



Gateway Youth Team Handbook

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General Information

We aim to ensure everything we do makes these two things great: Jesus and the team. We can't do anything without Jesus, and we trust Him with every part of this ministry. Our ministry works best when our team is unified – we all need to play our part, generously provide grace and be willing to sacrifice our needs and wants. If you are hearing from Jesus and committed to the team (not just the youth team, but the wider church family that we operate as a part of), then the youth will always get our best.

We haven't forgotten the actual youth! We assume you are on this team because you value youth which is awesome – don't forget that's why you're here – but our youth get our best when we are doing well with Jesus and each other.

This page outlines how our team works best at the most basic level. The rest of this handbook adds to these statements – whether it's procedures, commitments, or policies; it all points back to achieving what is on this page, and to ensuring our team is strong.

Mission Statement - What are we here to do?

Taking hold of the real life that Jesus gives, we grow people who have a passionate concern for our world.

Values – How do we achieve our mission?

Fun – we give people a reason to smile.

Growth - we have difficult conversations.

Excellence – we bring our best.

Relevance - we speak their language.

Encouragement - we champion people.

Our Character Hallmarks – What are we like?

We are Jesus first – we don't let that slide for anything!

We are Team Gateway – we're a team in a team – we're part of something bigger!

We value people – in all we do because that's what Jesus did!

Guiding Principles – How do we treat our Youth?

We welcome everyone into Gateway Youth like family and protect them like family too.

We connect with youth where they are now, not where we wish they were.

We invite youth onto a journey to discover Jesus and the real life only He offers.

Our Commitment

We are also committed to growing you as a youth team and as individuals. We will provide coaching and training as necessary, along with spiritual and personal growth opportunities. While we know that the expectations laid out in this handbook may seem strenuous, we believe they prepare you to be the best you can be on the youth team, but also in your future employment, training, and personal situations.

On a practical note, we commit to provide advance information about events and your roles as early as we possibly can; dates for the entire year (subject to unforeseen change) will be provided at the start of the year, rosters are provided per term, and team leaders will assign roles as early as possible.

We do our best to maintain the 'team page' (team.gatewayyouth.online) with all relevant information to being on the team, both in general and for a specific event. If you're running a section of the night and have information the team needs to access, just contact the Youth Pastor or Assistant Youth Director and it can be included.

Your Commitment

Being a youth team member is a larger commitment than some other ministries. This reflects the fact that Gateway values young people's care and growth. It takes an 'investment' amount of effort to support young people in the way they deserve.

We value our young people because God values them, and we invest in them because of how God invests in us. Ministry is part of our offering to God, and we never expect any 'return' from the youth.

Time

Team members commit for a full year at a time.

In that year, team members are expected to make the following time commitments:

- All Friday night Youth events
- All Recharge team nights
- Camp No Fear and associated team events
- Regular Sunday Worship
- Vision Mornings
- up to 1 hour per week preparation/follow up time
- up to 1.5 hours per month connecting with youth outside regular events
- Additional role-based commitments (i.e. worship practice, planning meetings etc)

We understand that exceptional circumstances requiring you to miss an event will arise from time to time (emergencies, big life events, weddings & funerals), but we expect that you plan and manage your time to give your best as much as possible – assignments, exams, concerts, parties etc are generally not reasons to miss youth.

If you think you may miss a youth event, it is your responsibility to ask one of the Youth Pastor or Assistant Youth Director and inform other relevant team members with plenty of notice – ideally at least a week. In these circumstances we also expect that you would ensure any responsibilities you had for the night were covered and to make your best effort to give what you can (i.e. can you attend for some of the event?).

Youth Team Roles

Your role will vary with your gifting and the needs of the team or the needs of a particular night. It is expected that team members bring their best to whatever role is allocated to them on any given night including being well prepared. Volunteers are often needed on the night and we all readily volunteer for any role that we can.

Often, members of the youth team will feel a tension between filling the practical needs of the event and being personally present for the youth. The reality is that generally you will have time to fulfil your practical roles on the night and still spend some time with youth, but it is important to remember the bigger picture of the team; even if you spend an hour 'separated' from the youth because you are setting up, running, and packing down a game, you have done your part to provide a framework for the entire youth ministry to run and for other team members to connect with young people and their parents.

Our Team Code of Conduct

We have a code of conduct for team members because both Jesus and a young person's parents or carers have placed their trust in us to set a great example for their youth; and to encourage you to live life in a way that is pleasing to God. We know that all people are on a journey so if you think that one of these items might be difficult for you, or you realize you have inadvertently strayed from this code, simply speak to the Youth Pastor. Our heart is to help grow you towards meeting this code – not necessarily kick you out of youth!

Our ultimate code of conduct is this: In everything we do, we try to honour God so that we can confidently say “follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

We are followers of Jesus, and we value that personal relationship, so we read or listen to our bible, pray, journal, worship, and tithe regularly. We know we can only take our youth where we have been first.

We value personal growth. We are actively exploring opportunities like other ministry opportunities, Gateway courses, conferences, books, and podcasts.

We are a team. We fight for unity of Gateway and guard the team like family. We actively build our church and show our commitment as contributing members of the church family. We don't let offence in. If we have a problem with any other team member, we talk about it straight away, let each other say sorry and move on.

We are generous with our time. We know that nothing impacts a youth more than the gift of our time. We are in contact with our regulars once a week without fail and follow the 'Your 5' system (outlined later in this handbook). We value the team by being on time – consistent lateness tells the rest of the team that you think your time is more important than theirs.

We speak positively. Our words highly value and encourage each other. We speak life into each other and our youth - we see them how God sees them. We share great stories from around our youth group with the team to encourage each other.

We value accountability with the leaders above us. It develops us and develops our relationship with God, so we seek it out. We ask for help when we are out of our depth so that we can serve our youth in the best way possible.

We honour God through what we do online, and in the things that we talk about with youth, team members and our friends who aren't in the youth team. The youth can see, are influenced by, and remember what we post and discuss. We want those encounters to have a positive influence.

We genuinely, but appropriately, invite the youth into our worlds to set an example; "Real Life". We meet youth where their needs are – not out of our needs or hurts. We seek them out, not wait for them to seek us out. We set an example in how we pray, worship, listen, and encourage at youth, church and privately. We are thermostats - we set the temperature and mood. We don't let that fall to others or circumstances.

We avoid any conduct or conversations that could be unhelpful or a negative influence on those for whom we are responsible. We submit all areas of our lives before God and express our faith both privately and to youth, in that light. Examples include any addictions, smoking, drugs, all forms of sex before marriage, pornography, gambling and any other conduct that might be displeasing to God. We have been entrusted to set an example by how we live.

If we drink, we drink responsibly and consider who can see us with alcohol (whether in real life or on social media). Youth have all sorts of experiences of alcohol that can lead them to make assumptions about our conduct when seen or taken out of context.

Our Child Protection Policies

It is our job to treat all youth with respect, regardless of race, sex, language, religion, background, or disability; and provide a fun, welcoming, and safe environment for children and fellow team members.

These policies are in place to ensure that this goal is met and to protect both our youth, team, and the reputation of the Church and Jesus. These policies are strict, and any breach will be dealt with by the Youth Pastor in consultation with the Gateway Child Safety Team. A first minor breach will, at minimum, result in suspension from the youth team for a period. A second minor breach, or a major breach, will, at minimum, result in dismissal from any ministries where you work with children at Gateway.

The policies laid out below include youth ministry specific examples and cover the most common questions and scenarios you will come across in youth ministry. It is not exhaustive. Ask questions if you are unsure of any scenario and be willing to accept guidance from other team members. **All effort is made to keep this document up to date, however in the case of a conflict, the Gateway Church Child Safety Policy supersedes the information contained in this document.**

Working With Children Checks

All team members must have a current Working with Children's Check. Additionally, any team member joining the team for the first time will complete the new team member application process before they may begin on the youth team, including reading and signing that they have read and understood the Gateway Church Child Safety policy.

Coaching

Some youth can benefit from having a member of the youth team as a 'coach' (either formally or informally). When we coach youth, we try to do the same thing a sports coach does, but for the life in general. We ask about what is going well, what they are struggling with, and offer plenty of encouragement – encouragement in life and faith is the main purpose of coaching. We get parent/carer permission via the coaching form.

At no time should you put yourself in a situation where you are alone with a youth of the opposite sex. Ideally, we hang out, coach and mentor youth in pairs at minimum, so that 3 people are always present. If one on one time is required, we do it in a public place.

Transport

We transport our youth if needed, however:

- We get parent/carer permission via the Transport form.
- We provide our personal contact details to the parent/carer number provided on that form if we haven't already.
- As above, at no time are we ever in a car alone with a youth of the opposite gender. We can give lifts to youth of the opposite gender if there are 3 or more people in the car for the duration of that trip.
- We record **every** car trip with youth in the car in the youth services database.
- We obey the law – we don't endanger the lives of our youths with our driving.

The Role of Parents/Carers

At Gateway Youth we value parents and their role in our youth's lives. We encourage them, support them, and respect their role in their child's life. We work alongside families to promote child safety and empower young people to participate in conversations that affect them.

Forms

Youth Services Form – This form is just for the youth team and has two main purposes: child safety and impact tracking. We enter any 'service' provided outside of our core youth program (transport, coaching, baptism prep, etc.) and any decisions made, or information requested. This allows us to have a record of both our impact, and interactions with Youth. It can be found on the 'team page' at team.gatewayyouth.online

Parent/Carer Forms

The following forms for to be filled out by parents/carers and are available at gatewayyouth.online – you can confirm receipt of transport and/or coaching permission via the relevant links on the 'team page' at team.gatewayyouth.online

Participation Form – When a new youth begins attending, we ask a parent/carer to provide some contact and permission information so that we can best support all in our care.

Transport Permission Form – to align with both our organizational commitment to parents/carers and to comply with Child Safe Standard 4, we seek and confirm express permission for transport. This protect us, the youth, and ensures that parents/carers are informed, and given choice about the level of driving experience of team members transporting their child/ren.

Coaching Permission Form – to align with both our organizational commitment to parents/carers and to comply with Child Safe Standard 4, we seek and confirm express permission for coaching. This protect us, the youth, and ensures that parents/carers are informed about the programs their child/ren are in.

Sleepovers

We clear any activity involving sleepovers with the Youth Pastor well prior to the event, when possible, for instance if you were organising a Life Group overnighiter. This includes in the unusual case of an 'emergency' situation to ensure child safety boundaries are established and clear in that scenario.

Physical Touch

it is important to balance the care and positivity of physical touch with guidelines for appropriateness to protect both the youth and team members. Appropriate physical touch can be encouraging, show value and be reassuring but inappropriate physical touch can be extremely damaging, so we must be wise, use good judgement and be open to accept guidance from other team members – as with all our child safety policies.

Remember that physical touch should only ever be about meeting the youth's needs, never about how you prefer to be shown value. There is no expectation that you behave in any way that you find uncomfortable – if you aren't a 'touchy' person, there is no expectation that you provide physical reassurance or encouragement to any youth.

Physical Touch Guidelines:

Green Light – go for it!

High Fives
Dumb Handshakes
Tap on the shoulder

Yellow Light – be careful!

Play fighting
Hugs – the 'side hug' is your best option

Red Light – unacceptable!

Any physical touch should be public
Touching around genitals and face
Youth who avoid physical contact
Youth sitting in your lap

Romantic Relationships

It's not wise to be on the youth team if you are in (or would like to be in) a romantic relationship with someone who is captured by the trust responsibility of your role. It shows integrity to practice transparency with the Youth Pastor as early as possible regarding romantic interest in someone who is under 18 years of age and who regularly attends any Gateway programs. Transparency creates trust and avoids doubt or hearsay about your intentions and preserves everyone's commitment to child safety. Further, and for the sake of clarity, it is generally not acceptable for anyone on the Youth Team to be in a romantic relationship with someone who regularly attends Gateway's Youth programs.

Social Media

We don't seek out youth on any online platform, although, if we are comfortable, we may accept friend requests. We never pressure youth to add us on any online platform.

Feedback, Concerns & Complaints

We have a form available on both team.gatewayyouth.online and gatewayyouth.online for feedback, concerns and & complaints. We encourage team members, parents, carers, and youth alike to make use of it at any time. The form responses go to the Youth Pastor and Child Safety Officer – so it can be used regarding any person. The information provided is only shared as necessary for resolution or as required by legislation.

Feedback could be something we're doing great, or something we could improve on but isn't a concern/complaint. A concern is something didn't seem/feel right and *might* require follow up. A complaint is for if you've observed, heard about, or experienced abuse or improper behaviour that requires *immediate* follow up. Essentially, anyone can use this form to tell us anything and remain anonymous if they wish.

Victorian Child Safe Standards

All children have the right to feel safe and be safe, but safety does not just happen. Victoria's Child Safe Standards are a set of mandatory requirements to protect children and young people from harm and abuse. The Child Safe Standards were introduced in response to recommendations from the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations. The rest of Gateways guidelines, policies and standards put these standards into practice.

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Reporting

The Youth Team is required to inform the Youth Pastor or Assistant Youth Director (unless it triggers the compulsory reporting process below) of any information we are given by youth that is not a part of regular, everyday life (examples below) – this could be anything from someone making them feel uncomfortable all the way through to physical or sexual abuse. This means that generally it's not necessary for a youth team member to consider the seriousness of the situation; simply err on the side of reporting anything out of the ordinary.

We use this information to support youth and families through any difficult situations they may face, as well as to trigger follow up for situations that may need to be immediately reported to parents/carers or authorities.

Where an immediate report isn't triggered, we encourage young people to talk about these areas of their life with parents/carers to open dialogue and empower them in their day to day lives. We might also seek to support the family where appropriate.

Examples

These are some specific examples that should be reported immediately which would be passed on to a parent/carer as soon as practical. These are broadly summed up as behaviours that are either illegal or pose immediate danger to the young person.

Alcohol use	Drug use	Vaping	Smoking
Suicidal thoughts	Illegal behaviour	Self-harm	Physical abuse
Sexual abuse	Emotional abuse	Any abuse experienced or perpetrated	

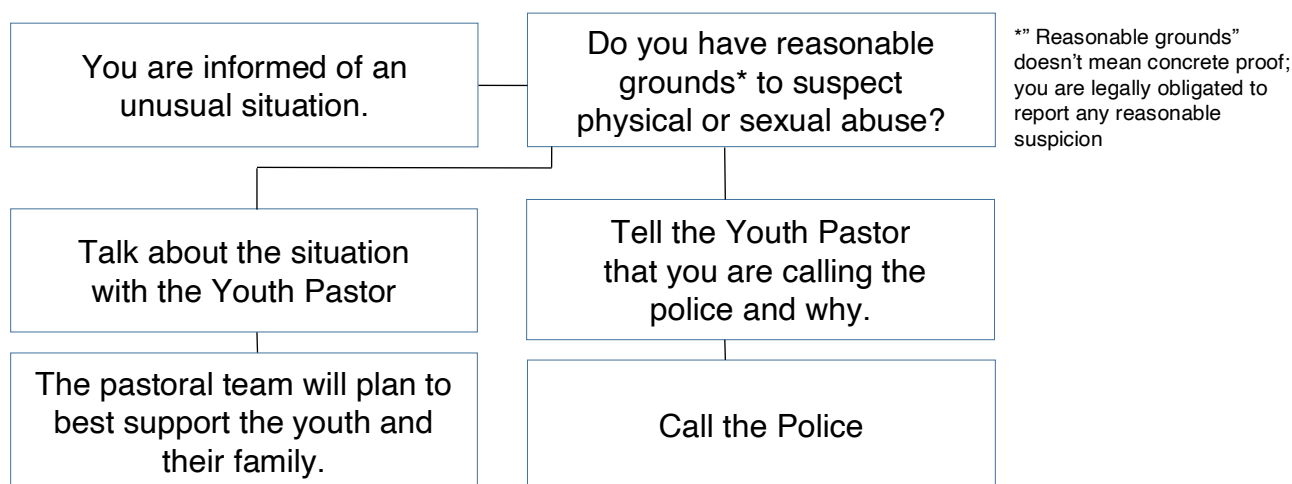
These are some specific examples that should be reported to the Youth pastor for potential follow up at their discretion or via other avenues.

Family issues	Possible mental illness	Risky behaviours	Out of character choices
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Compulsory Reporting Regarding Youth

In addition to the above, certain information or scenarios involving youth need to be reported to the authorities. Your use of this flowchart is triggered when you become aware of something that is 'not a part of regular, everyday life' as outlined above.

As indicated below it is, by law, the responsibility of any adult who has reasonable grounds to suspect physical or sexual abuse directly to the police, but we request that you let the Youth Pastor know in addition to contacting the police – but no advice or request given by Gateway supersedes the law.



Compulsory Reporting Regarding Team Members

It is Gateway's responsibility to report any allegations of inappropriate conduct by staff or volunteers to the relevant authorities within 3 days of being made aware of any allegation. This is not limited to staff or volunteers within children's or youth ministry, it applies to any staff member or volunteer. It doesn't even need to have happened at Gateway – our responsibility to report any allegation still stands.

The following 5 categories outline allegations that we are required to report:

- sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm
- significant neglect

Essentially, if you become aware of any of the above in the life of any staff member or volunteer at Gateway, it is your responsibility to report it to Gateway, so that we can report it as required.

Leadership Structure

Gateway Youth has a leadership structure overlayed on our 'heart to help wherever we are needed'. Our structures don't exist to create 'silos' and we don't accept 'not my problem' attitudes – we are one team that wins and loses together, but teams need leaders. We encourage investment and ownership of the different parts of Gateway Youth so that they are fulfilled with excellence regardless of your 'leadership role'.

One part of the structure is the senior team that works with the Youth Pastor and Assistant Youth Director on vision and long-term planning. Senior team members are experienced, proven team members who are co-leaders of the ministry with the Youth Pastor and Assistant Youth Director.

Another part is team leaders/2ICs who are given additional responsibility to general youth team members in a specific area for a time.

The final part of the structure is our general team members – you are not 'less than' anyone else if you don't have a formal 'leadership role' right now – we are one team and we all lead our youth 'from the pews'!

Our heart is to create opportunities for those members of the team who would like to take on more responsibility and ownership. If you see a role that you might be interested in taking on, or developing into, just ask - and continue to develop in your personal leadership!

We use our 4 key pillars of youth ministry to loosely shape our leadership structure:

Engagement	Online
How youth move to being connected	How we connect during the week
Discipleship	Team Development
How we grow youth in life and faith	How we grow the team

Each pillar has a few areas of focus

Engagement	Online	Discipleship	Team Development
Invite Events	Youth	Fun Factor	Team Development
Welcoming	Parents	Worship	Team Support
Connecting		Spiritual Growth	Courses
Engaging		Life Groups	MASH

Youth Follow Up

Gateway Youth's 'Your 5' system is implemented as a way of keeping in touch with the youth in a positive and encouraging way. By taking up the responsibility of keeping in touch with up to 5 youth, our team can be a reliable support system in our youth's lives.

We also provide follow up calls for youth who attend for the first time or who make any sort of commitment at Gateway Youth so that we can reinforce that they have been 'seen' and are valued.

'Your 5' also extends to supporting the broader team; each senior team member is allocated up to 5 team members, who are in turn allocated up to 5 youth. This allows us to support you as best we can and gives you a direct contact on the senior team.

'Your 5' Contact

We aim to stay in contact with 'our 5' on 3 levels:

Level 1 – Weekly rapid contact – as simple as a text message to each of your 5 about Friday and asking them how their week is going.

Level 2 – Monthly intentional contact – once a month set aside an hour or so to intentionally connect with some of 'your 5'. For instance, arrange to pick up 2 of them and go to a Macca's for a thick shake – following the coaching policies outlined later in this document.

Level 3 – Annual investment contact – once a year try to find something you can do for each of 'your 5' that is above and beyond. The more you understand their worlds, the easier it will be to figure out what counts; it could be going to their footy match, taking them to the Big Bash, writing them a thoughtful letter or turning up to their birthday party.

New Person Follow Up

In the debrief meeting, new youth information will be handed out to volunteering team members, and a follow up phone call is made to them throughout the next week. If you'd like you can use this as an outline for the call:

Introduce yourself and where you are from

How did you enjoy youth? (personal point from conversation at youth)

Do you need any more information about upcoming events? (I'll meet you there)

Commitment Follow Up

In the debrief meeting, commitment information may be handed out to volunteering team members, and a follow up phone call is made to them throughout the next week. If you'd like you can use this as an outline for the call:

Introduce yourself, where you are from and why you are calling.

Be excited- how do you feel about that commitment now?

How could we best support you? Is there anyone in particular you'd like help from?

Coaching

If you are meeting youth in person, outside of Gateway Youth programs, in any form, even as a one-off, we apply our coaching policies to provide appropriate boundaries.

Depending on who you talk to, the phrases 'coaching' and 'mentoring' are often used interchangeably. Youth are drawn to the phrase mentoring, possibly because it is a phrase often used in schools. At Gateway we have loose definitions that separate the two phrases for discussions and clarity at the team level, however there is generally no need to change the phrase that a participant prefers.

We would say that a coaching relationship is for the general wellbeing of the participant. It mainly revolves around asking great questions that encourage the participant to consider what is going in their lives, more than offer advice. In the same way a basketball coach encourages and guides a team, we coach and encourage people. The coach can be pretty much anyone who is 'further along in life' than the participant and is willing to develop their coaching skills.

We would say that a mentoring relationship is for the development of specific skills/areas in the participants life. It also revolves around great questions, but probably consists of more sharing of advice and experiences in a specific field.

In general, and by these definitions, the youth team is mainly involved with providing coaching. We recommend that all youth team members are being actively coached to be setting an example of continuous growth.

Youth coaching guidelines (non-negotiable)

- Parent/carer must fill out the Coaching Permission form
- You must provide your personal contact details to the parent/carer number provided in that form
- Transport can only be provided as per the transport policy earlier in this document
- Reporting requirements (as outlined earlier in this document) must be adhered to

Tips for coaching youth

- Ask open ended questions and practice active listening
- Set short and long-term goals, return to these goals regularly
- Ask about how they've been going with God - are they spending time with him?
- Be willing to ask tough questions and genuinely care about the answers
- Don't be too quick to offer advice, or your own experiences unless the participant asks you too (and even then, see if you can get them to think about it themselves)
- Don't pretend to have answers that you don't have – it's a better example to seek answers together
- We aren't trained counsellors, so don't try to be! If you feel out of your depth, refer to the youth pastor.
- While we share our experiences when appropriate, we also know that what parents consider appropriate varies greatly, and account for it.

Example coaching session outline

- How has your week been? What's a high and a low and why?
- Ask about their interests (e.g. How did your basketball game go on Tuesday?)
- How have you been spending time with God lately? Why?
- What's a goal you want to achieve next week? (School related, God related, etc)
- What's a goal you want to achieve next month/term/year? Why?
- How can I help with these goals?
- Have something to share/read together?
- Is there anything else you really wanted to talk about today?
- Organise another catch up time
- Remember (write it down if you need to) some key points from the conversation

Training and support

At Gateway Youth, we develop and train people for ministry – it's one of our core pillars of ministry. We also know that youth ministry can be tough, so being skilled up and knowing you have a support team is important – we value being life-long learners.

Recharge

Approximately once a month on a Wednesday evening we have compulsory team Recharge events. We supply dinner, training, spiritual enrichment, and time together in support groups – this is your opportunity to learn, be refreshed and get support for whatever you are facing.

DYMU

We provide free access to the Download Youth Ministry University training courses. While we don't require returning youth team to participate in this online training, it's strongly encouraged that you work through it. We do celebrate those who make an effort in this area though! The courses consist of short (~10mins each) videos followed by a handful of questions (when asked, enter the email address "youth@gateway.asn.au" so that we know when you've completed a module and can celebrate you!). They're fast, fun, and practical!

Other Courses

We encourage team members to engage with other learning opportunities around Gateway, such as Leadership Essentials – our leadership program that will make you better at youth, and in the rest of your life. If you're interested in LE, contact the Youth Pastor or Assistant Youth Director.

Support

Although our team is large, supporting you is incredibly important to us – it's as simple as this: no matter what is going on, members of the senior team and the Youth Pastor or Assistant Youth Director are available to support you. Whether it's just listening, providing advice or experience, we are here for you.

New Team Members

We love new team members – fresh faces keep us young and keep the energy up in the team! We want you to have the best start possible, so new team members are allocated an experienced youth team mentor when you begin. We also require you to have finished the '101' portion of training in the DYMU program by the end of term 1.

Planning Activities

Why?

We aim to be prepared and deliver the best program possible so that Youth can have a great time, break down barriers and connect with those around them. Planning activities well means the person running the activity is prepared, the youth understand and enjoy the activity, and everyone is safe. Risk assessments are a part of the planning process done to minimise the risks that youth and team are exposed to. Most activities that we carry out in daily life involve an element of risk so it is an unattainable goal to remove risk completely, but we can remove or reduce unnecessary risk.

How?

We use an activity planner with integrated risk assessment. The activity planner also allows re-use of activities, easier handover of games when necessary and ensures all relevant team members understand how the activity should run.

Activity planners are checked and approved by the Youth Pastor or Assistant Youth Director before an activity can run.

Planners should have a clear and concise explanation of the activity so that anyone reading it can understand and run the activity and ensure the appropriate risks have been assessed. The planner also clarifies information such as the materials you require, how to set up, how to explain the objective, rules and so on.

When?

In regular circumstances, activity planners are due to the Youth Pastor or Assistant Youth Director no later than one week before the activity is due to run. This allows time for necessary changes without impacting activities at the last second. It also allows these people time to fit reading and responding into their normal duties.

We understand that sometimes circumstances may result in activity planners being submitted later than this deadline however it is unacceptable for this to become a habit – it shows a lack of honour towards people's time and more importantly, their safety.


Reimbursement policy

From time to time, you may need to make some purchases for the youth ministry. It's important that these are authorised by the relevant team leader or the Youth Pastor before the purchase is made.

For other events, if the amount is over \$25. It generally goes through the finance department which can take up to 10 days – provide your receipt to the Youth Pastor for reimbursement. If the amount is under \$25 you need to obtain your reimbursement by providing receipts to the canteen at a House Party Night. We will make any reasonable, authorised, reimbursement requested, but if it is for a small amount and you're able to consider it an extra contribution to the church (rather than request a reimbursement), we encourage you to do that.


Example activity planner

Note the detail included in each section – in particular scoring, materials, and personnel. Try to include everything you can think of. It may help to visualise yourself setting up, running the activity, and packing it up. Consider the people you will need at each stage for each thing you have listed under setup, how to play and rules – have you considered people to referee the rules/objectives? Try to read the planner from the perspective of someone who only has this to go on, is it clear enough to picture how the activity should run? If a team member read out the objective, how to play and rules sections word-for-word, would the activity be fully explained to the youth?

 <h2>Activity Planner</h2>		
Activity Name:	Protect the nest	Location: Carpark
Objective:		
To have as many tennis balls, as many opposing team tags, and as few table tennis balls, in your teams' bucket by the end of the allocated time.		
Setup (what needs to happen before the activity):		Reward/Scoring:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Speakers and Mics in carpark -One Tub at each end of the carpark and a tub in the middle of the playing area with a circle of cones around it. -Tennis balls & table tennis balls in the middle tub. -Blue and Red tags handed out to identify each team 		1 pt per tennis ball in tub 1 pt per opposing team tag in tub -5 pts per table tennis ball in tub Winning team gets lollies
How to Play:		Materials (include clean-up):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teams send two players at a time to run into the middle circle and collect one tennis ball per person and bring it back to their team's tub. -Once the middle bucket has no tennis balls left, players may try to steal tennis balls from other teams. -Teams may also send players to collect one table tennis ball person at any time. Players can try to throw these into the opposing team's tub. -Other players can try to steal tags from the other team for extra points. 		3 tubs Speakers and 2 Mics 150 tags 50 tennis balls 20 table tennis balls Lollies for prize
Rules (what players can't do):		Personnel Needed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If a player gets their tag taken while holding any ball, they must drop the ball where they are and return to their team - Players can only steal from other teams when the middle bucket is empty - Players may only have one ball or tag with them at a time 		2 setup/ 4 pack up 4 handing out tags 1 supervisor per tub 2 team captains 2 activity MCs
Risk Assessment		
Risk	H/M/L	How to limit/remove risk
Slips trips falls	L	Team to supervise and ensure scenarios are acted out safely
Getting hit by a tennis ball	L	If a player throws a tennis ball, it is returned to the centre tub

Blank activity planner

Digital copies of this blank planner are available at any time.

 <h2>Activity Planner</h2>		
Activity Name:		Location:
Objective:		
Setup:	Reward:	
How to Play:	Materials Needed:	
Rules:	Personnel Needed:	
Possible Alterations for Younger Players	Possible Alterations for Older Players	
Risk Assessment (some examples provided)		
Risk	H/M/L	How to limit/remove risk
Slips trips falls	L	Team to supervise and ensure scenarios are acted out safely. Ensure any cables are placed in safe positions so participants won't trip, and no electric shock will happen if drinks are spilled.
Choking hazard	M	Make sure food is well blended
Allergies	L	Ask volunteers if they have any food intolerances

Planning checklists

Why?

These checklists ensure that the person responsible for a particular Gateway Youth event can be confident that they have covered all the basic needs for the night ranging all the way from macro items like 'does it meet our desired outcomes and values' to more micro items like 'have you considered food intolerances'.

Using these checklists ensure that all of our events meet our desired outcomes and are executed with excellence. It is important that these checklists are considered at the earliest stage of planning if they are to help make the event easier to plan – they don't exist as a hurdle to get out of the way when planning an event, rather we need to think of them as a tool to help plan the event more effectively.

How?

It really is as simple as thinking about items and ticking off the checklist. Some items may not be as critical for a particular event and therefore require no action – but by using the list we know we have considered the basics and avoided any easily avoided mistakes.

We have three checklists that are similar but have some changes to suit our three main types of events: House Party, Life Groups, and offsite events.

You can use and submit a paper form, but we also have similar checklists available digitally for each event – speak to your senior team member if you think you need to fill one in.

House Party checklist

Philosophy	
How are we pointing people to Jesus?	
How does this event incorporate each of our key values?	
Fun	
Encouragement	
Relevance	
Growth	
Excellence	
Planning/Safety	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dates/Venue Booked	<input type="checkbox"/> Organising team identified
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Pastor informed	<input type="checkbox"/> Activity Planners
<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Parent Info	<input type="checkbox"/> Instagram Youth Info
<input type="checkbox"/> Runsheet completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Permission to podcast
<input type="checkbox"/> Transport	
Runsheet/Team	
<input type="checkbox"/> Team arrival time	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaker
<input type="checkbox"/> MCs	<input type="checkbox"/> Band
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign In	<input type="checkbox"/> Activities/Games
<input type="checkbox"/> Tech – audio and video	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media/Photography
<input type="checkbox"/> Team Meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> Setup
<input type="checkbox"/> Pack up	<input type="checkbox"/> Announcements
<input type="checkbox"/> Lock up	<input type="checkbox"/> First aider
Setup/Venue	
<input type="checkbox"/> Take photo of space as found	
Food	
<input type="checkbox"/> Anticipated numbers	<input type="checkbox"/> Food safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Dietary requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Leftovers
<input type="checkbox"/> Menu	<input type="checkbox"/> Drinks
<input type="checkbox"/> Plates/bowls/cutlery	<input type="checkbox"/> Cups
Pack Up/Follow Up	
<input type="checkbox"/> New youth follow up	<input type="checkbox"/> Commitment follow up
<input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral follow up	<input type="checkbox"/> Incident reports
<input type="checkbox"/> Team debrief	<input type="checkbox"/> Reds/Greens
<input type="checkbox"/> Space returned as found	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifts home for youth

Life Group checklist

Philosophy	
How are we pointing people to Jesus?	
How does this event incorporate each of our key values?	
Fun	
Encouragement	
Relevance	
Growth	
Excellence	
Planning/Safety	
<input type="checkbox"/> Runsheet completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Activity Planners
<input type="checkbox"/> Transport	<input type="checkbox"/> Pet safety (for pets and youth)
Runsheet/Team	
<input type="checkbox"/> Team arrival time	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaker
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign In	<input type="checkbox"/> Activities/Games
<input type="checkbox"/> Announcements	<input type="checkbox"/> Are you involving youth?
Setup/Venue	
<input type="checkbox"/> Enough space	<input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen
<input type="checkbox"/> Parking	<input type="checkbox"/> Take photo of space as found
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrival vibe (music etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Money
Food	
<input type="checkbox"/> Anticipated numbers	<input type="checkbox"/> Food safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Dietary requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Leftovers
<input type="checkbox"/> Menu	<input type="checkbox"/> Drinks
<input type="checkbox"/> Plates/bowls/cutlery	<input type="checkbox"/> Cups
Pack Up/Follow Up	
<input type="checkbox"/> New youth follow up	<input type="checkbox"/> Commitment follow up
<input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral follow up	<input type="checkbox"/> Incident reports
<input type="checkbox"/> Team debrief	<input type="checkbox"/> Reds/Greens
<input type="checkbox"/> Space returned as found	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifts home for youth

Offsite Event checklist

Philosophy	
How are we pointing people to Jesus?	
How does this event incorporate each of our key values?	
Fun	
Encouragement	
Relevance	
Growth	
Excellence	
Planning/Safety	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dates/Venue Booked	<input type="checkbox"/> Organising team identified
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Pastor informed	<input type="checkbox"/> Flyers
<input type="checkbox"/> Online Info	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit
<input type="checkbox"/> Runsheet completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Activity Planners
<input type="checkbox"/> Transport inc. parent permission	<input type="checkbox"/> Indemnity form
Communications include:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Who is coming	<input type="checkbox"/> Who is running it (use logo)
<input type="checkbox"/> Where – be specific	<input type="checkbox"/> When (start and end)
<input type="checkbox"/> What is happening (food?)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cost (even if free)
<input type="checkbox"/> What to bring	<input type="checkbox"/> Comms flyer at event (i.e. next week)
Runsheet/Team	
<input type="checkbox"/> Team arrival time	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaker
<input type="checkbox"/> MCs and Announcements	<input type="checkbox"/> Activities/Games
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign In	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media/Photography
<input type="checkbox"/> Team Meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> Setup
<input type="checkbox"/> Pack up	<input type="checkbox"/> First aider
Setup/Venue	
<input type="checkbox"/> Enough space	<input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen/Parking/Bathrooms
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrival vibe (music etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Signage/Team Lanyards
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign in wristbands	<input type="checkbox"/> Take photo of space as found
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign in devices	<input type="checkbox"/> Money (EFTPOS?)
Food	
<input type="checkbox"/> Anticipated numbers	<input type="checkbox"/> Food safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Dietary requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Leftovers
<input type="checkbox"/> Menu	<input type="checkbox"/> Drinks
<input type="checkbox"/> Plates/bowls/cutlery	<input type="checkbox"/> Cups
Pack Up/Follow Up	
<input type="checkbox"/> New youth follow up	<input type="checkbox"/> Commitment follow up
<input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral follow up	<input type="checkbox"/> Incident reports
<input type="checkbox"/> Team debrief	<input type="checkbox"/> Reds/Greens
<input type="checkbox"/> Space returned as found	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifts home for youth



Child Safe Code of Conduct

Gateway Church (Australia) Limited

Revised: December 2025

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 vulnerable members of our community.

Gateway has zero tolerance for child abuse. We are committed to child safety and wellbeing, and to creating environments where children feel safe, are listened to, and can participate in decisions affecting them. Every person working with children at Gateway shares responsibility for keeping children safe.

Gateway's staff and volunteers will:

- Treat all children with dignity and respect, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, background, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, or other status;
- Provide a safe, welcoming, fun, and respectful environment for children, families, and fellow team members;
- Respect and value the diverse cultures and experiences of all children, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and support children to express their culture and identity;
- Respect the role of parents, guardians, families, and communities, maintaining open communication about concerns, activities, events, and interactions with children;
- Model Christian values aligned with Gateway's values (fun, growth, encouragement, relevance, and excellence) and follow any additional guidelines specific to their ministry or activity;
- Listen to children, take them seriously, and value their perspectives and participation in matters that affect them;
- Plan mentoring sessions and meetings with children in public, visible spaces, or where a second adult is present, maintaining transparency with parents and guardians about plans and locations;
- Be accountable for their behaviour toward children and accept responsibility for its consequences;
- Allow access to any one-on-one digital communication between adult and child for review by a ministry leader, Child Safety Officer, or staff member without notice;
- Ensure all photos, videos, and social media posts present children in a dignified and respectful manner, are honest representations of the environment, and have appropriate parental consent;
- Understand and comply with Gateway's Child Protection Policy, the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards, and the Reportable Conduct Scheme;

- Maintain current Working with Children Check (WWCC) registration with Gateway listed as a linked organisation;
- Report immediately any concerns—no matter how minor—about a child's welfare, wellbeing, or safety to ministry leaders, the Child Safety Officer, or Senior Pastor. Criminal conduct must be reported to Victoria Police as the first priority;
- Report any allegations or reasonable beliefs of reportable conduct (sexual offences, sexual misconduct, physical violence, emotional or psychological harm, or significant neglect) involving Gateway personnel immediately to the Child Safety Officer or Senior Pastor; and
- Participate in mandatory child safety training and professional development as required.

Gateway's staff and volunteers will never:

- Engage in any form of child abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse, or neglect;
- Use language or behaviour that is offensive, discriminatory, sexually suggestive, bullying, shaming, humiliating, or degrading toward children, families, or team members;
- Develop any romantic, sexual, or otherwise inappropriate relationship with a child, or engage in any physical contact that is inappropriate, unnecessary, or culturally insensitive;
- Show favouritism or discriminate based on any characteristic including race, culture, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity;
- Assist with personal care (bathing, toileting, changing) unless designated as an authorised support worker, carer, or aide;
- Share a room or sleep in proximity to children unless another adult is present at all times, or be alone in a vehicle with a child of the opposite gender (Youth team members must register in the lifts database when transporting young people);
- Use physical punishment or any unsafe disciplinary practices;
- Exploit children for unpaid or underpaid labour;
- Use Gateway devices or technology to exploit, groom, harass children, or access, produce, or distribute child abuse material; or
- Ignore, dismiss, or fail to report suspected child abuse or child safety concerns, or victimise anyone who raises concerns in good faith.

*Gateway Church (Australia) Ltd Child Safe Code of Conduct
Revised: December 2025*



Child Protection Policy

Gateway Church (Australia) Limited

Revised: December 2025

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, elders, volunteers, interns, consultants, special guests and contractors engaged by Gateway.

Gateway Leadership: The Senior Pastor, Directors, Elders, or any member of the Gateway Church (Australia) Board.

Child Safety Officer: the designated person responsible for coordinating child safety compliance and serving as the primary contact for child safety matters.

Child abuse: harm to a child. This includes, but is not limited to:

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse occurs when a person intentionally or recklessly uses physical force against, with or in the presence of a child, which causes or could cause harm to the child. Physical abuse includes hitting, punching, kicking, pushing, striking a child with an object, or threatening a child with harm.

Sexual Abuse: Any sexual act or sexual threat committed against, with or in the presence of a child. This includes sexual offences and sexual misconduct, spanning from inappropriate touching to penetration, exposing a child to pornography, using sexualised language, grooming, or any other conduct of a sexual nature.

Emotional and Psychological Abuse: Any behaviour that significantly harms a child's emotional or psychological wellbeing. This may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or rejected, causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or sustained patterns of hostile, degrading, or humiliating treatment.

Neglect: Failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional, medical, or educational needs, including adequate supervision, nutrition, healthcare, emotional nurture, and safe housing.

2. Principles and Commitments

1. Gateway is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. Every child under the care of Gateway will be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, ethnic or social origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, birth, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, or other status.
2. Gateway has zero tolerance for child abuse. We are committed to providing a child safe environment where children feel safe, are listened to, and their voices are heard regarding decisions that affect their lives.
3. Gateway implements the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards and complies with the Reportable Conduct Scheme. All staff and volunteers will familiarise themselves with this policy and relevant ministry guidelines. Compliance with these standards protects children, staff, and volunteers, and provides accountability and transparency in our child safety practices.
4. Gateway will adopt evidence-based policies and best practices to prevent child abuse and will comply with all relevant legislation on child rights and welfare. This includes mandatory reporting to appropriate authorities, the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), Victoria Police, state child protection services, and other regulatory bodies within statutory timeframes.
5. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in Gateway's organisational leadership, governance, and culture. Gateway Leadership is accountable for creating and maintaining systems that protect children and responds appropriately to child safety risks.

3. Cultural Safety and Inclusion

1. **Cultural Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children:** Gateway is committed to establishing a culturally safe environment where the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are respected and valued. We are committed to ensuring Aboriginal children feel safe expressing their culture and identity within our programs.
2. Gateway encourages all children to express their culture and explore their cultural rights. We acknowledge that children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may face additional barriers to safety and participation, and we work to address these through appropriate support and advocacy.
3. Gateway is committed to upholding equity and respecting diverse needs in policy and practice. Children who are unable to live at home, children with disability, and children who identify as LGBTIQ+ are provided appropriate support.
4. Gateway encourages children to have their voices heard, particularly on matters important to them.

4. Communication, Education, and Family Engagement

1. Gateway is committed to educating staff and volunteers about child protection and the Child Safe Standards through induction and ongoing professional development.

2. This policy and ministry guidelines are reviewed and updated every two years at a minimum, or more frequently if required by legislative changes or identified risks.
3. All staff and volunteers working with children must complete initial training on this policy and applicable ministry guidelines upon commencement. Regular refresher training is required, with frequency determined by role and risk level.
4. Failure to maintain compliance requirements (including current Working with Children Check or completion of mandatory training) will result in immediate suspension from child-related activities until requirements are met. Persistent non-compliance may result in termination of the role.
5. **Family and Community Partnership:** Gateway seeks meaningful partnership with parents, guardians, families, and communities in promoting child safety. Families are welcome to view our child safety policies, programs, and complaints processes.
6. Email and phone contacts are available through the Gateway website and app for parents and children to raise questions or concerns about our programs. All child safety policies are accessible via the Gateway app in the Youth and Godzone sections, and program information is available for parental review.
7. As a public venue, Gateway acknowledges a duty of care to any child who arrives at our programs. While we seek parental consent for ongoing participation, we will not turn away a child in need of support.

5. Code of Conduct and Behavioural Expectations

1. All staff and volunteers must treat children with dignity and respect. Inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, or demeaning language or behaviour toward children will not be tolerated and will result in immediate action including possible termination and reporting to authorities.
2. All staff and volunteers working with children must sign Gateway's Child Safety Code of Conduct, acknowledging they:
 - a) have read and understood the Child Safety Code of Conduct and associated ministry guidelines;
 - b) will respect and follow these guidelines in all interactions with children;
 - c) understand that failure to comply may result in disciplinary action including suspension, termination, and notification to Victoria Police, the CCYP, or other regulatory bodies.
3. Discipline of children must be age-appropriate and focus on positive behaviour guidance. Permitted approaches include verbal redirection, natural consequences, and temporary withdrawal of privileges. Corporal punishment is strictly prohibited. Specific ministry guidelines outline appropriate discipline procedures for each age group.
4. A minimum of two adults must be present when working with children whenever possible. Where one-on-one interaction is necessary, it must occur in visible, public spaces. The 'Three-Person Rule' applies when escorting children to toilets: one adult and two children for primary school aged children; two adults and one child for younger, non-verbal children.
5. Transportation of children by church personnel must comply with specific ministry guidelines and is regularly reviewed by the Child Safety Officer. Appropriate insurance, vehicle safety standards, and child supervision ratios must be maintained.

6. No adult will sleep in proximity to children unless another adult is present at all times. Overnight activities require specific risk assessments and enhanced supervision protocols.
7. Sexual activity or sexual conduct with children is absolutely prohibited. Adults are always responsible for maintaining appropriate boundaries and cannot attribute responsibility to a child regardless of the child's behaviour or presentation.
8. Gateway's computers, networks, mobile devices, cameras, and digital equipment must be used appropriately and will not be used to exploit, groom, or harass children, or to access, produce, or distribute child abuse material through any medium. Physical and online environments are designed to promote safety and minimise opportunities for harm.

6. Recruitment, Screening, and Suitability

1. Gateway ensures that people working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety values in practice. Rigorous recruitment and screening processes apply to all personnel engaged in child-related work, regardless of duration or frequency of contact with children.
2. Any person involved with children (including short-term visitors, guest speakers, contractors, or labour hire workers) must possess a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) and ensure Gateway is registered as a linked organisation prior to commencing child-related activities. Failure to provide proof of a valid WWCC, or a negative WWCC outcome, prohibits involvement in any child-related activity.
3. All Gateway paid staff must maintain a current WWCC as a condition of employment. A negative WWCC outcome constitutes grounds for immediate termination.
4. Ongoing volunteers in child-focused ministries complete enhanced screening including:
 - a) Completion of a detailed application form including name, date of birth, occupation, and previous experience working with children;
 - b) Verification of WWCC details and ongoing monitoring of WWCC status;
 - c) Provision of two referees, at least one external to Gateway. Where applicants have previous child-related experience, referees from these roles are prioritised;
 - d) Structured referee interviews conducted by trained personnel.
5. Referees are asked specific questions regarding:
 - e) Any formal or informal complaints, investigations, or concerns involving the applicant and children;
 - f) The applicant's suitability for child-focused work;
 - g) Whether the referee would re-engage the applicant in child-related programs.
6. Referees are provided opportunity to express concerns confidentially that they may not wish to document in writing.

7. Reporting Obligations and Response Procedures

1. **Mandatory Reporting:** All Gateway staff are mandatory reporters. Any staff member or volunteer who forms a reasonable belief of child abuse or observes reportable conduct must report immediately without fear of repercussion. Reports must be made for:

- a) Any allegation or reasonable belief that a child is being physically or sexually abused by a parent, caregiver, guardian, or Gateway personnel;
 - b) Any allegation or reasonable belief of inappropriate conduct or relationships between a child and any adult;
 - c) Any behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child;
 - d) Any significant neglect of a child's basic needs.
2. **Reportable Conduct Scheme Compliance:** Gateway complies with Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme. The head of Gateway (or delegated Child Safety Officer) must be notified immediately of any reportable allegation involving Gateway personnel. Reportable conduct includes:
- a) Sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
 - b) Sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
 - c) Physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child;
 - d) Behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child;
 - e) Significant neglect of a child.
3. **Reporting Timeframes:** When a reportable allegation is made:
- a) Criminal conduct must be reported to Victoria Police immediately as the first priority;
 - b) The CCYP must be notified within 3 business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation;
 - c) Updates must be provided to the CCYP within 30 calendar days and at conclusion of any investigation.
4. **Investigation Process:** Following notification of a reportable allegation, the Child Safety Officer will notify the Gateway Board. The Board will designate an investigator who will:
- a) Treat both the child and the adult involved with dignity and respect throughout the process;
 - b) Seek external advice from legal advisors, child safety experts, or regulatory bodies as necessary, maintaining strict confidentiality;
 - c) Designate a media liaison and coordinate with Victoria Police where required;
 - d) Ensure any conversations with the child occur with a parent, guardian, or appropriate support person present;
 - e) Maintain comprehensive, confidential records of all facts, conversations, and evidence;
 - f) Notify relevant embassies if foreign nationals are involved;
 - g) Present findings and recommendations to the Gateway Board in a formal meeting with full documentation.
5. **Record Management and Disclosure:** Gateway may disclose investigation records to Victoria Police, the CCYP, child protection services, or other regulatory bodies as legally required. When providing references for individuals who have been subject to child abuse investigations, Gateway will disclose that an investigation occurred and its findings.
6. **Risk Management During Investigations:** During investigations of allegations against personnel, immediate risk management measures will be implemented, which may include suspension from duties, restriction from child contact, or reassignment, to ensure child safety.

8. Child-Focused Complaints and Concerns Process

1. Gateway maintains accessible, child-focused processes for complaints and concerns. Children, families, and community members can raise concerns through multiple channels including direct contact with ministry leaders, the Child Safety Officer, or Senior Pastor.
2. All complaints and concerns are taken seriously and responded to promptly and transparently. Complaints are handled confidentially with information shared only as necessary to ensure child safety and meet legal obligations.
3. Gateway will not victimise or take adverse action against anyone who raises legitimate child safety concerns in good faith.

9. Use of Children's Images and Personal Information

When photographing or filming children for church purposes, Gateway staff and volunteers must:

- a) Obtain informed consent from a parent or guardian prior to photographing, filming, or recording a child, with clear explanation of how images will be used and where they will be published;
- b) Assess and comply with local traditions, cultural sensitivities, or restrictions regarding personal images before photographing or filming children;
- c) Ensure all images present children in a dignified, respectful, and safe manner, never in vulnerable, submissive, or inappropriate contexts. Images must be honest representations of context and facts;
- d) Ensure storage and transmission of images, films, and media complies with Privacy Act requirements and other applicable legislation. All media captured by staff or volunteers for church purposes must be stored on Gateway devices, not personal devices;
- e) Regularly review and delete images no longer required for their original purpose.

10. Review and Continuous Improvement

1. Gateway is committed to regularly reviewing and improving implementation of the Child Safe Standards. This policy is reviewed every two years at a minimum and updated in response to:
 - f) Changes in legislation or regulatory requirements;
 - g) Identified incidents, complaints, or areas of concern;
 - h) Feedback from children, families, staff, and the broader community;
 - i) Emerging best practice and research in child safety.
2. The Child Safety Officer has a standing action in each weekly leadership meeting to discuss child safety practices across all Gateway ministries, identify risks and remedy potential issues. Any significant changes or recommendations will be to Gateway Leadership and the Board.
3. Gateway maintains documentation demonstrating compliance with the Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme, including policies, procedures, risk assessments, training records, and incident reports.
4. Gateway seeks input from children and families in reviewing and improving child safety practices, ensuring their voices contribute to creating safer environments.

11. Policy Implementation and Governance

1. This policy documents how Gateway is safe for children and young people. It reflects Gateway's commitment to embedding child safety in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.
2. The Gateway Board retains ultimate accountability for child safety and oversight of compliance with the Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme.
3. The Senior Pastor and Campus Lead Pastors are responsible for ensuring child safety is prioritised in decision-making and resource allocation within their areas of oversight.
4. The Child Safety Officer is responsible for day-to-day coordination of child safety compliance, training, incident management, and reporting to the CCYP and other regulatory bodies.
5. Gateway actively encourages development and review of ministry-specific child safety guidelines that apply these principles to each unique ministry context, recognising that different age groups and settings require tailored approaches.
6. Gateway recognises the heightened responsibility religious organisations bear in preventing and responding to child abuse. We commit to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in all child safety matters.

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