

## **Attachment A**

### **Presbyterian Church of Queensland Safe Ministry with Children Code of Conduct**

The Presbyterian Church of Queensland is bound by the example of the love and compassion of Jesus Christ in his Ministry with the Disciples. The unique nature of servanthood, which Jesus Christ demonstrated to his Disciples and they then encouraged Christians to display in the Gospels, is the foundation of the Code of Conduct.

In contrast to the leaders of the day who acted with control, Jesus spoke of himself as being a servant of others and not one who came to be served. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, encourages us not to live with a selfish purpose, but with humility, thinking of others as better than ourselves. Paul urges the early Church to let their gentleness show in their treatment of all people.

As Christians, it is constantly placed before us in the Old and New Testaments our unique identity as a people chosen by God to serve in obedience. This is how we are to live our lives. Instead of watching out for our good we are to watch out for what is better for others.

As a Church we are to nurture our children. This responsibility is entrusted to parents and those involved in Children's Ministry. This is a position of leadership carrying with it a responsibility in shaping the lives of children and the culture in which they develop. Children's Ministry comes with a real or perceived authority within the church and the wider community and the integrity of the position requires personal behavior and practices that exemplify Christian faith. The highest standard of personal behaviour and interpersonal relationships is required.

Those serving in Children's Ministry in the Presbyterian Church of Queensland accept a position of trust which places on them a commitment to carry out their role in accord with the Doctrine and Christian values of the Church. Also required, particularly of those in leadership, is discernment and judgement around relationships and discipleship. The consequences of breaching the Code of Conduct are taken seriously and may result in the questioning of a persons' capacity to continue to serve in Children's Ministry. This is documented in the Safe Ministry with Children Policy and Procedures which provide a mechanism for dealing with breaches.

The Code of Conduct seeks to inform the Church and create a culture which promotes respectful relationships and create an ongoing safe environment free of abuse of children. Whilst this responsibility rests immediately with leaders and those involved in Children's Ministry, it is also a shared responsibility of the whole Church.

### **Principles**

These principles provide guidance on the expected behaviour to create a safe environment and ensuring children are protected from harm and abuse:

- Become familiar with and act in accordance with the Safe Ministry with Children Policy and Safe Ministry with Children Procedures for Sessions and Committee;
- Act according to the highest standards in their personal life and relationships;
- Only engage in appropriate actions and activities with children;

- Treat all people with respect and dignity regardless of age, culture, gender, religious/denominational affiliation, sexual orientation or personal circumstances;
- Accept responsibility for the appropriate duty of care for all participants;
- Understand that any perpetration of verbal, emotional, physical or sexual abuse or harassment is unacceptable and will be treated seriously and sensitively, and must be reported in accordance with the Church mandatory reporting Policy and Procedures;
- Act with courtesy, consideration and good judgement, in interpersonal relationships;
- Carry out their role in accord with the doctrines and values of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland;
- Engage only in lawful activity and never assist persons engaged in illegal activities.
- Respect the authority of leaders and act in accordance with reasonable directions;
- Complete training as required by the Church in relation to Children's Ministry roles;
- Care for equipment and resources used in Ministry.

The Church agrees to:

- Educate and train those involved in Children's Ministry in their duties and responsibilities;
- Support those involved in Children's Ministry as they carry out their roles;
- Provide policies and procedures for best practice and high levels of safety and care;
- Adequately insure approved programs, events and activities.

As a Code of Conduct cannot explain every situation where discernment is required, those involved in Children's Ministry should seek advice if placed in a position of uncertainty.