



BENDIGO BAPTIST COMMUNITY CARE INC.

Safe Space Policy

Bendigo Baptist Community Care Inc. (BBCCI) affirms that all people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected, and have their views and opinions valued at all times and value that our country legislates for people's safety.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers (workers) associated with BBCCI.

Purpose

- Minimise the risk of abuse and the misuse of positional power.
- Ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and ministry misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- Ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- Ensure that all people are respected and valued.

We commit to:

A) Safe recruitment of leaders.

BBCCI will screen all prospective leaders in our ministries, before they are appointed. (i.e.. relevant working with children's check/vulnerable people/police check).

B) Adequate training of leaders.

BBCCI requires that all leaders attend the approved BUV Safe Space workshop within their first year of ministry and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.

BBCCI requires all leaders to attend additional ministry-specific training as required.

C) Continued supervision of ministry leaders.

BBCCI commits to ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for leaders.

All leaders will agree to follow the BBCCI Code of Conduct.

D) Responding in a timely manner to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious ministry misconduct.

If the complaint is a reportable offence as defined by the Victorian state government, you MUST report as soon as practicably possible. See <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting> for more details. You MUST also inform the Safe Space Person immediately. The Safe Space Person is currently Community Care Director.

Where a leader has an allegation of ministry misconduct made against them, BBCCI will provide support to alleged victims and perpetrators and seek appropriate help for a just and fair resolution.

E) Safe environments in our ministry programs.

BBCCI will encourage feedback from participants in the programs and activities in which they participate to support that BBCCI values their ideas and encourages participation.

BBCCI will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that BBCCI is able to care for their physical and emotional needs.

All leaders will discharge their duty of care through the use of forms, checklists and risk assessments for establishment and maintenance of safe environments in all BBCCI ministry programs and locations.

Definitions

Child: a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Safe Environment: discharges duty of care by taking steps to keep all those in our care safe, including e.g. spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional abuse (including bullying) or neglect.

Safe Leader: has been through a recruitment process, understands responsibilities, is supervised and is an accountable team player.

Safe Ministry Program: all risks have been assessed and events thought through and planned. These programs have had permission to proceed from the relevant leader



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Introduction

Bendigo Baptist Community Care Inc. (BBCCI) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Everyone working at BBCCI is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

Policy Statement

This BBCCI Safe Child Policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment the board, staff and volunteers have to child safety, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within BBCCI.
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To prevent child abuse within BBCCI.
4. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.

5. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where suspected abuse within or outside of the organisation.
6. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
7. To provide assurance that any, and all, suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated according to Victorian State Law.

Policy

Commitment to Child Safety

All children who participate in a BBCCI program, have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero tolerance to child abuse. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun.

This policy was developed in collaboration with all our staff, volunteers and the children who use our services and their parents. It applies to all staff, volunteers, children and individuals involved in our organisation.

Children's rights to safety and participation

BBCCI staff and volunteers encourage children to express their views and will listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

Valuing diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this welcome and promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of ALL children and their families.

Recruiting staff and volunteers

BBCCI applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. BBCCI interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions.

Supporting staff and volunteers

BBCCI seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision, so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

BBCCI has appointed a Safe Space Person with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. This Safe Space Person is currently the Community Care Director.

Please note: If the complaint is a reportable offence as defined by the Victorian state government, you MUST report as soon as practicably possible. See <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting> for more details. You MUST also inform the Safe Space Person immediately (currently the Community Care Director).

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimizing the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. BBCCI will protect any personal information that is collected in relation to child safe reporting.