



Child Safe Code of Conduct Gateway Church (Australia) Ltd

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 Staff and Volunteers, one way that we show honour to God, is to respect and protect the most defenseless members of our community.

As such, Gateway’s staff and volunteers will:

- treat all children with respect, regardless of race, sex, language, religion, background, disability, or Aboriginal heritage;
- provide a fun, respectful, welcoming, and safe environment for children and fellow team members;
- 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;
- allow access to any 1:1 digital communication between adult and child/young person for review by a ministry leader or staff member without notice;
- 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 staff and volunteers 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 team member;
- 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 or young person;
- develop a romantic or physical relationship with a child or young person;
- 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 attends a Gateway program as a participant.

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

Staff and or Volunteers: any Pastors, paid staff, lay leaders, volunteers, interns, consultants, special guests, and contractors.

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: Physical abuse can occur when a person intentionally or recklessly uses physical force against, with or in the presence of a child without their consent, which causes, or could cause, the child harm. Physical abuse can include hitting, punching, kicking, pushing or throwing something that strikes a child. It also includes behaviour, such as words or gestures, that causes a child to believe that they are about to suffer physical abuse.

Sexual Abuse: Any actions with sexual intent committed against, with or in the presence of a child. Behaviour that could amount to sexual abuse spans a broad range of behaviours from sexual misconduct to a sexual offence. Including – but not limited to - touching children's genitals, penetration, forcing a child to watch or take part in pornography, using sexualised language, or coercing the child to have sex.

Emotional and Psychological Abuse: Any actions (gestures, words and behaviour) that deliberately affect a child's mental/emotional well-being. This may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or rejected, or causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger. Emotional or psychological abuse often diminishes a child's sense of identity, dignity and self-worth.

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.



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 and equity regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, ethnic or social origin, disability, sexual orientation, birth, Aboriginal heritage 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 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, state child welfare organisations and/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 focused 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 across all its operations, including in all overseas ministries.
- 3.3.** This policy and any ministry guidelines will be updated and communicated every two years at a minimum.
- 3.4.** Gateway staff and volunteers 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.
- 3.5.** 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 or volunteer being unable to continue in their role until they have met the requirements.
- 3.6.** Email communication links are located on the Gateway website and App to enable parents and children to make contact with the Gateway staff team with any questions or concerns relating to any of our programs.

4. Culture and Inclusion:

- 4.1** Gateway is a public venue and as such we will seek consent from a parent/guardian for a child/young person to participate in our programs. However, we acknowledge the duty of care to any child/young person who arrives to one of our programs.
- 4.2** Gateway seeks partnership with parents/guardians in relation to their children's participation in Gateway's programs.



- 4.3 Gateway encourages all children to openly express their culture and explore their own cultural rights, including those of Aboriginal heritage.
- 4.4 Staff and volunteers at Gateway are encouraged to grow and expand their knowledge including topics regarding the cultural safety of children when accessing Gateway and its programs. Specifically, this can relate to, but is not limited to, education about Aboriginal culture, to ensure Aboriginal children and young people are provided the best support, and staff are able to demonstrate culturally sensitive behaviour in all aspects.
- 4.5 Children at Gateway are always encouraged in their rights to participation, having their thoughts and ideas heard and recognised, right to safety and a healthy life as well as the right to express their views and participate in decisions that affect them.
- 4.6 All Gateway children who are unable to live at home are shown support and care by all staff and volunteers. They are made aware of the support available to them and their needs are met to the best of the ability of the Church. Children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex are supported and their needs identified by staff and volunteers. We aim to create a safe environment for all children where open conversations can take place and they feel able to express who they are.
- 4.7 All child safety policies are readily accessible via the Gateway app in the Youth and Godzone (Children's Church) sections. Bible-based lessons used in Godzone each week are accessible online where parents are able to view and discuss the planned program.

5. Behavioural Protocols:

- 5.1. Staff and volunteers are expected to treat all people, and especially children with respect and dignity. Inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative or demeaning language or behaviour towards children will not be tolerated.
- 5.2. All staff and volunteers working in a ministry focussed on children must sign a statement to say that:
 - a) they have read the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and any associated ministry guidelines
 - b) will respect and follow these guidelines
 - c) understand that action will be taken in cases of inappropriate behaviour. If the policy is not followed disciplinary action may include suspension of their involvement in an activity, termination of their role, and Police or other government agency involvement.
- 5.3. 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.
- 5.4. Whenever possible, there should always be two adults in a room when working in the proximity of children. A Three-Person rule will be applied when escorting children to the toilet; one adult and two children for primary school aged children, two adults and one child for younger, non-verbal children.



- 5.5. Gateway policy relating to transportation of children by Church leaders is contained within specific ministry guidelines and are regularly reviewed by the Child Safety Officer.
- 5.6. No adult will sleep close to children unless another adult is present at all times.
- 5.7. Engaging children in any form of sexual activities or acts is not permitted. Adults will always be responsible for their own behaviour and cannot blame the child regardless of the child's behaviours.
- 5.8. 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.
- 5.9. Gateway staff and volunteers are required to bring any concerns of children's distress, abuse or potential abuse, to their ministry leaders, Child Safe Officer or Senior Pastor.
- 5.10. Staff are considered mandatory reporters, who are required to report in relation to any form of physical or sexual abuse they become aware of. They may choose, as can anyone, to report in relation to other types of significant harm.

6. Recruitment and Screening

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. 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 permitted to be involved in any child-related activity.
- 6.3. 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.
- 6.4. 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.
- 6.5. Referees should be given an opportunity to express concerns that they may not be happy to put in writing.
- 6.6. Referees should be specifically asked if there have been any formal or informal complaints or investigations against the applicant, regarding children.
- 6.7. Referees should be specifically asked if they would again involve the applicant in a child-focussed program.



7. Responses to Allegations

7.1. Any Gateway staff member should immediately report (without fear of repercussion) 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 parent, caregiver, guardian, or Gateway staff.

7.2. Where a staff member has been informed of a situation outlined in 7.1 or any other similar situation of concern or inappropriate behaviour towards a child, the staff member will report this to the Child Safety Officer at the earliest possible opportunity.

7.3. Following on from 7.2, the Child Safety Officer will then notify the Gateway Board, who will designate a person to take responsibility for the investigation and provide recommendations for appropriate actions. The designated investigator will keep the Gateway Board fully informed of all situations and investigations and 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 to liaise with the media and the Police.
- d)** Any conversations with the child will take place with either a parent or nominated guardian present at all times, as appropriate.
- 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 Board in an extraordinary Gateway Board meeting. The report on recommended actions is 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 and volunteers must:

- a)** obtain consent from a parent/guardian of the child, wherever possible, including an explanation of how the photograph or film will be used;
- b)** assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming a child;
- c)** 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
- d)** ensure storage or transmission of film, photographs and other media meets the requirements of the Privacy Act, or any other appropriate local laws. Film, photographs and other media taken by staff or volunteers for Church purposes should be stored on a Gateway device rather than a personal device.