



## A CODE OF PRACTICE

### Beachside Church Code of Practice and Policies:

Working with children, young people and vulnerable people during the God's Grommets programs.

### Working safely with all participants

Beachside Church aligns its practice with ChildSafe SP3 and is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all participants, especially children and vulnerable people involved in programs run by Beachside and its volunteers.

When you work within this Code of Practice you will be supporting the rights of the participant, ensuring a safe environment for all.

Team Members should work together to build and maintain a secure environment for all participants in a program.

Leadership is a position of power and influence over others. This can sometimes be abused. This Code of Practice offers a safeguard against abuse of positional power, providing boundaries for appropriate behaviour.

This Code of Practice provides essential guidelines for behaviour when working with children and vulnerable people in a program.

This Code of Practice means that everyone on the team understands the expectations – we are all 'on the same page'.

### What does the Code of Practice cover?

- Behaviour
- Language
- Physical Contact
- Toileting/nappy change procedures
- Program Style and Safe environments
- Child Safe SP3 Ratios
- Cultural Awareness
- Additional Needs
- Medications/Illness/Allergies and Food
- Emergency Responses
- Children and Vulnerable People Protection
- Privacy & Social Media

### 1. Behaviour

What we do as Team Members reflects our values. It is vital to behave in a way that upholds what we believe about children and vulnerable people – that they are valued and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

#### Be a good role model

Children and vulnerable people learn as much from what Team Members do as from what they say.

It is easy to 'love the lovable'. The children and vulnerable people who are not easy to love often need more love from us.

Avoid behaviour that gives the impression of favouritism or encourages 'special' relationships with individual children.

Where parents, carers or members of the community observe Team Members at work, they need to see a caring style that demonstrates the positive values your organisation seeks to uphold.

### **What to do**

- Treat all participants with respect, and take notice of their reactions to your tone of voice and manner.
- Do not be alone with a child.
- Do not enter the sleeping accommodation of members of the opposite gender, except in emergencies.
- Be aware of situations when children or vulnerable people might be changing, showering or using the toilet.

## **2. Language**

### **Words can hurt**

It is important to use language that affirms the worth, dignity and significance of the participants.

It is not unusual to use negative or critical language towards people in an attempt at humour. Humour is a wonderful thing, however we must ensure that jokes are not made at the expense of others as this erodes the sense of safety and care.

### **Mind your language**

- Do not use derogatory language towards Team Members or participants – even when meant as sarcasm or as a joke.
- Do not use ‘in jokes’, negative language, put downs or sexist language with other Team Members or with participants.
- Do not speak down to children or young people in a superior way, but instead speak to them as people of value.
- Where private conversations are necessary, the Team Member and child should remain visible to another adult in the group.

## **3. Physical Contact**

Many children enjoy physical contact, and will seek it as a simple expression of affection and confidence, however others do not appreciate or seek physical contact.

Physical contact between adults and children may be misconstrued. Children and vulnerable people may not be aware of creating such situations. It is your duty to be alert to such circumstances. We must always be SEEN to be doing the right thing as well as knowing that we are.

### **Expectations**

Physical contact should:

- Be in response to the participant's need and not the Team Member's.
- Be with the child or vulnerable person's permission – resistance from the person should be respected.
- Never be in the area normally covered by bathers/ swimwear.
- Be open and not secretive.
- Be governed by the age and developmental stage of the person.

### **Let the participant choose**

Children and vulnerable people should be allowed to choose the degree of physical contact they have with others, apart from exceptional circumstances or when needing medical attention.

It is inappropriate to initiate close physical contact; this should come from the participant, if at all.

Physical contact between Team Members, and children and vulnerable people is inappropriate if it could be perceived as a threat, if it causes embarrassment to either person, or if it does not allow either person to disengage easily.

As a general rule, open displays of affection initiated by children in the presence of others, are acceptable.

Team Members need to be aware that consistent contact with the same person may give the impression of favouritism. It is unwise, and may result in others competing for attention or feeling left out.

Any physical activity that is, or may be construed as, sexually stimulating to the Team Member or participant is inappropriate and must be avoided.

Physical touch has an important role in building healthy relationships. It needs to be done within these very clear guidelines and with a heightened awareness of changing community attitudes around safe and appropriate touch with children and vulnerable people.

### **Doing the Right Thing**

- Touching a child or vulnerable person between the neck and the knees should be avoided, although contact with the bony areas of the body such as the shoulder, elbow or head, is generally acceptable.
- A sideways hug around the shoulder is more acceptable than an arm around the waist.
- There will be occasions where displays of affection are natural. Children must not be shunned if they initiate and demonstrate their need for comfort, bearing in mind the age of the child and the circumstances. Care needs to be exercised that such situations don't occur in private.
- On no account must any form of corporal or physical punishment be administered, even in fun.
- The only form of physical restraint appropriate is to protect children from harm. This includes reasonable restraint to stop a fight, to stop bullying or to avoid an accident.
- What is reasonable and lawful will depend on the circumstances, and appropriate judgement should be used.
- Allow children to determine the degree of physical contact they have with you, without showing favouritism.
- Never be alone with a child, always be in public viewing when working with children, young people and vulnerable people

## **4. Safe Places: toileting procedures / nappy changes**

- Encourage parents to take their own children to the toilet before the program starts
- If children require to use the toilet during the program, or require to wash their hands during the program, an adult Team member should take a minimum of two children to the toilet and use only the disabled toilet at the Beachside Church facilities. This ensures you are always in public viewing whilst accompanying the children.
- Ensure hygienic hand washing practices are followed
- Nappies are not to be changed by Team Members. Parents are to be called to change and assist their own child.

## **5. Program Style and Safe Environments**

### **Why is this important?**

The environment you are allocated for your program needs to set up safety, minimising all present and potential risks before the program starts.

Children and vulnerable people are not always able to sense the risks associated with participating in activities.

Your program and activity choices need to be made keeping the participant group's capability and risk appetite in mind.

## Safe environment, safe activities: what to do

- When conducting programs and setting up safe environments, you are required to identify the present and potential hazards and minimise risks.
- Do a risk assessment of the environment and of the activities you have chosen to run in the allocated environment.
- Minimise the risks in the environment and modify the program/activities to minimise those risks.
- Use manual handling to move any furniture/equipment required to be moved to minimise risks and obtain permission from the Team leader before doing so.
- Any incidents or injuries of any kind are to be reported to the Team leader immediately within 24 hours of when the incident occurred.

The activities you choose will speak loudly about the values you and Beachside Church hold about safety.

## What do I need to know?

- As you identify your program activities take into account their age appropriateness.
- Put in extra planning and support measures when an activity has extra challenges.
- Activities or 'wide games' that require participants to operate on their own or in pairs need to be in sight of the Team Members.
- Supervision for all activities is required. Position yourself in the environment so you can view all participants.
- Clear boundaries and rules are needed to ensure that participants can engage in activities safely.
- It is not appropriate for participants to be made to feel stupid or embarrassed. Whilst competitive games or activities can be fun, if they exploit gender, intellectual or physical differences, they should be avoided.
- Be willing to drop an activity if you sense that it is not working safely, or is making participants feel angry or isolated.
- Ask your Team Leader to help you plan well.

## 6. ChildSafe SP3 Ratios

Every program must have a safe number of adult Team Members in relation to the number of participants. This will differ according to the activity, age and capacity of the participants.

### What do I need to know?

- ChildSafe SP3 recommends ratio of 1:8 (one Team member to every participant) Here at Beachside Church we use lower ratios for younger age groups to allow a greater opportunity to build quality relationships and provide higher safety standards.
  - Beachside's policy for ratios working with children under 3 years old are 1:4 (One adult Team member to every 4 children)
  - Beachside ratio policy for Team members to children aged between 3 to 12 year olds is 1:8 (one adult Team member to every 8 children)
  - When young children or people with additional needs are present the ratio should be lower.
  - ChildSafe SP3 has other ratios for specific contexts, including working with the very young or when water activities are involved. Your Team Leader has Modules for these activities with more details.
  - Please note that Team members under 18 years old are not to be included in the ratios.

## **What do I need to do?**

- Ensure that sufficient Team Members are available to run the program.
- Commit to your allocated rostered day and if you cannot attend, organise a swap with another Team Member and alert the Team Leader of your arrangements.
- Report to your Team Leader if you have any concerns about the adult to child ratios

Please note that if ratios cannot be met for allocated age groups, programs may not be cancelled.

## **7. Cultural Awareness**

### **Sensitivity**

Team Members need to be sensitive to cultures and family traditions different from their own. These differences may affect the degree of participation of children and vulnerable people in activities and games.

### **Respect**

No pressure should be applied to participants from other cultures and traditions to encourage participation.

The family has many forms and leaders must respect a participant's support structures.

Team Members need to be sensitive about using words that make assumptions about any participant's background, family status or principal caregivers.

Your team should have zero tolerance for language or activities that discriminate on the basis of gender, race, age or ability.

## **What do I need to do?**

- Ensure you have a welcoming environment and attitude that is respectful, inclusive and welcoming to all.
- Show respect for the authority structures of other cultures and traditions.
- Do not make statements that reflect ignorance, bias or ridicule about other religions and cultures.
- Do not hold, kiss, cuddle or touch children or vulnerable people in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive way.

## **8. Additional Needs**

### **Who May Have Additional Needs?**

People with additional needs may include very small children, people with particular intellectual, mental or physical disabilities, children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, the elderly, children that require additional care strategies, for example who have English as second language or specific medical conditions.

### **Be Inclusive**

Being inclusive of children and vulnerable people with additional needs has more to do with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn, than with a list of 'Do's and Don'ts'.

Being inclusive means seeing that each person has both the potential to learn and the need to be loved and included like all other children and vulnerable people.

### **Be Proactive**

You may need extra adult help. The number of extra Team Members will depend on the particular needs of the child or vulnerable person.

Some children and vulnerable people will require one-on-one assistance.

Privacy and respect are particularly important for participants with special needs who may need help with toileting.

Find out as much as you can about the specific disability/additional need as well as constructive ways to include the participant.

Caregivers and schools are often the best sources of information on how to include those with additional needs.

When working with people with additional needs, activities should be structured, yet flexible.

### **Be Creative**

Make sure your attitudes and behaviour are positive and inclusive towards children and people with additional needs, as this will have a significant influence on how others are inclusive.

Encourage all children and vulnerable people to participate, play and learn together, and to share responsibilities.

Where appropriate, ask the participant what they think or want.

Rather than avoiding some activities because your group includes children or vulnerable people with special needs, be creative in the ways you include everyone.

Limit the amount of furniture and other obstructions to allow space to move.

Plan to include regular breaks in your program.

## **9. Medications / illness / allergies / food**

- Any medications required for a child participating in the program needs to be administered by the child's parent/primary caregiver and not by any Team members or Team Leaders
- If a child becomes ill during the program, comfort and exclude the child away from the other participants, notify the parent/primary caregiver who will need to collect the child from the program. If a Team Member becomes ill during the program notify the Team Leader immediately.
- No Food is allowed to be eaten in the program or be a part of the program activities, due to any allergies anaphylaxis, medical conditions or family preferences. If on special occasions food is requested to be used, this must be approved by the Team Leader and a food allergy notice must be on display and communicated to each of the families of the children participating in the activity.
- For any incidents or injuries that require first aid, please report to the Team leader or Coordinator immediately, who will assess and manage the situation including notifying the participants parents/primary caregiver.

## **10. Emergency Responses:**

- In the event of a serious incident or occurrence report immediately to your Team Leader who will activate the emergency response team.
- Follow all instructions given and maintain supervision and duty of care to the children and young people participating in the program.
- In the event of an evacuation, gather the children/ participants along with the sign in sheet and calmly walk together to the evacuation site (the school playing fields) check all children/participants and Team Members are present once at the evacuation site and report to the Team Leader.

## **11. Children and vulnerable people protection: what do I need to know?**

Children and vulnerable people have a right to be safe at all times. They are more easily taken advantage of than other people and sometimes abused.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to protect children and vulnerable people at risk of harm from neglect, or physical, sexual and emotional/spiritual abuse. Our legal obligations vary according to various jurisdictions, but our moral responsibility is to report and respond to abuse.

#### **What do I need to do?**

- Be aware of disclosures of abuse
- Report to the Team Leader and/or Coordinator any disclosure of abuse or any belief based on reasonable grounds
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## **12. Privacy & Social Media**

### **Personal Information**

As a Team Member you may, at times, require access to private information about a participant (e.g. medical information).

You have an obligation to abide by Beachside Church's privacy policy in relation to protecting the right to privacy of participants and their families.

Personal information and photographs obtained from your involvement in programs must not be used inappropriately.

Appropriate use would be within the context of the program itself, or uses for which permission has been obtained from the caregiver or child (as appropriate).

Photographs taken during programs must not be kept for personal use or publically shown, including on social media sites, without permission as indicated above.

### **Social Media**

The use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter can pose danger to participants, Team Members and organisations.

Participants under 18 should not be 'friended' on personal social media sites. Your program may choose to set up an authorised site, which can be used to keep in touch with participants.

Be aware that whatever you post online cannot be taken back. Again, only share what you would be happy for a caregiver to see.