

Riverwood CP Summary

1. CODE OF CONDUCT – summary of key points from Riverwood’s CP Policy
2. BOUNDARIES – examples of conduct boundaries
3. REPORTING, COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Riverwood Ecclesia is a group of brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, seeking to reflect the teachings of the Bible with integrity and humility. Beyond personal faith in the redeeming work of Christ in His death and resurrection, we accept that this faith is worked out and expressed in many areas including, especially the quality of relationships we develop as an Ecclesial community and all those with whom we interact in our daily lives.

Jesus summarised God's expectation for the conduct of His people into one famous and succinct sentence: *'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbours as yourself.'* He reinforced this 'law of love' by adding, *'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples; you love one another!'* Jesus also taught and demonstrated the importance of truth and honesty, of justice and mercy as essential to healthy relationships.

This **Code of Conduct** seeks to apply to our Ecclesial activities those ethical standards that God expects of all people. People in various roles are therefore expected to be examples and models of Christ-like faith and practice. It is the duty of any person at Riverwood not to use the influence or authority of their position for personal gain, whether that gain is financial or in terms of power, sexual gratification, or otherwise. This includes any action, verbal, written or electronic, physical or emotional that could be interpreted as emotional or sexual abuse, and applies especially when working with children.

Our commitment to expressing the love of Christ leads us to the view that all people should be able to live, work and learn in an environment that is free from abuse of any kind. We are committed to Riverwood being a safe place for all people, with a special focus on the safety and wellbeing of children.

This Code of Conduct aims to detail the standards of conduct expected by all in the performance of their duties and to provide guidance in areas where there is a need to make personal and ethical decisions.

The **Code of Conduct** recognises and is aligned with all statutory and compliance requirements enshrined in State and Federal law. Riverwood is committed to operating in accordance with the law in all its operations, so that it provides a safe, ethical and caring place for all users and activities.

All members and non-members at Riverwood are required to observe and comply with the following Code of Conduct when involved in the care of children under the age of 18.

These are to be strictly always adhered to:

DO:

- Uphold in speech and actions Biblical principles and Riverwood Child Safe Policies
- Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role at Riverwood, as a positive role model to children and young people
- Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in Ecclesial programs and activities
- Always establish and maintain a child-safe environment
- Adhere to Ecclesial child safety and protection policies and procedures
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent children from neglect, abuse or harm
- Treat everyone with respect, including listening to and striving to understand the opinions and ideas of others, including children
- Welcome all children and their families and make them feel included and accepted
- Respect differences between families and act in a sensitive way
- Use positive and affirming language towards children
- Comply with any guidelines that may exist from time to time on physical contact with children
- Help provide a safe, supportive environment for all children to interact and learn

- Intervene when children are displaying inappropriate behaviour towards others
- Report any breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the Riverwood Safeguarding Representative (RSR)
- Report concerns about child safety and protection to the Riverwood Safeguarding Representative (RSR) and ensure that any legal obligations to report allegations are met
- Call the Police on 000 regarding any immediate concerns for a child's safety
- Respect the privacy of children and their families and only disclose information to people who need to know

DO NOT:

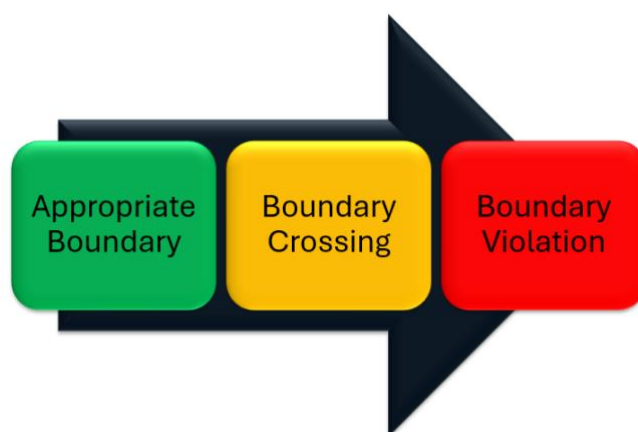
- Seek to use children to meet the needs of adults
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with children
- Put down, show favouritism, disregard or dismiss children who come up to talk to you
- Engage in suggestive talk, open discussion or behaviour of an adult nature in the presence of children
- Engage in any inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact (hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch) including doing things of a personal nature that the child can do for themselves such as toileting or changing clothes (without seeking parental support/advice/approval)
- Engage in any form of behaviour or speech that can cause children emotional or psychological harm, or is sexual or inappropriate in nature
- Develop special relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism or grooming
- Take photos without parental consent
- Do not post photos of children on social media without parental consent
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking or email addresses with children without parental consent
- Have unauthorised contact with children and young people online or by phone
- Drive a child anywhere without parental consent
- Take a child to your home or encourage meetings outside program activities (unless parental permission has been provided and in the case of Ecclesial activities)

BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are zones of safety, both for the child and adults who are in the presence of children, for whatever reason or activity. It is best to ask yourself questions to help determine the appropriateness of your conduct:

Ask Yourself:

1. How might this interaction be perceived by others?
2. Am I treating this child differently to others?
3. Can I achieve the same outcome through a different interaction?
4. Would I do or say this if another person or adult were present?
5. Would I condone my conduct if I observed it in another adult?
6. What guidance would Scripture or my Ecclesia give me in this situation?



Some examples of Boundaries...

GREEN	AMBER	RED
Upholding Child Safe Procedures & Mandatory Reporting	Not valuing Child Safe Procedures or Policy	Not following Child Safe Procedures and fail to report
Listening to, valuing and treating all children with respect	Showing favouritism or treating some children differently to others	Having a “special” relationship with some children
Only yelling at a child when their safety is in danger	Ignoring a child who is trying to speak to you, making them feel unloved or alone	Speak to children (or others) in a harsh, threatening, critical, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating way
Being age appropriate in conduct, speech and example		Discuss or engage in any sexual, alcohol/drugs related activities
Provide age appropriate and necessary contact if required with permission (e.g. cuddle a young child if hurt, put band-aid on hurt child)	Be in a room with a child alone, violating personal boundaries, close physical contact like tickling or play wrestling	Initiate any unnecessary physical contact with child or young person or do so in exchange for something.
Always respect confidentiality, only discussing matters on a “need to know basis”.	Discuss with others private matters or continue to spread information/rumour.	
Provide gifts etc for organised activities/classes to children	Isolating children from other adults/children	Go into the bedrooms or toilets of children alone.

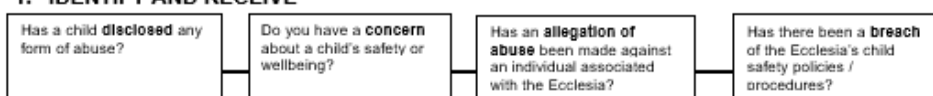
REPORTING, COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

Handling concerns, complaints and allegations, as well as reporting to the relevant authorities, is a detailed but vital process that needs careful oversight. This can range from concerns, suspicions or unwise behaviour to full disclosure of child abuse. All members and non-members at Riverwood are required to support a Child Safe Environment and follow the Ecclesia's Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct. This includes:

1. Discussing matters of borderline or 'amber' (unwise) behaviour with individuals if required
 - Members or non-members may see an action by another that concerns them. This might require a conversation with the person, explain the reasons for that concern.
 - A member may seek the advice of the RSR on these matters
2. Reporting child protection issues to Police or RSR/Arranging Brother CP Representative
 - If there has been a breach of the Ecclesia's Code of Conduct or Policies/Procedures, then notify the RSR
 - This is to be done in conjunction with Riverwood's 'Child Safe Complaint Handling Flow Chart' (Appendix G).

Appendix G: Child Safe Complaint Handling Flow Chart

1. IDENTIFY AND RECEIVE



2. REPORT

- YES**
- (a) If a child is at immediate risk of abuse or harm, or the complaint involves a serious criminal offence, contact the Police, on **000** (request an Ambulance if required).
 (b) For all non-emergency related matters, contact the Police, on **131 444**.

THEN

Immediately:

1. Complete the Child Safe Incident Report Form
2. Report to the appropriate external authorities in accordance with your child safe legal obligations:
 - **Has a child abuse offence been committed against the child?** If **YES**, report to the Police **DIAL 000**.
(refer to your State or Territory's Failure to Report legislation at [Appendix K](#))
 - **Does it meet Mandatory Reporting requirements?**
 1. If **YES**, REPORT to Child Protection Authorities
 2. If **NO**, call the Child Protection Authorities to seek further guidance and clarification.
(refer to your State or Territory's Mandatory Reporting legislation at [Appendix K](#))
 - **Does the allegation constitute reportable conduct?**
If **YES**, notify the Management Committee who will comply with legislative requirements in the Ecclesia's relevant State or Territory.
3. Report to the Safeguarding Representative/s or designated member of the Management Committee.

THEN

3. INVESTIGATE AND RECORD

1. The Management Committee to appoint external investigator for internal investigations (in accordance with Police direction) and take appropriate action.
 2. Record and store:
 - The Child Safe Incident Report Form
 - All information relating to the investigation findings, reasons and outcomes
 - Advice received from Child Protection Authorities and case reference number (if reported)
 - All other relevant information including about referral and support services.
- In relation to Reportable Conduct:** Document all information relevant to the allegation, investigation progress, findings and action taken. Comply with legislative requirements in relevant State or Territory.

THEN

4. DEBRIEF

- The Management Committee and/or the Safeguarding Representative/s:**
- Debrief affected child (and/or their family)
 - Provide information about support and referral services to affected parties (if appropriate)
 - Continue to monitor the situation
 - Continue to communicate with the Police and Child Protection Authorities (as required)

Summary of Procedure for Receiving an Allegation

A child protection concern may include concerns (but not be limited to concerns) regarding:

- a child at Risk of Significant Harm
- a Child Abuse Offence,
- Child Sexual Abuse,
- Sexual Misconduct involving a child,
- Physical abuse of a child,
- Serious neglect of a child
- Behaviour which may psychologically harm the child
- Inappropriately personal or intimate communication and/or behaviours which may constitute grooming , or
- Exposure of a child to Domestic and Family Violence

If someone raises a concern or reports an allegation:

- DON'T promise not to report the information
- DON'T ask leading questions
- DON'T attempt to assess the validity of the concern, or seek to investigate any allegation yourself
- DO clarify information reported to you if appropriate (for example, 'Can you tell me more about that?')
- DO assure the person that appropriate action will be taken
- if a child, DO reassure them that they are not at fault and that they will not be in trouble for sharing this information
- DO consider if there is an immediate danger to the child.

Where there is an immediate danger to a child:

- contact the Police immediately on (131 444 or 000) and report the information;
- follow any instructions given by the Police;
- address any immediate safety needs of others present; and
- organise support for the person who has disclosed the complaint or information.

Reporting Complaints and Allegations

Internal Reporting – If a Riverwood member (or non-member) has a concern about a child's wellbeing but have not received any specific information they may report the concern using the Child Safety Incident Report Form or speak to the RSR.

- The RSR and AB representative are responsible for ensuring the Ecclesia fulfils its legal obligations and that all concerns are managed appropriately.
- If the RSR or AB cannot be immediately contacted, the member can assess if their report needs to be made to external government agencies as outlined in the next section.
- Members should ensure they do not discuss any concerns raised with the accused person at this point in time. Doing so may impede future investigation processes
- If the concern raised would create a conflict of interest for any involved, including the RSR or AB, then other members (such as the Sunday School Superintendent or a member who has experience or training in child protection such as a teacher or school employee) must be sought or immediately report to external agencies.

External Reporting – the SRS and AB representative should ensure all reports are made (reports to different government agencies may be required for different purposes and so multiple reports might be needed)

1. Report Risk of Significant Harm to Department of Communities and Justice (formerly known as FACS or DOCS). See definitions of Significant Harm if required.
 - If the RSR or AB determine that there is a child at Risk of Significant Harm, then they are to make a report as soon as possible to the Child Protection Helpline via 132 111 or an e-report.
 - If there is any doubt whether a concern would be considered a Risk of Significant Harm then the RSR should complete the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>
 - If the MRG results in 'Immediate Report to the Child Protection Helpline', make a report as soon as possible via 132 111 or an e-report.
 - The MRG result may suggest other actions be taken.
 - The RSR and/or AB should keep a copy of the MRG report for their records.

2. Report Child Abuse Offences to Police
 - If the RSR/AB considers that a Child Abuse Offence may have been committed, they must report this to the NSW Police regardless of whether the victim of the alleged abuse wants this report to be made.
 - The requirement to report to NSW Police includes both recent incidents and allegations of historic abuse.
 - Failing to Report a Child Abuse Offence to NSW Police without a reasonable excuse may be considered a Concealing Child Abuse Offence which is punishable by up to two years imprisonment.

3. Report Allegations of Reportable Conduct to the Office of Children's Guardian
 - This is an 'allegations based' Scheme which means the allegation triggers the obligation to notify the OCG. There does not need to be any evidence or proof that the conduct occurred if the allegation falls within one of the following categories of reportable conduct:
 - (a) a sexual offence
 - (b) sexual misconduct
 - (c) assault against a child;
 - (d) ill-treatment of a child;
 - (e) neglect of a child;
 - (f) any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or
 - (g) criminal offences such as the failure to reduce or remove risk of a child becoming the victim of abuse and concealing child abuse (*Crimes Act 1900 ss 43B and 316A*).

For Reportable Conduct advice and support call (02) 8219 3800 or email reportableconduct@ocg.nsw.gov.au

