

WESTCITY CHURCH

POLICY DOCUMENTATION

HEALTHY CHURCH FRAMEWORK

1. THE GOAL

The purpose of the **HEALTHY CHURCH FRAMEWORK**, as part of the broader Westcity Healthy Church Framework, is to ensure that the Westcity community volunteers are empowered in a way that is congruent with Westcity mission and values, whilst adhering to relevant legislation and Churches of Christ WA guidelines.

The Vision

Westcity Church, within the Healthy Church Framework seeks to be an authentic, healthy church community that supports the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming individuals to become 'More like Jesus'. The Westcity community aspires to be a safe space where individuals in all stages of faith are able to rest, heal, grow, to recognize and practice their God given gifts and talents to the benefit of the wider community.

2. CONTEXT

This policy provides the overarching view of the **Healthy Church Framework** within the context of safety within Westcity Church of Christ.

3. POLICY AIMS

- Ensure that all people are respected, valued and able to operate within the context of the church in a safe and supported manner without fear or discrimination.
- Minimise the risk of abuse, misconduct and the misuse of positional power, ensuring any suspected cases of such be appropriately and thoroughly managed.
- Ensure leaders, both employees and volunteers, are properly supported to attend their roles without undue interference or fear.
- Ensure that Westcity 'programs' are physically, emotionally and spiritually safe.

4. DEFINITIONS

Child: a person who is under the age of 18 years.
Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)
Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)
Child Care Services Act 2007

Safe Governance: an accountable, safe and 'Christ as central' Healthy Church Framework incorporating policies and procedures for the benefit of all.

Safe Environment: discharges duty of care by taking steps to keep all those in our care safe, including spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional abuse (including bullying) or neglect.

Safe Leader: has been through a recruitment process, understands responsibilities, is supervised and is an accountable team player.

Safe Program: all risks have been assessed and events thought through and planned.

COCWA Safe: Safe Church Training Agreement under the Churches of Christ.

5. WESTCITY COMMITS TO:

- **Safe governance:**

Overarching governance of Westcity is provided by a Board of individuals from the Westcity community with expertise in areas of governance and pastoral care. The Westcity Board operates in both a governance and eldership capacity and adheres to the *Healthy Board Mandate*.

- **Excellence in recruitment, training and development of leaders and volunteers:**

All recruitment of both paid and voluntary positions within the church will follow a clear recruitment process. Prior to appointment, all prospective leaders and volunteers in Westcity ministries, will be required to obtain a *Working with Children Check*.

All leaders / volunteers will be inducted in the *Westcity Healthy Church Framework* and be required to attend training / accreditation and ongoing learning relevant to their area of ministry:

- Pastoral Staff – COCWA accreditation
- Children and Youth workers – COCWA Child Safe Training.

- **Provision of clear expectations of the essential behaviours for healthy community:**

All leaders/volunteers will be required to adhere to the *Westcity Community Conduct* guidelines.

- **The provision of clear guidelines for managing grievance:**

All leaders/volunteers and the Westcity community in general will be counselled in working through the *Westcity Grievance Procedure*.

- **Provision for the adherence to equal opportunity for all within the structure of Westcity:**

Westcity believes that all people are of equal value before God and the *Westcity Equal Opportunity Policy* reflects this belief.

- **Clear risk management guidelines both churchwide and within specific ministries:**

Westcity believes that the utmost care must be taken to mitigate / eliminate risk to all those within the church community and when interacting with the wider community. *Westcity Risk Management Policy, Event Planning, Building Management and Safety, Child Safety Policy*.

- **Adherence to COCWA guidelines for both child safety and disclosure of abuse:**

All leaders/volunteers working in the areas of children/youth ministries will be required to attend specific child safe training, be familiar with the *COCWA Child Safety Policy & Reporting Procedure*, and know the Child Safe Representative within Westcity community.

- **A system for responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious ministry misconduct:**

We will ensure that procedures are clear and appropriate in responding to allegations of abuse. Where a leader has an allegation of misconduct made against them, Westcity will provide support to alleged victims and perpetrators and seek appropriate denominational help for a just and fair resolution. *Westcity Bullying and Harassment Policy, Westcity Grievance Procedure*.

- **The embedding of pastoral care principles across all aspects of Westcity to ensure the respectful, holistic consideration of the individual, and health of the community:**

Westcity Pastoral Care Policy

- **Safe delivery specific pastoral care and supportive supervision as required:**

Westcity Pastoral Care Processes

- **Safe Building Management, Hazard Mitigation**

- **Event Planning and Risk Assessment**

6. ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Board accepts direct responsibility for high-risk operational areas - Safeguarding, ChildSafe, Finances, Building Safety & Risk Management. This is enacted by:
 - a. Annual review of relevant policies
2. Executive Leader accepts overarching responsibility for other allocated Operational Policies & Processes. This is enacted by:
 - a. Annual review of processes
 - b. Presenting of summary review to Board at AGM.
3. ALL amendments to policy & processes to be reviewed by Westcity Board.