



Child Safety Policy

of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania Inc
and all affiliated Churches and Agencies

Version 1

Approved 08.12.2016

Evaluation, Review and Update

CCVT is keen to receive feedback on this policy. Any future revision will take into account feedback from affiliates, and any developments in regulation and best practice.

The *Child Safety Policy of CCVT* will otherwise be reviewed regularly.

This document is clearly marked with the date of adoption by the Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania Inc Board. The Board will provide opportunity for affiliates to contribute to the review of this policy.

Introduction

Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania Inc. (CCVT) is committed to being a safe place for all people who engage with us including children, young people and vulnerable adults. We believe that CCVT will be doing better at building Communities of Hope and Compassion and developing Leaders to lead them, when each place of ministry and mission affiliated with CCVT is a Safe Place for everyone to grow in their discipleship of Jesus and in their relationships with one another.

The purpose of this policy is to set out CCVT's policy in relation to child safety, including the expectations that CCVT has of its churches and agencies (affiliates).

This policy applies to CCVT Inc, Churches of Christ Community Care, The Properties Corporation of the Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ Financial Services, all CCVT affiliates in Victoria and Tasmania, and CCVT's national partner Stirling Theological College. Each of those entities may need to adopt supplementary child safety policies in relation to their own work with children, as appropriate.

Policy

Definitions

“Child” and **“children”** means people under the age of 18.

Children's ministry means any activity or program where any of the participants are under 18 and not accompanied by parents or carers authorised by the parents.

Leaders are all those in some level of leadership in an affiliate. This includes not only the Ministers, Pastors, Elders, Deacons and Ministry Leaders but also those appointed to some level of leadership role in the church, and includes leaders under the age of 18.

Workers are all those who are involved in children's ministry other than in a leadership role, including both staff and volunteers, and includes leaders under the age of 18.

General Principles

CCVT takes a proactive, risk management approach to child safety and expects CCVT affiliates to do the same.

As stated in Affinity and any subsequent later iteration of Affinity, affiliates are required to meet the minimum requirements relevant to them as set down by law, as a pre-requisite for being affiliated with the Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania.

CCVT encourages affiliates to seek assistance from CCVT's Safe Places Coordinator where needed.

Affiliates must report child safety issues in accordance with the CCVT Safety Reporting Procedure.

CCVT will provide assistance with safety issues where needed at the invitation of the affiliate, or, if CCVT considers it necessary, at CCVT's instigation.

Responsibility for Safety

Everyone associated with CCVT and its affiliates has some responsibility for safety as set out below.

Who	Role in Promoting Safe Places
Individuals (participants)	Take personal responsibility for their own and others' safety; raise any issues of concern. Be aware of and act in accordance with policies and procedures.
Workers	Be aware of and act in accordance with policies and procedures. Encourage program participants to take responsibility for their own and others' safety and advise how to report any issues of concern.
Leaders	Be aware of and act in accordance with policies and procedures. Carry out responsibilities in accordance with employment contract/position description.
Governing body	Take responsibility for what happens in our church or agency Identify, assess and control risks, and review the effectiveness of control measures Ensure appropriate insurance arrangements are in place Adopt appropriate policies and review them regularly Ensure the relevant policies are widely communicated and lived out in the church or agency Ensure the church or agency is compliant with regulatory obligations Seek help from CCVT where needed Accept help from CCVT where CCVT believes necessary including where minimum requirements are not being met.
CCVT	Provide resources for affiliates to use, for example template policies and checklists. Provide affiliates with assistance when difficult issues arise, for example an allegation of abuse, either at the invitation of the affiliate, or at the instigation of CCVT. Identify minimum requirements for risk management and compliance purposes. Hold affiliates accountable for meeting those minimum requirements. Promote cultural change and best practice.
CCVT Inc. Board	Ensure that risk is managed proactively. Challenge the Movement in relation to opportunities and risks. Implement a system to minimise risk and encourage compliance with regulatory obligations. Promote compliance with risk and compliance regulatory obligations across CCVT. Monitor risk and compliance. Take responsibility for how CCVT as a whole deals with allegations of abuse and other major risks.
Churches of Christ Insurance	Provide insurance. Promote utilisation of insurance and related services.

Resources

CCVT provides guidance and resources including a **Child Safety Policy - CCVT Victorian Churches** and **Child Safety Reporting Procedure - CCVT Victorian Churches** which Victorian churches are required to adopt. Victorian agencies must ensure that they are compliant with the Child Safe Standards and may wish to adapt the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Reporting Procedure - CCVT Victorian Churches.

All people involved in children's ministry must undergo training in child safety, including how to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse, how to detect potential signs of child abuse and how to report any concerns appropriately, as set out below.

For each affiliate, the Chair of the governing body, the Senior Minister/Leader, Safety Contact Person, and the person responsible for children's ministry are required to attend a NCCA Safe Church Awareness Workshop before commencing in their role,¹ and to attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.

Those leaders are responsible for ensuring that *all leaders and workers involved with children's ministry* have also been provided with the following before commencing in their role,² and every 3 years:

- awareness training - either by attending a NCCA Safe Church Awareness Workshop, or completing Child Safe online training; and
- implementation training – covering the church's Child Safety Policy, the Child Safety Reporting Procedure, and a discussion of how the particular church applies the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

CCVT's Safe Places Coordinator provides expert assistance and is provided with training so as to be able to identify when external legal or other advice is needed.

Minimum Requirements

Churches are required to meet legal requirements as the bare minimum and are encouraged to pursue best practice, recognising the importance of safety to our ministry.

CCVT may stipulate additional minimum requirements from time to time.

Each affiliate is expected to have a person clearly designated as the Safety Contact Person.

Accountability for Safety

The governing body of each affiliate is expected to make an annual declaration to CCVT each year confirming that the affiliate complies with legal requirements or if not, specifying any areas for improvement and what action will be taken, by when, to ensure compliance at a minimum and ideally best practice.

¹ where a person is already in one of those positions at the time this policy is adopted, that person will complete a Safe Church Training Awareness Workshop by 30 June 2017.

² This requirement is effective from 30 June 2017.

CCVT will conduct random conversational audits and is committed to helping affiliates to become safer places.

Failure to demonstrate a commitment to improving safety may have insurance consequences for affiliates.

Authorisation

Affiliate name:	Paul Cameron
Approved by governing body on:	8 December 2016
Scheduled review date:	No later than December 2018

Safety Contact Person

Name:	Kylie Kendall
Phone number:	03 9488 8800
Email:	safeplaces@churchesofchrist.org.au
Other contact details:	

CCVT Safe Places Coordinator

Contact the Coordinator through the CCVT Office on 03 9488 8800.

Related policies

See the most recently release Safe Places documents on the CCVT website and keep an eye out for others as they are released. churchesofchrist.org.au/safeplaces

To the extent that the *Duty of Care for Responsible Leadership of Children and Youth Policy of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania (2012)* covers issues not covered by this Child Safety Policy or other new policies, it operates as our policy on those issues until CCVT distributes replacement policies.