



Child Protection Policy and Procedures

of

Lavington Baptist Church

Independent Incorporated

2017

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide written principles and procedures for workers and children at Lavington Baptist Church. These principles and procedures are to be in accordance with relevant New South Wales legislation regarding care and protection of children. These principles and procedures are to be followed by all workers and children at Lavington Baptist Church.

Definitions:

In this policy statement, we define a child as a person under 18 years of age and attending some aspect of the ministry of the Lavington Baptist Church.

By harm, we mean “any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
- Sexual abuse or exploitation; or
- Domestic or family violence.

A child in need of protection is one who has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm and does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

Harm can be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance, or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances. Anyone may report to Child Safety a reasonable suspicion that a child may be in need of protection or an unborn child may be in need of protection after they are born.

Sexual Abuse, in relation to a relevant person, includes sexual behaviour involving the relevant person and another person in the following circumstances–

- The other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person;
- The relevant person has less power than the other person;
- There is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.

Principles:

Lavington Baptist Church believes the following principles concerning Child Protection.

- We believe protecting children from harm and risk is basic to maximising their personal and spiritual potential. Therefore, we will seek to make our church a safe place to attend.
- We believe the welfare and best interest of the child to be a major priority.

- We acknowledge the high level of trust that has been placed upon us by your children, their families and the community. Therefore, any worker who becomes aware of or reasonably suspects that a child is being harmed, must report it in accordance with the church's child protection procedures.
- We believe our workers must ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with children reflect their Christian testimony and proper standards of care for children. If workers need to email children they must contact the parents of the children being contacted to maintain transparency in their communications.
- We believe all of our workers and volunteers must refrain from any form of sexual contact of any nature with a child of the church.
- We expect our children to show respect to our workers, members and volunteers and to comply with the church's policy on safety issues.
- We believe in child management practices that are administered with respect and acknowledgement of the child's dignity.
- We will treat everyone involved in an allegation of abuse with dignity and respect.
- We will notify and cooperate with state authorities that are involved in child protection to resolve such allegations. We will support any child that is a victim of harm.
- We will take proper disciplinary action against any worker or volunteer that is found to be guilty of harming children. Support will be given to workers or volunteers falsely accused of harming children.
- We require that all workers and volunteers pass a NSW Working with Children's check as required by the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

Procedures:

Cases relating to harm or suspected harm at Lavington Baptist Church

Obligation of Child:

If you are aware or reasonably suspect that a child of the church has been harmed, then report the matter to any worker.

Obligation of Worker:

If you are aware or reasonably suspect that a child of the church has been harmed, then report the matter to the Pastor or deacon. Keep a written record of your actions.

Obligation of Pastor or Deacon:

If you receive a report of harm or suspected harm to a child of the church and you are aware of the harm having been caused or you reasonably suspect the harm to have been caused, report it to the police or the Child Abuse Reporting Authority (CARA). Keep a written record of your actions.

Suggested follow up procedures:

- Provide details of the allegations to the respondent.

- If there is unacceptable risk, stand down the respondent or in extreme cases, dismiss them.
- Offer counselling to the child and the respondent.
- Inform the church board.
- Inform the insurers of Lavington Baptist Church.
- Attend to public relations.
- Take disciplinary action against the respondent if the circumstances require it.
- Keep the child and the respondent informed as to the progress of matters.

Cases relating to inappropriate behaviour or suspected inappropriate behaviour at Lavington Baptist Church

Obligation of Child:

If you wish to report behaviour that you consider inappropriate (harassment, intimidation, offensive language, bullying, etc.) by another child or worker, talk to the Pastor, a deacon or another worker about the matter.

Obligation of Worker:

A worker who receives a report of inappropriate behaviour must report it. If the Pastor is the subject of the report of inappropriate behaviour, the worker must inform a deacon of the church.

Obligation of Pastor or Deacon:

If you receive a report of inappropriate behaviour then conduct separate interviews with those involved in the incident and with anyone else who may be able to provide useful information. Take appropriate action.

Suggested follow up procedures:

- If the inappropriate behaviour is sexual abuse or “harm”, the Pastor or a deacon will report to a child safety officer in the Child Abuse reporting Authority (CARA) of NSW or the commission for Children and Young People or to a police officer.
- If the inappropriate behaviour is not sexual abuse or harm;
- Provide details of the allegations to the respondent.
- Talk to those involved in the matter.
- Resolve the issues and offer ways of changing actions and attitudes.
- Take disciplinary action against the respondent if the circumstances require it.
- Keep a written record of your actions.

Cases relating to sexual abuse or suspected sexual abuse at Lavington Baptist Church

If a worker becomes aware, or reasonably suspects that a child or person as designated below is likely to be sexually abused by another person:

- a child under 18 years attending the church
- a person with a disability:

the worker must give a written report about the abuse or suspected abuse to the church's Pastor or to an deacon of the church's management committee immediately.

Obligation of Child:

If you are aware or reasonably suspect that a child of the church has been sexually abused, then report the matter to any worker.

Obligation of Pastor or Deacon:

If the worker who becomes aware or reasonably suspects sexual abuse is the church's Pastor, the Pastor must give a written report about the abuse, or suspected abuse to a police officer immediately.

A report under this section must include the particulars required by section 29 of the Children and Young People (Care and Protection) Act 1998 providing:

- the name of the person giving the report (the first name)
- the child's name and sex;
- details of the basis for the first person becoming aware, or reasonably suspecting, that the child has been sexually abused;
- details of the abuse or suspected abuse;
- any of the following information of which the first person is aware
 - the child's age
 - the identity of the person who has abused, or is suspected to have abused, the child;
 - the identity of anyone else who may have information about the abuse or suspected abuse

Cases relating to harm or suspected harm to children from outside of Lavington Baptist Church

Obligation of Worker:

If a worker is aware or reasonably suspects harm has been caused to a child who, when the harm was caused or is suspected to have been caused, was under 18 years and the harm has not been reported under preceding sections of this policy, the worker must report the harm to the church's Pastor.

Obligation of Pastor or Deacon:

If the Pastor is aware or reasonably suspects the harm has been caused, the Pastor must report the harm or suspected harm to a child safety officer in the Child Abuse Reporting Authority (CARA) of NSW (or other department administering the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998) or to a police officer.

Suggested follow up procedures:

- Treat the child with respect and be sensitive to their needs, feelings and concerns.
- Monitor the situation.

Cases relating to self-harm of children at Lavington Baptist Church

Obligation of Worker:

If you are aware or reasonably suspect that a child of the church is in danger of self-harm, you should insure the immediate safety of the child. It is better to be cautious and act on concern than to do nothing. Have an adult stay with the child while the Pastor is being contacted. Keep a written record of the events.

Obligation of Pastor or Deacons:

If you receive a report or are aware or reasonably suspect that a child of the church is in danger of self-harm, an assessment of the child should be arranged. Following this assessment, the appropriate action should be undertaken. That may involve:

- Contacting parents;
- Arranging for professional help;
- Consulting the NSW Commission for Children and Young People;
- Contacting the police.

An individual program should be developed to protect any child that has a medical condition or intellectual disability that may lend itself to self-harm.

Written Reports:

When written reports are required, the following information must be included:

- the name of the person giving the report (the first name)
- the child's name and sex;
- details of the basis for the first person becoming aware, or reasonably suspecting, that the child has been sexually abused;
- details of the abuse or suspected abuse;
- any of the following information of which the first person is aware
- the child's age

- the identity of the person who has abused, or is suspected to have abused, the child;
- the identity of anyone else who may have information about the abuse or suspected abuse.

Awareness Procedures:

- All persons who are church members and workers must read the document Child Protection–Policies and Procedures of Lavington Baptist Church. Furthermore, they must agree to adhere to these policies and procedures as a requirement of being associated with the church.
- All persons who have dealings with children through the church must have a current working with children’s check.
- A yearly review of the Child Protection policies and procedures is to be conducted to strengthen any areas deemed weak or to consider any new potential risks.
- The Child Protection–Policies and Procedures of Lavington Baptist Church is given to all parents of new children attending church ministries and is posted on the church’s website.
- A session on child protection is to be implemented into the regular teaching program of Lavington Baptist Church. This will be conducted by the Pastoral Care Team of the church who are available during regular church hours for counselling.
- Appropriate reporting forms are available to workers and children and are located in the main administrative area of the church.