site. The responsibility for managing risk belongs to all associated with the site. The Pastor/ accountable officer ensures that audits are undertaken and deficiencies are dealt with effectively.

Management procedures

Recruitment

Our church

- will not commence employing/ appointing a person in a child-related position without first requiring them to attain a blue card as proof of police check.
- will not commence employing/ appointing, or continue to utilize, in child related activity, a person that has received a negative reply from a blue card application or has had their positive notice changed.
- maintains a register of blue card holders and ensures that currency is maintained
- follows the requirements of Blue Card legislation
http://www.childcomm.qld.gov.au/employment/bluecard/general_info.html

Screening

Our pastor

- will meet with each leader/ assistant applicant to determine their suitability
- will require the applicant to complete the Leaders and Assistants Personal Details Form (see Appendix) which includes a declaration of suitability by the applicant as well as legislative requirements
- the church board will formally appoint all leaders in our church

Induction

Our pastor

- will arrange or undertake induction training for all appointed leaders and assistants

Supervision

Our pastor

- will visit groups from time to time
- will support, guide and direct leaders

Accountability

Our pastor

- will maintain a governance role of all church activities
- will require annual and quarterly written reports from leaders of all groups

Disclosures and suspicions of harm

Disclosure Response Procedures

Any disclosure must be acted upon promptly.

1. Receiving a disclosure

Do not react in a shocked or critical way.

Provide support for the child encouraging them for being brave enough to share the information.

Find a confidential place to talk. It is unwise to meet with a person alone in a private environment.

Listen and reassure the person that they are doing the right thing.

Advise the child that you must tell someone who can help them.

Believe the person.

Do not ask leading questions.

Make a written summary as soon as possible after the disclosure noting the time, date location and who was present, significant dialogue, comments made and your following actions.

2. Reporting a disclosure

Advise the church pastor and present the written summary.

The pastor determines the required action which could range from noting the information to contacting the Department of Child Safety or the police (JAB). Where the disclosure of harm indicates that a family member is involved, the Department of Child Safety is to be notified.

No investigation must be carried out by the reporter or the pastor.

For all reports to Department of Child Safety or the police, the pastor must provide a written report for the District Superintendent.

The pastor must advise the reporter of the action. If the reporter is not satisfied, they may contact the police directly.

The pastor needs to manage the provision of support for everyone involved in the disclosure.

The privacy of the young person must be protected.

Response to breaches

Our church will

- Stand down any person against whom an allegation of misconduct has been made until the person is exonerated.
- Seek guidance from District Office before utilizing a person who has been charged with child related offences.

Documentation

- Our church has no standardized form for reporting a breach.
- The person receiving the report is to provide the Pastor with a verbal report immediately and within 24 hours, a written report.
- A copy of the report is to be retained within the church records.

Reporting obligations

Under the Commission for Children and Young People Act, our church is required to:

- Report to the Commission for Children and Young People the names and other identifying details of any employee against whom relevant disciplinary proceedings have been completed by the church, irrespective of the findings (except where allegation has proven to be vexatious, mischievous or false)
- Provide details of child abuse allegations/convictions against employees to the Commission.
- Report to the Commission of any applicants for child related employment, rejected as a result of risks identified through employment screening processes.
- Ensure that records of all information required to be submitted to the Commission for Children and Young People are retained by the Church.

Under our District governance procedures and requirements, our Pastor is required to:

- Advise the District Superintendent when a report has been made to the Commission for Children and Young People or the Juvenile Aid Bureau.
- Report any allegation against a leader or assistant that is being investigated.
- Report any allegation against them self that has been made.

Liability

Our church is morally and legally responsible for the well being of children in our programs. We must all take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable abuse or harm. Our church could be held to be negligent if its acts or omission contributed to the abuse or harm.

We are **negligent** if we did not take reasonable care, at a reasonable standard and the child is injured.

Our **duty of care** is to provide a standard of care to ensure that harm is not caused to others.

Reasonable foreseeability is the requirement to anticipate the risk of harm and applying the requisite standard to avoid or minimize the risk.

Records are needed to be able to prove due diligence well after an incident. All incidents that may result in a long term injury must be recorded comprehensively.

The suitability of employees and volunteers is the responsibility of our church. Clear expectations are provided and understanding of policy and procedures assured. Our insurance policy has an exclusion if we knowingly utilize a person with a history of abuse.

Communication and Support

It is essential that leaders inform parents and guardians of the typical activities of the group. For atypical activities or any involving transport or a change of regular time frames, it is essential that information is given in writing and consent for participation gained.

This Strategy document forms the basis of Training materials and Strategy development to help leaders, assistants and parents to identify and manage risks of harm. It is to be reviewed each year by all leaders and assistants.

Copies of this document are given to leaders each year as part of on going support and development.

Appendix

Child/ Young Person Personal Details Form

This information will be treated confidentially and is for the sole purpose of supporting the safety of your child or young person.

Child / Young Person's Name:

Date of Birth:

Medicare Number:

Medical Insurance: (yes/no, details)

Address:

Phone:

Mobile:

Parents' / Guardians' Names

Additional emergency contact:: (name and phone)

Details of court orders or custody issues:

Medical conditions or impairments that may affect participation or safety (include allergies and long term medication):

Any other details we should know about your child

Signature of Parent / Guardian:

Date:

Administrative Use: Last update

Leaders and Assistants Personal Details Form

This information will be treated confidentially and is for the sole purpose of supporting our safety program.

Applicants Name: Date of Birth:

Address:

Phone: Mobile:

Name and contact details of Next of Kin:

Personal Situation (marital, employment):

Blue Card Details:
(number and expiry date)

Church position(s) and group(s):

Details of court orders, criminal charges or legal restrictions to working with children and young people:
(if none, indicate NIL)

Medical conditions or impairments that may affect your participation or safety:

Any other details we should know about:

Declaration: I declare that there are no impediments to me taking on this position. I agree to bring to the attention of the Pastor any future issue that may make me unsuitable or seen to be unsuitable to hold this position. I agree to submit to the leadership of the church and to follow the Risk Management Strategy and all other procedural requirements of the church.

Signature of Applicant: Date:

<i>Administrative Use: Last update</i>	<i>Noted by: (please initial)</i>	Pastor	Board Secretary
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Accident Report

This information is kept to promote the safety of people by enabling us to review incidents and inform our procedures. It is also the reference data for enquiries from parents and guardians about the quality of our care for children and young people. It is also the source of data for any legal proceedings against our church.

For a minor injury (treated on site and no further medical attention sought) retain this sheet in the church records and complete the Parent/Guardian advice sheet. Items marked with a * are not essential for minor injuries.

For a major injury where further medical attention is needed eg ambulance called, hospitalization or treatment by doctor, or the Parent/Guardian has been called, send a copy to District Office in addition to the copy kept in the church records.

Child's / Young Person's / Adult's Name:

Date of Incident:

Time of Incident:

Activity when injury occurred:

Location:

Cause of injury (sequence of events):

Initial assessment of injury:

* Follow up advice of the extent of injury:

Details of action taken (include approximate times):

First aid administered

* Ambulance called

* Parent called to attend

* Names and phone numbers of witnesses:

Name of person(s) administering first aid:

Leader's Name, * address and * phone:

Signature of Leader:

Date:

* Signature of Key Witness:

Date:

Administrative Use:

Noted by: (please initial)

District Office notified:

Pastor	Safety Officer
yes / no	If yes, date copy sent

First Aid Advice

Grace Community Church (A Wesleyan Methodist Church)

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Today, your child received First Aid attention for
.....
.....

Action Taken:

Rest

Ice Pack

Elevate

Wound cleaned

Band aid applied

Bandaged

Other

Group Leader: Date:

This information is kept to promote the safety of children or young people by enabling us to plan to maintain a safe site in which activities at acceptable risk levels are undertaken. It is also the source of data for any legal proceedings against our church. This report must be completed annually and filed within the church records.

Safety Officers' Name:: Date of Report

Quarterly building safety inspections of site (date completed) :

January	April	July	October
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Quarterly grounds safety inspections of site (date completed) :

January	April	July	October
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Annual electrical safety check completed
(date completed, comments)

Annual fire safety equipment check completed:
(date completed, comments)

Quarterly safety inspections of equipment completed (date completed and comment) :

January	April	July	October
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Quarterly inspections of First Aid kit completed (date completed and comment) :

January	April	July	October
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Blue Card Register maintained accurately:
(yes/no, comments)

Child Personal Details data being maintained:
(yes/no, comments)

Reporting process for safety concerns working effectively:
(yes/no, comments)

Issues for consideration:

Safety Officer's signature: Date:

Administrative Use: (report noted, insert date)

(Pastor)	(Church Board)	(Property Committee)
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Flow Charts for Key Procedures

