

# SAFE CHURCH FRAMEWORK

## Safe Church Commitment Statement:

The Potter's House Church Beechboro is committed to creating and maintaining secure physical, emotional, and spiritual environments that prioritise the safety and wellbeing of every individual connected to our church community. Our goal is to support all people in their sincere journey of embracing the Christian faith within a space that is nurturing, respectful, and safe.

Every member of the PH workforce strives to uphold this commitment under the banner of our Safe Church initiative.

All staff and volunteers are dedicated to providing guidance, support, and timely responses to situations requiring focused assistance. This includes addressing any concerns related to the welfare of vulnerable individuals—particularly children and vulnerable people—as well as matters involving the conduct of our workforce.

To make contact with a Safe Church representative, please email [safechurch@pottershouse.com](mailto:safechurch@pottershouse.com) or call 0403 062 005.

For more information, please read below.

## Child Safety

### **The Potter's House Church Beechboro – Statement of Commitment to Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People**

At **The Potter's House Church Beechboro**, the safety and wellbeing of children and young people are central to the fulfilment of our mission and vision. We are fully committed to creating and maintaining environments that are **child-safe, nurturing, and free from harm**. Through proactive strategies, we aim to promote the wellbeing of all children and young people and prevent abuse, neglect, and grooming in any form.

#### **Our Commitment to Children and Young People**

We are dedicated to:

- Providing a **safe, supportive and positive environment** where children and young people can grow in faith and community.

- Ensuring that all experiences within our church are **free from harmful conduct**, including child abuse, neglect, or grooming.
- **Enabling children and young people** to speak up and respond when they encounter unacceptable behaviour.
- Making sure every child and young person knows **who to approach** if they feel unsafe or have concerns about their wellbeing.
- Implementing **age- and ability-appropriate codes of conduct** for our staff and volunteers within our church.
- Maintaining a clear and accessible **reporting framework** that ensures all reports are:
  - Easy to make for anyone within the church community
  - Responded to promptly, respectfully, and fairly
  - Properly documented
  - Escalated to relevant authorities when required
- Providing **compassionate support** for any child or young person who reports or is suspected of being exposed to harmful behaviour.

## Our Commitment to Parents, Carers, Families, and the Community

We recognise that keeping children and young people safe is a shared responsibility. The Potter's House Church Beechboro is committed to partnering with families, carers, and the broader community to ensure that every child is protected from harm.

We will:

- Communicate clearly with staff and volunteers about our expectations for maintaining a **safe and caring environment** for all children and young people.
- Provide staff and volunteers with **relevant information and training** on child safety, including:
  - How to recognise and respond to signs of harm
  - Where to access further information and advice
  - How to make a report if they suspect or witness harm, or observe a breach of our code of conduct.

## Our Commitment to Being a Child Safe Organisation

As a church community, we are committed to upholding the highest standards of child safety through the following actions:

- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers engaged in child-related roles **comply with our Codes of Conduct**, which are made publicly available.
- Implementing **robust recruitment processes**, including Working with Children Checks (WWCC) and other screening measures appropriate to each role.
- Provide induction, training, and ongoing learning opportunities focused on child safety.
- Take proactive steps to prevent unsafe behaviour among staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring that all members of The Potter's House Church Beechboro congregation know **how and when to report** any concerns, complaints, or allegations of abuse, neglect, or grooming.
- Offering appropriate **pastoral care and support** to any person who reports, experiences, or is affected by abuse, neglect, or grooming.

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### Pastors:

- Protecting all people who interact or attend The Potter's House Church Beechboro
- Ensuring that The Potter's House Church Beechboro observes all relevant regulations
- Ensure that reports to external parties are made where required.

### Safe Church Office

- Be the first point of contact for all safeguarding matters.
- Help staff, volunteers, understand their obligations to protect children, young and vulnerable people.
- Receive and escalate complaints, concerns and incidents for appropriate action.

### Ministry Leaders

- Implement this Policy in their area of responsibility.
- Assess the risk of abuse to children, young persons and vulnerable people within their area and endeavour to ensure controls are in place to prevent, detect and respond to incidents.

### Staff & Volunteers

- Provide a safe environment that supports all children, young and vulnerable people.
- Familiarise themselves with The Potter's House Church Beechboro's policy, procedures & Code of Conduct
- Report any reasonable belief or incident that a child, young person or vulnerable person's safety or welfare is at risk to responsible persons in the organisation or authorities (such as the Police and/or the child protection service).

## RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

### How We Respond to Your Concern

Our team is committed to listening carefully, offering support, and acting promptly on any concerns raised. See *Recognising Types of Concerns* for more details.

We provide:

- **Confidential support** to understand and assess your concern.
- **Appropriate response options** (formal or informal) depending on the nature and seriousness of the issue.
- **Access to wellbeing and pastoral care** for those affected.
- **Fair and consistent outcomes** in line with church, workplace, and legal expectations.

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### Mandatory Reporting Obligations

Depending on the seriousness of the matter, as per state requirements, some incidents require mandatory reporting. This means we may have a legal obligation to report to the authorities.

- **Criminal behaviour**, should be reported directly to the police, either in person or via [crimestoppers.com.au](http://crimestoppers.com.au)
- **Children at immediate risk of harm** should be reported to the relevant child protection authority in our state or territory.  
We can assess and help our workers and volunteers in determining what needs to be reported and to whom. Please note that when information is shared with a Safe Church representative, we are also required to report appropriately.
- Any sexual abuse of a child needs to be immediately reported to the relevant authorities and our insurance provider.

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## RESPONDING TO CONCERNS OR DISCLOSURES OF HARM

### INTERNAL REPORT PROCEDURE

The Potter's House Church Beechboro is committed to handling any suspicion, disclosure, or allegation of harm with care, integrity, and urgency. All concerns should be directed to the Safe Church Office.

Below is a flow chart for how we respond to concerns or disclosures of harm

**Reporting flow chart:**



We will endeavour to respond to every concern consistently and with compassion.

If the WA Police are required they can be contacted on: 131444

If the Department of Communities is required: 1800 176 888

Parents and carers who observe concerning or inappropriate behaviour should report it immediately to [safechurch@pottershouse.com](mailto:safechurch@pottershouse.com) or **0403 062 005**.

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## RECOGNISING TYPES OF CONCERNS/HARM

It's essential to recognise and respond appropriately to different types of concerns, including:

- **Bullying:** Repeated misuse of power that causes physical, social, or emotional harm.
- **Child-Related Concerns:** Any issue relating to the safety or wellbeing of a person under 18, including inappropriate adult behaviour or harmful sexualised conduct between children.
- **Data Breach:** Unauthorised access, loss, or disclosure of personal information.
- **Domestic or Family Violence:** Violence between family members or intimate partners, including between parents and children.
- **Harassment:** Repeated unwanted behaviour that offends or intimidates based on personal attributes.
- **Reportable Conduct:** Misconduct or concerning behaviour by anyone working with children or young people.
- **Sexual Harassment or Assault:** Unwelcome sexual conduct or violent conduct directed at someone because of their sex.
- **Power Imbalance:** Behaviour that takes advantage of differences in authority, role, or age, especially in leadership settings.
- **Violence:** Any form of coercion, intimidation, or physical or sexual harm.
- **Workplace Health & Safety:** Issues impacting physical or mental safety at work.
- **Other Concerns:** Any situation where assistance or advice is needed.

### Signs of harm:

Sometimes, signs of harm may include things like:

#### Emotional or Psychological Abuse:

Speech Disorders, Weight loss or gain, Avoiding home (particularly if the abuser is in the family home), Running away or continually staying at friend's house, Extreme attention seeking behaviour and other behaviours (e.g. bullying disruptiveness, aggressiveness)

#### Grooming

Talks a lot about a particular adult or older child, or wants to spend a lot of time with them or meet them alone, Is in a relationship with a much older person

### **Physical Abuse**

Facial, head and neck bruising or Injuries, Drowsiness vomiting fits (associated with head injuries), Unexplained or poorly explained injury

### **Sexual Abuse**

Direct or indirect disclosure, Sexual act described by the person, Trauma to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs, Repeat use of words e.g. “bad”, “dirty”, Self-destructive behaviour, self-mutilation, Sudden changes in behaviour or temperament, e.g. depression, anxiety attacks, withdrawal, agitation, anger, violence, absconding, seeking comfort and security, Inappropriate advances to others

**All concerns** must be reported to a Safe Church representative via [safechurch@pottershouse.com](mailto:safechurch@pottershouse.com) or **0403 062 005**.

If you're uncertain about whether to report, contact us—we'll guide you through the process.

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## **SAFE CHURCH CHILD SAFETY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS**

At The Potter's House Church Beechboro, we prioritise the safety of children and young people. We encourage parents and carers to engage in open, ongoing conversations with their children about safety, respect, and wellbeing.

Talking together helps raise awareness, and inspire meaningful behaviour and change. But lasting safety comes when conversation leads to *action*—when we build environments that protect, empower, and support children.

Below are resources and conversation starters for discussing topics such as:

- Preventing child sexual abuse,
- Online safety, and
- How to speak up or raise concerns.

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## **KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE, RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING**

The Potter's House *Safe Church* framework strengthens child safety across all areas of church life by:

- Overseeing recruitment and selection of volunteers in child-related roles including:
  - Regular attendance in church services for a minimum of six months.
  - Evidence of genuine conversion
  - Evidence of a consistent Christian life
  - Provide references
  - Have a valid *Working With Children Check*,
  - Answer questions related to basic safeguarding and behaviour around children.
- Developing and communicating clear policies and procedures.
- Providing ongoing *Safe Church* training for all staff and volunteers. This will include annual ongoing training on the safeguarding policy and the code of conduct.
- Managing concerns and disclosures in a consistent and responsible manner.

All staff & volunteers participating in programs at The Potter's House Church Beechboro must keep to the following working with children and young people guidelines. If you have any concerns or observe any behaviour outside of these boundaries, please let us know by contacting the Safe Church Office: [safechurch@pottershouse.com](mailto:safechurch@pottershouse.com)

## Programs

Every child and youth program within our church is designed to provide a secure and positive environment.

- Children and young people must always be supervised by **an approved adult leader**.
- Parents should receive clear information about program times, and leaders must ensure all children are collected safely.
- Proper toileting procedures must be followed: an approved adult will check the area is clear before children enter, then remain outside until all children have exited.

## Personal Interaction

Our guidelines ensure appropriate, transparent interactions with children and young people.

- Leaders must always remain in open, visible areas and never be alone with a child or young person.
- Physical contact should be safe, limited, and appropriate to the circumstances.
- All interactions must stay within healthy and professional boundaries.

## ONLINE SAFETY

Leaders must communicate with children and young people in transparent and age-appropriate ways.

- Leaders should not privately message, call or contact via social media or any other inappropriate apps primary-aged children
- Communication must involve parental awareness or permission.
- Electronic communication should remain professional and open.
- The privacy of children and young people must always be protected, especially in relation to personal information or sensitive disclosures.

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## INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**The Potter's House Church Beechboro is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all children and young people.**

### **Safety**

Our church has a duty to keep you safe.

If you ever feel unsafe or worried, you can talk to someone you trust—your parents, your pastor, or your leader.

### **Respect**

Respect means treating others with kindness and fairness. Respect is listening to each other and not leaving people out.

Every person is unique and has their own characteristics, strengths, and challenges.

At The Potter's House we endeavour to create a caring and safe environment for people to flourish in their walk with God.

### **We're Listening**

Your thoughts views and ideas matter.

Children and young people are a valued part of our church community, and we are committed to listen to and respect your input

### **Inform**

We'll help you understand how we keep you safe and what you can do if you feel unsafe.

Your wellbeing is important, and we'll connect you with people and services who can help.

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## RAISING A CONCERN

If you want to share feedback or report something that concerns you, you can contact us anytime.


You can raise a concern about:

- Safety or wellbeing issues,
- Behaviour of leaders or volunteers, or
- Anything any other concerns you may have

Your concerns will be taken seriously.

**Contact Safe Church:**

 [safechurch@pottershouse.com](mailto:safechurch@pottershouse.com)

 **0403 062 005**

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## WELLBEING SUPPORT SERVICES

If you and/or our staff or volunteers need support to talk or get help, you can:

- Speak with your parents, leaders, or pastors.
- Contact **Safe Church** at [safechurch@pottershouse.com](mailto:safechurch@pottershouse.com)
- Reach out to the following services:
  - **Kids Helpline:** 1800 55 1800
  - **Headspace:** 1800 650 890
  - **eSafety:** [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)