



Safe Ministry Policy

Aim:

Saltbush Evangelical Church seeks to take seriously the Bible's mandate to be proactive in the welcoming, spiritual nurture, protection, safety and care of those in our ministries- both adults and children

Saltbush Evangelical Church also aims to enable and protect those ministering to children.

To build and maintain a safe community for our children and adults, we are committed to ensuring that:

1. All leaders are appropriately screened, trained and appointed
2. All program's are led and run in a safe and appropriate manner,
3. There are clear reporting procedures in place and
4. The leadership at Saltbush Evangelical Church regularly reviews these policies and processes.

1. Screening, Training and Appointing of Leaders

All those involved in running ministries to children and adults on behalf of Saltbush Evangelical, undergo a full screening and training process as outlined below.

1. Appropriate leaders will have been regular participants at Saltbush Evangelical Church for at least 6 months (or been given special approval by the church leadership). They will be interviewed and have their potential roles and responsibilities clearly outlined for them and given copies of the relevant policies and documents.
2. Appropriate leaders will have provided references to confirm their character. If working with children and youth, they must provide Saltbush Evangelical Church with their unique Working With Children Check number and Date of Birth to be legally approved by the Commission for Children and Young People, unless they fit into the 'Exempt' category
3. Have completed an approved Safe Ministry Training Course which outlines appropriate behaviour as well as training in how to identify and report cases of abuse

Leaders will be asked to do revision every 2-3 years.

Under no circumstances will a person with a criminal record of child abuse, molestation or similar offences be allowed to be involved in children's or youth ministry.

2. Appropriate Behaviours and Guidelines for Safe Ministries

To provide for, build and maintain a safe community for our children and adults where they may grow as followers of Jesus, we must ensure that our programs and events are safe and appropriate for those attending. For this to happen, all those ministering to children and adults at Saltbush Evangelical Church are to behave and act according to the values of the community, society and above all as followers of Jesus.

Our programs and events must be safe and appropriate to the children and youth attending. Careful consideration will be made of things such as the activities chosen, the venue, safe ratios of supervision, appropriate child toileting practices, transportation, occupational health and safety, parental or guardian permission and confidentiality of records kept.

Guidelines for these safe practice procedures are highlighted and discussed in the Safe Ministry Training Course.

To help maintain appropriate standards, all leaders and helpers will be given access to ongoing training and adequate supervision in their roles and responsibilities.

3. Reporting Procedures

If any leaders suspect a child or adult has experienced abuse they will not take action on their own or approach the person accused. Leaders will raise the matter with one of the Saltbush Evangelical Church Safe Ministry Supervisors. There may be a perfectly good explanation for the injury or behaviour observed.

The Safe Ministry Supervisor will respond to all reports appropriately. Any allegations of criminal activity (whether adult to child or adult to adult) will be reported to police. Any allegations of child abuse will be reported to the NSW Government according to the Online Mandatory Reporter Guide. The insurer of Saltbush Evangelical Church will also be advised of any allegations of abuse. Leaders may be required to provide a statement to the Police and/or to Family and Community Services if it is confirmed that the child is at risk.

In various circumstances Saltbush Evangelical Church will appoint an Independent Ministry Investigator (IMI) to explore allegations of inappropriate behaviour. The steps involved in responding to allegations of abuse are outlined in the Saltbush Evangelical Church Safe Ministry Incident Response Process.

4. Regular Review Periods

It is the responsibility of the Senior Pastor and Overseers to ensure that this policy and the Incident Response Process is implemented, maintained and reviewed every 2 years or as required. This policy is in accordance with the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157.

Contact Details

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Saltbush Evangelical Church

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This document was approved by the Senior Pastor (Matt Letcher) and Overseers (Doug Hughes and Otto Peeters) on the 11th of December 2014