



DONNYBROOK
Community Church



20
25

Generations Handbook

For all staff and volunteer workers at
Donnybrook Community Church



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1. Definition of Terms

DCC: Donnybrook Community Church

BUV: Baptist Union of Victoria

Safe Church Concerns Person: A designated individual trained to receive and act upon any concerns, disclosures, or complaints related to child safety or misconduct. They assist with support, documentation, and reporting to authorities.

Ministry Leader: A person responsible for overseeing a particular area of ministry, such as Kids Church or Youth Church.

Team Member: Any volunteer or staff member serving in children's, youth, or family ministries.

Kids Church / Youth Church: DCC's Sunday programs for children and young people.

Vulnerable Adult: Any adult who may be at increased risk of harm due to age, disability, mental illness, trauma, or social circumstances.

Indigenous: Refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, recognised as the First Peoples of Australia.

Reasonable Belief: A belief that a reasonable person would hold based on available facts and circumstances — used when reporting child abuse or safety concerns.

Serious Harm: Any form of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, spiritual, racial, or cultural harm or neglect.

Child Safety Incident: Any situation in which a child is harmed or at risk of harm, or where a significant breach of safety policy occurs.

2.Introduction

Commitment to Child Safety

At Donnybrook Community Church (DCC), we believe children are a precious gift from God. We are committed to creating and maintaining environments where all children and young people feel safe, valued, and included. We have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

Our practices align with the *DCC Safe Church Policy and Procedure* and with Victoria's Child Safe Standards. These commitments apply across all DCC ministries, especially Kids Church and Youth Church.

Commitment to Participation

We value and seek the voices of children and families. This means:

- Encouraging children to express ideas, concerns, and feedback about programs
- Including children in age-appropriate conversations about safety and wellbeing
- Displaying visual tools and language children understand to support safe behaviour and reporting

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

We aim to be a welcoming community for every child. We actively support:

- Cultural safety and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse families
- Access and belonging for children with disabilities or additional needs
- Respect for children and families of all genders, identities, and backgrounds

“Let the little children come to me... for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” — Matthew 19:14

We take Jesus' call seriously and are committed to creating environments where every child can grow in faith, safety, and community.

3.DCC Core Values

At Donnybrook Community Church, **we exist to follow Jesus into the neighbourhood with an embodied message of faith, hope and love.** Our Generations Ministry is shaped by these three core values that guide our approach to leadership, discipleship, and care:

Faith

We grow in our upward relationship with God — Father, Son, and Spirit — as the foundation for all we do. Our ministries are rooted in Scripture, prayer, and a reliance on God’s grace. We want children and young people to encounter Jesus, deepen their faith, and know they are loved.

Hope

We share the good news of the gospel with others — in our families, neighbourhoods, and networks. Our Generations Ministry is part of God’s mission in the world, helping children and youth discover their purpose, develop their gifts, and trust in God’s redemptive story.

Love

We seek to love one another well. We care deeply for the safety, wellbeing, and flourishing of every child, family, and volunteer. We create welcoming spaces where people of all backgrounds are valued, and where the vulnerable are protected and included.

“These three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.” — 1 Corinthians 13:13

These values shape every policy and every program — not just what we do, but how and why we do it.

4. Expectations and Requirements of a DCC Leader

At DCC, we take seriously the responsibility of leading and caring for children and young people. Leaders are entrusted with influence and authority, and are expected to model Christlike character, prioritise safety, and create spaces of welcome and belonging.

Leadership Expectations

All leaders and team members serving in Kids Church or Youth Church are expected to:

- Follow the *DCC Code of Conduct* and model integrity, respect, and kindness
- Work collaboratively under the direction of Ministry Leaders
- Build trusting, appropriate relationships with children, young people, and families
- Participate in regular team meetings, training, and debriefs
- Commit to personal spiritual growth and prayerful leadership
- Communicate clearly and follow through on responsibilities

Safety Requirements

To serve in a leadership or team role, volunteers must:

- Complete the *DCC Leadership Application Form*
- Hold a current Working With Children Check (WWCC)
- Complete *Safe Church Training* (endorsed by the Baptist Union of Victoria) within the first year and refresh it every 4 years
- Sign the *DCC Code of Conduct* and *Leaders Code of Conduct Commitment Form*
- Adhere to all expectations outlined in the *DCC Safe Church Policy and Procedure*
- Undergo screening and reference checks as per the *DCC Volunteer and Employee Recruitment Procedure*

Junior Leaders

Young people aged under 18 can serve as Junior Leaders with parental permission and Ministry Leader support. Junior Leaders must:

- Complete a simplified application process
- Serve alongside adult leaders at all times

- Not be responsible for supervision without adult oversight
- Complete a WWCC within one month of turning 18 if continuing in ministry

5. Child Safe Standards

Donnybrook Community Church (DCC) upholds the *Child Safe Standards* established by the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) in Victoria. These 11 standards form the foundation of our commitment to building a safe, inclusive, and child-centred culture across all ministries, especially in Kids Church and Youth Church.

The 11 Child Safe Standards

1. Culturally Safe Environments

We recognise, respect, and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

2. Leadership, Governance, and Culture

Our leadership team, policies, and practices reflect and promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing.

3. Child and Family Participation

We involve children and families in decisions and activities that affect them, and encourage their voices in shaping safe environments.

4. Equity and Inclusion

We actively anticipate and respond to the diverse circumstances and needs of all children and families.

5. Staff and Volunteer Suitability

All staff and volunteers are carefully screened, trained, and supervised to ensure they are safe and suitable to work with children.

6. Child-Friendly Complaints Process

We ensure children know who to talk to and how to raise concerns. Clear processes are outlined in the *DCC Safe Church Policy and Procedure*.

7. Ongoing Education and Training

All leaders complete *Safe Church Training* and receive regular updates to deepen understanding and skills in child safety.

8. Safe Physical and Online Environments

We take active steps to identify and reduce risks in all spaces — including digital platforms — and plan activities with safety in mind.

9. Continuous Review and Improvement

We regularly review our policies, seek feedback, and adjust practices when necessary to improve safety and effectiveness.

10. Document Accessibility

We provide access to plain-language versions of our key policies and procedures and use visual tools for children where possible.

11. Reporting Obligations

We comply with all relevant legislation including *Failure to Disclose* and *Failure to Protect* offences under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* and report concerns according to the *DCC Safe Church Policy and Procedure*.

6. Understanding Child Abuse

At Donnybrook Community Church (DCC), we take all forms of child abuse seriously. We are committed to recognising the signs, responding appropriately, and supporting children with care, compassion, and justice.

Abuse can take many forms, and any concern — no matter how small it may seem — must be acted upon in line with the *DCC Safe Church Policy and Procedure* and legal obligations under Victorian law.

Types of Abuse

1. Physical Abuse

Deliberate physical force that results in harm or could reasonably be expected to cause harm.

Examples: hitting, shaking, burning, choking, or excessive discipline.

2. Emotional Abuse

Behaviours that harm a child's sense of self-worth or emotional wellbeing.

Examples: rejection, threats, shaming, isolating, or exposing children to violence or abuse.

3. Sexual Abuse

Any sexual activity or behaviour with a child, including grooming, sexualised language, exposure to pornography, or physical acts.

Note: Sexual abuse can occur even without physical contact.

4. Neglect

Failure to provide for a child's basic needs, leading to harm.

Examples: not providing adequate food, shelter, supervision, healthcare, or emotional support.

5. Spiritual Abuse

Manipulating or coercing children using religious language, practices, or authority in ways that cause fear, shame, or harm.

6. Grooming

The deliberate act of building trust with a child or their caregiver for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

This is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*.

Recognising the Signs

Children may show signs of abuse through:

- Sudden behaviour changes (aggression, withdrawal, anxiety)
- Fear of certain people or places
- Regression (e.g., bedwetting, loss of language)
- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour or language
- Disclosure (direct or indirect statements that something is wrong)

No single sign proves abuse — but any concern must be taken seriously.

7. Responding to Concerns or Allegations

DCC is committed to responding promptly and pastorally to any concerns, disclosures, or allegations of harm. Every leader and team member has a role to play in ensuring children are heard, protected, and supported.

If a Child Discloses Harm

If a child tells you something concerning:

- **Stay calm and listen carefully** — don't panic or press for details
- **Believe the child** — take their words seriously
- **Reassure them** — affirm that telling you was the right thing to do
- **Don't promise secrecy** — explain you may need to tell someone who can help
- **Write down what was said** — use the child's exact words and note date/time
- **Report it promptly** — inform the Ministry Leader or Safe Church Concerns Person

If You Have a Concern

If you notice signs of abuse or something that makes you uneasy:

- Document your observations factually and promptly
- Don't investigate or confront the alleged person
- Share your concerns with the Safe Church Concerns Person as soon as possible

Use the *DCC Safe Church Concerns Anecdotal Record Form* or *Incident or Hazard Report Form* to ensure concerns are clearly documented.

Who to Inform

- **For urgent danger** → Call 000 immediately
- **Mandatory reporting** → Notify Child Protection (DHHS) or Police as required
- **Internal reporting** → Safe Church Concerns Person, Ministry Leader, or Pastor

DCC follows the *DCC Safe Church Policy and Procedure*, which outlines specific pathways and timelines for reporting and responding.

8. Supporting Vulnerable Adults

At DCC, we affirm the dignity of all people, including those who may be vulnerable due to age, disability, trauma, mental illness, language barriers, or social disadvantage. We are committed to creating safe and respectful environments for vulnerable adults as well as children.

What is a Vulnerable Adult?

A vulnerable adult is anyone aged 18 or over who may be at greater risk of harm, exploitation, or mistreatment due to personal or situational factors. Vulnerability may be temporary or ongoing.

Principles of Support

1. **Dignity** — Every person is made in God's image and deserves to be treated with respect and compassion.
2. **Inclusion** — People of all abilities and backgrounds should be welcomed and enabled to participate fully.
3. **Safety** — We take concerns seriously and act to protect the wellbeing of all.
4. **Empowerment** — We support vulnerable adults to make informed choices and maintain autonomy where possible.

Practical Considerations

- Use inclusive, respectful language

- Ask before offering help or physical contact
- Don't make assumptions about what someone can or cannot do
- Offer clear information about events, spaces, and expectations
- Follow reporting procedures if you suspect mistreatment, abuse, or neglect

Our duty of care extends to all who participate in the life of the church. When in doubt, speak with the Safe Church Concerns Person or Ministry Leader for guidance.

9. CARE Model for Adults

The CARE model is a simple, practical tool to guide how we engage with and support vulnerable adults and each other within ministry. It reflects our commitment to kindness, dignity, and safety in all relationships.

C — Communication

Speak clearly and respectfully. Use language that is inclusive and free from jargon or assumptions. Ask questions and listen well, especially when someone expresses a need or concern.

A — Awareness

Stay attentive to emotional, physical, social, and spiritual needs. Be aware of power dynamics, cultural differences, disability access, mental health, and the impact of trauma. Notice when someone seems distressed or excluded.

R — Response

Act with compassion. Offer help appropriately, involve others when needed, and always follow reporting procedures if you suspect harm. Don't ignore warning signs.

E — Empowerment

Support people to make their own decisions wherever possible. Avoid creating dependency. Respect boundaries and personal autonomy while offering pastoral care and practical support.

10. Consequences of Misconduct

At DCC, all volunteers and leaders are expected to model safety, integrity, and Christlike care. Any breach of conduct — whether intentional or accidental — is taken seriously. Our response process is shaped by principles of accountability, restoration, and safety.

Minor or Unintentional Breaches

Examples may include forgetting to follow a process, being late, or using inappropriate language:

- The Ministry Leader will offer feedback and support to address the concern.
- A conversation will clarify expectations and provide guidance.
- The issue will be documented and monitored.

Repeated or Significant Breaches

Examples include ignoring safety procedures, overstepping boundaries, or failing to follow up on responsibilities:

- The individual may be stood down temporarily while the issue is reviewed.
- A formal conversation and written record will be made.
- The person may be asked to complete further training, take a break from ministry, or be removed from the team.

Serious Misconduct

Includes any abuse, grooming behaviour, criminal conduct, significant breaches of policy, or serious concerns about wellbeing:

- The person will be immediately removed from ministry roles.
- Concerns will be reported to external authorities as required.
- The *DCC Safe Church Policy and Procedure* will guide next steps, including care for all parties.

All leaders and team members are responsible for upholding the *DCC Code of Conduct*, and for seeking support if they are struggling to meet expectations. The goal is always to promote safety, clarity, and mutual accountability.

11. Risk Management

Risk management is an essential part of providing safe, welcoming spaces for children, young people, and vulnerable adults. At DCC, we proactively identify, assess, and manage risks across all programs — particularly Kids Church and Youth Church.

Key Risk Areas

We assess risks related to:

- Physical environments (e.g. play areas, equipment, trip hazards)
- Activities (e.g. games, excursions, transport, craft materials)

- Health and medical needs (e.g. allergies, first aid, medication)
- Relational dynamics (e.g. bullying, peer conflict, leader boundaries)
- Online and digital safety (e.g. messaging, social media, privacy)
- Emergency situations (e.g. fire, lockdowns, missing child)

Risk Assessment Process

Before commencing any new program, event, or off-site activity, Ministry Leaders must:

1. Identify potential risks
2. Assess likelihood and impact
3. Put strategies in place to eliminate or minimise risk
4. Complete a written risk assessment if required
5. Communicate clearly with team members and families

Use the *DCC Risk Matrix* and templates provided to guide this process.

Ongoing Monitoring

- Risk management is not a one-off task. It involves ongoing observation, feedback, and adjustment.
- All team members are encouraged to raise safety concerns and suggest improvements.
- Incidents must be recorded using the *Incident or Hazard Report Form* and reviewed by Ministry Leaders.

12. Mental Health

We recognise that mental health plays a vital role in the wellbeing and safety of children, young people, and adults. At DCC, we are committed to being a church community that supports mental health with grace, care, and compassion.

Our Commitments

- We affirm that struggling with mental health does not diminish a person's worth or faith.
- We do not diagnose or offer medical advice, but we listen, pray, and support people practically.
- We respect confidentiality and communicate sensitively.

- We support families and carers as they navigate complex challenges.

Supporting Children and Young People

- Be alert to changes in behaviour, energy, mood, or participation.
- Create safe spaces for expression through creative, sensory, and unstructured play.
- Avoid shaming, dismissing, or minimising a child's experience.
- Gently check in with parents or carers if you notice patterns of concern.

Supporting Team Members

- Ministry Leaders check in regularly with volunteers and encourage open conversations.
- Time off and flexible rostering are provided where needed.
- Referrals to pastoral care, counselling, or GP support can be offered.
- If someone is in crisis, follow DCC's safety procedures and seek help immediately.

We want to be a place where it is safe to not be okay — and where people can experience the peace of Christ in community and care.

13. Work Health & Safety

At Donnybrook Community Church, Work Health & Safety (WHS) is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to providing a physically safe environment for children, volunteers, staff, and visitors in every ministry context — especially in Kids Church and Youth Church.

Core Principles

- **Prevent harm:** Identify and reduce physical, chemical, emotional, and relational hazards
- **Report concerns:** Use clear, prompt processes to log hazards or incidents
- **Respond well:** Act quickly when risks or injuries occur
- **Support wellbeing:** Provide safe and reasonable conditions for all leaders and participants

What Team Members Must Do

- Know the location of emergency exits, first aid kits, and fire extinguishers

- Supervise children actively and remain in approved spaces
- Keep spaces clear of trip hazards, sharp edges, or blocked walkways
- Ensure toys and equipment are clean, safe, and age-appropriate
- Report hazards or injuries using the *Incident or Hazard Report Form*
- Use equipment as instructed and store it properly when finished
- Follow safety signage, food handling instructions, and allergy notifications

Ministry Leader Responsibilities

- Conduct regular WHS walk-throughs and reviews
- Ensure teams are trained in basic WHS awareness
- Update procedures when risks are identified
- Support anyone injured or unwell during ministry time
- Maintain appropriate child–leader ratios for safety and supervision

14. First Aid, Medical Action Plans & Emergency Response

First Aid

- Each Kids Church and Youth Church session should aim to have at least one adult with current First Aid training present. If not available within the team, there must be a designated person with current First Aid training on-site during the session.
- First Aid Kits must be easily accessible, well-stocked, and clearly labelled.
- All injuries must be recorded using the *First Aid Report Form* and communicated to parents/carers.

Medical Action Plans

- Children with specific medical conditions (e.g. asthma, allergies, epilepsy) must have a current Medical Action Plan on file.
- Plans must be signed by a parent/carer and accessible to relevant team members.
- Medication must be clearly labelled and administered only in line with the Action Plan.

Emergency Response

- In emergencies, team members must prioritise safety, stay calm, and follow the church's Emergency Management Plan.
- Call 000 if required, and follow any lockdown, evacuation, or emergency procedures specific to the site.
- Parents must be informed as soon as practical.

15. Evacuation Procedures

- Evacuation maps must be displayed in ministry areas and reviewed annually.
- All leaders must be familiar with evacuation routes, exits, and assembly points.
- Evacuation drills are conducted at least annually.
- In an evacuation, Ministry Leaders are responsible for:
 - Collecting sign-in sheets
 - Doing a headcount
 - Escorting children safely to the designated assembly point
- No child is to be released until officially checked off and signed out.

16. Specific Policies and Procedures for DCC Generations Ministry

This section includes ministry-specific expectations and procedures for Kids Church and Youth Church. These include:

- Supervision and child-leader ratios (see Safe Church guidelines)
- Two-adult rule in all spaces
- Toilet break and sign-in/out protocols
- Transport and excursion procedures
- Photography and media consent
- Social media boundaries for youth ministry
- Food safety and allergy awareness
- Pastoral care, prayer, and physical contact guidelines

For more detail, refer to the *DCC Safe Church Policy and Procedure* and your ministry's specific operating procedures.

16.1. Supervision and Child–Leader Ratios

DCC is committed to providing appropriate supervision for all children attending Kids Church and Youth Church.

- Our current practice includes **one adult Ministry Leader and one adult Team Member** present for all programs.
- Kids Church includes a **broad age range (2–12 years)**, and leaders are attentive to the diverse developmental needs within that group.
- We aim to provide a safe and engaging environment where each child can be seen and supported.

We acknowledge that best practice recommends lower ratios (e.g. 1:4 for preschool, 1:8 for primary), and we strive to meet these where possible. When we are unable to meet ideal ratios:

- We prioritise **group safety over individualised programming**
- We ensure that **two adults are always present**
- We adjust activities to reduce risk and ensure clear visibility and engagement
- We do not leave a single adult alone with a child or small group

When numbers increase or additional needs arise, the Ministry Leader will assess risk and seek additional support if needed.

16.2. Toilet Use & Sign-In/Out – Kids Church & Youth Church

Sign-In/Out Process:

- Parents/guardians sign their children or youth in before the 10:00 am service using a paper sign-in sheet located centrally.
- Sign-in includes name, age, and any medical/allergy information.
- A Team Member brings the sign-in sheet when the children or youth leave for their program.
- At the end of the service, leaders visually confirm each child or youth has rejoined their parent/carer and tick them off the list.

Kids Church:

- Begins around 10:20–10:30 am when announced during the service.
- Children (ages 2–12) are escorted to a classroom down the corridor.
- Two screened adult leaders (Ministry Leader + Team Member) supervise at all times.

Youth Church:

- Also begins after the announcement during the service.
- Youth (ages 13–18) meet in the upper atrium, just outside the Kids Church space.
- Two screened adult leaders are always present.
- Current attendance is small (2–4 youth), but the same sign-in/out process applies.

Toilets:

- Children and youth are encouraged to use the toilet before the service.
- The toilets nearest to the Kids Church classroom are **designated for children and youth only** during program times.
- Leaders escort children/youth to and from the toilet but **do not enter**.
- If a young child requires assistance, their **parent/carer will be contacted** to provide assistance.
- Any necessary physical assistance required of a leader must be done **in view of another adult** and only if immediate support is required.

16.3. Transport and Excursion Procedures

Any off-site activity or outing involving children or youth must be approved by the Ministry Leader and carried out in line with Safe Church expectations and local risk management procedures.

Key Requirements:

- A **written risk assessment** must be completed before any off-site activity, using the *DCC Risk Matrix* as a guide.
- A *specific permission form* must be signed by a parent/carer for each outing or excursion.
- Parents must be given **adequate notice** and details, including location, transport method, supervising leaders, and pickup arrangements.

- Children and youth must be **supervised at all times** during the activity.

Transport by Private Vehicles:

- Leaders must not transport children or youth in private vehicles **unless approved by the Ministry Leader** and with **written parent/carer consent**.
- Two adults must be present in the vehicle, unless a parent has specifically authorised otherwise.
- Leaders must hold a current driver's licence and use registered, insured vehicles.

Public Transport or Walking:

- When using public transport or walking, a clear plan must be in place to maintain supervision and safety.
- The group must stay together, with at least two adult leaders present at all times.

16.4. Photography/Video and Media Consent

At DCC, we celebrate our community through photos and stories shared on our website, social media, and newsletter. However, we are committed to protecting privacy and using images in a respectful and appropriate way.

Media Consent:

- All children and youth must have a signed *Media Permission Form* completed by a parent or guardian.
- **All adults involved in the life of DCC**, including volunteers, leaders, and staff, must also complete a *Media Permission Form*.
- Unless otherwise specified, consent is considered ongoing.

Usage Guidelines:

- Images may be used in printed and digital materials, including:
 - The church newsletter
 - DCC's website
 - Social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp)
- Photos used will avoid close-up images of children where possible, and children will never be identified by full name unless explicit permission is given.

Opting Out:

- Parents, guardians, or adults may opt out of photo use at any time by completing or updating their *Media Permission Form*.
- Ministry Leaders are responsible for being aware of and upholding all media restrictions during Kids Church, Youth Church, or church events.

16.5. Electronic Communication and Social Media Boundaries for Youth Ministry

DCC recognises that social media is part of how many young people communicate and connect. However, we maintain clear boundaries around online interactions to protect youth and adults alike.

General Principles:

- Electronic communication and online contact between leaders and youth is **not required or expected** as part of their ministry role.
- Leaders must never initiate or sustain **private communication** with youth through personal social media or other electronic accounts.
- Group chats or messaging platforms (e.g. WhatsApp) may only be used **with parental consent and prior approval** from the Ministry Leader. It must include **at least two adult leaders**.

Specific Guidelines:

- Leaders may not **add or follow youth** on personal social media accounts unless they have a pre-existing family or pastoral relationship, and even then only with **parent consent** and **Ministry Leader awareness**.
- Leaders must **never send or share inappropriate content**, jokes, memes, or private messages with youth.
- All communication should be **transparent, accountable**, and **aligned with the purpose of ministry**.
- When organising youth events or programs online, leaders must use official DCC channels or a group platform with multiple leaders present.

16.6. Food Safety and Allergy Awareness

DCC is committed to providing a safe environment for all children and youth, including when food is shared or served during programs.

Allergy Awareness:

- All allergies and medical conditions must be listed on the *Children's Indemnity & Permission Form* and reviewed by Ministry Leaders regularly.

- Foods containing **nuts or nut products** are not to be brought or served at any DCC Generations Ministry programs.
- Parents are encouraged to avoid sending food with children/youth during programs.
- Leaders must be aware of any children or youth with **anaphylaxis** and ensure that an **Action Plan and Epipen** are available and accessible.

Safe Food Practices:

- All food served must be stored, handled, and prepared in a hygienic way.
- Leaders must wash hands before serving food and use gloves or tongs where appropriate.
- Shared food should be clearly labelled. Allergy-safe and age-appropriate alternatives should be provided where possible.
- Children must be supervised while eating, and sharing of food is discouraged.
- All rubbish, spills, and leftover food must be cleaned up promptly.

16.7. Pastoral Care, Prayer, and Physical Contact Guidelines

Pastoral care and prayer are central to our ministry with children and young people. However, we approach these interactions with clear boundaries and sensitivity to ensure safety and respect.

Pastoral Conversations:

- Children and youth are welcome to share how they are feeling or ask for prayer at any time.
- Pastoral conversations should happen **in open spaces**, never behind closed doors or in isolation.
- Where possible, another leader should be nearby or in sight.
- Leaders must not ask probing personal questions, especially about family or trauma, unless trained and authorised to do so.

Prayer:

- When offering to pray with a child or young person, always ask first and respect their answer.
- Prayers should be short, encouraging, and appropriate to the child's age and context.

- Group prayer should be inclusive and non-coercive.

Physical Contact:

- Always let the child/youth initiate or consent to physical touch (e.g. high-fives, side-hugs).
- Avoid prolonged or close body contact (e.g. lap-sitting, full hugs).
- Leaders must never tickle, wrestle, or use rough play.
- Touch should only occur in open, public settings and be appropriate to the situation and the age of the child.

When in doubt, err on the side of caution, and consult the *DCC Code of Conduct* or Ministry Leader.

16.8. Correcting Behaviour in a Safe and Respectful Way

Children and young people are learning how to engage with others and manage their emotions. At DCC, we see discipline as an opportunity for discipleship — modelling self-control, compassion, and grace.

When behaviour needs to be corrected, leaders will:

- Stay calm and speak gently, clearly, and at the child's level
- Redirect attention or offer choices when a child is disruptive
- Use brief reminders of group expectations (e.g. "In this space, we listen to each other")
- Separate children if safety or calm needs to be restored — but never isolate or shame them
- Avoid sarcasm, raised voices, threats, or humiliation
- Offer space and time to regulate before re-engaging
- Inform parents if a pattern of concern emerges

Never appropriate:

- Physical discipline or restraint (unless in emergency to prevent harm)
- Public shaming, mocking, or punishment
- Denial of food, toilet access, or care

If behaviour endangers others or continues despite redirection, seek support from the Ministry Leader. Documentation may be required for repeated incidents.

16.9. Change or Suppression Practices (Victoria)

The *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (VIC)* makes it illegal to engage in any practice that seeks to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. This includes not only formal therapies or programs but also personal conversations, prayer, and spiritual advice where the aim is to change someone's identity or orientation.

Donnybrook Community Church is committed to being a place of safety, dignity, and respectful dialogue for all people. While we affirm a traditional biblical view of marriage, we also affirm that every person is made in God's image, loved by God, and deserving of care and connection. We want all people — regardless of sexuality or gender — to experience the welcome and love of Christ in our community.

As a leader or team member at DCC, you must not:

- Instruct, pressure, or attempt to coerce someone into changing their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Offer prayer, advice, or discipleship with the goal of changing or suppressing someone's identity
- Imbue your own interpretation of Scripture with pressure or judgement in this area

You may:

- Share your understanding of biblical teaching if invited — provided it is clearly framed as your interpretation, not a directive
- Respectfully engage in dialogue, listen deeply, and honour the complexity of each person's story
- Refer to a pastor or Safe Church Concerns Person if you need support in how to respond
- Continue to walk in relationship, showing kindness, curiosity, and the love of Christ

If you are asked to pray for someone in relation to their sexuality or gender identity:

- Focus on **maintaining the relationship**, not resolving the issue in one interaction
- Use respectful and legally appropriate language — such as:

“God, we ask that you help this person to discern your will for them in this and to act according to it.”

(Note: this is a suggested, legally untested prayer offered by the BUV.)

- Never use prayer as a means of pressure, persuasion, or subtle direction to change
- Prioritise ongoing conversation and support; refer to a member of the pastoral team if needed

For more information, leaders are encouraged to read the full *Guidelines for Churches – Change or Suppression Act* provided by the Baptist Union of Victoria, available at: <https://www.buv.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Guidelines-for-Churches-Change-or-Suppression-act-Dec-2021.pdf>

17. Enrolment Process

- All children and youth attending Kids Church or Youth Church must be registered using the *DCC Children’s Indemnity & Permission Form*.
- Parents/carers must update the form annually.
- Visitors may attend one session before being asked to complete the form.
- Contact details are stored securely and used only for ministry purposes.
- Leaders must be aware of special needs, custody arrangements, and medical alerts.

18. Cultural Safety and Inclusion

DCC is committed to creating culturally safe environments where all children and families feel valued, respected, and included.

We particularly seek to:

- Affirm the identities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- Honour cultural protocols, storytelling, and perspectives
- Use inclusive images, stories, and songs
- Avoid tokenism and build genuine cultural engagement
- Translate key information into other languages if needed
- Support families with disability or learning needs through flexible, thoughtful approaches

19. Policy Review Process

- This manual is reviewed annually by the Generations Ministry Team in consultation with the DCC Leadership Team and Safe Church Concerns Person.
- Policy changes are made in response to:
 - New legislation or denominational guidance
 - Feedback from leaders, children, families, or incidents
 - Insights from annual Safe Church audits or evaluations
- Any substantial changes are communicated clearly to all leaders.

20. Forms and Supporting Documents

The following forms and documents support the safe and effective operation of DCC's Kids and Youth ministries. Each is available from the Ministry Leader or Safe Church Concerns Person and should be completed or used as required.

Leadership & Volunteer Forms

- *DCC Leadership Application Form*
Completed by new adult leaders and volunteers. Includes personal details, references, WWCC, and screening questions.
- *DCC Leaders Code of Conduct Commitment Form*
Signed by all leaders to affirm understanding and agreement with the *DCC Code of Conduct*.
- *DCC Code of Conduct*
Outlines expectations for behaviour, safety, and ethics in all church ministry settings.
- *DCC Volunteer and Employee Recruitment Procedure*
Describes the formal process for screening, onboarding, and supporting volunteers and employees.

Children, Youth & Family Forms

- *DCC Children's Indemnity & Permission Form*
Completed by parents/carers for all children and youth. Includes contact details, medical info, participation consent, and emergency permissions.
- *DCC Media Permission Form*
Completed by parents/carers (for children/youth) and all adult leaders and

participants. Grants or withholds permission for use of images in newsletters, social media, and promotional materials.

- *Medical Action Plans*
Provided by parents for children with medical conditions (e.g. asthma, anaphylaxis, epilepsy). These must be current and available during all programs.
- *Excursion or Off-site Activity Permission Form*
Required for any off-site activity. Includes full details, supervision info, risk awareness, and signed consent.

Safety, Risk & Incident Forms

- *DCC Incident or Hazard Report Form*
Used to record injuries, near misses, or physical/environmental risks.
- *DCC First Aid Form*
Completed for any injury or first aid treatment. Copies are provided to parents and securely stored.
- *DCC Safe Church Concerns Anecdotal Record Form*
Used to document concerns, observations, or disclosures of abuse or misconduct.
- *DCC Risk Matrix Tool and Risk Assessment Templates*
Used by Ministry Leaders to plan and evaluate safety for events or excursions.

Policies and Guidance

- *DCC Safe Church Policy and Procedure*
Core reference for DCC's approach to child safety, duty of care, and mandatory reporting.
- *DCC Quick Guide to Failure to Disclose and Protect*
Summary of legal obligations under the *Crimes Act 1958 (VIC)* for reporting abuse and preventing risk.
- *Betrayal of Trust: Failure to Disclose/Protect Offences Factsheet*
Government-issued resource explaining Victorian offences relating to institutional child abuse.
- *Victoria Suppression Act Guidelines for Leaders*
Outlines leader obligations under the *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (VIC)*.
Available at: <https://www.buv.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Guidelines-for-Churches-Change-or-Suppression-act-Dec-2021.pdf>