

## **Hill Top Church**

### **SAFE CHURCH POLICY 2014**

The Bible consistently expresses God's concern for the well-being of the weak and powerless members of society, children in particular. Christ's words and example provide a strong rationale for churches being responsible for all those in their care. Hill Top Church takes this responsibility very seriously.

We affirm that all people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe and respected.

We also live in a country that legislates for people's safety, particularly in the area of child protection.

Our policy has been developed to help us live out our Biblical mandate and our responsibilities under NSW legislation.

#### **Our safe Church Policy has the following goals:**

- minimise the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power within the church.
- To handle all cases of suspected abuse and ministry misconduct in a consistent, unbiased and thorough manner.
- Our leaders and programs are safe.
- All people are respected and valued irrespective of their gender, age, country of origin, cultural heritage, socio-economic background or ability.

#### **SAFE LEADERS**

##### **WE COMMIT TO:**

##### **a) Safe recruitment of leaders**

We will screen all prospective leaders in our ministries, before they are appointed.

For those working with children to obtain a working with children check (NSW).

We recommend a minimum 6 months church attendance policy for all prospective volunteer leaders.

##### **b) Adequate training of leaders**

We require that all leaders attend a safe ministry Induction (or SCTA endorsed) workshop within their first year of ministry and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.

Hill Top Church will financially support any leader attending training in relation to safe ministry training.

We require all leaders to attend additional ministry-specific training as required by our church leadership.

We require all leaders to use educative material that aligns with the doctrinal statement and is endorsed by Hill Top Church Executive Committee.

##### **c) Continued supervision of leaders**

We commit to ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for leaders.

All leaders will agree to operate within this Policy and adhere to the Doctrinal Statement.

All leaders positions to be reviewed and endorsed by the Hill Top Church Executive Committee annually.

##### **d) Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious ministry misconduct**

All leaders will report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse to the relevant government authority via the Safe Church Contact Person, according to our procedure.

Reporting suspected risk of significant harm (abuse) Child protection helpline 132 111

Where a leader has an allegation of ministry misconduct made against them we seek appropriate denominational help for a just and fair resolution.

## **SAFE PROGRAMS**

We commit to:

### **Safe emotional environments in our ministry programs**

We will give opportunity to all people, including children, to provide input into the programs and the activities in which they are to participate by; valuing their ideas, and encouraging participation, as far as is safe, sensible and practicable.

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

### **Safe physical environments**

We will endeavour to establish safe physical environments as outlined in the Safe Church Manual.

We require team leaders to exercise a duty of care through the use of forms, checklists and templates for establishment and maintenance of safe environments in our church.

We require Team leaders to complete a Permission to Proceed process annually.

A Policy officer will be appointed to establish and maintain: fire safety, building safety, first aid, food safety, safe transport, incident and emergency procedures.

## **DEFINITIONS**

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

**The policy officer:** is responsible for the oversight of the implementation of the Safe Church Policy and supporting documentation and processes in Hill Top church.

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

**Safe Program:** risks have been assessed and events thought through and planned. These programs have had permission to proceed from a ministry co-ordinator.

**SCTA:** Safe Church Training Agreement under the National Council of Churches in Australia.

This Safety and Protection Policy applies to all members and volunteer workers associated with the ministry in our church.