

SOURCE CHURCH STIRLING CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Source Church Stirling is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our services and sites. Source Church Stirling recognises the importance of establishing and maintaining a safe, child friendly environment where all children and young people are valued and feel safe.

In order to strengthen this commitment Source Church Stirling is working towards embedding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations across the organisation.

This policy complies with obligations under the South Australian Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, which requires organisations to establish and periodically review policies and procedures to ensure that:

- Child safe environments are maintained within the organisation
- Appropriate reports of risk of harm are made

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Source Church Stirling sites and all persons working within Source Church Stirling including elders, staff, contractors, students and volunteers

PRINCIPLES

The following policy principles guide Source Church Stirling Board of elders, staff, contractors, students and volunteers in their commitment to child safety and strengthen the organisation's capacity to be child safe.

1. Safeguarding of children and young people in Source Church Stirling is promoted through a range of strategies and initiatives aimed at developing an organisational culture, environment and activities that are safe for all children and young people.
2. Source Church Stirling encourages and respects the views of children and young people who access our services. We involve children and young people in making decisions that affect them. We listen to and act upon any disclosures, feedback or complaints that children, young people or their families/carers raise with us. Source Church Stirling ensures that children, young people and their families/carers know their rights and how to access services, advice, feedback and the complaints processes available to them. Source Church Stirling engages in open, two-way communication with families and the community about activities and any areas of their concern. Parents and carers participate in decisions affecting their child such as permission forms for programs/events that include a section for parents/carers to identify possible risks to the safety of their child. (e.g. medical information, special needs, custody arrangements, etc.).

Where there is contact with children and young people in State Care, the Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care will be observed and upheld.

3. Maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of children and young people who participate in our services is paramount in ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Any issues relating to suspected or alleged harm to children and young people is highly sensitive and must be treated in such a way. All records are stored in accordance with Source Church Stirling Privacy Policy.
4. The release of images of a child or young person to the public has the potential to adversely impact their safety and well-being as it could disclose their whereabouts to a potential perpetrator. As such, Source Church Stirling will obtain consent from a child or young person, and their parent/guardian before taking an image of the child. When gaining consent, the child or young person and their parent/guardian are informed about the nature of the use of the image, how the image will be stored and their rights to withdraw consent for its use. The parent/guardian can access the image.
All images are held and stored in accordance with the Privacy Policy.
5. Source Church Stirling ensures that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people through vigorous human resource selection and checking processes to safeguard children and young people.
The following screening measures are undertaken:
 - Referee checks on all Workers
 - National Criminal History Record Check.
 - Working With Children Check (also known as Child Related Employment Screening) for people working with children and young people, as required in the South Australian Children and Young People (Safety) Regulations 2017.

Source Church Stirling registers an interest in all employees and volunteers through the DHS Screening Unit. Source Church Stirling will verify new employees and volunteers working with children have a current, not prohibited WWCC before engaging them to work with children.

For existing employees and volunteers, it will be verified they have renewed their WWCC every 5 years and the status remains as not prohibited. Source Church Stirling will ensure appropriate records are kept to ensure WWCC status remains current, and in line with our Privacy Policy.

Any person who has prior convictions relating to violent or sexually related offences is prohibited from working at Source Church Stirling.

In addition to Child Safe related training and support, Worker and Volunteers are required to note:

- And sign the SCS Code of Conduct and Privacy Policy
- And understand SCS WHS Policy and Risk Management Processes (especially as it relates risks and wellbeing of Children).

6. Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 defines the meaning of child-related work and working with children. Accordingly, for all child related activity, Source Church Stirling promotes a child safe environment through provision of Worker development programs that ensure mandated notifiers are equipped and supported to enhance and maintain child safe environments. Through education and ongoing professional development, the workforce will have the required skills, knowledge and attitudes to meet the mandated requirements of their position as it relates to their interaction with children. Source Church Stirling will create opportunities to ensure that staff embed the principles and practice of child safety and protection into their work. Workers will ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is promoted.

As Mandated Notifiers, people of Source Church Stirling who work with children and young people are provided with supervision, support and training to ensure they can maintain child safe environments and are able to identify and respond to harm or risk of harm.

Workers attend continuing training and updates as outlined below:

- New Workers who are mandated notifiers undergo Child Safe Environment training and are provided access to the Policy.
- All Workers who are mandated notifiers receive appropriate and regular training sessions that include a focus on ongoing learning about child protection practices and requirements.
- Workers who do not have direct contact with children are orientated to the Source Church Stirling Child Safe Environments Policy and Safeguarding Children and Young People Standard.

Volunteers and Students who are working with children are required to show evidence of completion or recent currency of a Child Safe Environments Introductory Course prior to commencing a placement in Source Church Stirling

7. Source Church Stirling ensures that all Workers:

- Who are mandated notifiers, as per the South Australian Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, understand their obligations to notify:
 - the SA Police on 000 if a child is at risk right in that moment;
 - and the Department for Child Protection's Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child and young person has, or is being harmed or is at risk of harm in accordance with the Mandatory Reporting Children and Young People Safety Organisational Standard.
- are able to identify, report, and respond to children and young people at risk of harm.

Source Church Stirling recognises that the duty of care is not exhausted by making a notification and support might be required to enhance the child or young person's wellbeing when a notification is made and will identify appropriate services for the child, young person and/or their family.

Failure by mandated professionals and Workers to report a reasonable suspicion that a child has or is being harmed or is at risk of harm is in breach of the Child Safe Environments Policy and may result in disciplinary action being initiated against the Worker. Failure by mandated notifiers to report is also an offence under the South Australian Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and carries a maximum penalty of a \$10,000 fine.

8. Professional protection and support for reporters

Protection under the South Australian Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017

Reporters of harm or risk of harm to children will not be held legally liable for the report or any investigation of the report if a report is made in good faith and does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics.

Mandated notifiers are also protected from “threats, intimidation, damage, loss or disadvantage” because they have reported or propose to report suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or young person.

Disclosure of the name or any identifying information in relation to a person who has made a report to the Child Abuse Report Line will not be made unless:

- The reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or family.
- The reporter consents, in writing that their identity can be disclosed.
- The case proceeds to court. In these circumstances the source of the information may be provided in evidence to the court.
- The identity of the reporter may be provided to a service if there is significant concern for the wellbeing of the child; however the other service will not disclose the reporter’s identity to others.

Protection of reporters by Source Church Stirling

Source Church Stirling’s Whistleblower Policy provides a mechanism whereby Workers and others can report their concerns freely and without fear of reprisal or intimidation.

Source Church Stirling opposes all forms of harassment and bullying. Anyone who believes that they or another person has been harassed or bullied can raise the issue with their Manager

Source Church Stirling ensures that support is also available for Workers making notifications. The following services are available to Source Church Stirling Workers:

- Pastoral support

9. Source Church Stirling will identify, assess and monitor all potential and actual sources of harm and take steps to minimise the risk to children and young people who use our services. Risk assessment tools are used where appropriate to determine if a child or young person is at risk. Strategies to minimise risks to children and young people occur as part of Source Church Stirling ongoing risk management process.

10. Source Church Stirling ensures that this policy is publicly available on the Source Church Stirling website and that all clients and carers/families are informed of the policy and how to access it.

Source Church Stirling Workers are required to sign that they have read, understood and will abide by the:

- Source Church Stirling Child Safe Environments Policy
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

11. Respect diversity

Lifestyles, family structures and customs vary across different cultural groups. Working with the strengths and support systems available within families, ethnic groups and communities is essential to ensuring cultural factors do not disadvantage children and young people or place them at harm or risk of harm.

To respond appropriately to the needs of people from diverse backgrounds, Workers will seek advice and guidance whenever they are involved with families whose culture is unfamiliar to them.

12. Source Church Stirling Workers can seek assistance from the following:

External:

Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia Inc.

Address: 9 King William Road, Unley SA 5061

Telephone: (08) 8273 7200 Email: ahcsa@ahcsa.org.au

Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia

Address: 59 King William Street, Adelaide Telephone: (08) 8217 9500

Email: admin@mrca.com.au

Multicultural SA

Address: Level 8, Riverside Centre, North Terrace, Adelaide

Telephone: (08) 8207 0751

Email: dcsimulticulturalsa@sa.gov.au

Interpreting and Translating Centre

Address: Level 4, 44 Pirie Street, Adelaide

Telephone: 1800 280 203 (Toll Free) Email: itc@sa.gov.au

13. Responsibilities

Lead Pastor

- Provide leadership that models and reinforces attitudes and behaviours that value children and young people.
- Ensure the organisation makes a public commitment to child safety, child wellbeing and cultural safety.
- Ensure the policy is implemented, monitored, reported and evaluated

- Ensure mandatory reporting requirements, procedures and associated legal responsibilities are adhered to.
- Support activities that embed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Understand mandatory reporting requirements, procedures and associated legal responsibilities.
- Ensure Workers are aware of their obligations as mandated notifiers and have appropriate skills and knowledge to identify children or young people at risk.
- Ensure all Workers receive regular training sessions that include a focus on ongoing learning regarding child protection.
- Ensure safe recruitment and selection practices are adopted.
- Ensure all criminal history reports obtained for Workers who work with children are dealt within a manner that reflects associated legal responsibilities.

Board of Elders

- Model leadership that reinforces attitudes and behaviour that values children and young people.
- Ensure Workers have appropriate training and supervision to understand and fulfil their obligations as mandated notifiers and provide a child safe environment for children and young people.
- Ensure staff apply risk assessment processes as required and feel supported to make mandatory notifications.
- Support activities that embed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Mandated Notifiers

Mandated Notifiers have obligations under the South Australian Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 to:

- Notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) if they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child has been harmed or at risk of harm.
- Ensure they are aware of the obligations and the consequences of the obligations and the consequences of failure to comply.
- Ensure they are able to identify report and respond to children and young people at risk of harm.
- Support activities that embed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Workers and Volunteers

- All Source Church Stirling Workers will apply the principles of this policy.
- Support activities that embed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

14. Legislative References / Standards

- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (South Australia)
- Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (South Australia)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Whistle-blowers Protection Act 1993 (South Australia)
- Charter of Rights for Children and Young People
- Child safe environments – Principles of good practice (Issued by the Chief Executive of the Department for Education, Updated 2018)
- Royal Commission, Creating Child Safe Institutions (the 10 Standards), July 2016
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- www.childsafe.org.au

15. Legislative References / Standards

- Source Church Stirling Privacy Policy
- SCS Risk Assessment- Play and Excursions
- Work Health & Safety Policy
- Code of Conduct for Source Church Stirling

16. Review

- This policy will be reviewed before January 2028 or if a major change in legislation takes place.