

Policy Last updated:	15/11/2018
Review & update due:	November annually
Responsible for Policy:	Children’s Ministry Pastor
Linked documents:	<p>Child Protection Policy Volunteers Handbook Volunteer Agreement Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy Child Discipline Policy Suspected Abuse, Neglect & Sexual Abuse Flow Chart Suspected Abuse/Neglect Form Suspected Sexual Abuse Form Accident/Injury Form Incident Report Form Complaints Report Form Risk Assessment Matrix (RAX) Indemnity Form New Employee Induction Checklist – Child Workers</p>
Who this covers:	This policy is applicable to Southern Lights Skye and all un-incorporated Southern Lights Network Churches subject to State Laws.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose:

Southern Lights Incorporated is a group of followers of Jesus Christ seeking to reflect the teachings of Christ and 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 the quality of relationships we develop as a church 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 the ministerial, or pastoral relationship those ethical standards that God expects of all people. People in various forms of recognised ministry are therefore expected to be examples and models of Christian faith and practice. It is the duty of any person in a ministry position 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, sexual or spiritual abuse, and applies especially when working with children.

The adoption of this Code of Conduct and the related Procedural Documents for investigating breaches of the Code, reflects a deep desire to follow an open, accountable process that seeks to express justice, acceptance and compassion to all parties, rather than to protect the organization.

This Code has been written in recognition of the power differential between people in ministry roles and the people they serve. The potential for this power imbalance to impact detrimentally on relationships is high. These guidelines have been established to help inform the conduct expectations in all aspects of personal relationships between people in ministry and those they serve.

1.2 Our Commitment

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. Our commitment is to cultivate an environment where a diversity of people, regardless of age, gender, race and culture can thrive and grow holistically. That is, we are committed to Southern Lights 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 staff (paid and voluntary) 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. Southern Lights 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.

1.3 Complaints regarding child abuse

Where there is a complaint made regarding child abuse, especially child sexual abuse, the procedures for reporting such abuse are outlined in the linked documents at the start of this document.

2. Specific Expectations to Protect Children from Abuse

All those who minister or work under the auspices of the church with children should be fully aware of our Child Protection Policy and this Code of Conduct. Abusive behaviour towards children will not be tolerated and any and all allegations will be investigated and reported if found to be substantially true.

DO:

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of, or in connection with, Southern Lights must:

- contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone '000');
- adhere to the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and uphold Southern Lights' statement of commitment to child safety at all times;
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;

- conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as an employee, volunteer, leader or contractor of Southern Lights and as a positive role model to children and young people;
- work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of Southern Lights;
- be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
- maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
- establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
- be fair, considerate and honest with others;
- treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas, opinions and backgrounds;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability;
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they are or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child;
- ensure (as far as practicable) that adults are not alone with a child;
- comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to reporting under legislation;
- raise concerns about suspected abuse with Children's Ministry Pastor
- record and act upon all allegations or suspicions of abuse, discrimination or harassment;
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe;
- be professional in their actions;
- maintain strict impartiality;
- respect confidentiality when sharing information about children in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and your reporting obligations;
- maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people; and
- operate within the policies and guidelines of Southern Lights.

DO NOT:

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of Southern Lights must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- put a child at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors for an improper reason);
- speak to a child in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Some examples are:
 - swearing or using inappropriate language in the presence of a child;
 - yelling at a child, except in an emergency situation where a child's safety may be in danger;
 - dealing with a child while the adult is angry with the child; and
 - using hurtful sarcasm.
- discuss sexual activities with a child unless it is a specific job requirement and the person is trained to discuss these matters;
- have contact with a child outside of church activities without the knowledge and/or consent of Southern Lights' leadership;
- use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account to communicate with a child without parental knowledge;
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child unless necessary;
- use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol while in the presence of or while supervising a child (unless your contact with the child is accidental/incidental and you are not performing your duties as directed by Southern Lights);
- use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of or while supervising a child;
- provide or allow a child to consume alcohol;
- provide or allow a child to consume illegal drugs;
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
- engage in rough physical games, hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way;
- engage in any sexual contact with a child for any purpose;

- take a child to your home or encourage meetings outside program activities (unless parental permission has been provided);
- be naked in the presence of a child;
- possess sexually explicit printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) in the presence of children;
- sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag, room or tent with a child
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender identity, sex, race, culture, sexuality, or disability;
- engage in any activity with a child that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
- be alone with a child unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
- develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child for their own needs;
- show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
- do anything in contravention of Southern Lights' policies, procedures or this Code.

DECLARATION

I, _____ have read the Code of Conduct and the Child Protection Policy and Procedures that express the intent of Southern Lights to protect and nurture children and other vulnerable people.

I agree to comply with these rules and expectations. I am aware that if I breach these, and/or break the law, that my actions will be reported to the Police or the Child Protection agencies.

Signed: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / 20__

Signed: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / 20__

Employer or Senior officer of the Church