

Horsham Church of Christ Policy: SAFE CHURCH (INC. CODE OF CONDUCT)



Original affirmed by Elders:	19 June 2023
Updated:	25 May 2026
Review:	May 2027 / May 2031

Purpose

This Safe Church Policy outlines appropriate standards of behaviour that Horsham Church of Christ, herein referred to as “the church”, expects from all staff and volunteers.

The purpose of this code is to:

- Affirm the values that guide our ministry
- Promote and foster confidence within the church and the community
- Facilitate accountable relationships
- Guide our conduct and actions in Christian Leadership

Following this code will help protect people participating in our programs and activities from abuse and inappropriate behaviour by staff and volunteers. It will also help staff and volunteers maintain the standard of expected behaviour and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

Commitment to Safety

The church is committed to being a safe place for all people. We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. We are committed to the inclusion and empowerment of all people. We believe all people have the right to have their views and opinions valued, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively work to create a culture of safety and employ transparency, authenticity, accountability, and risk management practices to prevent abuse.

The church has a zero-tolerance policy for any abuse and will report all allegations and concerns for the safety of vulnerable people to the appropriate authority.

We are committed to mandatory reporting of any abuse to the appropriate authorities.

Upholding the Code of Conduct

All members of staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of all those participating in church activities. All staff and volunteers are expected to report any concerns or breaches of this code to:

Alison Reichenbach, Victoria Dennis and Mark Busbridge

Safe Church Coordinators

phone: 5382 3877 OR email: safeplace@horsham.org.au

(This email is a distribution list that will send an email to all and only these three individuals. Appropriate follow-up and any required action will be taken accordingly.)

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Staff and volunteers who breach this code of conduct may be subject to the church's disciplinary procedures. Any breach of the code involving external workers/volunteers may result in them being asked to leave the church and any associated programs/events/ministries.

Serious breaches may also result in a report being made to authorities such as the police, the local statutory authorities and/or the Professional Standards of Churches of Christ in Victoria/Tasmania.

CODE OF CONDUCT: Safe Church & Leadership Commitment

1. Safe Behaviour & Boundaries

1. I will conduct myself in a manner consistent with the values and expectations of Horsham Church of Christ and safe church training.
2. I will treat all people with dignity, respect and fairness.
3. I will behave appropriately in all ministry settings, setting a Christ-like example and maintaining healthy physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational boundaries.
4. I will ensure interactions with children, young people, and vulnerable adults are appropriate, visible, and within approved ministry contexts (including all digital, text, and social media communication). Wherever possible, another adult will be present or within eyesight.
5. I will never use physical punishment, abusive behaviour, bullying, harassment, intimidation, or abusive language.
6. I will avoid behaviours or situations that place people at inappropriate risk, create misunderstanding, or compromise trust.

2. Safe Environments

7. I will help create relationships, environments and activities that are safe, welcoming, respectful, and inclusive.
8. I will include vulnerable people (and/or their carers or parents where appropriate) in decisions that significantly affect them.

3. Safeguarding & Reporting

9. I will listen well, encourage openness, and respond appropriately to concerns, disclosures, or signs of harm.
10. I will report any concerns, suspicions, disclosures, or allegations of abuse or harmful behaviour in line with safe church procedures.
11. I will maintain appropriate confidentiality and follow approved reporting pathways.
12. I will challenge inappropriate behaviour and seek guidance when unsure how to respond.

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4. Integrity & Accountability

13. I will act honestly, transparently, and responsibly in all areas of life and ministry, including relationships, communication (including online and social media), sexuality, and finances.
14. I will disclose information relevant to safe church responsibilities and participate honestly in leader screening processes.
15. I will comply with all relevant laws, church policies, and safe church procedures.
16. I will submit to the leadership, accountability, and disciplinary processes of Horsham Church of Christ where concerns arise regarding my conduct or suitability for ministry.

Consent

I understand the above Code of Conduct and I agree to uphold the standards of behaviour described in it. I understand that disciplinary measures and legal steps will be taken by the church if I am found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct, including reporting to the relevant authorities.

Signature:

Date: