



VOICE TO THE NATIONS CHURCH

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

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1. Introduction

Voice To The Nations Church takes seriously our commitment to the safety and protection of children. We will, to the best of our ability, provide an environment which is respectful and safe for all those in our care. This will be achieved through the education of all leaders responsible for and/or working with children. We recognise and realise our obligation to this end and will respond accordingly to any concerns relating to the care and protection of children.

This policy will provide

- a framework through which the church can minimise the risk of child abuse within our ministry.
- steps through which any suspected or reported cases of child abuse can be handled thoroughly with care and integrity.

2. Policy Statement

As a church we will consistently undertake to:

- provide an environment where every reasonable step is taken to ensure the safety of children.
- screen to the best of our ability volunteers who work with children.
- respond promptly to any suspected or reported child abuse.

3. What is Child Abuse?

In general, child abuse is categorised in four ways:

Physical abuse

This is commonly characterised by physical injury.

Sexual Abuse

This occurs when someone in a position of power to the child uses his/her power to involve the child in sexual activity.

Emotional Abuse

This tends to be a chronic behavioural pattern directed at a child whereby a child's self-esteem and social competence are undermined or eroded over time.

Neglect

This is a failure to provide for the child's basic needs.

4. Responding to Suspected Child Abuse

In responding to suspected abuse, the primary concern will always be the ongoing safety of the child. All other concerns will be secondary. It is imperative that we display immediate 'protective behaviours' towards the child, all appropriate steps will be taken to ensure the child is considered first.

Therefore anyone who suspects on reasonable grounds that there is abuse occurring must respond accordingly:

- the suspected or alleged abuse is reported to the appropriate authorities with immediate effect.
- the suspected or alleged abuse is reported to the church leadership immediately.
- a written report will be made by the person who reports and given to the church leadership.

All reports and information will be kept confidential.

5. Procedures where the suspected abuser is a staff member or volunteer.

In the case of the reported abuse involving a staff member or volunteer the following will take place:

- the suspected or alleged abuse is reported to the appropriate authorities
- the church leadership to be notified
- the suspected abuser will be informed of the report and immediately stepped down from any ministry or leadership role pending an investigation
- if the report is found to be true the perpetrator would adhere to strict guidelines regarding their involvement in the church
- if the report is found to be false the accused would be offered reinstatement at the leadership's discretion

- appropriate pastoral care would be offered in line with the circumstances.

6. Screening

The following are steps that should be taken by staff and volunteers who wish to work within these ministries. In consultation with their department leader, the person will need to

Step 1. Fill in an application 'working with children' form (All workers and Volunteers)

Step 2. Complete a police check, if necessary

Step 3. Participate in appropriate training for the level of work to be undertaken.

All forms of documentation (excluding the application form) will need to be updated as needed.

7. Policy

In line with our child protection policy and procedures Voice To The Nations Church states the following:

- we complete/require reference checks for all employed and volunteers working directly with children and 'Kids Ministries'.
- we do not employ or allow any person(s) with a violent or sexual related conviction to volunteer within any of our 'Kids Ministries' or events
- we actively encourage the reporting of sexual abuse as detailed within this document.