

**CABRAMATTA  
VINEYARD  
CHURCH  
CHILD  
PROTECTION  
POLICY**

# **CABRAMATTA VINEYARD CHURCH CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The issue of Child Protection is a complex problem that has an impact on all areas of society.

At Cabramatta Vineyard Church we are committed to introducing children and youth to Jesus Christ in a safe, secure and loving environment. Therefore, we have written, adopted and implemented a child protection policy that reflects our desire and dedication to protect children and youth from abuse and to report abuse when we become aware of it.

The information contained in this document will create a framework and provide direction for staff, volunteers, members, guests, attendees, and parents of young people involved in Cabramatta Vineyard Church.

## **RATIONALE/PURPOSE**

The Cabramatta Vineyard Church is committed to providing an environment which promotes the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and youth during their participation in activities run by us. We aim, to the best of our ability, to promote a safe environment for all children and youth. We also aim to assist staff, volunteers and members to recognise child abuse and neglect and follow the appropriate notification procedures when reporting concerns regarding children's safety and wellbeing.

This policy and associated procedures promote the care and protection of children and youth participating in church and provide information for staff and volunteers of Cabramatta Vineyard Church.

## **WHO MUST COMPLY WITH THIS POLICY**

All staff and volunteers who participate in the children youth ministries and events of Cabramatta Vineyard Church must comply with this Policy.

## **SCOPE OF THIS POLICY**

This Policy covers the following items:

1. Recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
2. Training
3. Support and supervision
4. Mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse
5. Risk management
6. Cabramatta Vineyards code of conduct

## **1. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

### **Policy:**

All staff will be assessed and approved by the Church Council before participating in child or youth ministries. Cabramatta Vineyard Church will not appoint any person in child related activities who has been identified as a “prohibited person”. All potential staff intending to facilitate in children and youth ministries must undergo a “Working with Children Check” before commencing employment with the CHURCH.

All volunteers must be approved and complete a “Volunteer Declaration Form” [Appendix A] before participation in children or youth ministries.

### **Procedure:**

1. All volunteers must have attended as a regular member for at least 6 months before being allowed to participate in child or young persons ministries, unless otherwise permitted by the Pastor or the Missional Council.
2. Prior to commencing employment or volunteer work, a nominee will do the following:
  - a) Sign the Applicant Declaration and Consent Form (if undertaking paid work) or the Volunteer/Student Declaration Form (if undertaking unpaid work) and show relevant identification as required by the legislation. [Appendix A].

At the time of signing the relevant Declaration the Coordinator will ask the nominee if they have ever been involved in or accused of any untoward acts of child abuse. The nominee’s response will be noted and provided to the Senior Pastor.

From 15 June 2013 this will change. Each volunteer or worker will be required to go to the Working With Children Website and apply for their own check. They will then receive a clearance number which will be relevant for 5 years. A register of clearance numbers will be kept.
  - b) Complete the “Caring for Our Children” training as detailed in Section 2 of this Policy.
3. Following completion of the items in clause 2 above the Missional Council will review the information provided and make a determination of the nominee’s suitability. All of the nominee’s information will be held in strictest confidence and will not be made available to any other person, except as required by law or deemed necessary by the Senior Pastor.
4. Nominees will not be permitted to participate in children and/or youth ministries until the Missional Council has approved

## **2. TRAINING**

### **Policy**

**Cabramatta Vineyard will facilitate ongoing education for it's staff and volunteers as necessary to comply with this Policy.**

### **Procedure**

- 1. The Senior Pastor and Church Council shall from time to time appoint one or more Child Protection Officers.**
- 2. The Child Protection Officer shall have a current Training Certificate from an approved body. Such body is to be nominated and approved by the Missional Council**
- 3. The Child Protection Officer shall facilitate a "Caring for Our Children" training Session no less than twice yearly. The session will include a review of the Policy and any associated guidelines or codes of conduct.**
- 4. All staff and volunteers who commence participation in children and/or youth ministries during the calendar year shall, prior to commencing participation, attend at least one training session, as conducted by the Child Protection Officer, on the Policy and any other matters relevant to child safety as determined by the Senior Pastor and/or Coordinator.**
- 5. Upon completing the "Caring for Our Children" training all staff and volunteers will sign an acknowledgement that they attended the training session. Their continued participation in church ministries will be conditional upon their attendance at authorised sessions. The Child Protection Officer shall keep a register of who has attended the training sessions.**
- 6. The Child Protection Officer will advise the Coordinator in writing, of each staff member and volunteer who has participated in the authorised training sessions within one week of them doing so.**
- 7. All staff directly or indirectly working with children shall complete authorised refresher training not less than every 3 years.**

### **3. SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT**

#### **Policy**

**Cabramatta Vineyard will provide ongoing accountability and feedback to staff and volunteers in relation to their compliance with this Policy.**

#### **Procedure**

- 1. All staff will have formal performance appraisals annually with the Senior Pastor.**
- 2. Coordinators will observe new staff and volunteers within 6 months of commencement and submit their observations to the Pastor, as deemed necessary.**
- 3. Staff and volunteers will be encouraged by the Coordinators to ask questions and will provide feedback to the Coordinators and/or Pastor.**

## 4. MANDATORY REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

### Policy

The Missional Council has a moral and legal responsibility to review all instances of suspected child abuse and notify child protection agencies where necessary.

### Procedure

1. If a staff member or volunteer suspects child abuse, they are to report to the Coordinator and/or Greg or Judy immediately. Existing Mandatory Reporters eg: teachers will in the first instance also report to Greg or Judy re the need for church based report

There are various ways in which you may become aware of abuse, such as:

- Verbal Disclosure (tells you he/she has been abused);
  - Someone else tells you (another child, sibling, relative, friend of the family); or
  - Observation of behaviour or knowledge of children leading to suspicion;
  - Indications of physical harm.
2. Any disclosures or allegations are **NOT** to be investigated by any staff member or volunteer.
  3. If there is a disclosure of abuse or suspected abuse to a staff member or volunteer then the following applies:

**DURING THAT DISCLOSURE** the staff member or volunteer:

**SHOULD NOT** promise not to tell.

Explain that you are concerned about their safety, or what they have told you and so you will need to talk to someone (you can identify who that someone will be) to talk about ways to keep them safe or to address the issues they have raised.

**SHOULD NOT** ask more questions than are necessary.

**SHOULD NOT** ask leading questions i.e. ones which suggest an answer.

**SHOULD NOT** touch the child inappropriately. See Code Conduct 6.2.

**SHOULD NOT** feel you or the child have to prove what has been disclosed.

**SHOULD NOT** discuss the disclosure with anyone other than those who need to be involved in reporting the suspected abuse to FaCS or the police.

**SHOULD NOT** notify parents or guardians in the first instance – they may be the perpetrators.

**SHOULD NOT PROMISE THAT THE ABUSE WILL STOP**

**AND:**

- SHOULD** satisfy themselves that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting abuse or risk of harm.
- SHOULD** as soon as is practicable write a record of what you said and what the child or young person said and give this record to the Senior Pastor.
- SHOULD** notify the alleged abuse to the pastor as soon as possible following the disclosure.
- SHOULD** reassure the child that you are there to give support and that they have done the right thing – they have the right to be safe.
- SHOULD** debrief with the Coordinator following the disclosure.

4. Any staff member or volunteer who suspects abuse or who receives a disclosure of abuse should immediately:
  - keep their suspicion completely confidential and not disclose it to any other person other than the Coordinator, Senior Pastor, Assistant Pastor, other chosen consultant with relevant skills and proper legal authorities.
  - Write a report containing the events leading to their suspicion or disclosure and provide that report to the Coordinator or Senior Pastor within 24 hours of the staff member or volunteer becoming aware of the suspected abuse [**Appendix C**].
  - (Volunteers are not mandatory reporters. Employers holding supervisory responsibility are mandatory reporters as are employees working in children’s services).
  - Go to the Mandatory Reporters guide on the “Keep them Safe” website and complete the Decision Tree which most closely reflects the concerns held by the person reporting the alleged abuse or disclosure of abuse. The result of the completion of the decision tree will help determine if the allegations/disclosure require further reporting to the relevant authority. If the decision tree determines further action is required, the staff member/volunteer should follow the directions contained on that website and provide a further report to the Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor detailing action suggested and print the outcome.
5. Any staff member or volunteer identified in an allegation of child abuse will be immediately suspended of their responsibilities. Staff members will be suspended with pay until the matter is resolved.

6. **If the situation requires emergency assistance the staff member or volunteer should contact the Pastor and the local police before making any reports to FaCS. If a child or youth is at risk of immediate harm, and the matter is reported to FaCS, FaCS will contact the police as they deem necessary.**
7. **FaCS.**
  - **FaCS can be contacted 24hrs a day 7 days a week for the costs of a local call by telephoning one of the following numbers;  
13 21 11; or  
1800 212 936**

## 5. RISK MANAGEMENT

### Policy

Risk Management is identifying and assessing all potential sources of harm and taking steps to decrease the likelihood that harm will occur. Any activity or event may have specific risks associated with it, and it is therefore important to reduce the risk of injury to participants of the event, to the extent it is possible to do so. Incident Report Forms contain valuable information for monitoring risk management procedures and policies as well as highlighting potential issues that require ongoing attention.

### Procedure

1. Identifying Risks Prior to an Event:
  - a. Any unfamiliar proposed venue for a one-off event will be visited at least once prior to event to assist with planning by the event leader. Any proposed venue for a regular event at a familiar venue will be checked for changes.
  - b. A Venue Risk Assessment Form [**Appendix G**] and an Activity Planning Sheet [**Appendix H**] will be completed for every one-off activity or event, or annually for an regularly occurring event. These forms will be kept on hand at the event by the leader, and kept on file at the CHURCH for 7 years after the event. When partnering with an external organization risk assessment information from that organisation must be obtained and evaluated prior to the event.
  - c. If any activity requires a trained instructor, that instructor shall be registered and insured (check registrations at centres or organisation) and the CHURCH shall keep copies of such registration and insurance for a period of not less than 7 years.
  - d. All events will have an adequate number of leaders for the number of participants attending in accordance with clause two (2) of this section.
  - e. Before any participant can attend an event, a Consent and Indemnity Form [**Appendix F**] and a Medical Form (where the event involves a time period of greater than 8 hours or the event poses a higher than normal degree of risk)[**Appendix E**] will be fully completed by the participant's parent or guardian. This includes activities re youth, homegroups, conferences, camps, girl/guy events. The CHURCH shall keep copies of such Consent Indemnity and Medical Forms for a period of not less than 7 years.
  - f. The CHURCH will provide written information to parents outlining the events and activities that will be occurring, location of the event, times, dates and emergency phone numbers of the event leader.

- g. A Visitors Registration Form will be available for when children bring along a friend (without a parent or guardian), to record the details of the child, the name of the parent/guardian and two contact phone numbers, plus any special diet/medical information that is required for their own safety. [Appendix I].
- h. The Coordinator will nominate a First Aid officer for the event (holding a current First Aid Certificate), who will arrange for the provision of a first aid kit at the event. This person will also be made aware of any particular medical conditions of the participants involved.

**2. Ratios:**

The following ratios shall be deemed appropriate for the undertaking of child and youth activities by members of Cabramatta Vineyard Church

- Children 0-2yrs a safe ratio is 1:4,
- Children 2-3yrs a safe ratio is 1:8
- Children over 3yrs a safe ratio is 1:10.

**3 Incident Reporting:**

An Incident Report [Appendix J] should be filled out when an injury occurs at any event.

It is essential to complete the form as soon as possible after an incident has occurred to ensure the information collected is as accurate as possible. Information collected will include names and contact details of witnesses.

- a. In case of a serious injury, the Coordinator will discuss the incident with the Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor to determine the appropriate steps to take to remedy the situation, which may include informing Cabramatta Vineyard Church's insurance company about the event.
- b. The staff member/s or volunteer/s responsible for organising the event should meet to discuss the incident and overall compliance with these policies and procedures.

If a particular type of accident is occurring with some frequency, then further investigation is required. It may be that further accidents can be avoided by changing a policy or alerting staff to a trend in certain types of accidents.

A copy of all Incident Report, consent forms, risk assessments etc will be filed by the Coordinators and held in a central location with the accounts manager Cabramatta Vineyard Church for 7 years

## **6. CABRAMATTA VINEYARDS CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Policy**

All children, young persons and young adults will be cared for in a secure and transparent manner.

### **Procedure**

1. All volunteers shall have attended a “Caring for Our Kids” training, in accordance with the Policy.
2. All Staff and Volunteers should at all times be aware of and comply with the following:
  - a. **The Two Adult Rule –THERE MUST BE AT ALL TIMES TWO LEADERS OVER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS** in each group
  - b. A parent or guardian must sign a child into Kids Church prior to the commencement of the session.
  - c. An attendance roll will be taken at the commencement of all kids’ church group times.
  - d. Parents have free access to their children in the classroom at all times.
  - e. Ministry groups with children ages 1-10 (inclusive) can have the door closed to the room while the group is taking place, and windows shall be kept clear so the parents can clearly see into the room at all times.
  - f. Once a ministry group session has commenced a child may only leave the classroom to go to the bathroom or return to their parent/guardian
    - i) Any child leaving the classroom to return to a parent or guardian must be accompanied by an adult teacher or adult helper and must be taken directly to the child’s parent/guardian
    - ii) See clause 4 of this section for toilet procedure
  - g. All children in kids church must be collected up by their parents, or guardian at the completion of the ministry time where they are to be signed out prior to leaving the classroom. The children and young persons who are in grade three and above may be permitted to return to their parents on their own, except where expressly requested by their parent/guardian in which case they shall be signed out prior to leaving the classroom by their parent/guardian.
  - h. All Creche children are to be picked up by the person who signed them in or an adult nominated by that person at sign in (not siblings or other adults). Creche children must be signed out by said adult/guardian.

- i People wandering around or acting in a suspicious manner are to be questioned and immediately reported to the Coordinator or Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor.
- j. All Staff and Volunteers serving in kids church should be aware of and comply with the “Behaviour Management Guidelines”. [Appendix N]

**3. Touching and interaction:**

- a. Staff and volunteers will always use language that affirms the children, young persons and young adults as important participants in the community.
- b. All staff and volunteers will refrain from touching a child or young person or young adult in an inappropriate manner. Appropriate touching includes brief hugs, light touches on the shoulder and a flat hand lightly placed on head or back. It is not permitted to touch a child or youth in an area that would normally be covered by one piece swimming togs.

As a community , through our training we will encourage adults to be aware of what are appropriate and safe behaviours/ displays of affection to under 18’s, particularly in the way children and youth interact with each other.

- c. It is not permitted to kiss or tickle a child, young person or young adult, or do anything that is potentially sexual in nature.
- d. No physical punishment is to be administered by any staff member or volunteer.
- e. An aggressive child, young person or young adult may be contained by light holding of the wrists to prevent physical harm to themselves or others while parents/guardians are being contacted. Remove other children is necessary. In extreme circumstances the police may be contacted. Should any containment be necessary the Pastors must be immediately notified.

**4. Toilet use:**

- a. Children in crèche will be taken to their parents to be escorted to the toilets or to have their nappies changed
- b. Children in groups for 3-7 year olds are required to attend to their bathroom needs by themselves. If they are unable to do this they should be returned to their parent or guardian. A child shall be allowed to the bathroom only when an adult leader is available to stand at the door of the classroom and watch the child walk to the bathroom and return on the completion of the bathroom visit. The adult should be earshot of the child at all times.

Children in groups for 8-12 year olds are permitted to go to the appropriate bathroom only in pairs.

**5. Ministry activities off church premises**

- a. For all ministry activities off church premises, there will be a ratio of adults to children deemed relevant to the circumstances and documented on the event form for the parents to sign. The ratios will be dependent upon the activity taking place. E.g. there will be a higher ratio where water activities are involved.
  
- b. **Transportation to and from church events**  
All drivers shall hold a full valid and current Australian Driver's license and will not transport a child or youth without two other person in the car at all times. The last person out shall be over 18 years. It will be our community policy to encourage guys to take guys and girls to take girls.

The Driver Code of Conduct form must be completed by every person who will be driving children or youth to events organised by Cabramatta Vineyard Church, including copies of their driver's licence and car insurance. [Appendix D]

Written permission notes from parents/guardians must be obtained for any regular transport arrangements.

**6. Camps**

- a. Where possible, leaders will supervise children, young persons and young adults of the same sex as them.
  
- b. For sleeping arrangements, supervision will be given by two leaders of the same sex as the children/young person/young adult.
  
- c. Children, young persons and/or young adults are not allowed to get into bed with another camper or with a leader.
  
- d. Children young persons and/or young adults of the opposite sex will not share a bedroom.
  
- e. Access to bathrooms, toilets or bunkrooms or tents of the opposite sex is not allowed by leaders or campers (except for leaders where there is an emergency).
  
- f. Health and safety rules of the campsite being used will be adhered to.
  
- g. Medical Forms and Consent and Indemnity Forms will be checked by parent/guardian and kept updated as required. [Appendix E and Appendix F]. The nominated First Aid Officer shall hold these forms for the duration of the camp.

**7. Telephones and Electronic Media**

- a. All staff and volunteers who are involved in youth ministry shall use respect when communicating via telephone and electronic media with children, young persons and/or young adults.

Particularly they shall:

- i) **NOT** send private messages to or engage in private chats with young people or young adults who have attended the youth ministry activities of Cabramatta Vineyard Church on Facebook, Twitter or any other form of social media, unless there has been signed approval given by a parent or guardian on the “Safe Care of our Youth Consent and Indemnity Form” [Appendix L]
- ii) Always include another youth person in any electronic communications. Always ensure another relevant leader/parent can view (is copied in on ) all electronic communications.
- iii) Do **NOT** send private text messages or private communication on telephones unless there has been signed approval given by a parent/guardian by completion of the “Electronic Communication Disclosure Form [Appendix L]

#### **8. Use Of Photographs**

- a. All staff and Volunteers in youth ministry shall not publically post or display photographs of a young person and or young adult unless there has been a signed approval given by a parent/guardian on the “Electronic Communication Disclosure Form” [Appendix L]
- b. All Parents/guardians of children attending the CHURCH’s children’s ministry can fill in a ‘Photograph Permission Form’ [Appendix M] to inform the Children’s Ministry Coordinator of their desires regarding the use of photographs of their children.
- c. No member of staff or volunteers in Children’s ministry shall use photographs of children in the CHURCH’s children’s ministry without the approval of the Children’s Ministry Coordinator.

#### **9. Mentoring & Pastoral Care**

- a. Written and signed consent by parent or guardian must be obtained prior to the commencement of any mentoring sessions with school aged children.
- b. Telephone calls are permitted directly with children. We advise parents will be informed of the discussion by the mentor.
- c. Mentoring sessions shall only occur in accordance with the Guidelines for Mentoring Sessions found in [Appendix G]
- d. Mentoring and face to face sessions must always occur in a public place.