

Safe Church Policy

The *Open Icon Baptist Church*'s Policy on Protecting the Safety of Church Participants

Approved by a Church Meeting - 20 September 2020

Everyone who is part of the *Open Icon Baptist Church* shares the responsibility to ensure the safety of all those who participate in the common life of the church and its activities, programs, ministries and events. Designated leaders naturally have greater responsibility during the activities they lead, but building a culture that is safe, respectful, transparent, liberating and empowering requires the commitment and participation of everyone.

This document sets out the specific understandings, values, policies and strategies adopted by the *Open Icon Baptist Church* to help us build such a culture. It gives particular attention to the provision of hospitality and care for those who are most vulnerable to being exploited, excluded, disregarded or scapegoated.

Biblical Mandate

Followers of Jesus are called to love friend, neighbour and enemy, with a special responsibility for the vulnerable (Matthew 25:31-46), including children (Matthew 18:2-6). This is not limited to people 'like us'. Instead, Jesus teaches that we are to reach out and protect those identified as enemies (Matthew 5:43-48) or ethnic outsiders (Matthew 8:5-13); those who are sick, disabled or impoverished (Matthew 11:4-5); and those who are marginalised because of profession, personal history, sexual identity, or sexual history (Matthew 21:31-32; Luke 19:1-10; Mark 2:25-17; Luke 7:36-50; Luke 7:1-10; John 8:3-11). Such radical openness was practiced in the early Church and the Holy Spirit has continued to lead the Church further on this same journey of inclusion, care and openness (Acts 2:1-21; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 10:1 - 11:18). This policy seeks to help us live out our Biblical mandate as well as our responsibilities under National, State, and Local legislation.

Aims

- To affirm the Biblical mandate to care for all people, including those of different ages, those with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, those from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with diverse gender and/or sexual identities.
- To outline specific strategies for providing a congregational environment that is physically, emotionally and spiritually safe for all participants in the life of the church, particularly for children and others who might be more vulnerable to exclusion, neglect or abuse.
- To provide all congregational members, regular attenders, staff and volunteers with clear guidelines regarding their responsibilities and conduct.
- To encourage and enable all congregational members, regular attenders, staff and volunteers to understand, recognise, discuss and report matters of child safety, abuse or misconduct.
- To ensure that allegations of abuse or misconduct are handled promptly and correctly.
- To support and assist any person who discloses abuse.
- To embed a culture of zero tolerance towards exploitation, abuse or harm of others, recognising that every person is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and must be so honoured.

Policies

1. Honouring the First Peoples of the Land

- 1.1. The *Open Icon Baptist Church* acknowledges with respect the Yalukit Willum (people of the river) of the Boon Wurrung language group of the Greater Kulin Nation as the First Peoples of the land on which we gather.
- 1.2. With them, we grieve over the violence that has been and continues to be visited upon indigenous peoples by our governments, our institutions, and our churches, and we repent of our complicity in this violence.
- 1.3. We will maintain and regularly review a *Commitment to Reconciliation* setting out practical steps that we will seek to implement to help make our church a culturally safe environment for Indigenous Australians. A copy of our current *Commitment to Reconciliation* is included as Appendix 1 to this document.

2. Honouring Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

- 2.1. The *Open Icon Baptist Church* acknowledges that all non-indigenous members of our society are immigrant peoples whose cultural, linguistic and religious heritages deserve to be honoured and celebrated.
- 2.2. We recognise that there are many and various ways of being family and raising children. We respect the right of parents to provide education and formative guidance to their children in the understandings and practices of their culture, so long as those practices protect children from harm and encourage and enable people to flourish. We also respect the right of those children, as they grow and mature, to make their own cultural choices, free of coercion or retribution. We recognise the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of the Child* as a valuable reference point for evaluating the treatment of children.
- 2.3. When publicising ourselves through avenues such as our street-front signage and our website, we will seek to make it clear that people of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds are very welcome to participate in our worship and common life.
- 2.4. We will foster a multi-lingual worship culture by inviting and encouraging all regular participants to lead parts of our liturgy in their first language.
- 2.5. We will foster a multi-cultural worship environment by seeking ways to include appropriate symbols, practices, or artworks from diverse cultural backgrounds.

3. Honouring People of Differing Abilities and Disabilities

- 3.1. The *Open Icon Baptist Church* acknowledges that people who live with permanent disabilities or chronic or degenerative illnesses, physical or mental, are close to God's heart and a precious part of our life together, and that an inclusive environment is beneficial to all, both those with and without additional needs.

- 3.2. We recognise that people with a disability can be particularly vulnerable and we will ensure that our risk assessment processes considers their needs.
- 3.3. We will endeavour to minimise access difficulties in our church building.
- 3.4. We will seriously consider the suggestions of individuals or families regarding measures that may better enable the participation of a person with a disability.

4. Honouring People of Different Sexualities

- 4.1. The *Open Icon Baptist Church* acknowledges that there is a diversity of sexual and gender identities and orientations, that LGBTIQ people and their children, parents and relatives are close to God's heart and a precious part of our life together, and that an inclusive environment is beneficial to all.
- 4.2. We grieve over the scapegoating of LGBTIQ people and their exclusion from many of our churches, and we repent of our complicity in all such persecution.
- 4.3. When publicising ourselves through avenues such as our street-front signage and our website, we will seek to make it clear that LGBTIQ people are very welcome to participate in our worship and common life.

5. Ensuring the Safety of Children

- 5.1. The *Open Icon Baptist Church* acknowledges that children and young people are a gift from God to the whole congregation.
- 5.2. For the purposes of interpreting these policies, any person who is under the age of eighteen years is defined as a child.
- 5.3. Children are encouraged to worship with and relate to the whole congregation.
- 5.4. Welcoming children, caring for them and ensuring that they are safe is the responsibility of the whole congregation.
- 5.5. The safety of children is best ensured by keeping them and their activities and carers easily visible. Therefore, it is everyone's responsibility to help ensure that no child is ever taken to or left in a closed room or other concealed location with any adult who is not a parent of that child, or who is not acting at the specific request of a parent of that child.
 - 5.5.1. When any supervision or care of children is provided, two or more adults should be in attendance at all times. If there is a reasonable exception, such as an adult needing to seek first aid or a child's parent, the remaining adult should be with more than one child.
 - 5.5.2. When transporting children to or from events, there should be two adults in each car. At least one must have a *Working with Children Check* (WWCC). If it is unavoidable that there be only one adult in the car, then that adult must have a WWCC and there must be more than one child in the car. This clause does not apply to parents with their own children.

- 5.6. Everyone who participates in the common life of our church is encouraged to read, understand, and comply with the *Code of Conduct for Adults interacting with Children* (set out in Appendix 2).

6. Ensuring Safety in our Online and Social Media presence

- 6.1. The *Open Icon Baptist Church* acknowledges that our church website and social media pages provide an important means by which people find out who we are, what we do, and whether we could be the church community that they need. It is therefore important to publish real information and pictures, and to encourage online comments and interaction, but we recognise that this can pose certain risks to privacy and civility.
- 6.2. We will endeavour to make it clear to all participants at church events that appropriate photos may be taken and published on the website or social media, and that if any individual wishes to ensure that they are not photographed or that they are pixelated out of any photos, the onus is on that individual to make their wishes known.
- 6.3. When publishing stories or photos on our church or personal pages, we will avoid including identity or contact details for the individuals described or depicted.
- 6.4. When interacting and commenting online, we need to maintain and model the culture of love, respect and safety that we strive for in our face to face community life. Thus we should avoid posting comments that we would not be comfortable saying face to face to the recipient in public, and we should be aware that our comments may be read by people who are not familiar with our personal history, sense of humour, insider knowledge, or particular relationship with the recipient of the comment. If properly interpreting a comment is likely to depend on such things, it would be better sent privately instead of posted online. Other people will be judging our church by the culture of our online conversations.

7. Ensuring a Safe Leadership

- 7.1. The “Policy on the Accountability of Pastors” of the *Open Icon Baptist Church* clearly sets out the requirements of pastors in the areas of accountability, professional ethics, ongoing professional development, ongoing professional supervision, and annual performance reviews.
- 7.2. The “Leadership and Administration Policy” of the *Open Icon Baptist Church* identifies two types of lay leaders: members of the Host Group (what other churches might call a Church Council, Diaconate, or Leadership Group), and people who are delegated administrative or leadership tasks on either a regular or ad hoc basis. With the exception of the Church Treasurer, none of these positions require an election, but all are subject to regular affirmations of confidence by the congregation and there are procedures in place for others to make reports or express concerns about potentially inappropriate behaviour.
- 7.3. No one may be considered for membership of the Host Group or for positions of ongoing or ad hoc leadership of any church related activities unless either:
- their character and suitability have become sufficiently known to us through regular participation in the worship and common life of the church for at least six months; or

- they have undergone a rigorous screening process as set out in section 8 below.
- 7.4. Pastors and Members of the Host Group are required to commit themselves to a Covenant which expresses the commitments and standards of behaviour expected of them. This covenant includes a commitment to promoting a safe culture within the church, and it is reviewed and submitted to the congregation for approval by vote prior to the church anniversary each year.
- 7.5. Pastors and lay leaders (whether or not they have a special responsibility for children), volunteers in programs for children, and persons assigned tasks which would give them any form of responsibility for any activity which may involve children must:
- have a current *Working with Children Check* (WWCC) registered for *Open Icon Baptist Church*.
 - read and comply with all aspects of this *Safe Church Policy*.
 - read, sign and comply with the *Code of Conduct for Adults interacting with Children* (set out in Appendix 2).
- 7.6. Pastors are also required to hold a Police Check issued within the past two years.
- 7.7. Pastors, members of the Host Group, and people to whom ongoing administrative or leadership tasks are delegated are required to attend a BUV endorsed *Safe Church Awareness Workshop* (or a workshop endorsed by the *Safe Church Training Agreement [SCTA]*) under the *National Council of Churches in Australia – Safe Church Program*) within their first year of service and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years. The church will cover the costs of their attendance.
- 7.8. If a WWCC is applied for, and is likely to be refused, an “Interim Negative Notice” is first issued. Any employee or volunteer of the *Open Icon Baptist Church* who is issued with an Interim Negative Notice after applying for a Working with Children Check will cease working with children and young people and avoid being left alone with children and young people until the matter is resolved by the Department of Justice.
- 7.9. As specified in the “Leadership and Administration Policy” the Host Group remains accountable to the Congregational Meeting for their provision of leadership, oversight, management, and care.
- 7.10. The Host Group’s meetings will normally be open to the attendance of anyone who regularly participates in the congregation’s life. The time and place and major agenda items of meetings will be publicised to the congregation in advance, along with an invitation to raise any other matters that should be on the agenda. As soon as practicable after the meeting, a summary of the major decisions will be publicised along with an invitation to provide feedback or raise concerns about the decisions.

8. Ensuring Safe Staff Recruitment

- 8.1. The *Open Icon Baptist Church* seeks to apply the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, leaders and volunteers. Our screening process helps us

to minimise the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of power within the church. It enables us to be fair and transparent in our screening processes for all staff and volunteers.

- 8.2. Documentation of the screening process will be kept confidential and kept secured by the correspondence secretary in a password-protected computer file.
- 8.3. We will screen and train all prospective leaders in our ministries, before they are appointed. We will screen and train all existing leaders.
- 8.4. Before appointing a person to any ~~paid employment~~ pastoral, administrative or leadership position (paid or unpaid) in the *Open Icon Baptist Church*, ~~including positions of pastoral or other leadership~~, we will:
 - review the position description and update it if necessary,
 - advertise the position appropriately,
 - ask them to complete a *Leader Screening Form* (see Appendix 5)
 - interview them, with the interview panel to be appointed by the Host Group and communicated to the congregation,
 - ~~seek~~ obtain at least two confidential references (if the candidate has not already been a part of our congregation for at least six months, at least one of the references must come from their immediate previous church),
 - obtain a new National Police Criminal Record Check if required, (required for pastors, the treasurer, any appointments of people who have not been part of our congregation for at least six months, and any other positions decided by the Host Group)
 - ensure that they hold a current *Working with Children Check* (WWCC), and
 - require them to participate in a documented induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position. This must include giving them a copy of their position description, and discussing and requiring them to sign the *Church Covenant*, the *Host Group Covenant*, this *Safe Church Policy* and the *Code of Conduct for Adults interacting with Children* (set out in Appendix 2) to indicate that they have read, understood, and are committed to complying with them. The induction should familiarise the appointee with formal or informal support mechanisms, so that they have a clear understanding of who to go to for support and what type of support is available to them.
- 8.5. If offences are identified through the above process, depending on the nature of the offence/s, it will remain the discretion of the pastors and Host Group as to the applicant's future involvement in the church.
- 8.6. Sexual abuse-related offences will preclude that person from having any contact with, or responsibilities involving children and youth. In some cases an offender may be excluded from attending the church, or any associated program under any circumstances. The BUV Professional Standards Consultant must be contacted and consulted in this situation.

9. Ensuring Appropriate Ongoing Leadership Training

- 9.1. The *Open Icon Baptist Church* is committed to ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for leaders (including pastors, employees and volunteers). All leaders must agree to follow the *Church Covenant*, the *Host Group Covenant*, this *Safe Church Policy* and the *Code of Conduct for Adults interacting with Children* (set out in Appendix 2). All leaders will receive training on the requirements of the documents before signing them, so that they are understood and put into practice by all leaders and volunteers.
- 9.2. We inform our whole congregation about *BUV Safe Church Awareness Workshops* and encourage attendance. This training covers a range of topics including risk management, indicators of abuse, responding to disclosures, and mandatory reporting of suspected sexual abuse. The following people will be required to attend one of these workshops (or an approved equivalent) within their first year of ministry and to attend a refresher workshop every three years:
 - pastors,
 - any paid employees,
 - Host Group members,
 - anyone who holds a position of leadership in any church program,
 - any leader or volunteer working with children in any capacity.
- 9.3. Opportunities for participation in additional ministry-specific training will be promoted as required, according to the role held. This may include but is not limited to: Church Administration Workshop, First Aid, Food Safety and Handling.
- 9.4. The “Policy on the Accountability of Pastors” of the *Open Icon Baptist Church* clearly sets out the requirements of pastors for ongoing professional development, ongoing professional supervision, and annual performance reviews.
- 9.5. The pastors and Host Group have the responsibility to ensure that our church programs are adequately resourced with staff and volunteers and have the required equipment for the safe and effective running of the program. They will provide ongoing support and supervision for all staff and volunteers, to ensure they feel valued, respected and fairly-treated.

10. Ensuring Safe Activities and Programs

- 10.1. We will honour all participants as God-bearers among us, serve them as servants of Jesus, and lead in gracious, hospitable, and non-abusive ways.
- 10.2. We will encourage regular attenders, including children, to help shape the programs and activities in which they participate.
- 10.3. We will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children’s health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.

- 10.4. When appropriate, leaders of church sponsored activities will be required to exercise their duty of care through the use of forms, checklists and templates for establishment and maintenance of safe environments in our church.
- 10.5. We will use the BUV's *Red Book* safety audit process to regularly give attention to our progress on such things as OH&S, fire safety, building safety, first aid, food safety, safe transport, incident and emergency procedures.

11. If Abuse Occurs

- 11.1. Anyone involved in our church who has reasonable belief that a child or other person is experiencing (or is at significant risk of experiencing) abuse – physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, neglect, sexual exploitation or grooming – should, as soon as possible, report their experience or concerns to one or more of the following:
 - a Pastor of the church,
 - a member of the Host Group,
 - one of the church's [*Visiting Pastoral Overseers*](#) whose contact details are in the church Contact Directory and on the church website;
 - the Baptist Union of Victoria's [*Professional Standards Consultant*](#), whose contact details are in the church Contact Directory and on both the church and BUV websites (especially appropriate if the abuse is believed to have been perpetrated by a pastor or leader of the congregation).
 - the parents or carers, if this is appropriate and does not increase the risk of abuse,
 - the [*Child Protection Unit*](#) (for major concerns) or [*Child FIRST*](#) (for low to moderate concerns) of the *Victorian Department of Health and Human Services*.
 - the *Victorian Police*, if the allegations involve criminal offences including but not limited to sexual offences, sexual exploitation, grooming, failure to disclose or failure to protect. These offences are explained more fully in the factsheets attached to this document.
- 11.2. A person to whom an allegation of abuse is disclosed should treat the report seriously, pass on the report immediately and appropriately, and **not** try to first investigate, evaluate or assess the truth of the allegations themselves. They should listen sensitively, and ask no more than the open-ended questions necessary to establish whether or not there is reasonable belief of harm or significant risk.
- 11.3. A person making a report is not required to have all the facts or to be certain abuse has occurred. They are simply required to pass on their concern. No one will be disciplined for making a mistake about which authority to contact first. People may be disciplined for wilfully failing to act in accordance with this policy, or failing to respond at all.
- 11.4. A person making a report is encouraged to record the concern on the *Safe Church Concerns Form* (included as appendix 4 of this document) and forward it to the appropriate church leader or organisation as soon as possible. If the form is not completed by the person making the report, it should be completed by the pastor or Host Group member receiving the report.

11.5. Upon receiving a report of alleged abuse, church leaders will as soon as possible:

- 11.5.1. let the victim and the person passing on the report know that the information will be acted on, and that other people will need to be informed;
- 11.5.2. alert other relevant church leaders;
- 11.5.3. alert the police if the allegation involves any of the following criminal offences:
 - 11.5.3.1. the physical or sexual abuse of children;
 - 11.5.3.2. ***grooming*** for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years (see the relevant fact sheet in the appendices of this document);
 - 11.5.3.3. ***failure to disclose*** a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 years of age (see the relevant fact sheet in the appendices of this document);
 - 11.5.3.4. negligent ***failure to protect*** a child under the age of 16 from a known substantial risk that the child would become the victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the church or another organisation with responsibility for the care, supervision or authority of the child (see the relevant fact sheet in the appendices of this document).
- 11.5.4. activate the process required under the *Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme* (see the relevant information sheet in the appendices of this document) beginning with notifying the *Commission for Children and Young People* within three days, either directly or through the Baptist Union of Victoria's Professional Standards Worker, if the allegation involves any of the following *reportable conduct*:
 - 11.5.4.1. sexual offences (against, with, or in the presence of, a child);
 - 11.5.4.2. sexual misconduct (against, with, or in the presence of, a child);
 - 11.5.4.3. physical violence (against, with, or in the presence of, a child);
 - 11.5.4.4. behaviour that is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm to a child;
 - 11.5.4.5. significant neglect of a child.
- 11.5.5. alert the *Child Protection Unit* of the *Victorian Department of Health and Human Services* if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child remains at risk and is in need of protection;
- 11.5.6. alert the Baptist Union of Victoria's [*Professional Standards Consultant*](#), if the alleged perpetrator of the abuse is a pastor or designated church leader;
- 11.5.7. contact the victim's parents, legal guardian, or carers (if applicable) to let them know (unless the disclosure relates to abuse within the family or care facility);

- 11.5.8. assist the victim and their family to access appropriate support, such as counselling;
 - 11.5.9. let the victim and their family know about steps the church is taking, such as an investigation, and any resulting action, such as changes to policy or procedures; and
 - 11.5.10. affirm the victim for helping the church become a safer place for all.
- 11.6. All complaints, disclosures or breaches of this *Safe Church Policy* or the *Code of Conduct for Adults interacting with Children* (set out in Appendix 2), especially those that relate to the safety of children or vulnerable adults, should be recorded and the records stored safely for a minimum of 45 years with due regard for security and privacy requirements (e.g. computer with password). Records should include:
- Church Safety Policy (dated versions)
 - Policies and Procedures (dated versions)
 - Safe Church Concerns Forms
 - Leader Screening Forms
 - Codes of Conduct (signed and dated)
 - Contemporaneous notes, where required, including:
 - a factual account of the report in the reporter's own words including any dates, times, and names;
 - an account of all actions taken;
 - any internal investigations;
 - any reports made to statutory authorities or professional bodies including dates and times of any phone calls or other reports;
 - notes regarding consideration of potentially reportable matters even where a report was not made.
- 11.7. A flowchart outlining the process for reporting concerns about the safety of children or vulnerable adults is included as appendix 3 of this document and will be displayed on a noticeboard inside the church and on the church's website.
- 11.8. Religious leaders, including pastors and members of our Host Group, (along with police, teachers, doctors, nurses, school counsellors and youth justice workers) are legally required to report child physical and sexual abuse to the [*Child Protection Unit*](#). However, all forms of abuse and neglect may be reported by any person. We require our leaders to comply with State and Federal laws regarding mandatory reporting and other reporting obligations. Additionally, we proactively encourage and support all adults in our church community to comply with State and Federal reporting obligations.
- 11.9. Although there is no legal requirement to report sexual abuse where the victim is over the age of 18 years at the time of the abuse or at the time of the disclosure of the abuse, a victim can be encouraged and supported to report to police at any time if they choose, or a report can be made on their behalf with prior consent. If consent is not given but a leader has concerns about the current safety of any children involved, the leader

themselves or others involved in the church may need to break confidentiality and pass on their concern. In this situation guidance should be sought from [Professional Standards Consultant](#) prior to taking action. If the abuse took place within a Baptist Church context, a report should be made to the [Professional Standards Consultant](#) to be followed up.

12. Grievance Procedures

- 12.1. Anyone who believes that a pastor or another leader or member of the church has behaved in a way that is inappropriate, unethical, abusive or criminal, is urged to report their concerns to one or more of the following:
 - a Pastor of the church;
 - a member of the Host Group;
 - one of the church's [Visiting Pastoral Overseers](#) whose contact details are in the church Contact Directory and on the church website;
 - the Baptist Union of Victoria's [Professional Standards Consultant](#), whose contact details are in the church Contact Directory and on both the church and BUV websites (especially appropriate if complaint is against a pastor or leader of the congregation); or
 - the police (if the complaint involves criminal behaviour).
- 12.2. The *Open Icon Baptist Church* affirms the [BUV's Complaints Procedure](#) for the handling of any issues raised by church members or members of the public about the conduct of leaders and/or pastors and will make a copy of the [Complaints Procedure](#) accessible on the church website.
- 12.3. In accordance with the "[Policy on the Accountability of Pastors](#)", the church will conduct a whole-of-church or pastoral performance review each year. This review will always include an invitation to comment or report on any area of the ministry of the pastor or other leaders in which respondents have a concern about behaviour that might be inappropriate, unethical, dangerous or abusive.

13. Policy Review

- 13.1. This policy is reviewed every five years by the Host Group in consultation with all congregational members, participants, and children.

Appendices to the Safe Church Policy

1. Commitment to Reconciliation

In the spirit of the apology and commitment made to Aboriginal and Torres Strait sisters and brothers at the BUV Assembly in March 1998, the *Open Icon Baptist Church* commits to the following practical steps to grow in understanding and relationship with Indigenous Australians:

1. To learn and teach the name of the Aboriginal groups who were the first peoples and custodians of the land on which our church stands, the Yalukit Wilam clan, one of six clans that formed the Boon Wurrung people; and of the current recognised elder of the Boon Wurrung people, Aunty Carolyn Briggs.
2. When publicising ourselves through avenues such as our street-front signage and our website, we will seek to make it clear that Indigenous/First Peoples of the Land are very welcome to participate in our worship and common life. This will include at least:
 - a. placing an Aboriginal flag sticker on our door as a sign of welcome.
 - b. placing signs both inside and outside our church building to acknowledge the traditional custodians, and to make a similar acknowledgement on our website.
3. To learn about the early history of our area; to invite Aunty Carolyn Briggs to tell us stories; to learn about the Indigenous Australians who live in our area now; and to prepare an information sheet for distribution.
4. To learn about the locally indigenous plants of the area, to plant them in the garden under the church sign, and to prepare a sheet which describes their traditional uses.
5. To continue to include Indigenous people and situations in the prayers of our church; to change the wording of our prayers from 'traditional owners' to 'traditional custodians'; to add Indigenous Christian groups to the list of churches for which we pray; and to add a line to pray for an Indigenous group with which members of our church have a connection.
6. To add some Indigenous Australians to our list of saints, where appropriate.
7. To add a line to the front of the worship booklet so that, where it observes the similarities between the Christian use of incense and the Indigenous use of smoke, it also notes the similarities in being sprinkled with water in the Christian and Boonwurrung traditions.
8. To think about ways to add Indigenous art and imagery to the service.
9. To acknowledge the traditional custodians when we run public events.
10. To continue to support the Indigenous Hospitality House financially and in other ways, and to arrange a visit for interested members of our congregation.
11. To seek out Indigenous stories and films for adults and children. In particular, to look for Indigenous books for the children's trolley, watch an interview with a Muslim Aboriginal, and hold an Indigenous film night at least once a year.
12. To advertise events such as Sorry Day, Aboriginal Sunday, NAIDOC week and the Long Walk, and campaigns such as 'Close the Gap' and 'Make Indigenous Poverty History', through the church email list.
13. To investigate the possibility of forming links with a non-local Indigenous group through our Baptist connections.

The *Open Icon Baptist Church* affirms its commitment to take practical steps towards reconciliation.

2. Code of Conduct for Adults interacting with Children

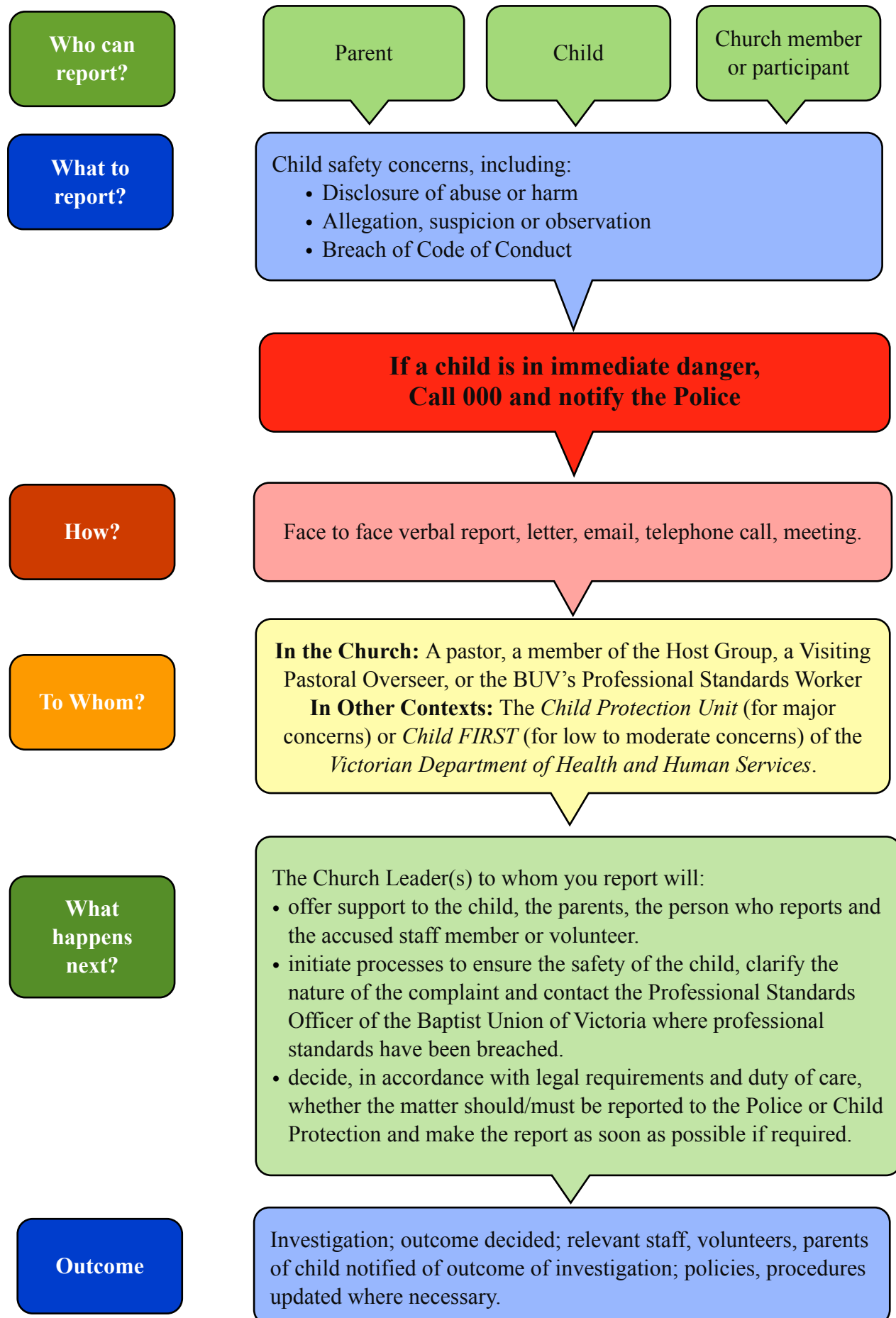
We who participate in the common life and activities of the *Open Icon Baptist Church* are all responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

1. Adhering to our *Safe Church Policy*, and other relevant policies.
2. Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
3. Welcoming all children and their families and carers, without discrimination.
4. Modelling appropriate adult behaviour, grounded and formed in the teachings and example of Jesus.
5. Listening to children and responding to them appropriately.
6. Providing a safe and comforting environment in which children are encouraged to speak about their concerns and fears.
7. Including children in discussions about the life of the church as it affects them and their activities.
8. Working with children in an open and transparent way, ensuring that the parents and other responsible adults always know about the contact we have and the work we are doing with children.
9. Respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing confidential information to people who have a need to know.
10. Never *using* children to meet our own needs in any way.
11. Reporting and acting on any complaints, concerns, or breaches of this *Code of Conduct* or other parts of our *Safe Church Policy*.
12. Taking seriously and reporting any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible.
13. Avoiding prejudice, oppressive behaviour or discriminatory language with or in the presence of children.
14. Never initiating unnecessary physical contact with children or doing things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
15. Never singling out individual children for 'special' relationships or showing favouritism in the provision of gifts or attention in secretive or otherwise inappropriate ways.
16. Avoiding contact with children or young people online or by phone, except to convey necessary information about events or activities, unless their parents are aware of the interaction. In particular, no one over the age of eighteen should 'friend' or have contact with anyone under the age of eighteen online (e.g. via Facebook).

I have read this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it.

Name:	Name of Witness:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

3. Flowchart: Child Safety Reporting Process





4. Safe Church Concern Form

In the event of an allegation or report being received about potential or actual harm to a child or other vulnerable person, this form should be completed and given to a pastor or member of the Host Group, who will follow up as appropriate. This document should be kept securely for 45 years. Do not discuss your concern with anyone other than the pastor or Host Group member, unless instructed to do so.

If there is immediate danger, call Police (000).

Details of the Victim	
Name	
D.O.B. or Age	
Phone	Email
Address	

Details of the alleged perpetrator (the person about whom the allegation has been made)	
Name	
Position/role in the church	
D.O.B. or Age	
Phone	Email
Address	

Any specific allegations made by the victim? (in brief; using their exact words if possible)

continued on next page ...

Please provide brief details of the behaviour observed or other reasons you have concerns of abuse/neglect, such as when, where, who, how and any other possible witnesses or persons involved or who could be affected. (Attach additional sheet if necessary)

Any further details: (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Authorities Already Notified	Yes/No	Officer's Name	Time/Date
Pastor or Host Group			
BUV Staff			
Police			
Child Protection Unit			
CCYP			
None (please give reason)			

Details of the person completing this form

Name		Signature	
Position/role			
Email		Phone	
Address			
Date (submitted form)		Format (e.g. email)	

Details of the person receiving this form

Name		Signature	
Position/role			
Email		Phone	
Address			
Date (received form)		Format (e.g. email)	

5. Leader Screening Form



All staff and leaders, and all volunteers wanting to work with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults must complete this form.

The *Open Icon Baptist Church* is committed to promoting the welfare of children, youth and vulnerable adults participating in any of its ministries or activities by protecting their rights and protecting them from harm. The church is obliged to ask questions about the background of prospective staff and volunteers, such as about past criminal history and sexual offences, in order to fulfil our legal, insurance and ethical duty of care to protect children and vulnerable adults from the risk of sexual abuse.

Name of applicant

Date of birth

Address

Postcode

Phone (H)

Phone (W)

Phone (M)

Email address

How long have you attended this church? years months

If less than one year, have you attended another church previously? Yes / No

If Yes, for how long? years months

Previous church

What ministry are you seeking to be involved in?

Please tell us of any previous experience you have had in this area of ministry.

Please tell us how you are equipped and/or qualified for ministry in this area.

Do you have any physical or mental health concerns or other potential complications which might cause anyone to question whether it is safe for you to be in this area of ministry, or which we should know about in order to be able to properly care for you?

Are there other things that we should know about your background, such as criminal history, past or present addictions, or unresolved legal disputes?

Please provide the names and contact numbers of two people able to act as referees:

Name		Contact Number		Relationship	
Name		Contact Number		Relationship	

Note: Unless you have already been part of our church for at least 6 months, then one referee must be a senior leader and/or direct supervisor from the most recent church you have regularly attended

I confirm that the information I have supplied on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. Should it be found the answers are untrue, I understand that may be grounds for removal from the position held.

I hereby declare that I have never committed, nor been convicted of, nor am I currently the subject of an investigation of, any criminal offences in relation to the sexual abuse of children, youth or vulnerable adults.

I agree that the church may make a check with police regarding any information they may hold about me.

I agree that the church may contact any referees provided by me to establish my suitability as a person working with children, youth or vulnerable adults.

Signed

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

OFFICE USE		
Up-to-date and current:	Date	Confirmed?
• Safe Church Awareness Training		
• Working with Children Check		
• Police Check (if required)		
	Date	Reference OK?
• Reference Check with Name 1:		
• Reference Check with Name 2:		
	Date	Accepted?
• Interview led by (name)		
• Induction led by (name)		