

Child Safe Code of Conduct Gateway Church (Australia) Limited

From beginning to end, God speaks about the importance of children through the Bible. In Luke chapter 9, verse 48, Jesus says *“See this little one? Whoever welcomes a little child in My name welcomes Me. And whoever welcomes Me welcomes the One who sent Me. The smallest one among you is therefore the greatest”*. As Gateway Leaders, one way that we show honour to God, is to respect and protect the most defenseless members of our community.

As such, Gateway’s volunteers and leaders will:

- treat all children with respect, regardless of race, sex, language, religion, background, or disability;
- provide a fun, welcoming, and safe environment for children and fellow leaders;
- respect the role of parents and guardians, and keep open communication with them on any concerns, activities, events, and interactions with the child;
- set a great example of an effective Christian life, in line with Gateway’s values (fun, growth, encouragement, relevance, and excellence), and any extra guidelines of their ministry or the activity a child is involved in;
- plan mentoring sessions and catch ups with children in public places, or where a second adult is present, and be transparent with parents and guardians about plans and location;
- be responsible and accountable for their behaviour towards children, and its consequences;
- ensure photos, video, and approved social media posts present children in a respectful way, and are an honest representation of the environment; and
- report any concerns - no matter how slight – about a child’s welfare, wellbeing, or safety to ministry leaders, Police, or other relevant authority.

Gateway’s volunteers and leaders will never:

- bully, shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade a child;
- act in a way that shows favouritism or discrimination;
- use offensive, inappropriate or discriminatory language when speaking to, or around a child, their parents and guardians, or a fellow leader;
- help a child with personal care (such as bathing, toileting, or changing clothes), unless a designated support worker, carer or aide;
- share a room with a sleeping child unless a third person would be present at all times;
- be alone in a vehicle with a child of the opposite gender, and avoid situations where the leader is alone in a vehicle with a single child of the same gender; (Youth team members must register in the lifts database every time they drive a Youth)
- behave provocatively, or inappropriately in front of a child;
- develop a romantic or physical relationship with a child;
- hold, cuddle, kiss, or touch a child inappropriately, unnecessarily or culturally insensitively;
- discipline a child by smacking, hitting, physically assaulting a child, or any other unsafe or abusive way; or
- use a child for unpaid or cheap labour.

Child Protection Policy Gateway Church (Australia) Limited

1. Definitions

In this policy, the following definitions apply:

Child/children: any person under the age of 18, or a person between the ages of 18 and 19 who has been signed into a Gateway program as a participant by a parent or guardian.

Gateway: any churches, ministries, programs – including overseas programs – run by Gateway Church (Australia) Limited, regardless of state or country of operation.

Staff: any Pastors, paid staff, lay leaders, volunteers, interns, consultants, guests, contractors, donors, or sponsors of Gateway or its associated ministries.

Gateway Leadership: the Senior Pastor, Campus Lead Pastor, Campus Executive Pastor, or any member of the Gateway Church (Australia) Board

Child abuse: intentional harm inflicted on a child. This may take many forms including:

Physical Abuse: Any punishments and physical contact to children like hitting, beating including with a stick or other implement, poisoning, shaking and smothering or forcing the child to work in an unsafe way/environment. These are things that deliberately and negatively affect the physical well-being of children.

Mental Abuse: Any actions (gestures, words and behaviour) that deliberately affect a child's mental/emotional well-being, for example by bullying them, making them afraid, anxious, annoyed or discouraged.

Neglect: Any actions that deliberately neglect to provide the basic needs of a child, including basic health care, supervision, nutrition, education, emotional nurture, and safe housing.

Sexual Abuse: Any actions with sexual intent towards children including – but not limited to - touching children's genitals, forcing child to watch or take part in pornography, using sexualised language, or coercing the child to have sex.

2. Principles

- 2.1. Gateway is committed to the welfare and rights of children. All children under the care of Gateway will be treated with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, ethnic or social origin, disability, birth or other status.
- 2.2. Gateway's staff will familiarise themselves with this policy, and the guidelines of any Gateway ministries they work in. This both protects children, staff, and volunteers, and provides a safe environment for everyone involved in Gateway ministries and events.
- 2.3. Gateway will adopt best practice policies and approaches to avoid any form of child abuse, and comply with all relevant local legislation on child rights and welfare in order to provide what is in the best interests of the child. This includes mandatory reporting to appropriate authorities including Police, and state child welfare organisations or the commission for children and young people.
- 2.4. Gateway staff will give respect and dignity to all children in their care. Children's leaders are encouraged to be good role models and child focussed ministries will provide additional guidelines on appropriate conduct for their ministry environment.

3. Communication and education:

- 3.1. Gateway is committed to educating its staff and volunteers about the importance of child protection so that children are protected from abuse.
- 3.2. Gateway actively encourages the development of child protection guidelines that further extend this policy in each ministry area, including in all overseas operations.
- 3.3. This policy will be reviewed every two years and any ministry guidelines will be updated accordingly.
- 3.4. Gateway staff will receive initial training on this policy and any ministry guidelines that apply to them on commencement with a ministry area that works with children.

4. Behavioural Protocols:

- 4.1. All staff are expected to treat all children and other staff with respect and dignity. Inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative or demeaning language or behaviour towards children will not be tolerated.
- 4.2. All staff working in a ministry focussed on children must sign a statement to say that they have read the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and any associated ministry guidelines, will respect and follow them, and understand that action will be taken in cases of inappropriate behaviour, which may include suspension of their involvement in an activity, termination of their role, and Police or other government agency involvement.
- 4.3. Each ministry that works with children will have guidelines on what forms of discipline can be used, encouraging primarily verbal discipline and withdrawal of privileges. Discipline will not involve any form of corporal punishment.
- 4.4. Whenever possible, there should always be two adults in a room when working in the proximity of children.

- 4.5. Sleeping close to unsupervised children will not be allowed unless a third person would be present at all times.
- 4.6. No child will be engaged in any form of sexual activities or acts. Adults will always be responsible for their own behaviour and cannot blame the child regardless of the child's behaviours.
- 4.7. Gateway's computers, network (including wifi), mobile phones, video and digital cameras will be used appropriately, and will not be used to exploit or harass children or to access or produce child pornography through any medium.
- 4.8. If this policy is not followed, the Police will be immediately notified of the issue if appropriate, and the adult involved will be disciplined and may lose their role or volunteer position.
- 4.9. Gateway staff are required to bring any concerns of children's distress, abuse or potential abuse within the organisation, to their ministry leaders.

5. Recruitment and Screening

- 5.1. Following the correct recruitment and screening process is equally important for staff, and any other person who may intermittently be working with or around children.
- 5.2. Any person involved with children (regardless of the duration of the activity) will require a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and will ensure that Gateway is added as a business prior to commencement of working with children. Failure to provide proof of a WWCC, or a negative outcome on a WWCC will mean the person is not to be involved in any child-related activity.
- 5.3. All Gateway staff are required to have a current WWCC check as a condition of their employment. A negative outcome will be grounds for termination.
- 5.4. Ongoing volunteers for a ministry focussed on children will complete additional stages of assessment for suitability, which include:
 - a) Completion of an application form, including name, date of birth, occupation, and previous experience working with children;
 - b) WWCC details; and
 - c) Provision of two referees, at least one of which is outside of Gateway. If the applicant has previous experience working with children, referees from these roles prioritised as contacts.
- 5.5. Referees should be given an opportunity to express concerns that they may not be happy to put in writing.
- 5.6. Referees should be specifically asked if there have been any formal or informal complaints or investigations against the applicant, regarding children.
- 5.7. Referees should be specifically asked if they would again involve the applicant in a child-focussed program.
6. Any failure to comply with the requirements of this policy (such as not maintaining a current Working with Children Check, or not attending re-training) will result in the staff member being unable to continue in their role until they have met the requirements.

7. Responses to Allegations

- 7.1. Any Gateway staff member should immediately notify their ministry leaders of any of the following situations:
 - a) allegation or reasonable belief that a child is being physically, or sexually abused by a parent, caregiver, guardian, or Gateway staff;
 - b) allegation or reasonable belief that a child is in an inappropriate relationship with any other adult; or
 - c) allegation or reasonable belief of a romantic or sexual relationship or sexually related contact between a child and a Gateway staff member.
- 7.2. Ministry leaders are mandated to report child sexual abuse concerns directly to the Police. There will be no repercussions for any Gateway staff for doing so.
- 7.3. Gateway staff who are designated mandatory reporters due to their professional duties should report any child welfare issues in accordance with the reporting requirements for their role and in their state. There will be no repercussions for any Gateway staff for complying with these requirements.
- 7.4. Where a ministry leader has been informed of a situation outlined in 7.1 or any other similar situation of concern or inappropriate behaviour towards a child, the ministry leader will report this to the Campus Lead Pastor at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 7.5. Following on from 7.4, the Campus Lead Pastor or Risk Management Officer will then notify the Gateway Leadership Board, who will designate a person to take responsibility for the investigation and provide recommendations for appropriate actions. In these situations, the designated investigator will ensure the following:
 - a. Both child and the adult involved will be treated with respect from the start of the process to the end.
 - b. Any external advice is sought or organisations notified as necessary. This may include engaging legal advisors, or any other organisations with relevant experience, or notification of police, insurers, or appropriate agencies. These approaches will only be made under the strictest confidence, bearing in mind the sensitivity of the situation.
 - c. Designate a person (ordinarily the Campus Lead Pastor) to liaise with the media and the Police.
 - d. Any conversations with the child will take place with a parent or guardian present at all times.
 - e. Records should be made of all facts, conversations, or other evidence related to the investigation and these should be carefully and confidentially filed.
 - f. The relevant Embassy should be informed if a foreigner is involved.
 - g. At the conclusion of the investigation, the report and recommendations of the investigator will be presented to the Gateway Leadership Board in an extraordinary Gateway Leadership Board meeting. Their deliberations and decisions on recommended actions are to be fully documented in the Minutes of the meeting.
 - h. Gateway may turn over any records associated with an investigation to police, state child protection services, or any other organisation as legally required.

- i. Gateway will advise organisations seeking a reference for a person who has been subject to an investigation of child abuse or inappropriate behaviour that an investigation has occurred, and the findings of that investigation.

8. Use of children's images and personal information for promotion, fundraising and development education

When photographing or filming a child for work related purposes, Gateway staff must:

- assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming a child;
- obtain consent from the child, or a parent/guardian of the child, including an explanation of how the photograph or film will be used;
- ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts; and
- ensure storage or transmission of film, photographs and other media meets the requirements of the Privacy Act, or any other appropriate local laws.