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# Working with Children & Young People Policy

## Pre-face

The foundation of the Chosen Generation Children & Youth Ministry at The House of Prayer is rooted in the Greatest Commandment: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all you mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Matthew 22:37-39

"The best chance someone may have to personally see God is to get a close-up look at the people who follow Him." (Reggie Joiner)

## The Chosen Generation Ministries

**Chosen Generation Ministries** is the Children & Youth Ministries of The House of Prayer. In a world of confusion and fear, we believe God is raising up our next generation of children and youth who know who they are and what they are called to do.

Our passion at The House of Prayer is to see young lives impacted by who Jesus is and what Jesus has accomplished for us. It's all about making disciples of Christ and turning them into World-Changers!

We are dedicated to seeing your children and teens develop an authentic faith. One in which they personally know Christ, faithfully grow in Christ, actively share Christ, and serve others. We do this by building relationships, partnering with parents and families, and providing opportunities to serve others.

**Chosen Generation Kids:** is the 'Pre-Schoolers and Primary School' Children's Ministry of the Church.

In such a permissive society we hope to include good values in our children by running a relevant children's program to develop their character and potentials. This will be accomplished by teaching Godly principles from the bible.



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### Chosen Generation Youth:

is the 'High Schoolers' Ministry of the Church (Ages 12 to Late Teens).

These are the future leaders of tomorrow and with the help of God we will create programs and activities that cater for different age brackets. These events will be in the form of targeted church service with a difference to see a dramatic change in the lives of our young people for God: and teach principles from the Bible such as peer pressure, parent-children relationships, self-esteem, integrity, friendships and caring for others, etc.

**1 Peter 2:9 (KJV)**

*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;*



### We are A Safe Church!

We strive to provide an environment that promotes the safety and well-being of all. All teachers and assistants are subject to a background check and must attend Safe Church training.



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## Introduction

**The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 (Qld) and the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulation 2001 (Qld)** ("The Act") and as amended by the **Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2014** requires that The House of Prayer develop and implement a Child Protection Risk Management Strategy ("The / This Strategy") as part of providing a safe church environment for all children and young people.

*The purpose of the Strategy is to promote the well-being of children and young people who come into contact with The House of Prayer and to protect them from harm. To comply with the legislative framework of the Act, this Strategy also addresses eight minimum requirements of the legislation which can be summarised as follows:*

### **1. Commitment**

- A statement about commitment to the safety and well being of children and the protection of children from harm.
- A code of conduct for interacting with children and young people.

### **2. Capability**

- Recruitment, selection, training and management procedures for paid employees and volunteers.

### **3. Concerns**

- Policies and procedures for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- A plan for managing breaches of the risk management strategy, and
- Risk Management plans for high risk activities and special events.

### **4. Consistency**

- Policies and procedures for compliance with blue card legislation including maintaining a register of staff/volunteers who hold blue cards.
- Strategies for communication and support including written information for parents/carers, paid employees and volunteers outlining this risk management strategy as well as training material for paid employees and volunteers to help them identify risks of harm and handle disclosures.

*The process of creating a safe and supportive environment for children and young people is a dynamic and ongoing process of developing, monitoring and review and as a church we commit ourselves to engaging in this process on a regular basis including the communication of the process to all stakeholders.*



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## PART 1 - PRELIMINARY

### 1. Purpose

Our philosophy of care is based upon the conviction that we must care for our children in ways that respect their dignity and value as unique individuals in a Christ-like manner. To that end this Strategy aims to promote the well-being of children under our care and to protect them from harm.

### 2. Related documents and resources

Documents and resources that relate to or are affected by this Strategy include:

- (a) Code of Conduct (Schedule 1);
- (b) Church Constitution;
- (c) The Ethical Issues Response Group ("EIRG") Guidelines used by Queensland Baptists;
- (d) Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 (Qld) and the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulations 2001(Qld) as amended by the Child Protection Amendment Act 2014.
- (e) Blue Card Services website [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au)
- (f) Baptist Insurance Services website (Risk Management)  
[www.baptistinsurance.com.au](http://www.baptistinsurance.com.au)
- (g) The House of Prayer Church Worker's Application
- (h) The House of Prayer Church Worker's Operational Manual

### 3. Definitions

The dictionary in Schedule 2 defines particular words in this Strategy.

### 4. Who must comply with this Strategy

This Strategy applies to the following persons, referred to in this document collectively as "staff and volunteers":

- (a) Employees of the church who have regular contact with children;
- (b) Volunteers of the church who have regular contact with children;
- (c) Contractors or agents at the church who have regular contact with children;
- (d) All members of the church leadership team who make decisions about children.



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- (e) Trainee students doing placement in the church as part of their studies with an education provider.

## 5. Scope of Strategy

This Strategy covers the following:

- (a) Staff and volunteer screening and selection;
- (b) Standards of behaviour expected of staff and volunteers (Code of Conduct);
- (c) Prevention of harm through the adoption of a risk management process;
- (d) Minimisation of harm through procedures for dealing with and reporting allegations of harm.
- (e) Risk management processes for high risk activities and special events



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## PART 2 - POLICY

### DIVISION 1 - STAFF AND VOLUNTEER PRE-SCREENING AND SELECTION

#### 6. Volunteers

A volunteer must not be engaged unless an application for a current Blue Card has been made and a current Blue Card is issued to the volunteer. (Available from [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au))

#### 7. New employees

An application for a Blue Card must be made prior to a new employee commencing work. New employees must not commence work until the application has been made.

#### 8. Existing employees

An application for a Blue Card must be made in circumstances where the currency of an existing employee's Blue Card has expired. Existing employees must not be allowed to continue to work until the application has been made.

#### 9. Persons legally exempt from holding a Blue Card

Persons exempt from holding a Blue Card under the Act shall still be required to obtain a Blue Card if they have regular contact with children as part of a church ministry. In relation to police officers and registered teachers who are exempt from holding a blue card, they must apply for an exemption card to be involved in children's or youth ministry.

#### 10. Withdrawal of screening authority

Where a person withdraws their consent to screening under a Blue Card application, that person cannot commence or continue work.

#### 11. Recording of current Blue Cards

The Church leadership (or their nominee) is responsible for ensuring the timely and accurate recording of information relating to positive notices (see Schedule 5). The church leadership (or their nominee) must sight the Blue Card to verify its authenticity before entry of data.



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## 12. Agreement to comply with policies and codes

Upon commencement of employment, new staff or volunteers must be provided with a copy of this Strategy including the Code of Conduct.

## DIVISION 2 - ADDITIONAL STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SELECTION STEPS

### 13. Application process for staff and volunteers

**In addition to the requirements contained in Division, all staff and volunteers must undergo the following application process:**

- (a) Apply for a Blue Card or if a Blue Card is already held complete an authorisation to confirm valid Blue Card form; (available from [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au))
- (b) Submit a written application (Schedule 3);
- (c) Provide the contact details of at least two referees;
- (d) Attend an interview if deemed necessary by church leadership (Schedule 6);
- (e) Sign an agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct (Schedule 3).

### 14. Church leadership obligations under application process

Where a person makes an application under section 13 above the church leadership (or their nominee) must ensure the following before agreeing to accept the application:

- (a) All churches the applicant has attended (or been involved or connected with) in the past five (5) years are to be contacted and asked whether there have been any alleged or actual incidents of harm involving the applicant;
- (b) If the church leadership determines that more detailed information is required from the application, interview the applicant using the questions in Schedule 6 as a guide to ascertain the suitability of the applicant;
- (c) The person has attended the church regularly for a minimum of six (6) months unless exceptional circumstances apply;
- (d) If the applicant has not obtained their Blue Card through the church, the church leadership should also arrange completion of an "authorisation to confirm valid Blue Card" form and submit to Blue Card Services; (available from [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au))

### 15. Additional employment requirements

These additional requirements apply in the following situations:



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- (a) Where certain roles require registration by the Baptist Union of Queensland (Queensland Baptists), the applicant must also successfully pass the application process under those Registration Guidelines;
- (b) Where a job or role description has stipulated additional educational, skill or other requirements, the applicant is also required to satisfy these criteria before employment will be considered.

#### **16. Upon receipt of positive Blue Card notice**

Once a Blue Card has been received the church leadership (or nominee) can:

- (a) Use their discretion to accept or reject the application taking into consideration all factors of the application process;
- (b) If the application is accepted, enter the staff or volunteer's details into the Blue Card Register contained in Schedule 5;
- (c) Provide staff or volunteers with induction training that includes this Risk Management Strategy.

### **DIVISION 3 - RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

#### **17. Guidelines for involvement with children**

- (a) All staff and volunteers must comply with the Code of Conduct (Schedule 1) while being involved with children.
- (b) All staff and volunteers must comply with the requirements of risk management plans that are required and in place for high risk activities or special events. (see [www.baptistinsurance.com.au](http://www.baptistinsurance.com.au) risk management resources)

#### **18. Complaints of harm procedure**

Where there is a report of harm or a breach of the Code of Conduct the following procedure will apply:

- (a) All allegations must be reported to the church leadership (or their nominee) unless the allegations involve (either directly or indirectly) a Registered Church Worker, and then the complaint should be made to the General Superintendent or a Regional Consultant or the Chairperson of EIRG or the Chairperson of Ministerial Services or the Professional Standards Officer of Queensland Baptists;
- (b) The designated person must complete a harm report;



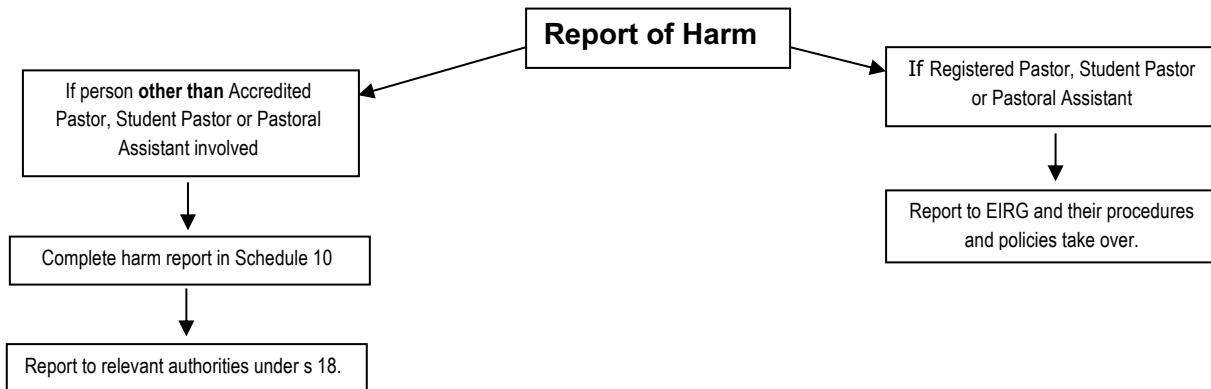
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- (c) The designated person must also determine whether to report the matter to the police, Department of Community, Child Safety and Disability Services taking the following factors into consideration:
- The severity of the allegation;
  - The likelihood that the report is false, vexatious or malicious;
  - Whether the victim or any other person is in any danger of future harm;
  - There is knowledge, which would assist authorities to apprehend or convict a person of a serious offence,
  - The incident involved physical or sexual assault.

If the designated person is unable to make a determination, the decision should be made in consultation with the Professional Standards Officer of Queensland Baptists.

- (d) Where the person is charged, or convicted of a criminal offence, the procedures in sections 21 to 25 of the Strategy also apply.



The above summarises the 'complaints of harm procedure' diagrammatically



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## PART 3 - BLUE CARD COMPLIANCE

### 19. Monitoring Blue Cards

The church leadership (or its nominee) should review the Blue Card Register (*contained in Schedule 5*) annually to ensure the following:

- (a) Blue Cards are still current and positive;
- (b) That all staff and volunteers covered in section 4 of this Strategy are included in the register.

### 20. Stolen or lost cards

If a Blue Card is stolen or lost, the following procedure will apply:

- (a) The staff or volunteer must notify the church leadership (or its nominee) within five (5) days;
- (b) The staff or volunteer must make an application to Blue Card Services for a new card within fourteen (14) days of the card being lost or stolen.

### 21. Criminal Convictions - obligations of staff and volunteers

If the staff or volunteer has any changes to their criminal history they must:

- (a) Notify Blue Card Services immediately
- (b) Notify the church leadership (or nominee) immediately;
- (c) Stand down from their position until such time as they may receive a new Blue Card;
- (d) Return their old Blue Card to Blue Card Services within seven (7) days;
- (e) Apply to Blue Card Services for a positive notice (new blue card).

### 22. Criminal Convictions - obligations of church leadership or nominee

As soon as the church leadership (or its nominee) receive notification of a change in criminal history of the staff member or volunteer (other than an excluded offence dealt with in section 23 below) they must:



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- (a) Suspend the person from all ministries involving children until they apply for a new Blue Card;
- (b) Complete Part B of the change in criminal history form;
- (c) If a new Blue Card is later received from Blue Card Services, reinstate the person;
- (d) If a negative notice is received, the person cannot apply, start or continue in their position.
- (e) The church leadership should also liaise with Professional Standards Officer of Queensland Baptists in relation to those persons whose convictions would indicate they fall within the definition of a person of concern (*see Definitions Schedule 2*)

#### **23. Criminal ‘charges’ for excluding offences pending conviction or acquittal**

If a staff member or volunteer is ‘charged’ with an excluding offence (*defined in Schedule 8*) the following procedure must apply:

- (a) The person charged or the church leadership (or nominee) must notify Blue Card Services;
- (b) The person charged cannot apply, start or continue to work in the church ministries involving children;
- (c) The person charged must return their Blue Card to Blue Card Services within seven (7) days;
- (d) The church leadership (or nominee) must suspend the person charged. They cannot terminate the person’s employment solely or mainly because the person’s Blue Card is suspended. If a new Blue Card is later received from Blue Card Services, they can reinstate the person;
- (e) If a negative notice is received, the person charged cannot continue to work in church ministries involving children.
- (f) The church leadership should also liaise with Professional Standards Officer of Queensland Baptists in relation to those persons whose charges would indicate they fall within the definition of a person of concern (*see Definitions Schedule 2*)

#### **24. Negative notices**

If a person is convicted of a serious offence or Blue Card Services cancels their Blue Card and issues a negative notice to the person, that person must immediately return the Blue Card to Blue Card Services.



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## 25. Breaches

If any staff member or volunteer breaches this Strategy, the following will apply:

- (a) Where the applicant has breached legal requirements under the Act, Blue Card Services will be notified and the person will be subject to any legal process under their procedures;
- (b) If the breach falls outside the scope of the Act, the dispute resolution procedure in the Church Constitution will apply unless there is no dispute resolution procedure, and then:
  - (i) The church leadership will deal with the person in accordance with the rules of natural justice;
  - (ii) The decision of the church leadership will be final.
  - (iii) In addition the church leadership will consider whether the following need to occur:
    - further education, training or reinforcement of this strategy with all stakeholders
    - a review of current policies and procedures to ensure their adequacy.
- (c) Where a Registered Pastor, Student Pastor or Pastoral Assistant causes the breach, the procedures of EIRG will apply.