ev/church

Safe Ministry Policy

05-000 PO

Approved by: Andrew Mitchell	Approval date: 12/4/21	Author/s: Phil Hayes

Purpose

This policy outlines the underlying principles that direct our approach to safeguarding vulnerable people involved with EV Church.

Scope

The policy applies to all Leaders at EV church. It aligns with the National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations and NSW Child Safe Standards .[1]

Definitions

Vulnerable Person means: (a) a Child (i.e. a person under 18 years of age) (b) an individual aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.
Leaders - are all staff, leaders, pastors, coordinators, volunteers, trainees and anyone working on behalf of EV Church. In this policy **a Leader** has a ministry responsibility over a vulnerable person.
Reportable Conduct
Children's Guardian Act 2019 defines *reportable conduct* as:

(a) any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence), or

(b) any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child, or

(c) any behaviour that causes emotional or psychological harm to a child, whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child.

d) Offence under s43B (failure to protect) or s316 A (failure to report) of the Crimes Act 1900

Policy Statement

We commit to:

1. Safeguard Vulnerable people

We affirm that all people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected and have their views and opinions valued at all times. We are committed to a Biblical call to care for the vulnerable by actively preventing harm and abuse, and by seeking to provide safe programs.[2] We are also responsible and accountable to fulfil our obligations to State and Federal law to protect children and vulnerable people.
We are committed to consulting as appropriate and ensuring that vulnerable people are able to voice their concerns and thoughts about decisions that affect them. We recognise the diverse needs of vulnerable people should be taken into account and their concerns taken seriously.[3] We are committed to embedding this care into all levels of our leadership and culture.

[1] NSW Child Safe Standards (www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)
[2] Deut 6:4-7; Matt:18:1-6; Mk10:13-16
[3] Standards 2,3 & 4 NSW Child Safe Standards

2. Screen and Train Leaders

We are committed to ensuring all EV Leaders are screened, trained and appropriately supported for the position they hold by the process outlined below. [4]

1. All Leaders will have their potential roles and responsibilities clearly outlined to them as they start a role.
2. All Leaders must be regular participants in EV Church life for a minimum of six months or have a reference from a previous church context.
3. All Leaders will have completed the EV Safe Ministry Training relevant for their position, which outlines appropriate behaviour including how to minimise the possibility of harm or abuse, as well as training in how to identify and report cases of abuse.
4. All Leaders will have committed to the relevant Code of Conduct for their ministry. (see Associated Documents)
5. Leaders that are working with children and youth must have references that confirm their character and suitability to work with vulnerable people and that there is no reason the proposed leader should not be appointed in such a role.
6. If a Leader is working with children or youth they must have a NSW *Working with Children Check* verified.

3. Provide Safe and Accessible Programs

We are committed to ensuring that our programs and events are safe and appropriate for those attending. Careful consideration is given to the activities chosen, the venue, safe ratios of supervision, appropriate toileting practices, transportation, work health and safety, parental or guardian permission and confidentiality of records kept. Our Safe Ministry practices are documented in the EV Church Code of Conduct for working with children, Youth Handbooks and detailed in EV Church Safe Ministry Policy and Procedure documents. These are reviewed regularly in the light of experience and current community practice.
To help maintain appropriate standards, we will give all leaders access to ongoing training and adequate supervision in their roles and responsibilities.

4. Appropriately Respond to Concerns or Complaints

We are committed to creating a culture where people feel safe to speak out about inappropriate behaviour without fear of being rejected or ridiculed. We are committed to listening and appropriately responding to allegations of *Reportable Conduct* or other concerns or complaints about behaviour and safety at EV Church. Throughout this process we are committed to protecting the confidentiality, dignity, health and wellbeing of all individuals involved.
We will appropriately respond to a) allegations of leader misconduct and/or b) reports of vulnerable persons at risk of harm.

a) Responding to any allegations of leader misconduct

i. Care of the alleged victim.
EV Church is concerned to protect the interests and welfare of children and vulnerable people as of first priority. All leaders will report allegations to an EV Church Safe Ministry Contact.
Detail of action to be taken can be found in 05-043 (Responding to Allegations of Misconduct and Necessary Reporting)

ii. Support of Leaders
We are committed to ongoing leadership training, support and supervision of leaders. Where a leader is the subject of an allegation of ministry misconduct, we will provide support to both the alleged victims and the accused person. We will carefully monitor and provide appropriate care for anyone in EV Church who has been found to have breached any Code of Conduct or Safe Ministry practice.

[4] Standards 5,7 & 8 NSW Child Safe Standards

b) Where it is suspected that a vulnerable person is at risk of harm, abuse, neglect or ill-treatment.
All leaders will report such disclosures or suspicions to an EV Church Safe Ministry Contact. *Any child related issues will be managed with a focus on the interests of the child and will be reported to relevant NSW Government Child protection bodies[5] according to the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide and Office of Children's Guardian. Any serious allegations of abuse will also be reported to our insurer.*

Ev Church Safe Ministry Contacts

Andrew Mitchell (Head of the Reporting Entity)

See the Safe Ministry Contacts on the Ev Church website

Responsibilities

Church Council of EV Church takes responsibility for reviewing this Policy regularly[6] and embedding it in the organisation's culture at all levels.[7]
The responsibility for the implementation[8] of and the regular review of the implementation procedures[9] lies with the Executive Pastor and Ministry leadership.
Responsibilities for reporting are detailed in the procedure documentation.

Associated Documents & References

NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157

NSW Children's Guardian Act 2019

National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations

NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide

NSW Child Safe Standards

Office of Children's Guardian

05-011 PO Code of Conduct for Working with Children and Youth

05-043 PR Responding to Allegations of Misconduct and Necessary Reporting

Last updated P Hayes 06/02/2023

[5] Standard 6 NSW Child Safe Standards
[6] Standard 9 NSW Child Safe Standards
[7] Standard 1 NSW Child Safe Standards
[8] Standard 10 NSW Child Safe Standards
[9] Standard 9 NSW Child Safe Standards