



AFBC Response: Child Safe Scheme

About the Child Safe Scheme

In February 2022, new laws were introduced to create the [NSW Child Safe Scheme](#). These laws aim to make sure that Organisations/Churches in NSW are doing everything they can to keep children safe. In response to the child abuse Royal Commissions in 2017, The NSW Government acted in response to the Royal Commission by introducing the Child Safe Scheme. While the Royal Commission focused on sexual abuse, the NSW Child Safe Scheme aims to prevent all kinds of abuse that children may experience.

The NSW Child Safe Scheme was introduced Under the [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#) and has become mandatory for organisations and religious bodies that provide programs or services to children, or in which adults have contact with children to comply with the Child Safe Scheme.

The principle-based framework provides Organisations/Churches working with children to develop strategies and create a culture that keeps children safe and protecting from harm. As the legal mandate is framed through a biblical lens of stewardship, protection, and moral responsibility, we can respond to the child safe scheme with above approach standards that are God honouring in all that we do. *"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."* — 1 Corinthians 10:31

About the Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Scheme is built on 10 [Child Safe Standards](#). These standards are principle-based and are designed to keep children safe by creating Organisations/Churches that help prevent, detect and respond more effectively to harm and abuse, if it occurs.

Applying the Child Safe Standards means that the best interests of children are always at the forefront, child abuse is never tolerated, and every child's rights are respected. Concerns about child safety are taken seriously, and everyone is empowered to report abuse without obstruction. Applying the Standards also ensures we as a church are complying with the legal obligations of the Child Safe Scheme.



National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are 10 high-level principles that set out a national approach to creating organisational cultures and practices that promote the safety and wellbeing, and prevent harm and abuse, of children in Australia.

Safety includes (but is not restricted to) cultural, psychological and physical aspects that ensure children and young people are safe and supported no matter who and where they are, or what organisation/church they engage with.

The role of the Office of the Children's Guardian

The NSW [Office of the Children's Guardian](#) is responsible for overseeing the Scheme and have built a strong focus on education and capability building to help organisations/churches put their child safe foundations in place.

The NSW Office of the Children's Guardian has developed several [helpful resources](#) to assist organisations, including churches, in [implementing the Child Safe](#) Standards.

Other resource guides from the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian:

- [Introduction to the Child Safe Standards and the Child Safe Scheme- Video](#)
- [The Working with Children Check is just one step – Video](#)
- [Child safe risk management animation – Video](#)
- [Child safe policies animation – Video](#)
- [Printable copy of the Child Safe Standards and their components](#)
- [Implementing the Child Safe Scheme An introduction for faith-based organisations](#)
- [The NSW Child Safe Scheme – In easy read](#)
- [Child Safe Standards and their components in multiple languages](#)



Our Commitment to Child Safety

We declare that the safety, physical protection, emotional wellbeing and spiritual discipleship of every child entrusted to our care is our highest priority. We are unwavering in our commitment to providing a secure, nurturing, and environment where children can grow in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and others. Guided by biblical wisdom, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and vigilance.

Our Unwavering Promise to Protect God's Children

Our absolute theological and practical commitment to maintaining a safe, transparent, and nurturing environment is grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ and aligned with child safe standards. These 8 core pillars guide our leadership, staff, and volunteers in protecting the next generation.

- 1. Value of the Child:** We recognise that children are precious to God. They deserve an environment that welcomes, respects, and shields them from harm. Jesus said, *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"* (Matthew 19:14).
- 2. Pledge of faithfulness:** We pledge to be faithful stewards of the next generation, creating a refuge where the little ones can safely encounter the love of Christ. *We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.* (Psalm 78:4)
- 3. Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** We have absolute zero tolerance for child abuse or neglect. Any form of harm compromises the sanctuary of God's house and will be met with immediate legal and internal action. *Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.* (Isaiah 1:17)
- 4. Obedience to Governing Authorities:** We believe that child protection laws, including the *Children's Guardian Act 2019* and the Child Safe Scheme, are instruments of justice. We joyfully submit to these standards as part of our witness to the world. Scripture instructs us, *"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established"* (Romans 13:1).



- 5. Rigorous Vetting and Compliance:** In line with legal mandates, every worker and volunteer must hold a current Working With Children Check (WWCC). We rigorously screen all adults before they step into ministry or recreational programs. *Therefore submit yourselves to every ^[a]ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.* (1 Peter 2:13-14)
- 6. Culture of Transparency:** We foster an open environment where children are listened to, their voices are valued, and families feel safe to raise concerns. *But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."* (John 3:21)
- 7. Continuous Improvement:** We actively train our leaders, staff, and volunteers to recognise, prevent, and report risks, ensuring our policies strictly align with the Child Safe Standards. *A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel* (Proverbs 1:5)
- 8. Honouring God in All We Do:** Everything we establish is designed to reflect the character of our Creator. By upholding these standards, we ensure our ministry remains pure, accountable, and holy. *"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God"* (1 Corinthians 10:31).



Our Statement to Child Safety

Here at AFBC, we hold a sacred and legal trust to protect, nurture, and cherish every child in our care. Our commitment is anchored in the Word of God, guided by our spiritual duty to the vulnerable and our civic duty to the law.

By embedding these 10 standards into the fabric of our culture, we stand firm as a sanctuary of safety. We ensure that our actions match our faith, proving to families, authorities, and the community that the safety of our children is our sacred bond.

STANDARD 1 – Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

Obedience to Governing Authorities: Scripture instructs us, *"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established"* (Romans 13:1). We believe that child protection laws, including the [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#) and the [Child Safe Scheme](#), are instruments of justice. We joyfully submit to these standards as part of our witness to the world.

Biblical Framework: God establishes earthly governance to maintain justice and protect the vulnerable. For a church to lead with integrity, it must walk in obedience to legal safety frameworks, viewing civil compliance not as a burden, but as a direct expression of Christian stewardship and moral accountability.

STANDARD 2 – Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

The Value of the Child: Jesus said, *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"* (Matthew 19:14). We recognise that children are precious to God. They deserve an environment that welcomes, respects, and shields them from harm. Hindering a child's safety hinders their ability to thrive in God's kingdom.

Biblical Framework: Children are not secondary members of God's kingdom; they are its very pattern. A child-safe culture does not just tolerate children but actively values, listens to, and supports them. We must build an environment where children are seen as a divine heritage from the Lord and where their voices are heard and respected in accordance with the biblical family model.



STANDARD 3 – Families and communities are informed and involved

The Safety of the family Community: Protection is a collaborative effort of the entire body of believers. *"Two are better than one... If either of them falls down, one can help the other up"* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). By involving the wider community, we build a robust, transparent defence system around our children.

Biblical Framework: God designed children to thrive within a protective network of family and community. Safety is not achieved in isolation, but through open communication, shared responsibility, and mutual accountability we can help build up and protect the children in our churches.

STANDARD 4- Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account

No Partiality or Discrimination: God does not show favoritism, and neither must we. *"For God does not show favoritism"* (Romans 2:11). In our safety measures, there is no room for partiality. We must actively defend children who face systemic barriers or increased vulnerability.

Biblical Framework: God created every individual with unique worth, and Christ broke down the barriers that divide humanity. True safety means ensuring that every child—regardless of their background, ability, or culture is equally protected, valued, and given the specific support they need to thrive.

STANDARD 5- People working with children are suitable and supported

Rigorous Vetting and Above Reproach Assessment: Leadership requires proven integrity, not just good intentions. Scripture warns against rushing people into ministry without careful examination. *"Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure"* (1 Timothy 5:22). Vetting staff and volunteers through Working With Children Checks (WWCC) and references is a practical outworking of this biblical wisdom.

Biblical Framework: The spiritual and physical safety of children relies directly on the character, integrity, and preparation of the adults who lead them. God requires that those entrusted with care are thoroughly vetted for maturity, equipped for service, and held to the highest standards of accountability as above reproach.



STANDARD 6- Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused

Swift and Uncompromising Justice: God hears the cries of the oppressed and demands immediate intervention. *"Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless..."* (Isaiah 1:17). A child-focused process prioritises the safety and well-being of the child. Dealing and responding with allegations swiftly and transparently, cooperating fully with legal authorities immediately while conducting the process with professional support, and pastorally care around the child and their family.

Biblical Framework: When a child cries out for help, or when harm is suspected, our response must mirror the absolute justice, swift protection, and tender compassion of God. A child-focused complaint process ensures that the victim is believed, protected, and healed, while misconduct is brought into the light without hesitation or cover-up.

STANDARD 7- Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

The Command to Grow in Knowledge: Scripture explicitly warns against the dangers of operating without proper understanding. *"Desire without knowledge is not good—how much more will hasty feet miss the way!"* (Proverbs 19:2). Continual safety training gives our leaders, staff, and volunteers the precise knowledge needed to guide their feet safely and avoid critical errors in care.

Biblical Framework: Godly stewardship requires competence, not just good intentions. To keep children safe, our leaders, staff, and volunteers must grow continuously in wisdom, alertness, and practical skills. Dedicating time to ongoing child safety education ensures we are never caught off guard by the tactics of harm.

STANDARD 8- Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

Designing Physical Spaces for Safety: The Bible reveals that physical construction must include safety features to prevent foreseeable harm. *"When you build a new house, make a parapet around your roof so that you may not bring the guilt of bloodshed on your house if someone falls from the roof"* (Deuteronomy 22:8). In ministry context, this means designing open, highly visible ministry spaces and line-of-sight environments to protect children from isolated contact with adults.

Guarding the Gates of the Digital World: Just as physical walls protect a city, we must secure our online environments from predators. *"Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control"* (Proverbs 25:28). As children increasingly interact online, we must establish strong digital walls—such as monitored group chats and strict social media policies—to keep our online ministries secure and above reproach.



Biblical Framework: Godly stewardship requires us to intentionally design, monitor, and secure the spaces where we gather. Whether in a physical building or a digital landscape, we must actively eliminate hidden corners, set clear boundaries, and build a perimeter of safety that removes any opportunity for harm to take root.

STANDARD 9 Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

The Pursuit of Excellence and Growth: Our standard of care should constantly improve as we learn and mature. *"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight"* (Philippians 1:9). Continuous improvement ensures our safety practices grow more sophisticated, dynamic, and effective in protecting the next generation.

Biblical Framework: Complacency is the enemy of safety. A truly child-safe organisation never assumes its work is finished. God calls us to a lifestyle of continuous examination, correction, and growth, ensuring that our protection frameworks adapt to new challenges and remain steadfast over time.

STANDARD 10 Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

The Blueprint of Order and Accountability: God instructs His leaders to record instructions clearly so that anyone can understand and act upon them immediately. *"But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way"* (1 Corinthians 14:40). Documenting our safety protocols ensures that our commitments are formal, structured, and legally binding—not left to human error or changing leadership. Written child-safe policies make our safety standards plain and actionable for every leader, parent, and volunteer.

Biblical Framework: God is a God of order, clarity, and truth. He does not leave the protection of the vulnerable to memory or good intentions. Throughout history, He commanded that laws, boundaries, and covenants be clearly written down so that all people could read them, follow them, and remain accountable across generations.



AUSTRALIAN FELLOWSHIP OF
BIBLE-BELIEVING CHURCHES

References:

1. [NSW Child Safe Scheme](#)
2. [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#)
3. [Office of the Children's Guardian, Guide to the Child Safe Standards V.3.0 2023](#)