



## Child safety and wellbeing policy

### Purpose of Policy

The purpose of HOCl's Child Safety and Wellbeing policy is to –

- demonstrate the organisation's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who attend the premises, programs and services.
- Inform all Board Members, Pastors, volunteers, staff and trainers of their obligations to act in a way that is ethical towards children and young people that utilise the service and participate in programs offered.
- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in providing what the board members, volunteers and trainers roles and responsibilities are.
- Give guidance on the processes and procedures that aim to ensure children's safety and wellbeing across all areas of the organisation's work.
- Inform how HOCl will meet its obligations regarding the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.

### Scope

This policy applies to all Pastors, volunteers, staff, contractors, third parties and board members who conducts a service or program within HOCl.

The child safety and wellbeing policy applies to all activities in the organisation which involve, result in or relate to contact with children.

## Responsibilities

Board Members, volunteers, staff and trainers are responsible in implementing and complying with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at all times.

It is a mandatory requirement under the Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld) for any person to report suspected instances of abuse or concerns that they have regarding incidents or risks of child harm, using the reporting procedures in place by the organisation.

## Principles

- Zero tolerance for child abuse and neglect.
- Recognition of the rights of children and young people as paramount.
- A commitment to cultural safety for all children, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Shared responsibility across the organisation for upholding child safety.
- Respect for the diversity of cultural identities and practices.
- Recognition of the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Nations.
- Cultural safety is a shared responsibility requiring continual reflection and improvement.

## Definitions

**Abuse** when a child is harmed or shows signs of distress over a single incident or a number of incidents that have occurred over time. It can be the result of a physical injury, showing signs of neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or sexual exploitation by an adult.

**Child** an individual who is under the age of 18 years of age

**Harm** when a child is harmed or show signs of distress over a single incident or a number of incidents that have occurred over time. It can result in physical injury, showing signs of neglect, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation by an adult

**Mandatory Reporting** is making a report to Child Safety if they are under reasonable suspicion that a child is suffering or has suffered significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse

**Cultural Safety** is creating an environment that is culturally safe for everyone

## Relevant legislation and standards

### National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

#### **Principle 1: We recognise that all adults have a shared responsibility to prevent child abuse**

- we at HOCl are committed to upholding the rights of the child and Australia's obligations under the United Nations Convention.
- The best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration across our services and activities.
- We acknowledge that any abuse that occurs within our organisation, may unfairly damage the reputation of the wider sector.

#### **Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously**

- we, at HOCl will take all complaints or questions we receive from children seriously and will respond in a way that is appropriate to the age of the child.
- HOCl must report any 'reasonable suspicions' or 'beliefs on reasonable grounds' of child abuse immediately, according to the laws within Queensland.
- A person who makes a report is generally not liable in any civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings if the report is made in good faith.
- if a Pastor, Board Member, volunteer or trainer suspects a child is being abused then it shall be reported to the police within their state or the Department of Child Safety by calling 1300 682 154. Child abuse includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, and neglect.

- an email should be sent to the CEO, when they reasonably think that abuse is likely to occur or there is a risk of abuse occurring.

**Principle 3: We will take a risk-based approach to managing child protection in our activities and will mitigate risks to children that might arise in the course of our activities**

- risk management strategies will be monitored and revised if risk levels change relating to the safety of children directly involved with our services and programs.
- we will take reasonable and lawful steps to mitigate those risks, taking into consideration consequences of our actions on the children.
- children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

**Principle 4: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice**

- we, at HOCl will respect the diversity that exists in the community. We will be mindful that different children have different cultural and physical needs.
- training volunteers and board members on identifying and responding to children and young people from diverse backgrounds and who have needs according to their backgrounds, living arrangements, gender, and if they belong to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultural group.
- HOCl will create and retain full and accurate records relevant to child safety and wellbeing.
- HOCl will create accurate records of any incidents, responses and decisions concerning child safety and wellbeing.
- all records created by HOCl will be clear, objective, thorough and created at, or as close as possible to, the time an incident occurs. They will clearly show the author of the record and the date the record was created.
- all records that are relevant to child safety and wellbeing will be destroyed in accordance with the legal retention requirements within Queensland.

**Principle 5: Ensuring people working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice**

- all Board Members, Volunteers and trainers are to have current working with Children checks or equivalent background checks completed.
- inducting all board members, volunteers, contractors and third parties on child safety and wellbeing responsibilities within the organisation, external mandatory reporting obligations and Code of Conduct.

**Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused**

- we, at HOCl will investigate complaints that include allegations of an unsafe environment for children, the interests of the children will influence our approach and our response.
- policies will be made available on reporting to external authorities, record keeping and information sharing and systems to ensure HOCl meets its reporting requirements and privacy obligations.
- training Pastors, board members, volunteers and trainers on the complaints process, their roles and responsibilities, reporting and privacy obligations and how to respond to children who disclose abuse.

**Principle 7: Pastors, Board Members, Volunteers, Trainers to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training**

- regular training for board members and volunteers on rights that children have
- having policies and procedures in place relating to child safety and wellbeing
- recognising the signs when it comes to harm and abuse
- understanding and responding to harmful behaviours by a child to another child
- recordkeeping

- board members, volunteers and trainers to have knowledge on external reporting obligations and how they must be adhered too at all times
- knowing how to create culturally safe environments
- having ongoing professional development and information exchange opportunities relating to child safety and wellbeing
- development of strategies to ensure that board members, volunteers are supported when it comes to disclosing harm or risks to children and young people.

**Principle 8: Minimising children and young people being harmed by promoting safety and wellbeing through physical and online environments**

- risk assessment and management processes will address risks associated with physical and online environments, activities associated with the organisation including adult to child interactions and child to child interactions
- minimising risks without comprising children's rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities by board members, volunteers and trainers
- when using online environments, it is a requirement that it adheres to the Code of Conduct, online safety policy and communication protocols
- appropriate information on conduct carried out in physical and online environments to be provided by the organisation to children, young people and families
- information be provided on promoting cultural safety in physical and online environments
- workplace health and safety responsibilities being met relating to child safety and wellbeing
- policies and procedures in place to ensure visitors to the organisation are logged and supervised
- procurement policies in place when contracting third parties to ensure child safety and wellbeing

**Principle 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved**

- the child safety and wellbeing policy that the organisation has in place will be reviewed regularly
- review processes and outcomes will engage children, young people, families, communities, board members and volunteers
- complaints, incidents and concerns will be recorded, regularly analysed and identified, improvements made and implemented

**Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people**

- other documents such as the Code of Conduct, risk assessment, management processes, record keeping, information sharing and external reporting will demonstrate how the organisation ensures child safety and wellbeing
- documents will be easily accessible, in a language and format that is understood, culturally safe and stakeholders informed and consulted
- strategies to be implemented to monitor understanding of the child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures among board members, volunteers and trainers
- the organisation engaging with children, young people, families and communities to create awareness and confidence of the child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures

**Principle 11: Promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Worldviews**

- Partner with Elders, community leaders, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to guide policy implementation.
- Embed Indigenous knowledge systems, family structures, and approaches to child rearing in program design.

- Acknowledge the impact of intergenerational trauma and commit to trauma-informed practice.

### **Policy Status and Review**

The child safety and wellbeing policy was approved by-

**Name: Lee Peak**

**Signature:** *Dr. Lee J Peak*

**Position: Senior Pastor**

**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> Aug 2025**

**Next Review Date: 24/04/2027**

### **For more information**

If you have any queries or complaints about our child safety and wellbeing policy, please contact us at:

**Email – [lee@hocifaith.org](mailto:lee@hocifaith.org)**

**Phone +61 421 578 898**