



CHILD SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES

for

High Country Vineyard Church

Version 3

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1 CHILD SAFETY POLICY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 High Country Vineyard Church (HCVC) is committed to promoting and protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and harm.
- 1.1.2 If any person believes a child is at immediate risk of child abuse or harm, telephone 000.

1.2 COMMITMENT TO THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- 1.2.1 HCVC is committed to providing children and young people with a safe and nurturing environment in which they can learn and thrive.
- 1.2.2 HCVC supports, values and respects all children and young people, and is committed to their safety, participation and empowerment.
- 1.2.3 HCVC has zero tolerance for all forms of child abuse or harm against children and young people, and all allegations will be treated seriously in accordance with our policies and procedures.
- 1.2.4 HCVC is committed to providing a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of all culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people, including Aboriginal children and young people, are respected and valued.
- 1.2.5 The safety, welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.

1.3 PURPOSE

- 1.3.1 This policy aims to:
 - (a) ensure HCVC meets its responsibilities for the safety, protection and wellbeing of children and young people;
 - (b) ensure Staff are aware of their responsibilities to prevent and report child abuse and harm to children occurring within all HCVC Environments;
 - (c) provide Staff with information and guidance regarding exercising the judgements involved with reporting risks of significant harm to children and the action that should be taken where a person suspects any child abuse or harm within all HCVC Environments;
 - (d) establish controls and procedures for preventing child abuse or harm and detecting it when it occurs within all HCVC Environments;
 - (e) provide a clear statement to Staff forbidding child abuse or harm;
 - (f) provide assurance that any and all suspected child abuse or harm will be reported and fully investigated; and
 - (g) place an emphasis on genuine engagement with and empowerment of children.

1.4 DEFINITIONS

- 1.4.1 **“Board”** means the governing body of HCVC.
- 1.4.2 **“Child”, “children” or “young person”** means a child or young person who is under 18 years of age, unless otherwise defined by law or noted in this Policy or Child Safety Procedure.
- 1.4.3 **“Child abuse or harm”** means conduct towards, against, with or in the presence of a child, or threatening to engage in such conduct, which includes:
- (a) physical violence;
 - (b) conduct of a sexual nature, including a sexual offence against a child and grooming behaviour;
 - (c) serious emotional or psychological harm; or
 - (d) serious neglect of a child.
- 1.4.4 **“Child Safety”** means matters related to HCVC’s duty of care to children in its care, protecting all children from harm, managing the risk of child abuse or harm, taking steps to prevent the occurrence or reduce the occurrence of child abuse or harm, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.
- 1.4.5 **“Child Safety Officers” or “CSOs”** means people appointed by HCVC to listen, discuss and clarify issues raised by Staff and children in relation to actual or suspected child abuse or harm.
- 1.4.6 **“HCVC”** means High Country Vineyard Church.
- 1.4.7 **“HCVC Environment”** means all physical and virtual environments and places made available or authorised by HCVC for use by a child, including but not limited to:
- (a) Mansfield Secondary College;
 - (b) St John’s Anglican Church Mansfield;
 - (c) the offices of HCVC;
 - (d) online HCVC Environments (including email, telecommunication, social media and other online communications); and
 - (e) other locations provided by HCVC for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for youth group nights, camps, excursions, and other events).
- 1.4.8 **“Staff”** means HCVC pastors, employees, contractors, elders, board members, leaders, interns and volunteers.
- 1.4.9 **“Pastor”** means a Lead or Associate Pastor.
- 1.4.10 **“Lead Pastor”** means a person/s appointed by the Board to provide oversight and leadership of the whole of High Country Vineyard Church.
- 1.4.11 **“WWCC”** means a Working with Children Check issued pursuant to the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic).

1.5 SCOPE

- 1.5.1 This Policy, in conjunction with the Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Procedure, applies to all Staff engaged by HCVC who work with children and young people.
- 1.5.2 This Policy applies to all HCVC Environments and all interactions with children and young people including:
- (a) physical contact,
 - (b) face to face contact;
 - (c) contact by post or other written communication;
 - (d) contact by telephone or other oral communication;
 - (e) contact by email or other electronic communication including online seminars and social media.

1.6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1.6.1 This Policy is based on the following principles:
- (a) HCVC has zero tolerance for child abuse and harm.
 - (b) All forms of child abuse and neglect cause harm to children.
 - (c) The best interests, safety and wellbeing of the child are paramount.
 - (d) Child safety is a shared responsibility of all adults in the community.
 - (e) All children have a right to feel and be safe and have equal rights to protection from abuse and harm.
 - (f) HCVC will consider the opinions of children when developing child safety policies and procedures to promote engagement with and the empowerment of children.
 - (g) HCVC will ensure that families participate in decisions affecting their child, and will openly communicate with families, carers and the community about its approach to child safety and ensure that information about child safety including information about making a complaint is readily available and accessible.
 - (h) HCVC will take into account the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, and make reasonable efforts to accommodate them.
 - (i) HCVC is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.
 - (j) Professionals working with children have legal and ethical responsibilities to support the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children.

1.7 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.7.1 The safety of children is everyone's responsibility.

- 1.7.2 **All staff:**



- (a) have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety of children from child abuse or harm or the risk thereof;
- (b) are responsible for identifying child abuse or harm and taking steps to prevent, reduce or eliminate child abuse or harm and the risk thereof;
- (c) must promote child safety at all times and provide a safe environment for all children; and
- (d) must telephone 000 if they believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse or harm.

1.7.3 All Staff are required to:

- (a) read and comply with this Policy, the Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Procedure;
- (b) take all reasonable steps to maintain an environment that prevents child abuse or harm to children;
- (c) respond to a child disclosing an incident of child abuse or harm or a risk of child abuse or harm, in a child-focused manner, with sensitivity and professionalism;
- (d) participate in child safety induction and training as directed by HCVC and request further assistance if further training is required;
- (e) report any concerns about actual or suspected child abuse or harm or risk thereof, as soon as possible to a CSO or Pastor; and
- (f) report any breach or suspected breach of this Policy, the Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Procedure as soon as possible to a CSO or Pastor.

1.7.4 HCVC

HCVC will ensure, as far as possible, that Staff are aware of:

- (a) their responsibilities to create and maintain child safe environments, including a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children and young people;
- (b) their obligations under this Policy;
- (c) the appropriate standard of conduct and behaviour that HCVC requires; and
- (d) HCVC's commitment to empowering children about their rights including the right to feel safe, be informed and participate in decisions affecting them.

1.7.5 The Governing Body of HCVC

The Governing Body of HCVC has ultimate responsibility for complying with the National Child Safe Principles and relevant state Child Safe Standards and Principles, including:

- (a) preventing and detecting the risk or actuality of child abuse or harm;
- (b) ensuring appropriate and effective internal control systems, including processes to respond to complaints and concerns, and regular reviews;
- (c) modelling and championing a child safe culture and making a public commitment to child safety;
- (d) implementing appropriate policies, procedures and codes of conduct in relation to child safety, including ensuring Staff are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness through ongoing education and training, and ensuring staff are suitable to work with children;
- (e) ensuring appropriate insurance arrangements are in place; and
- (f) empowering children, young people, families and communities with information about their rights and protections.

1.7.6 The Pastors

The Pastors of HCVC are responsible for:

- (a) managing and overseeing the response and investigation of reports of child abuse and harm to children or young people;
- (b) preventing, identifying and mitigating child safety risks, including the risk of child abuse or harm, within all HCVC Environments;
- (c) making reports and adhering to obligations under the applicable state and territory reportable conduct schemes;
- (d) ensuring Staff are aware of this Child Safety Policy, the Codes of Conduct, the Child Safety Procedure and their overall child safety obligations, including the obligation to report suspected child abuse or harm;
- (e) ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are in place, including effective internal control systems for the detection of child abuse and harm and risks of significant harm to children;
- (f) appointing CSOs;
- (g) providing support for Staff in undertaking their child safety obligations;
- (h) ensuring that this Child Safety Policy, the Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Procedure is reviewed and updated annually and after every child safety incident; and
- (i) monitoring compliance with the Child Safety Policy, Procedure and Code of Conduct.

1.7.7 The Administration Officer

The Administration Officer must:

- (a) keep records of all WWCCs and identify and monitor those that require renewal;
- (b) not allow Staff to work without a valid WWCC, including when a WWCC has expired or a negative notice is received;
- (c) collect, document and store information from applicants and their referees to assess their suitability for child-connected work; and
- (d) securely store Incident Reports, attendance registers, and child application forms.

1.7.8 Child Safety Officers (CSOs)

CSOs are available to listen, discuss and clarify issues confronting Staff in relation to child abuse.

HCVC CSOs are responsible for:

- (a) responding to, managing and overseeing the investigation of complaints and disclosures under this Policy, as directed by the Lead Pastor;
- (b) reporting any risks to child safety, including risk of child abuse or harm, to the Lead Pastor;
- (c) recording risks to child safety and specify the action(s) HCVC will take to reduce or remove the risks (i.e. risk controls) when a Staff member notifies them of an identified risk;
- (d) making reports on behalf of HCVC, as authorised or delegated by the Lead Pastor;
- (e) maintaining adequate records of all complaints, decisions and actions taken in relation to any child safety complaint or disclosure under this Policy in conjunction with the Administration Officers; and
- (f) being familiar with the types of abuse that might occur and be alert to any indications of such conduct, including harm caused by other children or young people.

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1.8 CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

- 1.8.1 Before working with children, Staff must read, understand and agree to comply with the HCVC Child Safety Code of Conduct as part of HCVC's child safety induction and training.
- 1.8.2 HCVC's Child Safety Code of Conduct is publicly available as a hard copy at the offices of HCVC and as a soft copy on the HCVC website at: www.highcountryvineyard.org.au

1.9 RECRUITMENT

- 1.9.1 HCVC engages in a range of recruitment strategies to ensure that Staff working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing in practice, including:
- (a) developing clear position descriptions for jobs or categories of jobs that involve child-related work setting out:
 - i. the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing; and
 - ii. the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing;
 - (b) engaging in a thorough examination of a person's suitability to work with children prior to inviting them to take a leadership position with children;
 - (c) ensuring the applicant completes a trial session to assess suitability and demonstrate job requirements;
 - (d) screening all persons that will (or could reasonably) work with children to verify that they have a valid WWCC (or equivalent) before they commence working with children at HCVC, and keeping records of all relevant information;
 - (e) informing all Staff involved in child-related work of HCVC's child safety practices (including the Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Child Safety Procedures);
 - (f) ensuring the applicant has been approved by the Lead Pastor prior to participating in children or youth ministries; and
 - (g) ensuring the applicant has attended HCVC as a regular member for at least six (6) months prior to participating in children or youth ministries.

1.10 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 1.10.1 HCVC understands there may be a number of risks associated with its services and programs in relation to:
- (a) images or videos taken of children during a program or event;
 - (b) the supervision of children;
 - (c) the online environments in which children engage with HCVC; and
 - (d) overnight stays or excursions associated with HCVC.

1.10.2 To mitigate or prevent those risks, HCVC:

- (a) requires Staff to comply with all HCVC policies and procedures and comply with responsibilities in relation to privacy and information sharing;
- (b) requires Staff to comply with the Code of Conduct which establishes expected behavioural standards and responsibilities when having contact with children;
- (c) conducts reviews of all policies, procedures and documentation to help monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls;
- (d) ensures appropriate recruitment and training is conducted for all Staff; and
- (e) ensures proper documentation is gathered from the child’s parent or designated guardian including, but not limited to:
 - i. child registration forms
 - ii. photo consent forms
 - iii. attendance register forms

1.11 SUPERVISION, TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT FOR STAFF

1.11.1 HCVC has strategies and safeguards in place to ensure that all Staff are adequately supervised, trained and supported to understand their obligations and responsibilities to create a child safe environment.

1.11.2 Those strategies and safeguards include:

- (a) induction and annual refresher training for all Staff to support their understanding of their reporting obligations;
- (b) ongoing supervision by team coordinators who are trained in HCVC policies and procedures;
- (c) training for Staff before engaging with children;
- (d) compliance with this Policy monitored by administration officers; and
- (e) instructing and supporting Staff in complying with procedures for responding, suspecting and identifying child abuse and harm or risk of child abuse or harm towards children.

1.12 COMMUNICATION

1.12.1 HCVC will communicate the Child Safety Policy, the Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Procedure in the manner below:

Congregation	Parents, Guardians, Community	Employees, Volunteers, Contractors
Website	Website	Website
Email Newsletter	Email Newsletter	Email Newsletter
Printed copies at the HCVC offices	Printed copies at Little Church and Youth events & programs	Letters of appointment/contract
		Induction training and refresher training
		Annual training session

1.13 THE PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN

1.13.1 HCVC:

- (a) provides inclusive and engaging activities and programs for children;
- (b) acknowledges the benefits of involving children in decision making;
- (c) promotes meaningful participation through programs and initiatives;
- (d) acknowledges and appreciates the strengths of the diversity of children, including cultural diversity and the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people;
- (e) acknowledges the rights of children assists them to make meaningful contributions be balancing the need to provide guidance while respecting independence; and
- (f) is responsive to the needs of children and encourages feedback.

1.13.2 HCVC will ensure HCVC's child safety practices are communicated in an accessible manner for:

- (a) younger children, by discussing the documents in-person (and/or any other method deemed appropriate and effective for the particular age of the child);
- (b) children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, by discussing the documents in-person (and/or any other method deemed appropriate and effective for translation), and;
- (c) children living with a disability, by discussing the documents in-person (and/or any other method deemed appropriate and effective for the particular type of disability that the child is living with).

1.14 ADULT LEADER TO CHILD RATIOS

1.14.1 At HCVC, we comply with the Victorian State Government regulations for adult leader to child ratios. There must be a minimum of two qualified adult leaders present at any child or youth event.

Age	Ratio
Birth – 35 months	1 adult leader to 4 children
36 months – preschool age	1 adult leader to 11 children
Above preschool age	1 adult leader to 15 children
Overnight camps & water-based activities	1 adult leader to 10 children

1.15 BREACHES

- 1.15.1 Staff must report any breach or suspected breach of this Policy, the Code of Conduct or Child Safety Procedure to a CSO and/ or Pastor as soon as possible after becoming aware of the breach or suspected breach.
- 1.15.2 If HCVC becomes aware of a suspected breach of this Policy, the Code of Conduct or Child Safety Procedure, HCVC will take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any child who may be at risk as a result of or in relation to the breach.
- 1.15.3 Suspected breaches of this Policy, the Code of Conduct or Child Safety Procedure are treated seriously by HCVC and will be investigated (either internally or externally, depending on the severity of the suspected breach) in a manner that affords procedural fairness to the subject of the investigation and complies with any reportable conduct schemes if applicable. HCVC will handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.
- 1.15.4 Following an investigation into a suspected breach, any person who is found to be in breach or to have breached this Policy, the Code of Conduct or Child Safety Procedure may face disciplinary action (including termination of their engagement with HCVC).

1.16 REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO RISK OF HARM TO A CHILD

- 1.16.1 HCVC is committed to ensuring that children and young people who access HCVC's services and programs are kept safe from harm and the risk of harm.
- 1.16.2 When HCVC suspects that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, HCVC will respond to that suspicion in an appropriate manner which prioritises the safety of children and young people.
- 1.16.3 All Staff are required to follow HCVC's Child Safety Procedure (annexed to this Policy).
- 1.16.4 HCVC will comply with all obligations under Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme and any other applicable laws, and will provide information to government agencies including police, and do all things necessary to assist with enquiries, as is required.

1.17 INVESTIGATIONS

- 1.17.1 The CSO and/or Pastor will make every effort to keep any child safety investigation confidential; however, from time to time Staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation (e.g. to provide witness statements).
- 1.17.2 HCVC will do all things necessary to assist in any external investigations conducted by police or investigations conducted under any applicable reportable conduct scheme.
- 1.17.3 An investigation conducted by HCVC will be conducted in accordance with procedural fairness to protect the integrity of the investigation and the interests of all the parties involved in the investigation.

1.18 RECORD KEEPING

- 1.18.1 All reports of alleged abuse or harm (or an identified risk) must be recorded in the form of a Child Safety Incident Report (found in the Appendices). A Child Safety Incident Report must record places, times, dates, names of people, observable behaviours or evidence of harm. Reports must be securely stored by the CSO in conjunction with the Administration Officers.
- 1.18.2 CSOs are responsible for ensuring adequate records are maintained. Either the Staff member who identified or witnessed the actual or risk of child abuse or harm or a CSO must complete a Child Safety Incident Report.
- 1.18.3 The CSO will ensure that the following records are held and maintained indefinitely:
- (a) allegations, complaints and concerns of a breach of the Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct or Child Safety Procedure;
 - (b) complaints, reports and disclosures of actual or suspected child abuse or harm to a child;
 - (c) reports made to external government agencies or regulators including reports to police or reports made under any applicable reportable conduct scheme;
 - (d) investigation reports, evidence and records of interview in relation to any investigation under this policy; and
 - (e) all decisions and actions taken in relation to any child safety complaint, report of a breach or disclosure received.

1.19 PRIVACY

- 1.19.1 HCVC will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and its Privacy Policy.

Principles

- 1.19.2 There are two guiding principles in respect to a child's privacy:
- (a) Best interests: HCVC, all employees, volunteers and contractors will do what they believe is in the best interest of the child. The paramount consideration is the safety of children.
 - (b) Respect privacy: HCVC will respect a child's privacy, except when this conflicts with the best interests principle. This means acting consistently with the Australian Privacy Principles.
- 1.19.3 As much as is reasonably possible, an individual's privacy is to be protected. Individuals who make reports or disclosures of abuse and individuals who are the subject of accusations are all entitled to privacy.

Disclosing information and privacy

- 1.19.4 Staff must act consistently with the HCVC Child Safety Policy and Procedure, the Code of Conduct and relevant statutory requirements.
- 1.19.5 Where a disclosure, such as reporting to a government department or police, is required or authorised by a reportable conduct scheme or other law, the disclosure will not be a breach of privacy. The Child Safety Procedure (below) sets out applicable reporting requirements for Victoria.

1.20 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 1.20.1 HCVC welcomes feedback from all members of the community including families on how it can improve its risk management approach and better protect the safety of children and young people. Please direct feedback to one of the Pastors in writing. A review of this Child Safety Policy, the Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Procedures shall be conducted annually.

2 CHILD SAFETY PROCEDURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1 This Procedure applies to all Staff of HCVC in all HCVC Environments. It should be read in accordance with the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- 2.1.2 The Lead Pastor is accountable for monitoring compliance with this Procedure.
- 2.1.3 This Procedure is set out according to the Victorian Child Safe Standards for organisations.

2.2 OVERVIEW

- 2.2.1 HCVC is committed to ensuring that children and young people who access HCVC's services and programs are kept safe from harm and the risk of harm.
- 2.2.2 When HCVC suspects that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, HCVC will handle that suspicion in a manner which prioritises the safety of children and young people.
- 2.2.3 All Staff members are responsible for reporting reasonable beliefs that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm in accordance with this procedure.
- 2.2.4 All Staff members will follow the process outlined below.

2.3 STEP 1: DETERMINE WHETHER THE CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

- 2.3.1 The Staff member will stay with the child (if within their presence) and take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.
- 2.3.2 If the Staff member believes the child is at immediate risk of abuse, they will notify police immediately by telephoning 000.

2.4 STEP 2: CONSIDER WHETHER THERE IS AN OBLIGATION TO REPORT

- 2.4.1 A Staff member:
 - (a) who, in the course of carrying out their duties, forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered or are likely to suffer from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents cannot or will not protect the child:
 - i. **must** disclose that information to the police or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) if they are a **mandatory reporter**; or
 - ii. may **voluntarily** disclose that information to the police or the DFFH if they are not a mandatory reporter;
 - (b) who forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or neglect) may make a **voluntary report** to DFFH or the police;

- (c) who is an adult and forms a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child under the age of 16 years by an adult, **must** make a report to the police as soon as practicable; or
 - (d) who is aware of a substantial risk that a child will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by another adult associated with HCVC must not negligently fail to reduce or remove that risk, noting that reporting to DFFH or police is one way to reduce or remove that risk.
- 2.4.2 HCVC will report any reportable allegation made against a Staff member to the CCYP within three (3) business days of becoming aware of the allegations in accordance with the reportable conduct scheme. Staff members are strongly encouraged to advise a CSO and/or Pastor if they become aware of conduct which may constitute a reportable allegation, which includes conduct which occurs outside the course of a person's employment.
- 2.4.3 For the purpose of this procedure:
- (a) **Staff members** means HCVC pastors, employees, contractors, elders, board members, leaders, interns and volunteers and includes Staff;
 - (b) a **child** is a person under 17 years of age;
 - (c) the **CCYP** means the Commissioner for Children and Young People;
 - (d) a **mandatory reporter** includes a:
 - i. registered medical practitioner, nurse or midwife;
 - ii. person registered as a teacher or early childhood teacher;
 - iii. principal of a school;
 - iv. police officer;
 - v. person in religious ministry;
 - vi. the approved provider or nominated supervisor of or a person with a post-secondary qualification in the care, education or minding of children who is employed by or engaged by a children's service;
 - vii. person with a post-secondary qualification in youth, social or welfare work who works in the health, education or community or welfare services field;
 - viii. youth and child welfare worker;
 - ix. registered psychologist.
 - (e) a **reportable allegation** arises when a Staff member forms a reasonable belief that there has been:
 - i. a sexual offence, sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
 - ii. behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child;
 - iii. significant neglect of a child; or
 - iv. misconduct involving any of the above.

- 2.4.4 If a Staff member is uncertain as to whether they need to make a report, they should discuss their observations and concerns with a CSO and/or Pastor.
- 2.4.5 Staff members are not required to consult with HCVC or gain the support of HCVC prior to making a report.

Responding to a child or young person who is harmed or at risk of being harmed by a Staff member

- 2.4.6 If a Staff member suspects on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm by another Staff member, then:
- (a) that suspicion must be reported in the same way as if it arose in relation to a person outside of HCVC; and
 - (b) the person is strongly encouraged to report that suspicion to a CSO and/or Pastor so that steps can be taken to minimise potential harm to children.

2.5 STEP 3: MAKE A REPORT (IF REQUIRED)

Mandatory and voluntary reporting

- 2.5.1 If a Staff member determines they must make a report or should make a voluntary report, the Staff member must report that suspicion by making a telephone notification to the relevant authority by contacting:
- (a) DFFH East Division intake on 1300 360 391;
 - (b) After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service on 13 12 78;
 - (c) Victoria Police by dialling 000;
 - (d) by contacting your local police station (contact details available at: www.police.vic.gov.au/location); or
 - (e) by contacting the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT) in your area (contact details available at: www.police.vic.gov.au/sexual-offences-andchild-abuse-investigation-teams).
- 2.5.2 A report must be made by a mandatory reporter each time that person becomes aware of any further grounds for their belief a child may have suffered or is likely to suffer harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse.
- 2.5.3 If a Staff member makes a notification, the person is strongly encouraged to notify the CSO and/or Pastor that they have made that notification.
- 2.5.4 If the CSO or Pastor is notified that a child is, or may be, at risk of harm, they must:
- (a) take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any child or young person which may be at risk or danger;
 - (b) confirm that the concern has been reported, and if not, assist the Staff member to make the report;
 - (c) complete the Child Safety Incident Report (or direct the staff member to complete the report).

Reportable Conduct Scheme

- 2.5.5 If the Lead Pastor determines that a reportable allegation has been made in relation to a current Staff member in Victoria:
- (a) the Lead Pastor of HCVC must make a report to the CCYP within three business days of forming a reasonable belief that a Staff member has committed reportable conduct or engaged in misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, irrespective of whether the conduct in question is alleged to have occurred within the course of the Staff member's engagement with HCVC;
 - (b) HCVC will seek external guidance regarding conducting an internal or external investigation;
 - (c) The Lead Pastor of HCVC must provide the CCYP with updates as required under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, including providing a 30 day report; and
 - (d) HCVC will cooperate with all regulatory authorities in relation to the investigation, including DFFH, police and the CCYP.

Stand down

- 2.5.6 Where HCVC has allegations or concerns that any Staff member may have engaged in conduct that could give rise to risk of harm to a child, HCVC may, at its discretion:
- (a) stand the Staff member down while an investigation is conducted (which will involve removing or limiting their contact with children, and liaising with authorities); and
 - (b) direct the Staff member to return any keys, passes or equipment and to provide any access codes or passwords.

2.6 STEP 4: COOPERATE WITH REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

- 2.6.1 The Staff member and HCVC will cooperate with any investigation by the police or DFFH.
- 2.6.2 Support will be provided to the child(ren) as deemed appropriate by the CSO and/or Pastor.
- 2.6.3 All correspondence from regulatory authorities should be directed to a CSO and/or Pastor.
- 2.6.4 HCVC will not interview the child(ren) further or otherwise investigate until the police and/or the DFFH have provided it with written permission to do so.
- 2.6.5 DFFH or the police may conduct interviews of HCVC children and young people without their parents' knowledge or consent.
- 2.6.6 When a police officer or child protection practitioner from DFFH attend HCVC premises, a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to the child or young person.
- 2.6.7 HCVC will notify Working with Children Check Victoria of the allegations.

2.7 STEP 5: INTERNAL INVESTIGATION

- 2.7.1 Once clearance has been provided to HCVC by the relevant regulatory authorities, it will conduct its own internal investigation if the conduct is subject to the reportable conduct scheme.
- 2.7.2 If the conduct is not subject to the reportable conduct scheme HCVC may decide to conduct its own internal investigation.
- 2.7.3 The Lead Pastor will appoint a relevant person to manage the internal investigation. If required, an external investigator will be appointed.
- 2.7.4 The investigation will be undertaken in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice and will comply with the obligations under the reportable conduct scheme.
- 2.7.5 All Staff are expected to fully cooperate with any internal investigation.

2.8 STEP 6: CONFIDENTIALITY

- 2.8.1 Following a report and during an investigation, Staff members are required to protect confidentiality and the interests of:
 - (a) the child(ren) and their family;
 - (b) the individual(s) who made the report; and
 - (c) any representative of or another person associated with HCVC who is implicated in the report.

2.9 STEP 7: INTERNAL INVESTIGATION FINALISED

- 2.9.1 Following an internal investigation, findings and recommendations should be made.
- 2.9.2 HCVC has full discretion to put in place safety management plans or take disciplinary action where it forms a reasonable belief that it is not safe for a Staff member to interact with children in accordance with its duty of care.
- 2.9.3 The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.
- 2.9.4 HCVC will endeavour to offer support to any Staff member or member of HCVC community involved where appropriate.

2.10 STEP 8: EVALUATION

- 2.10.1 HCVC Board will be notified as needed and policies and procedures may need to be reviewed.

3 APPENDICES

Please find attached relevant forms, guidelines and documents related to the Child Safety Policies and Procedures.

These Child Safety Policy and Procedures have been approved by the Board of the Association and is signed below by the Chair and one other Board member:

Chair

Name: Mark Buscombe

Signed: *Mark Buscombe*

Date: 2024-11-07

Board Member

Name: Holly Cameron

Signed: *Holly Cameron*

Date: 2024-10-14





HCVC Child Safety Code of Conduct

To be completed by all employees, contractors, elders, board members, leaders, interns and volunteers involved in the areas of children and youth at High Country Vineyard Church. A copy is to be kept by the staff member and on church file.

Our standard of conduct

The framework on which the following standards are based combine our core values and beliefs with relevant laws. This document should be read in conjunction with our other policies and procedures.

You are expected to:

1. Stay connected

- Be in the pursuit of living a life pleasing to God, through personal relationship with Him.
- Be connected and invested in church community life.

2. Be faithful

- Endeavour to live a life of good character. You are expected to deal appropriately with personal issues which may affect your ability to lead others.
- Minister in accordance with our vision and mission, and core values and beliefs.
- Endeavour to pray regularly for HCVC, our leadership and the people to whom you minister and with whom you serve.
- Be faithful to ministry commitments, team and other meetings and policy requirements, including being respectful to others by being punctual.
- Actively seek to strengthen your skills and understanding in areas of ministry in which you serve.

3. Bring honour

- Set a good example for others and represent HCVC well both when engaged in HCVC activities and in your personal life.
- Always act in accordance with HCVC's policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Be a collaborative and empathetic team member always trying to create a safe, efficient and effective working environment.
- Advise a Pastor if you are charged with, or convicted of, a criminal offence.
- Avoid any conflict between your private interests and your role at HCVC. It is not appropriate for you to use your position at HCVC for personal gain or advantage. You must declare to your supervisor any personal interest which could be construed as conflicting or potentially conflicting with your role at HCVC.

4. Act with integrity

- *Gifts.* Not solicit or accept gifts or benefits in connection with your role which might compromise or be seen to compromise the integrity or reputation of HCVC.
- *Confidentiality.* Protect the privacy of others. You are expected:

- Not to share with anyone confidential information received in the context of pastoral ministry without the consent of the person who provided it unless the disclosure is required by law or is clearly in the public interest (such as to avoid the risk of serious injury or harm to others).
- To maintain and preserve records and ministry documentation in accordance with our policies and procedures.
- *HCVC's information and ownership rights.* Respect HCVC's rights. You are expected:
 - Not to disclose to anyone information confidential to HCVC. This is information we tell you is confidential, by its nature is confidential or which you know or ought to know is confidential.
 - To respect HCVC's intellectual property rights.
- *Copyright of others.* Respect the copyright of others. When engaged in HCVC activities, you are expected:
 - To comply with all copyright licence conditions applying to software and other intellectual property rights acquired or used by you or HCVC.
 - Not to use software or other intellectual property rights e.g., music, songs or digital media, unless you or HCVC has a legitimate right to do so.
- *Property.* Respect and be good stewards of HCVC property including buildings, equipment and supplies. You are expected to:
 - Keep clean and tidy office and ministry areas under your responsibility.
 - Report damage and supply shortages to the appropriate person (and, where appropriate, take responsibility for repairing or replacing damaged items).
- *Social media.* Be circumspect when commenting on social media platforms. You are expected to:
 - Obtain approval from a Pastor before making a statement on a social media platform which could be construed as expressing the view of HCVC on a political or social issue.
 - Be circumspect when expressing your personal views on social media platforms on political or social issues, ensuring it is clear they are your personal views and the reputation of HCVC is not jeopardised by your comments.
- *Internet and email.* You are expected to:
 - Always use respectful language and not make comments which could be construed as gossip, harassment, defamatory, discriminatory or threatening.
 - Not access the email records of others unless expressly authorised to do so by a Pastor or the person whose records you access.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

Child safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of all HCVC staff. Appropriate behaviour is essential for ensuring that children and young people are protected from child abuse and harm.

All HCVC Staff will:

1. Uphold HCVC's Statement of Commitment to child safety at all times;
2. Act in accordance with HCVC's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures at all times;
3. Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people;

4. Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families and toward other staff;
5. Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and their families, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well;
6. Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children;
7. Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries;
8. Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children;
9. Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.
10. Participate and engage in all induction and training obligations required by HCVC and identify personal deficits in knowledge regarding child safety and communicate these deficits to the CSO or Pastor.
11. Involve children in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them wherever possible;
12. Contribute, where appropriate to HCVC's policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child safety and wellbeing;
13. Identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as required by HCVC's risk assessment and management policy or process;
14. Respond to any concerns or complaints of child abuse or harm promptly and in line with HCVC's policy and procedure for receiving and responding to complaints;
15. Report all suspected or disclosed child abuse or harm as required by any relevant legislation and by HCVC's policy and procedures for internal and external reporting;
16. Comply with legislation and HCVC's policies and procedures in relation to record keeping and information sharing;
17. Notify the CSO or Pastor of HCVC immediately if a complaint or allegation regarding child safety has been made against them, including outside the ordinary course of their employment;
18. Ensure that the government regulator of any WWCC or other required clearance registers HCVC on their WWCC and causes any adverse or negative notices to be provided to HCVC.

All HCVC Staff will not:

1. Engage in any unlawful activity towards, against, with or in the presence of a child, or threaten to engage in such conduct;
2. Engage in any form of child abuse or harm towards, against, with or in the presence of a child, or threaten to engage in such conduct;
3. Discriminate against any child or their family members or engage in conduct towards or in the presence of a child or young person that suggests contempt, ridicule or intolerance, including in association with their race, culture, gender, sexuality, disability or religion;
4. Engage in oppressive or threatening behaviour toward a child or young person;
5. Be alone with a child;
6. Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian provides consent or unless required to do so by HCVC's policy and procedure on reporting;
7. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children, or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material;
8. Work with children under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs, or prescription drugs which have an adverse effect on the person's duty of care to a child or young person;

9. Post or publish any information about a child or young person online, including personal information such as their name, age, email address, telephone number, photographs or videos;
10. Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or harm.

If any HCVC staff believe that this Child Safety Code of Conduct has been breached by another person they will:

1. Act to prioritise the best interests of children and young people;
2. Take actions promptly to ensure that children and young people are safe;
3. Promptly report any concerns to HCVC’s CSO or Pastor;
4. Follow HCVC’s policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns;
5. Comply with all required legislative requirements on reporting and with HCVC’s policy and procedure on internal and external reporting including the Child Safety Policy and Procedures.

Breach of Child Safety Code of Conduct or Policy

Breaches of this Child Safety Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including the termination of a person’s engagement or employment with HCVC. Allegations of misconduct involving children will be managed in accordance with any relevant Reportable Conduct Scheme and may be the subject of a referral to Police or other government authority.

DECLARATION

Staff member details	
Name	
Position	
Phone number	
Email	
Address	

Referees (someone to whom you are not related, and you have known for at least five (5) years)			
Referee #1		Referee #2	
Name		Name	
Phone number		Phone number	
Email		Email	

If at any time I wish to withdraw from my work in children’s and/or youth ministry at HCVC, I will advise the CSO or Pastor verbally or in writing of my intent to withdraw from this position. I understand that my declaration and applications will be kept on file for evidence of compliance.

Signed	
Print full name	
Date	





HCVC Little Church Child Registration Form

To be completed and signed by a parent/guardian for EACH child.

Child's details:

First Name: _____
Surname: _____
Gender: _____
D.O.B: ____ / ____ / ____

Parent/Guardian 1

First Name: _____
Surname: _____
Relationship to child: _____
Home Address: _____

Contact Number: _____
Email: _____

Parent/Guardian 2

First Name: _____
Surname: _____
Relationship to child: _____
Home Address: _____

Contact Number: _____
Email: _____

Are there any family situations (e.g., custodial issues/court orders) we should be aware of? Please specify:

Medical Information

Medicare No: _____
Ambulance Membership No: _____
GP Name/Clinic: _____
Phone: _____



Does your child have any allergies? YES NO
IF YES PLEASE SPECIFY – (Please attach the child’s management plan if relevant)

Does your child have any medical or additional support needs? YES NO
IF YES PLEASE SPECIFY – (Please attach the child’s management plan if relevant)
(triggers, medication e.g. inhaler / Epi-Pen etc.)

I declare that:

- All information given is true and correct.
- I will take responsibility in informing the Child Safety Officer of any changes to the above details in a timely manner.
- I understand that although High Country Vineyard Church staff and volunteers will take all reasonable care to ensure the safety of my child, as per the HCVC Code of Conduct, HCVC Child Safety Policy & Procedures, in the case of personal injury, sickness, loss or damage to personal property, that I will not hold HCVC, and its employees and/or volunteers responsible.
- In the event that medical attention is required I understand that HCVC staff and volunteers will act in the best interest of my child and I will cover all medical expenses incurred.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____ / _____ / _____





HCVC Youth Registration Form

To be completed and signed by a parent/guardian for EACH child.

Child's details:

First Name: _____
Surname: _____
Gender: _____
D.O.B: ____ / ____ / ____

Parent/Guardian 1

First Name: _____
Surname: _____
Relationship to child: _____
Home Address: _____

Contact Number: _____
Email: _____

Parent/Guardian 2

First Name: _____
Surname: _____
Relationship to child: _____
Home Address: _____

Contact Number: _____
Email: _____

Are there any family situations (e.g., custodial issues/court orders) we should be aware of? Please specify:

Medical Information

Medicare No: _____
Ambulance Membership No: _____
GP Name/Clinic: _____
Phone: _____



Does your child have any allergies? YES NO

IF YES PLEASE SPECIFY – (Please attach the child’s management plan if relevant)

Does your child have any medical or additional support needs? YES NO

IF YES PLEASE SPECIFY – (Please attach the child’s management plan if relevant)

(triggers, medication e.g. inhaler / Epi-Pen etc.)

I declare that:

- All information given is true and correct.
- I will take responsibility in informing the Child Safety Officer of any changes to the above details in a timely manner.
- I understand that although High Country Vineyard Church staff and volunteers will take all reasonable care to ensure the safety of my child, as per the HCVC Code of Conduct, HCVC Child Safety Policy & Procedures, in the case of personal injury, sickness, loss or damage to personal property, that I will not hold HCVC, and its employees and/or volunteers responsible.
- In the event that medical attention is required I understand that HCVC staff and volunteers will act in the best interest of my child and I will cover all medical expenses incurred.

Parent/Guardian Name:

Signature:

Date:

____ / ____ / ____





HCVC Photo Consent Form

From time to time at High Country Vineyard Church we may take photos or video of children's ministry activities, youth ministry activities and other HCVC events. These photos or video may be posted on our church website, used in church publications, on social media and/or used within the ministry program and the church in general.

Please note that photos used on the HCVC website or any social media platform WILL NOT be of individual children standing or sitting on their own.

This consent form is given to parents of children who are under 18 years of age and who are involved in church ministry activities, so that parental consent can be given for the above use of photos of their child.

I _____ consent to my child _____'s photo being taken, or a video being taken in which my child appears, for use within the program and High Country Vineyard Church in general.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____





HCVC Little Church 'SIGN IN / SIGN OUT' Register

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Leader: _____

Helper 1: _____

Junior Helper/s: _____

Helper 2: _____

Child's Full Name	Parent/Guardian Dropping Off Child	Parent/Guardian's Signature	Time In	Parent/Guardian Picking Up Child	Parent/Guardian's Signature	Time Out
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						





HCVC Youth Attendance Register

To be completed and signed by a Youth Ministry Leader at the beginning and end of each event.

Event Details

Date of Event: ___ / ___ / ___

Location of Event: _____

Details of Youth Leader filling out this Attendance Register

Full Name: _____

Signature: _____

Register of all Youth Leaders present at event (*full name*):

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

Register of all Parent Helpers present at event (*full name*):

Please note that all Parent Helpers must be registered with HCVC, have undertaken appropriate training, hold a current WWCC and have been screened in order to work safely with children.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

Register of attendance for all youth present at event (*full name*):

Child's Full Name	Parent/Guardian's Full Name	Notes
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		





Child Safety Incident Report Form

This form must be filled out with 24 hours of disclosure or suspicion being made known. This information is to be kept strictly confidential and not to be used for any other reason except for the purpose of reporting the Risk of Significant Harm. Appropriate recorded keeping procedures are to be observed when filling this report.

The provision of information to the Statutory Authorities for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality.

Child's information

Full Name	
Date of birth	
Gender	
Residential address	
Parent/Guardian's full name	
Language(s) spoken by child	
Disabilities, mental or physical health issues	

Incident details

Date of incident	
Time of incident	
Location of incident	
Name(s) of child(ren) involved	
Name(s) of staff/contractor/volunteer involved	

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

Categorise the incident

Physical violence	[]
Sexual conduct or offence	[]
Serious emotional or psychological abuse	[]
Serious neglect	[]
Other (please specify)	[]

Describe the incident (and attach an extra page if you need more room)

When did it take place?	
Who was involved?	
What did you see or hear?	
Other information	

Has the incident been reported?

Government Department (please specify)	
Police	
Another third party (please specify)	

Incident reported wishes to remain anonymous?

[] YES [] NO

Office use:

Date incident report received	
Staff member managing incident	
Follow-up date	
Incident ref. number	

This form must be passed on to the CSO or Pastor immediately



Register of Injuries

Section 1: Injured person details

Family name:		First name:	
Adult or Child?		Event/Location:	
If adult, please state their leadership role:			

Section 2: Injury/illness details

Date of injury/illness:		Time of injury/illness:		am/pm
Nature of injury/illness				
Bodily location of injury/illness				
Exaction location at time of injury				
Describe how the injury/illness was sustained				
Was any equipment involved in the injury/illness?			Yes / No (Please circle your response)	
If yes, please provide details:				

Section 3: Witnesses

Were there any witnesses to the injury/illness?	Yes / No (Please circle your response)
If yes, please list the witnesses' full names as well as a contact number for each.	



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Section 4: Follow up

Was the injury reported to the CSO/Pastor?	Yes / No (Please circle your response)
Was any treatment provided?	Yes / No (Please circle your response)
<i>If yes, please provide details.</i>	
Did the injured person continue with event?	Yes / No (Please circle your response)
<i>If yes, please provide details.</i>	

Section 5: Details of person making this entry

Family name:		First name:	
Position:		Event:	
Signature:		Date:	
If you are not the injured person, did you witness the injury/illness?		Yes / No (Please circle your response)	

Section 6: To be completed by CSO/Pastor

Name of CSO/Pastor:	
Has an investigation been conducted into the incident?	Yes / No (Please circle your response)
What, if any, controls were implemented to ensure the incident doesn't happen again?	

Section 7: HCVC Confirmation – Office Use Only

Date received:	
Action required:	



Signature Certificate

Reference number: HGTVX-FD6TQ-SD5YE-AVYZT

Signer

Timestamp

Signature

Holly Cameron

Email: holly.cameron213@gmail.com

Sent: 14 Oct 2024 04:32:23 UTC
Viewed: 14 Oct 2024 04:33:14 UTC
Signed: 14 Oct 2024 04:33:31 UTC



Recipient Verification:

✓ Email verified 14 Oct 2024 04:33:14 UTC

IP address: 1.152.28.106
Location: Melbourne, Australia

Mark Buscombe

Email: mark.hcvc@gmail.com

Sent: 14 Oct 2024 04:32:23 UTC
Viewed: 07 Nov 2024 04:04:16 UTC
Signed: 07 Nov 2024 04:04:38 UTC



Recipient Verification:

✓ Email verified 07 Nov 2024 04:04:16 UTC

IP address: 206.83.122.99
Location: Sydney, Australia

Document completed by all parties on:

07 Nov 2024 04:04:38 UTC

Page 1 of 1



Signed with PandaDoc

PandaDoc is a document workflow and certified eSignature solution trusted by 50,000+ companies worldwide.

