



NEW SPRING
CHURCH

:
**EMPLOYEE AND VOLUNTEER
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS
UNDER 18 YEARS**

1. Background

The Employee and Volunteer Code of Conduct for Working with Children and Young Persons under 18 Years (herein after Code of Conduct) provides an outline of appropriate conduct for employees and volunteers working in roles or making leadership decisions on behalf of persons under the age of 18 in New Spring Church. This Code of Conduct extends to incorporate all activities undertaken on behalf of New Spring Church

To provide context of the use of the words Team Leader and/or Leader within this document:

Team leader is: The person responsible for overseeing the program and volunteers being conducted within Kid's Church.

Leader: Leads children and young people into safe places to discover their faith.

2. Scope and Purpose

The aim of this Code of Conduct is to create a safe culture by outlining the expected behaviour and practices of a safe community. This is achieved by ensuring staff are aware of, and commit to, the behaviour and practices outlined in this Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct applies to you if you are:

- employed to work in ministry, either directly or indirectly, with children and young people under the age of 18 within New Spring Church;
- a member of a decision-making body that provides oversight of the services for children and young people under the age of 18 within New Spring Church; and
- working in roles related to children and young people under the age of 18 within New Spring Church.

This Code of Conduct helps Church employees or volunteers by providing a clear outline of appropriate conduct so they can:

- be sure of what conduct is expected;
- adjust their conduct, if needed;
- identify areas for improvement; and
- ensure their conduct supports a safe environment.

This Code of Conduct provides assurance to the members of the community generally, and particularly parents, that New Spring Church has a responsibility toward the protection of young people under the age of 18, as well as a commitment to creating a safe environment for all members of the church community.

The leadership of New Spring Church has a sacred, God-given duty to protect the vulnerable, including our young, within our community. This is also a high priority within the wider community as is evidenced by protection legislation and the duty of care expected from an organisation. This Code of Conduct provides the leadership team and Governance Board with comfort that those working in the team have committed themselves to conduct that ensures an environment that is safe for all. This Code of Conduct assists the leadership team and Governance Board in identifying staff and volunteers who do not meet this standard of conduct and to identify support and training that may be required to result in the necessary improvement/s to behaviour.

3. Code of Conduct



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Employees and volunteers appointed to work with young people under the age of 18 are required to commit to the Code of Conduct outlined below as being the agreed standard of conduct for those working as Christian leaders in New Spring Church.

Modelling Christian Conduct

- Treat all children and young people under the age of 18 with courtesy and respect, avoiding rude, insulting, threatening or aggressive behaviour and loud, abusive, intimidating, profane or derogatory language.
- Act honestly, in the best interest of New Spring Church and the community, protecting children and young people under the age of 18 and appropriately managing any conflicts of interest.
- Do not engage in conduct likely to discredit New Spring Church. Leaders are to uphold the values of New Spring Church and represent ourselves in a Christ like manner.
- Empower others, avoiding exclusivity, but rather actively seeking to include the marginalised in church activities generally and within your social group.
- Report concerning behaviour, including conduct that might be causing a person harm.
- Respect personal space when greeting or congratulating a child or young person under the age of 18.
- Respect others' privacy and maintain confidentiality, particularly in circumstances where information is known to you as part of your role.
- Maintain proper relationship boundaries informed by Christian standards in your interactions with others.

Governance Responsibilities

New Spring Church staff and volunteers acting as decision-makers in matters pertaining to all persons under the age of 18 must:

- endeavour to be informed when making decisions.
- be familiar with, and meet the requirements of, relevant legislation as these pertain to children and young people under the age of 18.
- make decisions that protect the interests of all stakeholders, but particularly children and young people under the age of 18 in the community; and
- ensure that in all decisions risks including those related to children and young people under the age of 18 protection, are assessed and properly managed.

Conduct towards children and young people under the age of 18.

As a Christian leader of children and young people under the age of 18 you are trusted by the community and provided access and opportunity to engage with them. This establishes a special relationship with authority, including spiritual authority, where there is a power imbalance. Persons entrusted with this Christian leader r relationship must protect these boundaries by only acting in the interests of the children and young people under the age of 18 and not acting to meet their own needs. The following elements outline the agreed ways to protect these boundaries:

- a) Creating a safe environment
 - Behave as a positive role model using positive, affirming and inclusive language.



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- Treat all children and young people under the age of 18 with respect, without showing favouritism.
- Facilitate an open, family-friendly environment for children and young people under 18 to worship, interact, and socialize, empowering all to contribute to the group.
- Respect personal space when interacting with children and young people under the age of 18.

b) Supporting Policy

Intervene when any child or young person under the age of 18 in your care are engaging in bullying or harassing behaviour towards each other or acting in a way that humiliates or vilifies others. Escalate the matter using the established reporting mechanisms if the conduct persists.

Ensure that you, and all persons assisting in Church events that you supervise, follow the Church's guidelines on the handling of visual images when taking photos.

Protect the privacy of all children and young people under the age of 18 in your care by maintaining confidentiality, except where required by Youth Protection legislation or policy where intervention is needed to protect a child or young person under the age of 18 from potential harm.

Ensure that you only allow screened, trained adults unsupervised access to children or young people under the age of 18 in your care.

c) Protecting Relationship Boundaries

As a Christian leader, avoid crossing relationship boundaries with children and young people under the age of 18 by:

- Notifying the team leader, you are escorting a child to the toilet areas and if possible, have another leader with you.
- not changing in front of a child or young person under the age of 18 or watching them changing or bathing.
- not sleeping in a small room or tent with a child or young person under the age of 18.
- not using physical means to correct or manage a child or young person under the age of 18 unless the person is seeking to harm him- or herself or others when under such circumstances reasonable restraint is appropriate.
- not engaging in activities with a child or young person under the age of 18 where physical contact is likely to occur that may be seen as inappropriate or may make contact with private parts of the body.
- not giving personal gifts or showing favouritism that targets a particular person or a smaller group of such.
- not allowing persons in your care to break the rules, such as using tobacco, drugs or alcohol; and
- not using profane language or encouraging others to use profane language.

Never:

- make sexually suggestive or explicit comments to a child or young person under the age of 18.
- share or send sexually suggestive or explicit material to any child or young person under the age of 18.
- enquire about the romantic or sexual relationships of a young person under the age of 18.
- share information about your own sexual activity with a child or young person under the age of 18; or
- make offensive or inappropriate comments to a child or person under the age of 18 regarding their appearance, abilities, or sexuality.

Your engagement as a Christian leader of a child or young person under the age of 18 should always be done transparently and publicly through planned and authorised events. This is enhanced by:



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- Ensuring that any special out-of-routine activities with your group are approved by the leadership team and that all members of the group are invited.
- Always ensuring that you engage with the group, not focusing your attention on a particular child or young person under the age of 18 or a smaller group of such.
- spending time alone or remaining in a confined or secluded space with a child or young person under the age of 18 without prior parental consent.
- seeking to meet privately with a child or young person unless prior parental consent has been provided in a context outside of church events.
- communicating privately with a child or young person under the age of 18 requires parental consent using any means.
- Guarding the boundaries of your relationship as a Christian leader by reporting and seeking counsel from your church leaders when:
 - a) a child or person under the age of 18 appears to be overly familiar or has developed a crush on you; or
 - b) you find that you are seeking extra time with a child or young person under the age of 18 to meet your own personal needs.
- Always act in a manner to protect the needs of a child or young person under the age of 18 in your care as informed by Christian Standards rather than your own needs.

6. Breaches of the Employee and Volunteer Code of Conduct for Working with Children and Young Persons under 18 Years

Breaches of this children and young persons under age of 18:Code of Conduct will be managed like any other complaint raised in New Spring Church and will be informed by best practice approaches to addressing child and young persons under the age of 18 protection allegations.

In managing alleged poor conduct the Church is committed to balance the following competing needs:

1. The needs of the complainant to be heard and for confidentiality, justice, restitution and closure.
2. The needs of the wider community for the prosecution of the investigation to deliver a finding and for the timely implementation of the recommendations arising from the investigation.
3. The needs of the subject of the allegation for procedural fairness, confidentiality and closure.

The following guiding principles will be used in managing an alleged breach:

1. The breach will be considered as an allegation that requires investigation.
2. The alleged breach will be kept confidential.
3. The subject of the allegation will be informed of the detail of the allegation, provided a reasonable amount of time to prepare a response, and provided the opportunity to submit a response before a decision is made.
4. Alleged breaches will be investigated and, if sustained, may result in:



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- a) church disciplinary action; or
- b) further training; or
- c) closer supervision; or
- d) being required to sign or resign the Code of Conduct; or
- e) no longer be able to work with children or young people under the age of 18 in the Church; or
- f) any combination of the above.

- 5. Serious alleged breaches will be reported to the New Spring Governance Board and may be independently investigated. The Code of Conduct relevant at the time of the alleged breach will form part of the investigation.
- 6. If sustained, the employee and/or volunteer may no longer be able to work with children or young people under the age of 18 in the Church and the result may be reported to the appropriate government Working With Children screening agency.
- 7. Alleged criminal conduct will be reported to authorities.

Employee and Volunteer Commitment:

As part of the New Spring Church's responsibility to continuously improve children and young people under the age of 18 protection framework, this Code of Conduct may change from time to time and this will require the re-signing of any new Code of Conduct.

- 1. I have read this Code of Conduct and agree to always abide by it.
- 2. I acknowledge that if I do not agree with, or do not understand any of the points of this Code of Conduct, I will first seek further clarification before signing this Code of Conduct.
- 3. I understand that an alleged breach of this Code of Conduct may be investigated and if sustained may result in New Spring Church taking the actions outlined above.

Role	Name and Surname	Signature