



St Ives Community church

Safe Ministry Policy

*Open your mouth, judge righteously,
and plead the cause of the vulnerable and needy.*

Proverbs 31:8-9

Background & governance

The Elders & Deacons, as the Governance Body, of St Ives Community Church has established this policy to express our commitment to safeguarding vulnerable people involved with St Ives Community Church (SICC).

This document outlines the underlying principles that guide our approach and the strategies being implemented to embed a safeguarding culture in SICC at all levels.¹ Because of the changing nature of our world and our organisation, we commit to regularly reviewing and updating this policy to ensure its ongoing effectiveness, relevance and fulfilment of any State and Federal laws to protect children and vulnerable people.^{2,3}

1. Commitment to safeguard vulnerable people

We are committed to the biblical call to actively prevent harm and abuse, and ensure the safety and equity of everyone involved in our organisation with special concern for vulnerable people who face a higher risk of mistreatment.⁴ This includes children and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, the elderly, people with disabilities, and people with identity and mental health challenges.⁵

It is important that all people involved in SICC (including vulnerable people and children) are informed about their rights, invited to express their individual needs, participate in decisions which significantly affect them, and have their concerns taken seriously.⁶ We also want families and communities who are involved in SICC to be informed and involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people.⁷ All people are encouraged to appropriately express their cultural backgrounds and racism will not be tolerated within our church.⁸

¹ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 1

² National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, points, 9 & 10

³ This policy is in accordance with the NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157.

⁴ As an organisation that works with children, we are committed to the National Child Safe Principles. See <https://childdsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles>

⁵ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 4

⁶ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 2. Victorian Child Safe Standards, point 5

⁷ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 3

⁸ Victorian Child Safe Standards, point 1

To help achieve this, we encourage every person attending or involved in our church to complete the St Ives Community Church Safe Ministry Members Safeguarding course.

We have also made this policy (and further information for children, families and vulnerable people) available through our statement page, accessible online through our webpage:

<https://www.stivescommunitychurch.org.au/safeministry>

This material will help people in our community to better understand their shared responsibility to safeguard vulnerable people around our community and how to raise any concerns. We actively encourage everyone involved in SICC to be involved in the effectiveness and ongoing improvement of our policies and safeguarding procedures.⁹

2. Commitment to respond to concerns

We are committed to creating a culture where people feel safe and encouraged to raise concerns about their own or other people's safety.

Therefore, we encourage all people involved in any way with SICC to report any concerns they have about the safety and wellbeing of people connected with our church. We are committed to listening well and handling all concerns seriously. We will protect the confidentiality, dignity, health and well-being of all individuals involved in any concern raised. Any child-related issues will be managed with a focus on the interest of the child.¹⁰

All reports will be managed by the St Ives Community Church Safe Ministry Contacts.¹¹

Safe Ministry Contacts

Benjamin O'Donoghue – M: 0435 035 916 E: ben@stivescommunitychurch.org.au

Juliette Hackett – M: 0426 211 702 E: hackettx5@optusnet.com.au

⁹ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 8 & 3.

¹⁰ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 6

¹¹ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 10

The Safe Ministry Contacts are a part of the SICC Elders & Deacons. When any concerns or allegations are raised, the Safe Ministry Contacts will follow the Safe Ministry Incident Management Process which, depending on the circumstances, may involve reporting the concern or allegation to other entities like the Police, the relevant State Child Protection body, and the insurer of SICC. In certain incidents the Safe Ministry Contacts will appoint an Independent Ministry Investigator to investigate allegations.

3. Commitment to screening and training

We are committed to ensuring all leaders at SICC are appropriately screened, supported and trained.¹²

This means all Elders & Deacons, staff members, team leaders and volunteers involved in personal/relational serving roles (including anyone working with or around children) must follow the direction of the Safe Ministry Contacts who oversee this compliance. These leaders must:

1. Be regular participants at St Ives Community Church;
2. Provide referees who can confirm they are suitable to work with vulnerable people;
3. Complete an approved safe ministry training course which outlines appropriate behaviour, including how to minimise the chance of harm, as well as training in how to identify and report cases of abuse;
4. Commit to the St Ives Community Church Code of Conduct, including being willing to be held accountable for their behaviour; and
5. If they are working with children & youth, they must have their state-based “Working With Children Check” verified and current.

No-one with a criminal record of child abuse, molestation or similar offences is allowed to be involved in children or youth ministry at St Ives Community Church.

¹² National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, points 5, 7 & 8

4. Commitment to safe and accessible programs

We are committed to ensuring that our physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing for all involved.¹³ Careful consideration will be given to the activities chosen, the venue, safe ratios of supervision, appropriate toileting practices, transportation, work health and safety, parental or guardian permission and confidentiality of records kept.

The Safe Ministry Contacts will regularly check-in on SICC programs and team meetings to help establish a safeguarding culture and provide ongoing training and supervision to leaders and volunteers in those roles.¹⁴

Date Instituted by St Ives Community Church Elders & Deacons: 7th December 2020

Date of Last Review by St Ives Community Church Elders & Deacons: April 2026

¹³ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 8

¹⁴ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, points 1, 7, 8.

Glossary of Policy Terminology

Governance Body A Governance Body is a group of people that has the authority to exercise governance over an organisation or entity. The governance body in our organisation is currently the team of Elders & Deacons.

Organisation An organised group of people with a particular purpose. Our faith-based organisation is St Ives Community Church.

Safeguarding Safeguarding is protecting the welfare and human rights of people that are, in some way, connected with our organisation or its work – particularly people that may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Safe Ministry Policy Statements that set expectations for decisions made, or actions taken by, members of an organisation related to the protection of rights of vulnerable people and the duties of, as well as the terms and conditions of engagement for, organisation members & volunteers.

Safe Ministry Contact A Safe Ministry Contact is someone in our organisation who will hear your concern, and help you work out what to do.

Incident Management Process A document that outlines the process of and assists Safe Ministry Contacts in responding appropriately to concerns raised.

Vulnerable People While the term ‘vulnerable people’ includes everyone under the age of 18, the elderly, people with disabilities, people who experience mental health issues, people who are unable to live at home, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, people who are intersex, as well as people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.