



## Safe Church Policy Suite

*Working with vulnerable persons*

## Document Revisions

#	Author	Position	Date	Amendments	Authorised By
1	Christina Paton	Safe Church Manager	21/12/22	Helpful Resources & References & Training Requirements	Zachary Haslem
2	Christina Paton	Safe Church Manager	23/1/23	Changes to Safe Church Campus Leader Definition	CL Board
3	Christina Paton	Safe Church Manager	09/02/23	Updates to penalties and definitions pertaining to Blue Cards & Restricted Persons and Restricted Employment.	QB
4	Christina Paton	Safe Church Manager	27/03/23	Changes to the Photography & Videography Policy & Disclaimer	CL Board
5	Christina Paton	Safe Church Manager	27/03/23	Addition of Safe Church Confidentiality Agreement to Code of Conduct Section	CL Board

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# Safe Church Policy

## Purpose

Under the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, organisations regulated by the Blue Card System are legislatively required to develop, implement and maintain a child and youth risk management strategy.

The purpose of CrossLife – a baptist church’s Safe Church Policy Suite for working with vulnerable persons is to help identify potential risks of harm to vulnerable people and to implement strategies to minimise these risks.

This policy suite provides a clear and consistent framework to guide and support the stakeholders who work with CrossLife – a baptist church or who participate in CrossLife – a baptist church ministries and activities. The policy suite also cultivates a culture of safety so that all people, involved in or attending the Church are safe and free to grow in their relationship with God and others.

## Scope

This policy suite applies to the following persons:

- The Church Leadership which consists of the CrossLife – a baptist church’s board, Ministry Team Staff (including Ministry Support Workers (interns), Elders, Campus Leadership Teams, and all ministry leaders;
- Any person engaged by the Church to provide a service to the Church, whether paid or voluntarily, and who while providing their service will be in contact with vulnerable people. This includes staff, volunteers, contractors, and visitors (who are in direct contact with vulnerable people);
- All members of the Church Leadership team who make decisions about vulnerable people;
- Vulnerable People and Parents; and
- Trainee students doing a placement in the Church as part of their studies with an education provider who will be in contact with vulnerable people.

## Commitment

It is CrossLife – a baptist church’s policy to respect everyone as unique individuals created by God and to give special attention to the care, protection, and wellbeing of vulnerable people. Staff and Volunteers of CrossLife – a baptist church will behave towards them in a manner that resembles and represents Christ’s attitude and approach, providing environments and ministries that promote their spiritual, social, and physical safety and personal growth and development.

To this end CrossLife – a baptist church will promote a culture of safety throughout the Church, constantly communicating and reinforcing our commitment across all aspects of CrossLife – a baptist church’s campuses, ministries, and activities.

Queensland Baptists and CrossLife – a baptist church, recognise the [10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#). They provide a nationally consistent approach to embedding child-safe cultures within organisations that engage with children and act as a vehicle to give effect to all Royal Commission recommendations related to child safe standards. Therefore, CrossLife – a baptist church will have regard to these as guiding principles for cultivating a safe Church environment and safe activities.

## Communication & Support

### **Communication**

CrossLife - a baptist church recognises this policy is most effective when it is communicated to all stakeholders. If parents/carers, staff and volunteers, and vulnerable persons are actively involved and aware they are more likely to accept, support, and implement the Strategy. This is aimed at strengthening a culture of safety.

The Safe Church Manager and church leadership will:

- ensure that all stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities and understand what acceptable behaviour is for interacting with vulnerable persons.
- enable individuals to feel comfortable addressing issues of concern
- highlight the importance of CrossLife - a baptist church's commitment to protecting the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable persons in our environment, and
- reduce the likelihood of breaches of this Policy Suite.

This will be achieved through an ongoing commitment to promoting safety by:

- training both annually and as required
- use of CrossLife - a baptist church's website
- induction of staff and volunteers
- enrolment process for families into programs/ministries/activities
- annual review of this Strategy.

Child protection and a culture of safety is everyone's responsibility and CrossLife - a baptist church is committed to considering and implementing new ways of communicating this.

### **Support**

CrossLife - a baptist church recognises that staff and volunteers may require support to deal with issues such as behaviour management, stress, conflict, bullying including cyberbullying, child protection concerns, breaches of this policy suite, and dealing with disclosures or suspicions of harm. As such the Safe Church Manager will ensure support is available.

The types of support that will be made available include:

- risk management guidance from the Church's workplace health and safety officer/s.
- annual training and specific training as required.
- partnering with external support and counselling services.
- implementing mentoring programs.
- mediation or other alternative conflict resolution techniques.

## Positional Powers

To ensure that the safe church policy suite is followed, CrossLife – a baptist church has provided certain roles with the powers as listed below.

### **Board - Crosslife – a baptist church**

CrossLife – a baptist church's board has overarching accountability for the implementation safe church policy suite and as such can take any action deemed necessary to protect staff, volunteers and stakeholders of Crosslife – a baptist church. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Power to stand down, suspend or terminate any paid or volunteer staff member or ministry leader/participant effective immediately should there be a risk to the health safety and wellbeing of others

- Power to stand down, suspend or terminate the senior pastor or any campus pastor effective immediately should there be a risk to the health safety and wellbeing of others. In the event that the board undertakes this power, they must contact Queensland Baptist to conduct further investigations
- Power to direct any employee of CrossLife – a baptist church whether paid or volunteer to take any required action to ensure the health safety and wellbeing of others

### ***Safe Church Manager***

The Safe Church Manager is a paid employee of CrossLife – a baptist church who is employed to implement the Safe Church policy suite on behalf of the Board. To ensure they can carry out their role in an effective manner they are provided with the following powers:

- Power to stand down, effective immediately any ministry participant who poses an immediate and unacceptable risk to vulnerable persons. If this power is used, a member of the board must be contacted within 12 hours and provided all relevant details for further action.
- Power to investigate any person engaged by CrossLife – a baptist church whether paid or volunteer if there is reason to believe they may pose a risk to the health safety and wellbeing of vulnerable persons
- Power to shut down, effective immediately, any ministry or event which poses an immediate and unacceptable risk to the health safety and wellbeing of vulnerable persons
- Power to suspend any recurring ministry activities which pose an unacceptable risk to the health safety and wellbeing of vulnerable persons

### ***Safe Church Campus Leader***

The Safe Church Campus Leader is a part of the broader CrossLife Safe Church Team under CrossLife's Safe Church Manager. They are responsible for ensuring their campus complies with the Safe Church Policy Suite by supporting their Ministry Teams in this process (inc. approval of Risk Assessments & Safety Plans with Permission to Proceed). They are available to their Church as a point of contact should any concerns or issues arise in relation to Safe Church.

To ensure that they can carry out their role in an effective manner they are provided with the following power:

- Power to suspend any ministry activities which pose an immediate unacceptable risk to the health safety and wellbeing of vulnerable persons. ***This power can only be enacted with authorisation from the Safe Church Manager.***

### ***Campus Pastor***

Campus Pastors have oversight of ministries within their campus as well as the responsibility to ensure the pastoral needs of the congregation are met. To ensure that they can carry out their role in an effective manner they are provided with the following powers:

- Power to shut down, effective immediately, any ministry or event which poses an immediate and unacceptable risk to the health safety and wellbeing of vulnerable persons
- Power to suspend any recurring ministry activities which pose an unacceptable risk to the health safety and wellbeing of vulnerable persons

### **Definition of Vulnerable Persons**

Vulnerable persons are defined as a people aged under 18 or other individuals who may be unable to take care of themselves or are unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation.

While all people must be protected from harm, there are additional legislative and ethical considerations for protecting vulnerable people. Vulnerable people can include:

- children and seniors
- people with impaired intellectual or physical functioning
- people from a low socio-economic background

- people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
- people who are not native speakers of the local language
- people with low levels of literacy or education
- people subject to modern slavery, which involves human exploitation and control, such as forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking, and child labour.

Vulnerability may be either temporary or ongoing.

## References

- Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission - [Definition of a vulnerable person](#)



# Recruitment, Selection, Training and Management

## Recruitment

CrossLife – a baptist church recognises the importance of recruiting staff and volunteers who have skills and attributes to fulfill the roles involved in working with vulnerable people. To ensure this, all such roles will require a working with ministry application form as an initial screening tool. Any such roles that involve paid employment will be further defined by a position description and selection criteria.

It is further recognised that there are ministries within the church whereby volunteers are not engaging with vulnerable persons or have unintentional contact with vulnerable persons. We understand the volunteers in these positions may be seen to hold influence because of their involvement in the church. To ensure that volunteers in these ministries act within accordance of the code of conduct and maintain an awareness of the Safe Church Policy Suite they must complete a ministry application form and adhere to the Policy Suite.

When recruiting for roles involved in working with vulnerable people, applicants will be made aware (via the application form) that they are going to be subject to blue card screening (where relevant), referee checks, identification verification, and that CrossLife – a baptist church will request that the applicant disclose any information relevant to their eligibility to engage in activities involving vulnerable people, including if they are a Restricted Person.

CrossLife – a baptist church will include information regarding Restricted Persons and Restricted Employment laws in position descriptions, application forms, and any advertisements for roles working with vulnerable people.

Applicants for roles involved in working with vulnerable people at CrossLife – a baptist church will be provided a copy of this Safe Church Policy Suite when they receive an application form. This is to ensure they are fully informed of the requirements of the policies and procedures in place prior to applying for a role.

An application for working with vulnerable people will only be considered if the following criteria have been met:

1. Churches that the applicant has attended (or has been involved or connected with) in the past five (5) years are contacted to ascertain whether there have been any alleged or actual incidents of harm involving the applicant.
2. The applicant has signed and returned the Code of Conduct.
3. The Safe Church Manager has completed an interview to ascertain the suitability of the applicant.
4. In the case of a volunteer, the person has attended the church regularly for a minimum of six (6) months unless exceptional circumstances apply. (Note: Only the Safe Church Manager can approve a volunteer to begin in a ministry role if they have not engaged with the church for the appropriate period.)
5. Where certain roles require Registration by Queensland Baptists, the applicant must also successfully pass the application process under those Registration Guidelines.
6. Where a position description (for paid employment) has stipulated additional educational, skill or other requirements, the applicant is also required to satisfy these criteria before commencement.
7. The applicant has a valid blue card, and the Safe Church Manager has linked them to this organisation and added them to the CL Blue Card Register
8. Referee's checks have been completed.

## Selection

CrossLife – a baptist church sees the selection stage as an opportunity for identifying the most suitable applicants for working with vulnerable people. The selection process will be supported by interviewing, referee checking, and a probationary period.

### Interview

Interviews should be conducted by a minimum of two persons, one of which should be the Safe Church Manager or Safe Church Campus Leader. Interviewers will use the interview process to explore the background of an applicant, their work history, skills, and values, and will evaluate their suitability to work with vulnerable people at the Church.

During the interview process, appropriate and informative questions will help the selection, and the responses provided by the applicant will demonstrate how well they will uphold CrossLife – a baptist church’s values. The interview questions will explore the applicant’s capacity to contribute to a safe and supportive environment for vulnerable people. As CrossLife – a baptist church has a responsibility to provide a safe and supportive environment for vulnerable people, the interviewers will question any inconsistencies in an applicant’s work history.

### ***Referee Checks***

The Safe Church Manager or Safe Church Campus Leader will use referee checks as an important step to validate the information of an applicant. Referee checks will be completed, preferably with the most recent place or work (staff or volunteer) to verify the:

- identity of prospective employee;
- accuracy of the details of previous employment; and
- suitability of individual to work with vulnerable people.

If the reference is written, the Safe Church Manager or Safe Church Campus Leader will contact the referee to confirm authenticity.

### ***Probationary Period***

Probationary periods will be used to allow for monitoring how a person is settling into their role of working with vulnerable people. A probation period of three months applies to all volunteers, unless otherwise determined by the Safe Church Manager.

For paid employees, the probationary process will involve setting goals and identifying any training required. For volunteer roles, this will be a less formal process of “checking in” to get feedback and see how things are going. If the Safe Church Manager feels it necessary, they will move to the more formal process used of paid employees, to provide further support to the volunteer.

## **Training**

The Safe Church Manager:

- is responsible for establishing an arrangement for the appropriate supervision, support, and training of all staff and volunteers in contact with vulnerable people.
- must report to the Church Leaders and the annual Church members’ meeting about the supervision, support, and training of staff and volunteers.
- will in consultation with staff and volunteers establish a training plan, setting out the type of training that will be provided, the regularity of the training, and the expectations that the Church has for attendance and participation.

All staff and volunteers must receive an annual induction:

- for ministries that cater to vulnerable persons, the induction must be completed;
  - (a) before starting as a volunteer within the ministry; or
  - (b) before the ministry resumes for a new year.
- For ministries that don’t directly involve vulnerable persons, the induction must be completed;
  - (a) within the first month of beginning to volunteer for the ministry; or
  - (b) within the first month of the ministry resuming for a new year.



Additional training and development will be provided to staff and volunteers as required and, the Safe Church Manager, reserves the right to make any training and development mandatory.

Training will include such things as:

- Application of this Policy Suite
- Risk Assessments (identifying, assessing, and minimising risks)
- Reporting disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- Laws pertaining to Restricted Persons
- Code of Conduct
- Identifying sexual grooming
- Indicators of abuse
- First Aid and Emergency Response
- Best practice
- What constitutes a breach of this Policy Suite
- Any other relevant Church policies and procedures

All Leadership Teams (Board, Elders, Finance, CLT) and Sunday Volunteers that are not otherwise in a ministry setting (i.e. Hospitality, welcoming etc) are required to:

- Complete the Safe Church Culture Course
- Submit the Safe Church Culture Agreement Form containing the code of conduct and a confidentiality agreement (for the Leadership Teams & those with access to Ucare)
- Refresher to be completed every 3 years

The Safe Church Manager will maintain a calendar of training and a register of who has completed what training.

### ***Induction***

Staff and volunteers will be inducted into their role before commencing by:

- Reviewing the Safe Church policy suite (and seeking any clarification required at interview or any time after as it arises);
- Completing the Code of Conduct; and
- Completing any required training.

## **Management**

It is the responsibility of CrossLife – a baptist church to ensure management procedures are in place to support and encourage safe and supportive environments for vulnerable people. As such the Church will ensure that management processes are consistent, fair, and supportive.

To assist CrossLife – a baptist church in ensuring the ministries and activities offered, reflect safe programs and safe environments for vulnerable people, it will continually promote and demonstrate respect for the rights and expectations of vulnerable people, parents, and carers.

## **Associated Forms and Documents**

- [CL – Ministry Application Form](#)
- [CL – Ministry Renewal Form](#)
- [CL – Interview Form – working with vulnerable persons](#)
- [CL – Referee Check Sample Automation Email](#)
- [CL – Referee check Form – working with vulnerable persons](#)
- [CL Ministry Guest Volunteer Form \(Includes Code of Conduct\)](#)

## Resources

- [Applying for a blue card or exemption card](#)

## References

- QB Safe Church Strategy – Working with Vulnerable People Template



# Code of Conduct & Safe Church Confidentiality Agreement

## Purpose and Scope

CrossLife – a baptist church applies a Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement to define expectations relating to standards of behaviour for all staff and volunteers working with vulnerable people. It provides clear guidelines about what is expected and the consequences of not meeting these expectations.

The Code of Conduct will be completed:

- during the application process for working at CrossLife – a baptist church.
- by any guests or visitors participating in ministries/activities involving contact with vulnerable people, to ensure laws relating to Restricted Persons and Restricted Employment are upheld.
- by Church Leaders, staff and Ministry Team Members on an annual basis via the Ministry Renewal Form.
- by all other CrossLife Volunteers via the Safe Church Culture Agreement Form, completed every 3 years

## Code of Conduct

1. In relation to people, property and language, staff and volunteers respect and acknowledge that they:

- a. Must be responsive and courteous to others and avoid improper use of their position.
- b. Must promote the participation and empowerment, education, and awareness regarding safety of vulnerable people, recognising that attention needs to be given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and other vulnerable groups.
- c. Must avoid discriminatory and /or harassing treatment of others and must not use inappropriate or crude language in the presence of, or towards others.
- d. Must always demonstrate integrity and act in a manner consistent with being a Church representative.
- e. Must not make any sexual or crude innuendos such as suggestive looks, comments, jokes, sounds, display visuals, words, acts or gestures towards any individual/s.
- f. Must respect privacy and protect the confidential information of others, subject to complying with the reporting requirements of this Safe Church Policy suite and to also comply with any other obligations under the law.

2. In relation to behaviour, supervision and communication, staff and volunteers acknowledge that they:

- a. Must comply with Church practices for managing group sizes, ratios, enrolments, sign in/out procedures, toileting/nappy change, injury and illness management and collection procedures.
- b. Must comply with the Church's practices for positively guiding behaviour, photography, and complaint handling.
- c. Will listen carefully and consider respectfully the input from vulnerable people concerning decisions affecting them and what makes them feel safe or unsafe.
- d. Must not be alone with vulnerable person where they cannot be seen by other Church workers.
- e. Must not take a vulnerable person to their home or visit a vulnerable person in their home unless the visit is part of a Church approved organised activity for the group or in the company or written consent of the child's parents/guardian.
- f. Must not drive a vulnerable person. If extreme circumstance exists, this should occur with 2 staff/volunteers and after gaining permission from child's parents (where it involves a child) and a Church leader in a direct position of responsibility.
- g. Must not commit any sexual offence, sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a vulnerable people (including a child pornography offence) or any assault, ill treatment of or neglect of a vulnerable person or any behaviours that causes psychological or other harm to a vulnerable person.
- h. Must not attempt to do any of the things described above or do any act in preparation of doing any of the things described above.

- i. Must not engage in any communication via electronic or other means that would be in breach of this policy.
3. In relation to physical contact, staff and volunteers acknowledge that they:
  - a. Must comply with the Church's protocols for injury management.
  - b. Must not touch any person in a way that is inappropriate to the situation, or uncomfortable or confusing to the receiver.
  - c. Will only console (if a vulnerable person is distressed and needs to be consoled) if this is with the permission and or welcomed by the vulnerable person.
  - d. Will only console a vulnerable person of the same gender and with another staff or volunteer within sight.
4. In relation to pastoral care staff and volunteers acknowledge that they:
  - a. Will not step beyond their level of competency or training.
  - b. Will not encourage vulnerable people to keep things hidden from their parents, guardians or other leaders.
  - c. Will avoid providing pastoral care for members of the opposite sex where possible.
  - d. Will always provide pastoral care in an open area in view of others, never in a closed room.
  - e. If a vulnerable person makes a disclosure regarding any kind of harm, this disclosure must be reported to the Safe Church Manager but must not be revealed to any person, except as required by this policy or the law.
5. In relation to pornography and sexuality, staff and volunteers acknowledges that:
  - a. They recognise it is inappropriate to access or view pornography.
  - b. They will not display, discuss or distribute pornography to other adults or vulnerable people.
  - c. The sexuality of staff must be under the guidelines and Lordship of Christ.
  - d. They will dress modestly, and not sexually suggestive, and clothing will be without slogans contrary to Christian principles.
6. In relation to Workplace Health & Safety, staff and volunteers acknowledge that they:
  - a. Must comply with risk management plans that are required and in place for high-risk activities or special events.
  - b. Must not put themselves or others in danger.
  - c. Must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything in the interests of safety.
  - d. Must follow the Church's Workplace Health & Safety policies and procedures and encourage others to do the same.
  - e. Must follow the Church's COVID Safe Plan and encourage others to do the same.
  - f. Staff must use all safety devices including knowing the location of first aid kits and fire extinguishers and should know the identity of the first aid attendant in their area.
  - g. Staff must report all incidents and accidents.
7. In relation to Blue Cards, staff and volunteers will:
  - a. Hold a current Blue Card.
  - b. Stand down from duties immediately if they:
    - i. receive a negative notice or is a known disqualified person.
    - ii. have their blue card or exemption card cancelled or suspended.
    - iii. have their blue card application withdrawn.
    - iv. receive a notification in relation to a serious change in criminal history.
  - c. Immediately advise CrossLife – a baptist church and Blue Card Services if there is a change to their police information (the maximum penalty for failing to report to Blue Card Services a change in your police information is \$14,000 - 100 penalty units).
8. In relation to Restricted Persons and Restricted Employment, staff and volunteers acknowledge that:
  - a. From 31 August 2020, you cannot start or continue in 'Restricted Employment' if you are a 'Restricted Person.' The maximum penalty is \$71,000 (500 penalty units) or 5 years in prison.
  - b. A Restricted Person is a person who:
    - i. has been issued a negative notice, or
    - ii. has a suspended blue card, or

- iii. is a disqualified person, or
    - iv. has been charged with a disqualifying offence which has not been finalised, or
    - v. are the subject of an adverse interstate Working with Children Check decision that is in effect.
  - c. Restricted Employment refers to particular exemptions which allow a person to work with children without a blue card, such as:
    - i. a parent volunteering;
    - ii. a volunteer who is under 18;
    - iii. paid or unpaid staff who work in child regulated employment for not more than 7 days in a calendar year; or
    - iv. a person with a disability who is employed at a place where the person also receives disability services or NDIS supports or services, or
    - v. a secondary school student on work experience who carries out disability related work under the direct supervision of a person who holds a blue or exemption card.
  - d. If they are a Restricted Person, they will not start or continue to work in Restricted Employment. If they currently work in Restricted Employment at time of re/signing the Code of Conduct, they will immediately stop or they will be breaking the law and can be prosecuted.
  - e. If they are a Restricted Person they do not need to tell the Church the reason why they are no longer able to work. However, they will immediately stop working for the Church as this would be committing a prosecutable offence.
9. The Church is committed to maintaining an illegal drug and alcohol-free environment with vulnerable people. Staff and volunteers acknowledge that:
- a. The consumption, sale of or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working with vulnerable people (other than properly prescribed and administered drugs) will result in dismissal and possibly a report to the police.
  - b. Consumption of cigarettes/tobacco is also prohibited on Church premises.
10. In relation to this policy suite, staff and volunteers agree to:
- a. Comply with all aspects of the policy suite
  - b. Participate in training provided by the Church and for which the Church leadership requests their participation
  - c. Report any suspected breaches of this Code of Conduct and/or this policy suite to the Safe Church Manager or relevant Church Leadership immediately.
  - d. Take careful written records of any suspected breaches for future reference.
  - e. Not make a report which is false, vexatious or malicious.

## **Safe Church Confidentiality Agreement**

### **As a representative of CrossLife, I understand:**

1. that any information (written, verbal or any other form) obtained during the performance of my duties must remain strictly confidential. This includes all information about attendees, families, employees and other associate organisations that CrossLife may consider private.
2. the importance of abiding by this agreement to help honour and protect the private matters of the Crosslife people.
3. that any unauthorized release or carelessness in the handling of this confidential information is considered a breach of the duty to maintain confidentiality.
4. that any breach of this duty to maintain confidentiality could be grounds for immediate dismissal and/or possible liability in any legal action that might arise from any such violation.

This policy suite ensures CrossLife - a baptist church is compliant with the Blue Card System requirements and demonstrates our commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for vulnerable people. CrossLife - a baptist church is committed to ensuring the policy suite remains compliant, current, and effective in identifying and minimising risks of harm to vulnerable people. As such, an annual review will be completed by the Safe Church Manager in collaboration with stakeholders, with consideration given to:

- whether processes and procedures were followed
- whether any incidents relating to vulnerable people's risk management issues occurred
- the actual process used to manage any incidents
- the effectiveness of processes and procedures in preventing or minimising harm to vulnerable people, and
- the content and frequency of training in relation to the Policy Suite.

Reviews of this Policy Suite will be documented by the Safe Church Manager using the Safe Church Policy Suite Annual Review Form.

## Restricted Persons & Restricted Employment

CrossLife - a baptist church has a responsibility to ensure that all staff and volunteers working with vulnerable people, including those in Restricted Employment are not a Restricted Person. CrossLife - a baptist church must also ensure anyone beginning to work or volunteer in Restricted Employment is not a Restricted Person, before that person begins working or volunteering with children within the Church.

The definition of Restricted Employment captures scenarios that could commonly arise in CrossLife - a baptist church's setting, specifically a volunteer parent, a volunteer who is under 18, or a staff or volunteer who do not work more than 7 days in a calendar year. As such, any Staff or Volunteer (as per the definition and scope of this Strategy) working in these capacities will be required to complete the Code of Conduct.

To fulfill obligations relating to Restricted Persons and Restricted Employment, the Code of Conduct will be completed:

- during the application process for working at Crosslife - a baptist church (including for parents who wish to volunteer as their child participates); and
- on an annual basis thereafter as part of the annual induction process.

If at any time CrossLife - a baptist church becomes aware that a person is a Restricted Person, that person will be immediately stood down and will not be permitted to continue working. CrossLife - a baptist church will liaise with Blue Card Services and the QB Safe Church Officer regarding any further action that may be required or if a Response to a Person of Concern process needs to be undertaken.

If at any time CrossLife - a baptist church becomes aware of a breach to the Restricted Person & Restricted Employment laws, the Safe Church Manager will liaise with the Church leadership in reporting the breach to Blue Card Services and the Queensland Police Service. CrossLife - a baptist church will also liaise with the QB Safe Church Officer regarding any further action that may be required.

## Blue Card Screening Requirements

### *Persons Requiring a Blue Card*

All Church staff and volunteers must hold valid and current Blue Cards to attend or participate in any church activities that will bring them into contact with vulnerable people.

### *Disqualified Persons and Disqualifying Offences*

The blue card system stops certain people from holding or applying for a blue card such as:

- People convicted of disqualifying offences
- Current negative notice holders
- People convicted of serious offences as they can only hold a blue card in exceptional circumstances.

### ***No Card No Start***

No Card, No Start means that all staff and volunteers must have a blue card (paid employees can no longer start pending an application) before they can work with vulnerable people.

### ***Nominated Contact Person/s***

The Safe Church Manager will be the Contact Person/s responsible for managing blue cards and exemption cards for CrossLife - a baptist church. Each blue card or exemption card application form for a paid employee or volunteer has a space in the "Organisation details" section for a "Contact Person". This is who Blue Card Services will send all notifications to and these are the only people who Blue Card Services can discuss a person's Blue Card status with unless additional authorisation is provided.

### ***Managing Blue Card Applications***

To manage CrossLife - a baptist church's obligations, the Safe Church Manager must use the online [Organisation Portal](#) to manage blue card records.

### ***Linking Blue Cards***

The Contact Person must ensure a Blue Card belongs to the card holder and link them to CrossLife - a baptist church before engaging them in work. This ensures the Church is kept up to date about a card holder's status.

When a new applicant is progressed and appointed to work with vulnerable people the Contact Person must check the card holder's identity. This will be completed by sighting identification before linking the card holder to CrossLife - a baptist church. Blue Cards can be linked by submitting the link form or via the Organisation Portal. Blue Cards can also be validated online.

When a card holder leaves CrossLife - a baptist church the Contact Person will notify Blue Card Services by completing a De-link a Person form or via the Organisation Portal.

All staff and volunteers engaged by CrossLife - a baptist church must be linked (NB: card holders can be linked to more than one organisation).

### ***Renewals***

As long as an individual submits their renewal application before their current card expires, they can continue to work - even if their new Blue Card has not been issued by the time their previous card expires.

The Contact Person will use the Organisation Portal to check whether a card holder has applied to renew their card or will contact Blue Cards Services on 1800 113 611 to determine whether a card holder has applied to renew their card.

### ***Frequency Test***

An individual does not need a blue card if their work is not more than 7 days in a calendar year. If it is more than 7 days, a blue card is needed.

For this test, a 'day' includes a full day or part of a day (e.g. 2 hours of work on 1 day is considered to be a day). A 'calendar year' covers the period from 1 January to 31 December.

The new frequency test only applies to volunteers, paid employees and students doing practical placements for their course. It does not apply to an individual who is either:

- a restricted person
- a business operator.

### ***Exemption Cards***

Police officers with the Queensland Police Service and teachers registered with the Queensland College of Teachers apply for exemption cards, not blue cards. From 31 August 2020, exemption cards have expiry dates and are valid for three years.

Exemption cards expire if not renewed. Existing exemption cardholders whose cards do not have an expiry date have until 31 August 2023 to renew their card or it will expire.

Exemption card applicants are able to start work as soon as they apply online or submit their application (i.e. No Card no Start does not apply) AND have been linked to CrossLife – a Baptist Church.

### ***Police Information***

Blue Card Services will notify the Contact Person of any change in an individual's police information, when appropriate. It is no longer a requirement for CrossLife - a baptist church to notify Blue Card Services of any changes in police information that the Church becomes aware of.

### ***Managing High-Risk Individuals***

The Safe Church Manager will stand down any staff or volunteer from duties immediately if they:

- i. receive a negative notice or is a known disqualified person.
- ii. have their blue card or exemption card cancelled or suspended.
- iii. have their blue card application withdrawn.
- iv. receive a notification in relation to a serious change in criminal history.

### ***Blue Card Register***

The Safe Church Manager for CrossLife - a baptist church must maintain a register of all staff and volunteers engaged to work with vulnerable people. This must be maintained electronically and must be made available if requested by Blue Card Services.

The Blue Card Register will be maintained to include up to date information on:

- whether or not the person requires a blue/exemption card (if not, why not – e.g. an exemption applies under the Act)
- the type of application/blue card (e.g. paid or volunteer) or exemption card
- when the person applied and/or the date of issue of the positive notice and blue/exemption card
- the blue card/exemption card number and the expiry date of the blue card, and
- the renewal date.

The Safe Church Manager will ensure that appropriate and confidential records in relation to the following are maintained:

- whether a negative notice has been issued
- any change in status to a blue/exemption card or exemption card (such as a change in police information, or the cancellation or suspension of a blue/exemption card)
- where there is a change in police information
- where an employee leaves CrossLife - a baptist church and the date Blue Card Services were informed, and
- any change to a staff or volunteer's personal information, including the date Blue Card Services were informed (NB it is an offence for any staff or volunteer to fail to notify Blue Card Services on the appropriate form of any change in personal details within 14 days).

## **Associated Forms and Documents**

- Safe Church Policy Suite Annual Review Form
- Confidential - Smartsheet – Blue\_card\_register

## **Resources**

- [Applying for a blue card or exemption card](#)



## Important notes:

1. The application of the Child Protection Act 1999 pertains to **children** and while this Strategy is a tool for managing risks that relate to vulnerable people (not just children), this section will reference “child or children” as we preserve the intent of this legislation.
2. Under the [Criminal Code \(Child Sexual Offences Reform\) and Other legislation Amendment Act 2020](#), failure to report a child sexual offence committed in relation to a child is a criminal offence, effective 5 July 2021. As such the process on reporting in this regard is different to responding to and reporting on other disclosures/suspicions of harm (detailed in Managing and Responding to a Disclosure of Suspicion of Harm).

## Purpose

Vulnerable persons can only be protected from harm if it is reported and dealt with quickly and effectively. Therefore, CrossLife – a baptist church outlines in this document procedures to ensure staff and volunteers respond as quickly as possible to a disclosure or suspicion of harm. Whilst the procedure refers to children more due to legislative requirements, the process remains the same for all vulnerable persons.

## Disclosures or suspicion of harm

CrossLife – a baptist church has a duty of care to follow up any suspicions of harm or potential risk of harm to children in our care. Additionally, we maintain a duty of care to report all suspicions of harm or risk for any vulnerable person who attends or is involved in any ministry of CrossLife – a baptist church. We do this by observing and recording the actions of children or vulnerable persons who might be at risk and reporting the concerns to the relevant authority.

A suspicion of harm exists if:

- a child or vulnerable person tells you they have been harmed
- someone else, for example another child, a parent, or an employee, tells you that harm has occurred or is likely to occur
- a child or vulnerable person tells you they know someone who has been harmed (it is possible that they may be referring to themselves)
- you are concerned at significant changes in the behaviour of a child or vulnerable person, or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries, or
- the harm is witnessed

In relation to suspicion of harm, staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable persons at CrossLife – a baptist church will:

- remain alert to any warning signs or indicators
- pay close attention to changes in the child’s or vulnerable persons behaviour, ideas, feelings and the words they use
- make written notes of observations in a non-judgemental and accurate manner
- assure a child or vulnerable person that they can come to talk when they need to, and listen to them and believe them when they do, and
- follow CrossLife – a baptist church’s process for reporting a disclosure or suspicion of harm.

## Managing and Recording a Disclosure or Suspicion of Harm

### Reporting a Disclosure or Suspicion of Harm

**Mandatory Reporting** - child sexual offence committed in relation to a child.

With proclamation of the Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and other legislation Amendment Act 2020, section 229BC, failure to report a child sexual offence committed in relation to a child becomes applicable to CrossLife – a baptist church’s ministries and activities for children/vulnerable people in regards to reporting. (NB: for the purpose of understanding offences under this section of the Act, a child is defined as under 16 years of age or a person with an impairment of the mind).

Under the provisions of this Act, it is an offence not to report a belief (including disclosure or suspicion) of an offence of a sexual nature committed in relation to a child. This in effect mandates reporting of child sexual offences for all adults, and so by default includes all staff and volunteers engaged in Crosslife – a baptist church’s ministries and activities for children/vulnerable people.

Furthermore, failure to report is an offence even if the information was gained during a religious confession.

The Act requires the report be made to the Police as soon as reasonably practicable after the belief is (or ought reasonably to have been) formed, that the offence has been committed.

For the avoidance of doubt, staff and volunteers working with children at CrossLife – a baptist church, who believe on reasonable grounds that a child sexual offence is being or has been committed against a child by another individual are to report to the Police as soon as reasonably practicable. In addition, they are to liaise with the Safe Church Manager for support and guidance in recording the reporting process, particularly if a breach of this policy suite has also occurred.

### ***Non-Mandatory Reporting (excludes child sexual offence committed in relation to a child).***

Protecting vulnerable persons is everybody’s responsibility, and every person should report to relevant authorities if that person forms a reasonable suspicion that a child (including an unborn child) or vulnerable person has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm and does not have a parent able and willing to protect them from the harm.

Any person is lawfully entitled to make a report if they are concerned for a child's or vulnerable persons welfare, even if they are not required to do so as a mandatory reporter. Anyone making a voluntary (non-mandated) report is protected with regard to confidentiality and immunity from legal liability.

Staff and volunteers working with children or vulnerable persons at CrossLife – a baptist church who receive a disclosure or have a suspicion of harm (other than child sexual offence) are to liaise directly with the Safe Church Manager who will guide them through and manage the reporting process.

## **Responding to disclosure or Suspicion of Harm (other than in response to an offence of a sexual nature committed in relation to a child).**

### ***Receiving a Disclosure of Harm***

- remain calm and listen attentively, actively and non-judgementally.
- ensure there is a private place to talk (you should remain in sight of another person at all times)
- encourage the person to talk in their own words and ensure just enough open-ended questions are asked to act protectively (e.g. ‘Can you tell me what happened?’...or ‘Can you tell me more about that?’). Don’t ask leading questions that tend to suggest an answer. Ensure the person is advised that the disclosure cannot remain a secret and it is necessary to tell someone in order to get help.
- reassure the person they have done the right thing by telling you.
- advise the child or vulnerable person that you need to tell someone else who can help.
- do not attempt to investigate or mediate an outcome
- consider if additional barriers exist such as if the child or vulnerable person:
  - identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;
  - is culturally and linguistically diverse; or
  - has disabilities.

- follow this Strategy's procedure for reporting a disclosure of harm.

The Safe Church Manager will consider whether the matter meets the threshold to report to the Queensland Police Service or Child Safety or consider what support services could be offered to the family if the concern does not meet the relevant threshold to make a report. This determination will involve implementing the recommended 3 step process for assessing a disclosure or suspicion of harm.

### ***Assessing a Disclosure or Suspicion of Harm (Safe Church Team ONLY)***

*Step 1 – Considering whether the disclosure or suspicion needs to be reported to the Queensland Police Service*

**If an individual (including staff, volunteer and/or the Safe Church Coordinator) believes a child or vulnerable person is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, they should immediately contact the Queensland Police Service by dialling 000.**

Queensland Police Service has a number of child protection and investigation units across Queensland. To contact the Queensland Police Service the nearest Police District Communication Centre can be located following this link [QLD Police - Contact Us](#)

*Step 2 - Considering whether the disclosure or reasonable suspicion of harm needs to be reported to Child Safety or another relevant agency.*

### **How to determine if there is significant harm?**

Section 13C of the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld) provides guidance when forming a reasonable suspicion about whether a child has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm. The matters the Safe Church Manager will consider include:

- whether there are detrimental effects on the child's body or psychological or emotional state:
  - that are evident to the person, or
  - that the person considers are likely to become evident in the future, and
- in relation to any detrimental effects to the child the reporter may consider:
  - their nature and severity, and
  - the likelihood that they will continue, and
  - the persons age.

The consideration of these matters may be informed by an observation of the child or vulnerable person, other knowledge about the child or vulnerable person or any other relevant knowledge, training or experience that the person may have.

### **How to determine if there is a parent willing and able to protect the vulnerable person?**

A parent may be willing to protect a child, but not have capacity to do so and therefore they are not considered 'able'. This may include parents suffering from a severe mental health condition or physical illness/injury.

Alternatively, a parent may have the capacity to protect a child (i.e. they may be able), but may choose not to do so (i.e. they are not willing). This may include a parent continuing a relationship with a person who is sexually abusing their child.

In some circumstances, a parent may be both not able and not willing to protect the child from harm.

In some cases, the circumstances in which the harm occurred will be so serious that it can be presumed there is no parent able or willing to protect the child.

If there is considered to be at least one parent both 'able' and 'willing' to protect the child, the child is considered to not be in 'need of protection'.

### **What information which must be provided to Child Safety?**

Under section 13G(2) of the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld), the written report about a 'reportable suspicion' must contain the following details:

- the basis on which the person has formed the reportable suspicion, and
- the information prescribed by regulation, to the extent of the person's knowledge.

**Step 3 - Consider whether referral is required to other support services, including Family and Child Connect**

Concerns for a vulnerable person that do not amount to a reasonable suspicion of harm will be considered in terms of what support services could be offered to the family. This may include contacting Family and Child Connect who can provide information and advice about connecting families with support services and the circumstances in which a referral can and should be made to one of these services.

A mandatory reporter can refer a family without their consent, but others require the consent of the family to make a referral.

The criteria for Family and Child Connect service to work with the family is:

- the referred family has a child from unborn to 18 years of age, and
- the child is not currently in need of protection, and
- without support the child, young person and family are at risk of entering or re-entering the statutory child protection system, and
- the family would benefit from access to intensive and specialist support services, and
- the family has multiple and complex needs.

The Family and Child Connect website provides useful materials, including Training resources in relation to family support services, which can assist you further.

**Procedure for Recording and Reporting a Disclosure or Suspicion of Harm**

The person receiving a disclosure or who have a suspicion of harm, is able to report this directly to the relevant authorities. However, staff and volunteers working with children or vulnerable persons at CrossLife – a baptist church who receive a disclosure or have a suspicion of harm are required to liaise directly with the Safe Church Manager who will guide them through and manage the reporting process. It is important that the person who receives a disclosure or is reporting a suspicion of harm is involved in the reporting process because:

- the integrity of the information is retained when the person receiving the disclosure is the person reporting the matter to the authorities.
- information is not accidentally mishandled in the internal reporting procedures, prior to the matter being reported to the authorities, and
- where there is immediate risk of harm to a child or vulnerable person, all staff or volunteers are aware they can act immediately to protect that child and contact the authorities.

In all cases where harm is disclosed or suspected, the best interests of the child or vulnerable person will be paramount, CrossLife – a baptist church's response will be clear and transparent to those affected.

When recording and reporting a disclosure or a suspicion of harm, the following will occur:

1. Document the disclosure/suspicion clearly and accurately, including a detailed description of:
  - the relevant dates, times, locations and who was present
  - exactly what the person disclosing said, using "I said," "they said," statements
  - the questions you asked
  - any comments you made, and
  - your actions following the disclosure

*\*Care must be taken to record information and evidence in the words of the child or vulnerable person to assist with the accurate presentation of the information or evidence.*

2. Follow the steps for Assessing the Disclosure of Suspicion of Harm
3. Consider restrictions in relation to privacy obligations, make sure to keep information confidential, and only include necessary people in the report handling process. The Safe Church Manager will ensure that

information included in the report is properly stored either physically and/or electronically and that accessibility to the data is correctly managed.

4. Gain clear guidance and advice from the Queensland Police Service or Child Safety as to:
  - who should tell the child or young person's parents or carers about the disclosure and the action taken.
  - who can give ongoing help and trained support to the child and family.
5. If the disclosure or suspicion of harm relates to a Registered Minister of Queensland Baptists, then the Safe Church Manager or Church Leaders will also inform either the QB Safe Church Officer or the Director of Pastoral Services for Queensland Baptists.
6. If the disclosure or suspicion of harm relates to a staff or volunteer then the Safe Church Manager or Church Leaders will immediately stand down that person from any involvement in Church ministries/activities pending an investigation from the report, and also notify Blue Card Services

## Child Safety Contact Information

Child Safety Services can be contacted as follows:

- During normal business hours - contact the [Regional Intake Service](#) on 1300 679 849
- After hours and on weekends - contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999. The service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If unsure who to call, or for assistance in locating the nearest Child Safety Service Centre, contact Child Safety Services' Enquiries Unit on 1800 811 810. Child Safety Service Centres have professionally trained child protection staff members who are skilled in dealing with information about harm or risk of harm to children.

**A person making a report is protected from liability under the Child Protection Act 1999 from civil or criminal legal actions and is not considered to have broken any code of conduct or ethics.**

### Supporting vulnerable persons

## Reviewing Reporting Procedure

CrossLife – a baptist church will undertake a review of the procedures following a disclosure or suspicion of harm being actioned to:

- consider the application of the procedure and whether there are any changes necessary, for example, whether they are suitable for:
  - responding to a child or young person or vulnerable person when a disclosure is made
  - protecting children, young people vulnerable persons from harm, and
  - assisting involved parties within your organisation, and
- identify any additional training requirements.

The review must not interfere with court processes, and it may be necessary to seek legal advice in this instance. During the review, CrossLife – a baptist church will record what worked well and what may need to be improved upon. If new procedures and/or are required, information regarding the changes will be provided to all stakeholders.

## Persons of Concern

There may be instances where behaviour of an individual is observed that is of a concern to ensuring the safety of others. CrossLife – a baptist church, will implement the Australian Baptist Response to Persons of Concern for persons that meet the following criteria even if the person of concern is not engaged as a staff or volunteer in working with vulnerable people:

- if a person who is attending or interested in attending CrossLife – a baptist church:
  - discloses that they have committed a sexual offence

- in the course of completing due diligence checks for recruitment they disclose they have committed a past sexual offence
- if the church is or becomes aware that a person has had an allegation of past or current sexual offence
- is deemed to be a risk to the safety of vulnerable people because of an adverse risk (for example, exhibiting wandering across other people's sexual boundaries)

## **Associated Forms and Documents**

- [CL – Disclosure/Suspicion of Harm Form](#)

A high-risk activity or special event, due to their nature, will require extra planning to ensure that appropriate control measures are implemented to manage the identified risks.

CrossLife – a baptist church recognises that in order for a vulnerable person to suffer harm, there must be an opportunity for harm to arise. These opportunities can be reduced by engaging in forward planning to identify risks and implement strategies that reduce the possibility of being harmed during high-risk activities and special events.

The Safe Church Manager will lead in the determination of whether an activity or event is deemed high risk. Such criteria to be considered will include (but not limited to) if the activity/event:

- involves the participation of volunteers or people who are external to Crosslife – a baptist church
- involves additional participant numbers than would ordinarily be provided for
- is to take place at an external venue or destination
- has a large number of people and/or hazards (e.g. involving water hazards such as ponds, lakes or pools), and/or
- is to take place overnight or for a lengthy period.

There may be other criteria that the Safe Church Manager or Safe Church Team identify that requires the activity or event to be managed as a high risk.

### ***Risk Management Process***

Adapted from the Standards Australia's AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management - Principles and Guidelines, Crosslife – a baptist church will apply a six-step process in the development of an effective plan for high-risk events and activities:

1. Describe the activity
2. Identify the risks
3. Analyse the risks
4. Evaluate the risks
5. Manage the risks and reassess, and
6. Review

### **Associated Forms and Documents**

- CL – Risk Assessment Template
- [CL – Injury/Near Miss Incident Form](#)



# Electronic communication

## Procedure overview

For many of our vulnerable people, online platforms such as social media, text messaging, and video are a natural way for them to interact and express themselves. This affords an opportunity for the Church to create safe places for vulnerable people to build community, explore faith and grow as disciples, and to receive care and support.

Caution must be taken however, when engaging with vulnerable people in the various forms of electronic communication and social media. Intentional boundaries are fundamental to keeping vulnerable people safe. As such, this procedure provides clear instruction on how Crosslife – a baptist church can engage with vulnerable persons online.

## Principles

Crosslife – a baptist church follows five principles for electronic communication, they are; consent, traceability, accountability, transparency, and safety.

### Consent

Parental/Guardian consent must be in place before engaging online or via any form of electronic communication with any person under the age of 18. Verbal consent is unacceptable, as it does not meet the principle of Traceability. No online engagement or electronic communications can occur where consent has not been given or where the Parent/Guardian has indicated that they do not want online communications to take place between their young person and church staff or volunteers.

For persons over the age of 18, consent must be obtained by that person or by their caretaker where required before contacting them via electronic communication.

Any online group involving children 12 years or younger must be set up using only a Parent/Guardian's email and login, and login-in details must not disclose a child's full name. Groups involving teenagers must ensure that Parental/ Guardian consent covers off young person's email being used as a login.

When obtaining consent, it must identify details of all platforms to be used, the purpose of the engagement/activities and how information will be managed (accessed/stored). Additionally, consent should identify specific timeframes for when church staff and volunteers are permitted to communicate online with vulnerable people.

### Traceability and Accountability

The Safe Church Team must assess each electronic platform to ensure that it is traceable, platforms that allow end to end encryption or temporary messages like Snapchat are not to be used for any ministry purpose. Electronic communication must only take place on the platforms approved by the Safe Church Team. Below is a list of approved platforms and services that can be used for electronic communication.

- **Facebook** – This platform can only be used for public information, through approved church accounts unless specified differently below. *Facebook should not be used to communicate with children under the age of 13 as per Facebook's terms of use.*
  - Groups – Facebook groups may be used with the following procedures:
    - Must be established using approved church accounts
    - Must not be available in the public domain, groups must be private and via invite only
    - Photographs and screenshots are not permitted to be used in or taken of groups



- A minimum of two leaders should have administrative access to the group (this can be through church approved account) and should contain a minimum of two participants
- Messenger – Facebook messenger can be used with the following procedures:
  - Only permitted to use for group chats which must be established using an approved church account
  - Photographs and screenshots are not permitted to be used within the group chat
  - A minimum of two leaders should have administrative access to the group (this can be through church approved account) and should contain a minimum of two participants
  - No content should ever be deleted from the group chat
- **Instagram** - This platform can only be used for public information, through approved church accounts. Messages received through this Instagram can be responded to with public available information or redirect the contact to message through approved communication channels.
- **Email communications** – Email communications can be used for public information to be sent from CrossLife email addresses and can also be used to communicate with vulnerable persons. When using email to communicate with vulnerable persons the following procedure is to be followed:
  - All emails sent to vulnerable persons or guardians of vulnerable persons must have [safechurchcommunications@crosslife.org.au](mailto:safechurchcommunications@crosslife.org.au) cc'd into the email.
  - All responses or emails received from vulnerable persons or guardians of vulnerable persons should be forwarded to [safechurchcommunications@crosslife.org.au](mailto:safechurchcommunications@crosslife.org.au) if they are not already included in the email.
- **Ucare** – The Ucare platform is only to be used to share publicly available information with the wider church. This platform should not be used for initiating conversations with vulnerable persons.
- **Planning Center** - The Services/people app within the planning centre platform is only to be used to schedule volunteers using the automation process. This platform should not be used for initiating conversations with vulnerable persons.

## Transparency

The following strategies are implemented to maintain transparency:

- The Safe Church Manager is responsible for overseeing online communications and ensuring appropriate practices are being implemented
- An email ([safechurchcommunications@crosslife.org.au](mailto:safechurchcommunications@crosslife.org.au)) has been setup and can be accessed by the Safe Church Manager and the Senior Pastor who will oversee communications with vulnerable persons. Additionally, evidence of any breaches is to be sent to this email address for investigation.
- All online communication is to be retained in accordance with the CrossLife – a baptist church's privacy policy.
- Before new online platforms are approved for use, they are assessed by the Safe Church Team to ensure they do not breach this policy or the CrossLife – a baptist church's privacy policy.

## Safety

- Live Stream
  - When using live stream, no images of young people should be used if the Church does not have consent for their image to be online, or if there is a custody issue that could endanger them if they were seen online.
  - If a church is streaming in a way where members of the public can access the stream, chat functions should be disabled unless there is an appointed moderator.
  - If a church is streaming in a way where members of the public cannot access the stream (closed Facebook group for example) chat is permitted.

## General Safety

In all online communications the following must be implemented:

- Consideration must be given to gender dynamics. For example, never have a group discussion where the group of participants are all of the opposite gender.

- Care must be taken with online communication and consideration given to how an engagement may be perceived differently by those who view/receive it. For example, ensuring the text/image is beyond reproach and cannot be misconstrued.
- Online communication is only to occur between the hours of 8:00am to 9:00pm unless approval to communicate outside those hours is provided by the Safe Church Manager or there is a justified emergency.

### **Risk Assessments**

Online events/activities should be risk-managed as would be done for any in-person event using a risk assessment tool.

When completing risk assessments, consideration needs to be given to how to communicate to parents/guardians the event/activity specific details (outside of the original consent) as would be done when hosting any in-person event/activity.

### **Awareness and Training**

CrossLife – a baptist church will provide annual training and education to staff/volunteers around etiquette and expectations as well as protecting personal and private information during online activities/engagements.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to educate themselves and their young people about online safety. Parents can access the following websites for resources and information on online safety:

- QLD Family and Child Commission - [online safety resources](#)
- eSafety Commissioner – [Parent resources](#)



## Photography/Videography Policy & Disclaimer

At CrossLife, we value the way photographs/videos tell our story, share our experiences with the community and communicate the gospel. There will be times when CrossLife would love to document our services/events in this way and we have a blanket Photography/Videography Disclaimer in place for such times. This Disclaimer is used in the CL Photography and Videography Consent Form, on applicable event booking pages, in the yearly CL Children/Youth Yearly Registration Form and displayed onsite for the duration of an event requiring Photography/Videography.

We do however acknowledge the risk this can raise to vulnerable people and want to utilise photography and videography in a safe and positive way.

To ensure the privacy of individuals and children:

- Images will not be identified using full names or personal identifying information without written approval from the photographed subject, parent, or legal guardian.
- We will not knowingly or intentionally post any photo, video or other recording that would be embarrassing, objectionable or hurtful to any clearly identifiable individual in the recording.

Prior to any events requiring Photography/Videography of vulnerable people takes place, the following will be completed:

1. Pastors must have discretion when choosing appropriate photographers/videographers
2. Volunteer Photographer/Videographer must have a Valid Blue Card and be linked to our organisation
3. Volunteer Photographer/Videographer is to complete:
  - The **Safe Church Culture Course** and
  - The **CL Volunteers Safe Church Agreement Form** (inc. Confidentiality agreement)
4. Volunteer Photographer/Videographer is to be provided with the **"Volunteer Photography/Videography Guidelines"**
5. Ministry Team Leader must provide photographer/videographer with an updated list of who does and does not consent to their photograph being taken/released.
  - For children/youth, consent must be provided by their parent/guardian and should be done using the yearly "Kids and Youth Registration Form".
  - For all other Ministries:
    - The **Ministry Team Leader** can include the CL Photography and Videography Consent Form (<https://crosslife.ucareapp.com/forms/264/embed>) in their general communication
    - If an event is requiring a booking and the **Ministry Team Leader** wishes to gather consent in their Ucare Event Booking, they must ensure:
      - They use the Photography/Videography Disclaimer
      - The response is set to Save To the profile name
      - They select "Load existing info from linked people"
      - They select "Replace existing data"
      - They set it to save under More Detail Name "Photography/Videography Consent – Take & Release inc. Online"

### Disclaimer

*In granting permission, you consent to you/your family being photographed, videotaped, or otherwise recorded for both internal and external promotion. This includes (but not limited to) Posters, Flyers, Enews and online platforms such as our website, Facebook, Instagram & Youtube. These will be used without compensation, credit, or other consideration to you, for CrossLife's promotional, publicity and other purposes, throughout the world and in perpetuity; and you agree to release, hold harmless and indemnify CrossLife from any and all liabilities and claims involving the use of your image, likeness, voice or statements.*

*While we reserve the right to photograph and record church events, we also strive to ensure that photography and videography are used in a safe and positive way. To ensure the privacy of individuals and children, images will not be identified using full names or personal identifying information without written approval from the photographed subject, parent, or legal guardian. We will not knowingly and intentionally post any photo, video or other recording that would be embarrassing, objectionable or hurtful to any clearly identifiable individual in the recording. All designated CrossLife photographers/videographers will be clearly identifiable on the day with a photographer name tag. All images/recordings remain the property of CrossLife and stored on the CrossLife server. Please understand that CrossLife has no control over the recording, use and posting of images or other media by non-church staff (e.g., by community members, news outlets) and no ability to remove such media from publications, including internet or social media sites, that are not run by CrossLife. If you wish to discuss this disclaimer policy and any concern regarding your picture being taken, stored, or released, please email [digital@crosslife.org.au](mailto:digital@crosslife.org.au).*

## **Associated Forms and Documents**

- [CL Volunteers Safe Church Agreement Form](#)
- [CL Photography and Videography Consent Form](#)
- [CL Children/Youth Yearly Registration Form](#)



## Managing Breaches of the Safe Church Policy Suite

### ***What is a breach?***

A breach is any action or inaction by individual captured in the Scope, that fails to comply with any part of the policy suite.

### ***Who must comply?***

All persons/roles identified in the Scope of this policy suite must comply.

## **Responsibilities and Delegations**

The Safe Church Manager will be responsible for managing breaches of Safe Church Policy Suite. If the Safe Church Manager is unavailable or is in breach themselves, the board will manage the breach and may engage the QB Safe Church Officer.

## **Types of Breaches**

There may be different types of breaches of this Strategy and the consequences determined by CrossLife – a baptist church will vary accordingly.

Depending on the severity of the breach and the level of risk that results will determine the consequence. Consequences can range from additional training, supervision/probationary periods, stand down, reporting to relevant authorities and permanent removal from ministries and activities and/or the Church.

## **Breach Procedure**

Where the breach does NOT relate to a disclosure or suspicion of harm a Breach Incident Form will be completed. This process will identify details of the breach, outcomes and follow up.

Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained to protect privacy.

All breaches will be recorded in the Breach Register and reported to the relevant authority as applicable including the Queensland Police Service, Child Safety and/or Blue Card Services.

- [CL Breach of Safe Church Policy Suite / Code of Conduct Form](#)



## Helpful Resources & References

### ***Support for Vulnerable People – Community Service Referrals***

- <https://askizzy.org.au>
- [Gold Coast Community Services Directory – Act for Kids](#)
- <https://www.blueknot.org.au>
- <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

### ***Helpful References***

1. Blue Card Services website:

[www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/)

2. Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women:

[www.csyw.qld.gov.au/departments/child-safety-youth-women](http://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/departments/child-safety-youth-women)

3. Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/act-2020-032>

4. Family and Child Connect Services:

[www.qld.gov.au/community/caring-child/family-child-connect](http://www.qld.gov.au/community/caring-child/family-child-connect)

5. Queensland Police Service:

[www.police.qld.gov.au](http://www.police.qld.gov.au)

6. Department of Education and Training:

[www.deta.qld.gov.au](http://www.deta.qld.gov.au)

7. Early Childhood Education and Care:

[www.deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/](http://www.deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/)

8. Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships:

[www.datsip.qld.gov.au/](http://www.datsip.qld.gov.au/)

9. Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel to access legislation such as the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011, Child Protection Act 1999 etc:

[www.legislation.qld.gov.au/OQPChome.htm](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/OQPChome.htm)

10. Play by the Rules:

<http://www.playbytherules.net.au/>

11. Bullying and cyberbullying:

[www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/bullying](http://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/bullying)

12. Australian Human Rights Commission – Children's Rights

[www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights)

13. Queensland Family and Child Commission

[www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/](http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/)