

# **Tivoli Christian Reformed Church**



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND CODES OF CONDUCT**

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## Introduction

### **Policy statement**

Tivoli Christian Reformed Church (Tivoli CRC) is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Tivoli CRC has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

Tivoli CRC is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We are committed to the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

### **What is a Child Safe organisation?**

A child safe organisation will:

- be preventative rather than reacting to an unfortunate incident after it happens;
- understand and act on the moral and legal imperatives of protecting children in their care;
- acknowledge the damage an incident of abuse would do to the child, their family, people within and outside the organisation, as well as to the organisation itself;
- introduce safeguards that will protect children, staff, volunteers and the organisation;
- have clear boundaries of roles between staff and children;
- be open to outside accountability;
- have adequate staff, staff supervision and training;
- recognise and act on children's rights; and
- know that it is doing all that it can to protect children.

## Scope

The scope of this policy extends to:

- All ministries authorised by or under the control of the church, including those ministries undertaken at the church's premises or away from the church's premises.
- All leaders within the church or engaged by the church.

## Authority

These are the Policy and codes of conduct of Tivoli CRC, as approved by the Session (Elders and Deacons) of the church. This policy and codes of conduct will be reviewed annually by the Childcare Coordinator and presented to Session for approval.

## External Policies

Tivoli CRC acknowledges that some ministries in the church might have external affiliation with other organisations. These organisations will possibly have policies governing the issues of member and/or child safety and abuse. The church's policies and procedures are not intended to replace or conflict with the other policies, but instead to operate in conjunction with these policies to ensure child safety in the church.

## About Childsafe

Tivoli CRC uses the Childsafe Management Online System (CMOS) to administer our Child Safety Policies and Procedures. ChildSafe Limited is a Harm Prevention Charity, established by Scripture Union (SU) Australia in 2007. The safety and care processes developed within SU movements in Australia and New Zealand form the basis for the CMOS. Since 2003 SU has been intentionally developing ChildSafe with a specific desire to improve child and vulnerable people safety among Australasian churches and community organisations.

All leaders will have access to the CMOS. This will give access to online training as well as template documents that leaders will need to perform their duties.

If you are unsure of your password to the CMOS, please contact the ChildSafe Coordinator.

## Hierarchy and definitions

The Childsafe Management System use specific terminology to describe a Childsafe hierarchy. At Tivoli CRC we use the same terminology for most positions.

### Child

A Child is defined for the purposes of this policy as any person below 18 years of age to whom Tivoli CRC has a particular duty of care.

## Program

A set of activities and events authorised and run by Tivoli CRC. This may, for instance, include a camp, an activity day or coaching day.

## Activity

Any element that makes up a program such as a Fun Day, a hike or a fundraising event.

## Risk Management Officer

At Tivoli CRC the ChildSafe Coordinator, with the support of Session, will fulfil the role of Risk Management officer (RMO). The RMO will assess risks and determine strategies to minimise those risks.

## Childsafe Coordinator

The Childsafe Coordinator is the administrator for child safety.

## Team Leader

Team Leaders are given responsibility for leadership of a program or Ministry. At Tivoli CRC the Team Leaders are the Coordinators for Sunday School and Ignite, the Crèche coordinator, the GEMS coordinator and the Coordinator for Transformers.

## Team Member

Team Members are all people who work with children. They work within a broader team, and have limited responsibilities. Their primary focus will be on the participants in their program.

## Helper

A Helper is any unpaid person who is invited by a Leader to assist them in their Ministry.

Any Helper who provides assistance in a Children's Ministry must be **supervised** by a Team Member **at all times** and will be accountable to that Member.

Team Members who accept the assistance of a Helper must be satisfied of the Helper's maturity and suitability for Children's Ministry. Since helpers are always directly supervised by a Team Leader or Team member, they may include children under the age of 18.

## Leader

Any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of members placed in their care whilst holding a formal position in a recognised Ministry of the Church. A leader could include but is not limited to:

- Ministers, Elders or Deacons;
- Team leaders and members for Sunday school;
- Team leaders and members for a youth group;
- Team leaders and members for Crèche, GEMS, Transformers or Ignite;
- Small Group Leaders;
- Music, Drama or other Ministry Leaders; and
- Leaders for special occasions such as Sunday school fun days etc.

## Member

Any person, including children, who attends or participates in Church Ministries.

## **Childcare workers**

Anyone working with children including Elders, Deacons, ChildSafe coordinator, Team Leaders, Team members or Helpers.

## **Policies**

### **Information of participating children and Privacy**

All parents of children up to the age of 18, participating in programs or activities offered by Tivoli CRC, must complete a Medical Permission Form at the beginning of each year.

This needs to be available at ALL meetings and activities for the group throughout the year in case of medical emergencies and must be kept safe and secure between meetings.

A copy will be kept by the Childsafe Coordinator.

Care will be taken by all Team Leaders that Medical Information remains private.

The ChildSafe coordinator will ensure that the medical permission forms are updated every year.

Additionally, the Childsafe coordinator will distribute relevant documentation to the team leaders of each ministry.

Visiting children:

Visiting children will provide emergency contact details if parents or guardians will not remain on the premises.

Information regarding allergies or any relevant medical information for the individual will be collected.

### **Selection and Screening of Children's Ministry workers**

All prospective childcare workers will fill out an Application Form. The person appointing the childcare worker will also have an interview with the new worker.

All childcare workers will sign off on this Policy document before commencement of their duties.

### **Blue Card checks**

Before a Childcare worker (excluding supervised helpers) can commence their duties they are required by law to be in possession of a current Blue Card. Application details and forms are available online at <https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/index.html>. Please send your registration information to the Childcare Coordinator as soon as possible.

### **Training**

ChildSafe training is relevant to anyone who engages in work with children, young people and families. ChildSafe sets a standard of safety and care for the organisation and it is important that everyone involved is informed and agrees to uphold it.

All childcare workers at Tivoli CRC must complete the relevant training offered by ChildSafe.

The Childsafe Online System offers training for all levels of Childcare workers. This training can be offered

- face-to-face by the organisation using the Childsafe Resources or another organisation using the Childsafe system;
- online by each individual; or
- using printed ChildSafe resources by individuals or in group format.

At Tivoli CRC we expect self-training (online or using printed resources) before commencing volunteer duties should face-to-face training not be immediately available.

All childcare workers will sign off on this Policy document before commencement of their duties.

Training modules to be completed:

|   | Childsafe Team Members training      | Childsafe Team Leaders Training | Childsafe Coordinator training |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Minister  | ✓                                    | ✓                               |                                |
| Elders  | ✓                                    |                                 |                                |
| Risk Management Officer and Childsafe Coordinator | ✓                                    | ✓                               | ✓                              |
| Team Leaders                                      | ✓                                    | ✓                               |                                |
| Team Members                                      | ✓                                    |                                 |                                |
| Helpers   | Under direct supervision of a Leader |                                 |                                |

## Risk assessments

Each Team Leader will conduct a risk assessment of their regular program and activities outlining the possible risks, the level of risk and possible precaution measures to implement. This will be reviewed annually.

An application for permission to proceed will be made with the RMO who will provide Permission to proceed before the program or activity may proceed. Should the RMO have any concerns, he/she will discuss this with the Team Leader.

Each activity that is not part of the regular program scope will need a separate risk assessment.

No program or activity may proceed without permission to do so

## Transport

All drivers of private cars transporting children must have a valid Blue Card.

All drivers of private cars transporting children must be in possession of at least a Probationary P2 license (Green "P's").

Parents must give permission before children may be transported in private cars.

The car driven must be roadworthy and insured.

All passengers must wear seat-belts at all times.

There should be a mobile phone available in the car in case of accident or running late due to unforeseeable situations. This is so that the passengers can call parents and relieve them of any unnecessary worry.

No leader will transport a single child at any time unless explicit approval has been given by parents.

Always make sure your passengers enter their house before driving away, either wait in the car or walk your passenger to their front door. This is not just a courtesy this is necessary for making sure that you have safely taken them home.

Drivers are not allowed to smoke in the vehicle.

Drivers are not allowed to use any alcohol or drugs when transporting children.

All Drivers are required to sign a Driver's Declaration Form.

## **Location of activities**

All programs and activities will take place in an area that is visible to any parent/guardian or any other member of the public.

All window coverings, blinds and curtains will be opened to allow people to look into the rooms.

No Childcare worker will be alone with a child. All private conversations will take place under the "Two worker policy" where a second worker must be present or in close enough proximity to be able to see the child and Childcare worker. This will also take place in an area that is visible to the public.

Should a Childcare worker have only one child in their class, that child can join another group if appropriate.

All activities will have a leader/child ratio of 1:4 for ages 0-4, 1:8 for primary age (5-11) and 1:10 for secondary aged kids 12-18. For teaching classes, where the focus is on spiritual and academic growth rather than physical activity, a ratio of 1 team leader or team member to 15 children aged between 12-18 years old will be permissible.

## **Attendance**

Programs that operate while parents or guardians leave the premises will have a sign-in sheet where parents or guardians can sign their children in when arriving and out when leaving.

Parents are required to collect children from the venue rather than having children come out to their cars to meet them.

Visiting children will provide emergency contact details if parents or guardians will not remain on the premises.

Information regarding allergies or any relevant medical information for the individual will be collected.

# First Aid

## Location

There are two First Aid Kits at Tivoli CRC:

- A box located in the kitchen near the baby-change table.
- A portable First Aid bag for off-site activities, located in the cupboard to the right of the door that leads from the hall to the kitchen.

## Signage

Adequate signage (white cross on green background) will be displayed on the property to indicate the location of the fixed First Aid Kit.

## Content

The content of the First Aid Kits will be in accordance with guidelines provided by The Red Cross or St. John of God.

A First Aid booklet will be included in the First Aid Kit in which note should be made of items that were used to facilitate restocking.

Incident Report Templates will be kept with the First Aid Kits to facilitate reporting.

## First Aid personnel

First Aid Personnel will undertake initial treatment of injuries. The initial management provided by first aid personnel should be consistent with their level of training or competence. When first aid management required is beyond the level of training and competence of the personnel available, they should recommend that the person seek medical assistance.

The ChildSafe Coordinator will make a list of Members with First Aid qualification and will assess the need for further training.

| Name | Relevant Training |
|------|-------------------|
|      |                   |
|      |                   |
|      |                   |

## Analgesics

The dispensing of drugs needs to be managed by a medical practitioner (or an occupational health practitioner such as a registered division 1 nurse), not a first aid officer. Paracetamol and other Scheduled or over-the-counter medications require appropriate medical supervision and, despite their ready availability, should only be dispensed by persons with training in the administration of non-prescription medications. These drugs have been shown to be the major source of abuse and pilfering of first aid kits. Accordingly, analgesics will not be included in first aid kits at Tivoli CRC.

## Review

The First Aid Kit will be checked and restocked twice per year by the Risk Management Officer or an appointed representative, who will also review the relevance of items stocked and their expiry dates.

## Reporting of incidents

The Childsafe Incident Report must be completed in the event that

- An outside emergency service is contacted for the event;
- An individual is taken to the hospital, a doctor's surgery, an emergency dental surgery or other medical professional;
- An injury results in a participant being unable to participate for 24 hours;
- Where there is an alleged illegal act, a participant is sent home, serious leader dispute, damage or loss of property; or
- In cases related to child protection.

If in doubt, please complete a report on the event.

The Childsafe Incident Report will be submitted to the Risk Management Officer or Childcare Coordinator.

Copies of the Report Templates will be kept with the First Aid Kits.

**Note:** Reporting is not necessary for minor cuts and abrasions although a note must be made in the First Aid booklet to ensure items used get re-stocked.

## Physical contact

### Choice and Initiation

Some people do not seek or enjoy physical contact and are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact they have with others except in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when needing medical attention. It is therefore inappropriate, in the normal course of events, to initiate physical contact with a child. When a child initiates physical contact the childcare worker may respond to this in an appropriate way.

### Adult Responsibility

Physical contact between adults and children may be misconstrued. Any physical activity that is or may be construed as sexually stimulating to the adult or child is inappropriate and must be avoided. As children may or may not be aware of creating such situations, it is the duty of the adult to be alert to such circumstances and to act accordingly.

### Appropriate physical contact

Administration of first aid.

Supporting children who have hurt themselves.

Non-intrusive gestures to comfort a child or young person who is experiencing grief, loss or distress, such as a hand on the upper arm or upper back.

Non-intrusive touch such as congratulating a child by shaking hands or patting upper arm.

### Good practice

Always seek a child's permission to touch.

Even non-intrusive touch can be inappropriate when the child indicates that he/she does not wish to be touched.

Respect and respond to any signs that a child is uncomfortable with touch.

Use verbal directions instead of touch.

In some circumstances, staff may need to discourage younger children from inappropriate touch. This should be done gently and without embarrassment.

## **Nappy changes and toileting assistance**

Parents of pre-school children are encouraged to take their children to the toilet before leaving them with the care staff.

Supervision of toddlers and babies will only occur when a parent or guardian is present on the premises.

Where a child needs to be accompanied to the toilet, this will be done by one of the leaders. In this case the toilet door will remain open.

In the event that a child needs a nappy change, the parents will be requested to do this unless prior permission has been given to the leaders to do this.

## **Inclusive culture**

Tivoli CRC as an organisation is committed to being inclusive of all children and families. In particular Tivoli CRC aims to provide

- cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- safety for children with a disability.

## **Safe food handling**

The ChildSafe program provides guidelines on safe food handling. All Team Leaders should consider this as part of their risk assessment when providing food in their programs. All information regarding children with food allergies and food intolerances will be provided to the Team Leaders to consider when supplying food in their programs.

## **Building guidelines**

The Elders and Deacons in cooperation with the property manager will be responsible for the task of ensuring a safe building and equipment. ChildSafe produces a set of guidelines in this regard and a copy of these guidelines will be given to them.

## **Equipment**

All childcare workers should know how to operate equipment correctly and all safety guidelines must be adhered to.

## **Audio-visual**

Parents will give permission through the Medical Permission form for children to view audio-visual material during programs and activities.

All audio-visual material will be age-appropriate as classified by the Australian Classification Board. It must be taken in consideration that G, PG and M ratings are guidelines only and do not carry age restrictions. It is the responsibility of the Team Leader to ensure that all audio-visual material is appropriate for the age group.

## Media

Parents will give permission on the Medical Permission form for photographs and video recordings of children to be used appropriately.

Any media of children (for which consent was provided on the Medical Permission form) will only be used for presentations to the congregation or for displays around the church building. Any additional use of media will require specific permission from the parents.

## Discipline

It is not the responsibility of the Church or its Leaders to discipline a Child. It is appropriate for Leaders to employ general behaviour management strategies (such as mixing seating arrangements or separating disruptive children into different groups). At no time however, will a Leader administer any form of physical, emotional or mental discipline. If a Child does not abide by the rules set down by the Leader, or is an obstruction to the care of other Children or may cause harm to other Children, the Child will be removed and referred back to their parent or guardian.

## Abuse

Abuse can be defined as an act that endangers a child's physical or emotional health or development.

Child abuse includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse. All leaders and volunteers need to have an understanding of all these forms. They need to learn about the nature of child abuse, and develop an awareness of how and why some children are victimised. It is important that all participants know what constitute appropriate or inappropriate behaviours in any relationships with children. This will enable staff and volunteers to recognise dangerous situations and act before children are abused in any way.

Child abuse thrives on secrecy. To prevent child abuse in our organisation Tivoli CRC commits to developing and maintaining an open and aware culture which

- Listens to children
- Believes children
- Learns about child abuse and protective behaviours for children and young people
- Teaches children about their rights and protective behaviour strategies
- Instils a culture of safety and awareness in Tivoli CRC.

Physical or sexual abuse of children is a crime and must be reported to the Police. If a child discloses any such abuse, the organisation must listen, respond immediately and appropriately and report to the Police. It is important to validate a Child's disclosure, no matter how you feel about it. This means listening to the Child, taking them seriously and responding and acting on

the disclosure by reporting to the police. Children, parents, staff and volunteers must be encouraged and supported in their efforts to protect themselves and others.

Any incident of suspected or reported abuse must be immediately reported to the Childsafe Coordinator, using the Childsafe Incident Report.

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect a Child has been or is suffering Abuse, the ChildSafe Coordinator must be informed immediately.

If an allegation of abuse is made against a Team Leader, Team Member or Helper, the Childsafe Coordinator must be informed immediately.

Confidentiality is extremely important. Since Child Abuse is a serious incident the ChildSafe Coordinator will immediately involve other members higher up in the church's hierarchy (RMO, Minister and Session) to report to the Police and make further decisions.

Where an allegation is made the accused person will be removed from all Children's ministry pending the outcome of all investigations. This means that the person is relieved from their duties while the matter is investigated. Both the Child and the alleged abuser have rights and need protection and due process.

Once the authorities have been notified, they should be left to conduct any investigation. It is important that the Child is not required to repeat their disclosure to more people than absolutely necessary within the church. Interviewing the child must be left to the investigating authority who has appropriately trained people who are skilled in the process.

If a disclosure of abuse is made, the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate pastoral care to the one making the disclosure.

Any disclosures by a Child and all details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly and the documents will be held in a secure location where a breach of privacy cannot occur.

The church reserves the right to carry out church disciplinary procedures in accordance with the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia.

## **Alcohol and drugs**

The consumption of alcohol by persons under 18 or the use of illegal drugs during an activity is not to be condoned by any Leader. Any Child found to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is to be counselled and the parents/guardians contacted so the Child can be returned home immediately.

## **Queensland legislation**

### **Child Protection Act 1999**

The current Child Protection Legislation can be downloaded from <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/2018-01-29/act-1999-010>

## Blue Card checks

Child ministry volunteers must have a current Blue Card as described in **Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000**. A person is guilty of an offence if he or she does not have a current card and he or she engages in child-related work, knowing that it is child-related work; and he or she knows that he or she does not have a current card or is reckless as to whether he or she has one.

Exemptions are made for registered teachers or police officers in Queensland. They should however apply for an exemption card when providing services to children outside of their professional duties.

## Important contact details

### How to make a Child Protection report

Note that it is preferred that all reporting is made in conjunction with the relevant church authorities (Risk Management Officer and Minister/session).

*Who to contact?*

- To report concerns that are life threatening call Queensland Police on **000**
- To contact a Child Protection Office close to you, call a local office. For Tivoli CRC it is the *Ipswich South Child Safety Service Centre*, whose number is **(07) 3381 7522**.

### Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.

Tel.: **1800 55 1800**

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/organisation/>

### Lifeline

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Tel.: **131 114**

### Childsafe

<http://www.childsafe.org.au>

Access Childsafe resources and online training

<https://www.smo.org.au/auth/login>

### Child Wise

Child Wise (<http://www.childwise.org.au>) is dedicated to protecting children from abuse by:

- Educating children, parents and carers about risks and personal safety strategies.
- Working with child-focused organisations to improve child protection mechanisms and create safer environments for children and young people.
- Researching and responding to emerging risks to children and young people.
- Helping to shape regional and national policy through advocacy and partnerships.
- Providing information, support and referral to victims, families and concerned members of the public through our toll-free Helpline.

Childwise Helpline: **1800 99 1099**

## Any further questions?

### **Minister:**

Colin Pretorius

Tel.: 0423 88 99 11

Email: [colin@tivolicrc.org.au](mailto:colin@tivolicrc.org.au)

### **Childsafe Coordinator/Risk Management Officer:**

Marisa Strasser

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