



Drouin Presbyterian Church

Knowing Jesus and Making Him Known

Safe Church Policies for Children's and Youth Ministries

1. Purpose

As a ministry of Drouin Presbyterian Church, we acknowledge and accept the trust granted to us by those who are taking part in our children's and youth ministries. We therefore commit ourselves to striving to ensure that all our actions are morally upright and consistent with the 'Safe Church' policies of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria. We believe that churches ought to be places of safety and refuge for children, young people and others. That means we're committed to making all our ministries, places where they should feel safe from any threat.

Below are the 'Safe Church' policies and procedures we are committed to:

In this document the term 'leaders' refers to Ministry Leaders, Team Leaders and Team Members.

2. Responsibility

- 2.1 Drouin Presbyterian Church is responsible for children and youth who have been signed into a specific activity.
- 2.2 Parents/guardians are responsible for all aspects of supervising their own children at church events unless the children have been signed in to a specific activity.

3. Ratios

No matter what size group of children/youth the ministry has there must always be enough leaders to cope with any accidents and/or critical incidents that may happen. The following ratios apply.

- 3.1 Preschoolers: A minimum of two adult leaders up to a maximum 7 children per adult.
- 3.2 Kinder/Prep: A minimum of two adult leaders up to a maximum 10 children per adult.
- 3.3 Grade 1-6: A minimum of two adult leaders up to a maximum 12 children per adult.
- 3.4 High School: A minimum of two adult leaders up to a maximum 15 children per adult.
- 3.5 Camps for school age children/youth must have a minimum of two adult leaders up to a maximum of 10 children/youth per adult.

4. Sign in/Sign out forms

Sign in/Sign out forms should be used for all activities involving children and youth. Information required includes.

- 4.1 Ministry activity description.
- 4.2 Location, date and time of event.
- 4.3 Leader names.
- 4.4 Child/youth's name.
- 4.5 Parent/guardian's name & contact number.
- 4.6 An initial registration form if not previously completed is also required.

5. Medical/Allergy information

Separate forms are to be filled out by parents/guardians of newcomers which cover these details as well as any relevant medical/allergy information.

- 5.1 A current list of relevant medical/allergy information must be accessible to each leader for each child/youth under their care each session.
- 5.2 Leaders must ensure that when food or drink is being offered in ministry to children/youth that the children do not eat or drink food that they are allergic to.
- 5.3 Leaders must familiarise themselves with the location of the First Aid kit and Ministry Leaders must ensure that the First Aid kit contains everything it should, and any medications (such as Ventolin inhalers) are within expiry dates. At least one leader should be qualified in basic First Aid.

6. Visibility

- 6.1 All activities are to be open to observation by parents/guardians and other adults who have approved oversight.
- 6.2 All doors to rooms where ministry to children and youth occurs are to have large glass windows in them, so the room is visible to those passing by. If this is not the case, then doors are to be left open during ministry activities.

7. One-to-One Discipleship

- 7.1 A leader will not meet in person with someone under the age of 18 for one-to-one discipleship (Bible reading and prayer) in any place unless:
 - A parent/guardian is also present (nearby and visible), **OR**
 - An adult sibling or another leader is present (with permission from parent/guardian), **OR**
 - The meeting takes place in a public area where there are other people present (e.g. café, food court).
- 7.2 One-to-one discipleship may only take place with written parental permission via the DPC Youth 1-2-1 Discipleship Permission Form.

8. Camp & Overnight Activities

- 8.1 We will not provide any form of accommodation, for any reason, where there is not strict segregation by gender (except for married couples and families).
- 8.2 Supervision of those under the age of 18 will be provided by a leader of the same gender.

9. Social Media and Online Communication

- 9.1 Refer to Drouin Presbyterian Church Internet Usage and Electronic Communication Policy

10. Transportation

- 10.1 Leaders still on their red probationary license will not drive persons under the age of 18 (other than family members) to or from or during a ministry activity.
- 10.2 Leaders will not drive persons under the age of 18 unaccompanied, unless specific permission has been given by a parent/guardian (refer to Transport Consent Form)

11. Toileting

Each year the Ministry Leaders of each children's/youth ministry must communicate in writing to parents/guardians about how toileting will be managed in your ministry and include a consent form for parents/guardians to sign demonstrating they consent to the toileting management outlined.

- 11.1 Preschool: Parents/guardians are to ensure that their children have been toileted or had nappies changed before being signed in. Leaders are not to change nappies, instead, the child's parent/guardian will be called to attend to their child if their nappy needs changing, or their child needs to use the toilet.
- 11.2 Primary school:
 - 11.2.1 For Sunday School: Parents/guardians are to ensure that their children have been toileted before being signed in. If a child needs to use the toilet during Sunday School, the child's parent/guardian will be called to attend to their child.
 - 11.2.2 For KidZone: Children are to be taken in pairs by an adult leader. The adult must check the toilet facility first to ensure it is safe for the child. The child should be encouraged to manage him/herself to the fullest possible extent, according to ability. The adult is to wait outside the door of the cubicle and only assist the child if required. When a leader is needed to assist in the toileting of a child, they then inform another leader upon their returning to the main group.
- 11.3 High School: Youth can attend the toilet alone, provided the toilets are at the church facility or in a private home. Leaders are to be mindful of when youth leave for the toilet. If the youth seems to have been gone longer than seems reasonable the leader is to ask another leader to either investigate or supervise the group to enable a leader to check to see if the youth is ok.
 - 11.3.1 When out in public, youth are to be taken in pairs by an adult leader. The adult must check the toilet facility first to ensure it is safe for the youth.

12. Extra Activities

- 12.1 Leaders, members and non-members must not create or host a meeting or event, under the banner of Drouin Presbyterian Church, where they will spend time alone with persons under the age of 18.

13. Behavioural Expectations

- 13.1 Leaders will:
- 13.1.1 Seek to provide programs that draw children and youth together and include everyone.
 - 13.1.2 Seek to create a culture where everyone is safe.
 - 13.1.3 Seek to reinforce positive behaviours and respond immediately, consistently and appropriately to unkind or unsafe behaviours.
- 13.2 Children and youth are encouraged to follow Jesus' instruction to 'love God & love neighbour' (Matthew 22:37-40) and to grow in the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-24) in their interactions with each other.
- 13.3 Bullying is not acceptable. Bullying is defined in the Safe Church Code of Conduct and means repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful towards a group or an individual.
- 13.4 No weapons or replica weapons are to be brought to any program.
- 13.5 No cigarettes, vapes, alcohol or other drugs are to be brought to, or used, at any program.
- 13.6 No pornographic images are to be brought to, or accessed, at any program.
- 13.7 Expressions of romantic love should be paused during any program. This means that couples will need to share their time with others and not hold hands, hug, kiss and make other romantic expressions during the program.
- 13.8 Photos and videos should not be taken during the program, unless expressly permitted by leaders.
- 13.9 Mobile phones are not to be used unless explicitly permitted by leaders. Mobile phones should be put away or checked in at sign-in.
- 13.10 Leaders will seek to stop any unacceptable behaviour immediately and love and encourage both parties, while also giving appropriate rebuke. This may include giving warnings, exclusion from program elements, reporting to parents, and exclusion from the entire program.

14. Helpers in Children's and Youth Ministries

Any adult who is part of a Children's or Youth ministry team interacting with children/youth in any capacity before commencing (unless stated otherwise), needs to be.

- 14.1 Approved by Session.
- 14.2 Have a valid WWCC (or equivalent) linked to Drouin Presbyterian Church.
- 14.3 A Communicant Member or become an Adherent Member immediately, then intend to become a Communicant Member at the next available opportunity.
- 14.4 Have completed the Safe Church Volunteer Approval Process (VAP).
- 14.5 Undertake to complete PCV Safe Church Basic Training within the appropriate time frame.

15. Junior Leaders in Children's Ministry

A Junior Leader is a person under 18 years of age.

- 15.1 Junior Leaders are not included as adult leaders in the ratios for children's ministry.
- 15.2 Junior Leaders are not to be left alone with children.
- 15.3 Junior leaders are not to take children away from the main group alone, such as to the toilet. This must be done by an adult leader, following the toileting policy.
- 15.4 Adult leaders must always follow the Safe Church Code of Conduct regarding their own interactions with junior leaders. Adult leaders must make sure they are never alone with a junior leader as they are still legally considered to be a child.
- 15.5 Junior Leaders 15 years or younger (Junior Helpers):
 - 15.5.1 Must be approved by Session before commencing.

15.5.2 Are still to be considered legally as children.

15.5.3 With a parent/guardian, they must fill out a Junior Leader Role Description and Contact Details Form including an indication that they have received and read the Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct, signed the role description as an indication of their acceptance of the responsibilities of the role and agreement to abide by the PCV Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct. A parent or guardian must also sign this role description.

15.6 Junior Leaders 16-18 years of age:

15.6.1 Must be approved by Session before commencing.

15.6.2 Are still to be considered legally as children.

15.6.3 With a parent/guardian, they must fill out a Junior Leader Role Description and Contact Details Form including an indication that they have received and read the Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct, signed the role description as an indication of their acceptance of the responsibilities of the role and agreement to abide by the PCV Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct. A parent or guardian must also sign this role description.

15.6.4 Are to apply for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and from 18 years of age they must complete the Safe Church Volunteer Approval Process (VAP) before being allowed to continue in their role.

15.6.5 Are to be encouraged to attend Safe Church Basic Training but only with the permission of their parent(s)/guardian(s) (an Under 18s Basic Training Attendance Permission Form must be completed and returned to the Safe Church Representative prior to attendance).

16. Reporting and Feedback

16.1 If you have immediate safety concerns about a child or young person.
Call 000.

16.2 To report Child Safety Concerns to the Commission for Children and Young People,
Call 1300 78 29 78.

16.3 If you have any questions about the standards outlined above or are concerned that they may have been breached in some way, please notify an elder or the Safe Church Unit.

Steve Jones (Head of Children's Ministry) - 0408 341 384 or steve@drouinpresbyterian.org.au

Heath Easton (Head of Youth Ministry) - 0432 088 373 or heath@drouinpresbyterian.org.au

16.4 For urgent abuse related reports, complaints or concerns contact the Safe Church Unit.
Call Kooyoora - 1800 135 246

16.5 Safe Church compliance related questions.
Call 0435 417 283 (Mon, Thurs, Fri 9am-5pm) or scu.compliance@pcv.org.au

17. Policy Implementation

17.1 This policy is to be distributed to all those in children's and youth ministry leadership roles at Drouin Presbyterian Church.

17.2 This policy, with Session approval, is to be added to the church website. Information regarding its existence, location and the need for it to be read by all those involved in children's and youth ministry leadership roles at Drouin Presbyterian Church is to be communicated by relevant ministry elders to new leaders.

18. Policy Review

18.1 This policy is to be reviewed every two years by the Session of Drouin Presbyterian Church.

18.2 The next review of this policy is due to be conducted in September 2028.

19. Other Resources

19.1 Presbyterian Church of Victoria – Safe Church Unit: safechurchpcv.org.au

19.2 Drouin Presbyterian Church Internet Usage and Electronic Communication Policy
[Internet Usage and Electronic Communication Policy](http://drouinpresbyterian.org.au/helpful-links) from drouinpresbyterian.org.au/helpful-links

19.3 Commission for Children and Young People: ccyp.vic.gov.au/