

## POLICY & PROCEDURE: WORKING WITH CHILDREN

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## **PART 1      PRELIMINARY**

### **Statement of Commitment**

1. **Riverlife's** philosophy of care is based upon the conviction that we must care for our children (that is, people under 18 years of age) in ways that respect their dignity and value as unique individuals in a Christ-like manner. **Riverlife** is committed to ensuring that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is maintained at all times during their participation in activities that **Riverlife** runs. **Riverlife** aims to promote a safe environment for all children and to assist all relevant staff and volunteers to recognise **Harm** and follow the appropriate notification procedures when reporting **Harm**.

### **Related documents**

2. Documents that relate to or are affected by this policy include:
  - (a) **Riverlife's** Code of Conduct (Schedule 1);
  - (b) The Working with Children (Risk Management & Screening) Act 2000 (Qld);
  - (c) **Riverlife's** Workplace Health & Safety Policy & Procedures; and
  - (d) **Riverlife's** Crisis Management Policy.

### **Definitions**

3. The dictionary in Schedule 2 defines particular words in this policy.

### **Who must comply with this policy?**

4. This policy applies to **staff and relevant volunteers**, that is, **all** paid employees as well as volunteers, contractors and agents whose usual functions include or are likely to include providing services directed towards children or conducting activities involving children.

### **Scope of policy**

5. In the context of working with children at **Riverlife**, the scope of this document includes:
  - (a) Definition of risks and their management;
  - (b) Policies;
  - (c) Procedures; and
  - (d) Compliance requirements and expectations.

## PART 2 RIVERLIFE CHILD PROTECTION RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

### Risks to Manage

6. To understand the need for a risk management strategy we must also define the risks we intend to manage. The risks to a child relate to their physical, sexual, emotional or psychological vulnerability. This vulnerability can be abused whilst in our care or prior to us accepting them into our care. The risks can therefore be defined as:
- (a) Inappropriate people being allowed to have direct contact with children in our care
  - (b) Creating or not managing the circumstances and opportunity for people to commit abuse
  - (c) Ignorance about recognising the signs of abuse
  - (d) Ignorance about the process of dealing with the signs of abuse
  - (e) Not doing anything about abuse when it or evidence of it is observed
  - (f) Insufficient care of the victim
  - (g) Inappropriate visibility of confidential information about children, incident records and perpetrator information
  - (h) Non-compliance with legislation
  - (i) Not doing anything about any other behaviour or conversation which indicates a child may have been subject to Harm or is at risk of being subject to Harm.

### Risk Matrix

7. The following table illustrates the level of risk assessed for each type of risk identified in relation to working with children.

Likelihood	Consequence if risk occurs				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
Very likely (expected to occur in most circumstances)	Medium	Medium	High	Critical	Critical
Likely (will probably occur in most circumstances)	Low	Medium	High	High	Critical
Possible (might occur at some time)	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely (not expected to occur)	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare (occurs in exceptional circumstances only)	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

### Risk Management Strategy

8. **Riverlife's** Child Protection Risk Management Strategy exists to ensure the above risks are appropriately managed and mitigated. The strategy includes:

- (a) The creation and nurturing of a culture of child safety within **Riverlife** through the commitment to that culture by its leadership, through understanding and advocating **Riverlife's** Working With Children Policy and Procedures;
- (b) Defining **Riverlife's** Working With Children Policy;
- (c) Establishing **Riverlife's** Working With Children Procedures, including roles and responsibilities that can be directly aligned to the management and mitigation of the above risks. This will include but will not be limited to:
  - i) Procedures for the screening and selection of relevant staff and volunteers;
  - ii) Procedures for receiving and reporting of disclosures of harm; and
  - iii) Procedures for collection, storage and access to confidential data;
- (d) Establishing and executing a program of **Riverlife's** Working With Children Policy and Procedures training for **Riverlife** leaders, relevant staff and volunteers;
- (e) Establishing and executing a program of **Riverlife's** Working With Children Policy and Procedures compliance audits;
- (f) Establishing and maintaining a Working With Children Risk Register that also records risk mitigations, incidents and their treatment and who was involved in the incident and its management; and
- (g) Establishing and executing a regular program of review of **Riverlife's** Working With Children Policy and Procedures with a view to improving their effectiveness.

## **PART 3**

## **RIVERLIFE WORKING WITH CHILDREN POLICY**

9. **Riverlife's** Working With Children Policy comprises general, preventative, incident management and review components.
10. General Policies are:
  - (a) **Riverlife** will do all in its power to comply with all legislation relevant to 'working with children';
  - (b) All **Riverlife** leaders, relevant staff and volunteers must comply with this document; and
  - (c) Ignorance of the content of this document is not regarded as an acceptable reason for non-compliance with it.
11. Preventative Policies are:
  - (a) Only **Blue Card** holders are permitted to be involved in providing services directed mainly towards children whilst those children are under the care of **Riverlife**;
  - (b) Screening and selection of relevant staff and volunteers of **Riverlife** must be performed only with strict compliance to the procedures described in this document; and
  - (c) Training in the use of and compliance with this document is mandatory for all leaders, relevant staff and volunteers working with children whilst those children are under the care of **Riverlife**.
12. Incident Management Policies are:
  - (a) All incidences of suspected **Harm** must be reported immediately to the Senior Pastor, or, where relevant, the Chairman of Elders;
  - (b) All necessary effort must be taken to protect and care for any child who has suffered any form of **Harm** during or prior to their being under the care of **Riverlife**;
  - (c) All allegations of **Harm** must be managed in accordance with the procedures contained in this document in order to minimise **Harm**; and
  - (d) Only those who need to know will be informed of incidents requiring management in compliance with strict confidentiality requirements.
13. Review Policies are:
  - (a) The Working With Children Procedures will be reviewed and updated as necessary by the executive Elders (that is, the Senior Pastor and Church Administrator) by 31 March each year as a minimum, or more frequently if necessary or prudent. Liaison with key ministry leaders including the Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry, legislative changes and preceding period experiences will be used with a view to improving effectiveness; and
  - (b) The Working With Children Policies will be reviewed by 31 May each year as a minimum, or more frequently if necessary or prudent, by the Elders with a view to improving overall effectiveness.

## SCREENING, SELECTION & APPOINTMENT

Clauses 14 to 60 apply to **staff and relevant volunteers** that is, paid employees as well as volunteers, contractors and agents whose usual functions include or are likely to include providing services directed towards children or conducting activities involving children.

Where screening, selection and/or appointment procedures are not followed by staff whose main role is to minister to or supervise **Riverlife** children or to supervise other staff in that role, disciplinary action will be taken, including possible termination of employment.

### Volunteers

14. An application for a **Blue Card** must be made prior to a new volunteer commencing duties. A new volunteer must not commence duties until the application has been made and a current **Blue Card** has been issued to the volunteer, unless the volunteer is exempt from the requirement to hold a **Blue Card**. Where a potential volunteer is considering whether or not to undertake volunteer work with children, that person may attend the relevant ministry as an observer for up to 3 weeks without holding a **Blue Card**, provided that at all times the potential volunteer is supervised by an existing volunteer who holds a valid **Blue Card** and who is not a member of the potential volunteer's family.
15. An application for a new **Blue Card** must be made before an existing volunteer's **Blue Card** has expired. Existing volunteers must not be allowed to continue to work with children until a current **Blue Card** has been issued to the volunteer.

### Employees

16. An application for a **Blue Card** must be made prior to a new employee commencing work. New employees must not commence work until the application has been made and a current **Blue Card** has been issued to the employee.
17. An application for a new **Blue Card** must be made before an existing employee's **Blue Card** has expired. Existing employees must not be allowed to continue to work with children until a current **Blue Card** has been issued to the employee.

### Blue Card issued by a different organisation

18. Notwithstanding clauses 14 and 16, where a new volunteer or employee already holds a current **Blue Card** that has been issued by another organisation, an application for a **Blue Card** is not required. However, the new volunteer or employee must sign a 'Link' form and agree to re-sign this form each time their **Blue Card** is renewed with another organisation.

### Persons legally entitled to hold an Exemption Card

19. Persons entitled to hold an **Exemption Card** under The Act must continue to hold a current and valid **Exemption Card**. In such cases, any reference to a **Blue Card** in this policy shall be read as a reference to an Exemption Card. An **Exemption Card** must be renewed before it expires for the person to be allowed to continue working with children.

### **Withdrawal of screening authority**

20. Where a person withdraws their consent to screening under a **Blue Card** application, that person cannot commence or continue to work with children. If a person withdraws their consent, all relevant leaders must be advised of such withdrawal and those leaders must take any reasonable steps that ensure the safety of children.

### **Recording of current positive notices**

21. The Church Administrator (or nominee) is responsible for ensuring the timely and accurate recording of information relating to positive **Blue Card** notices in the system and must sight the positive **Blue Card** notice to verify its authenticity before entry of data. Original or scanned copies of **Blue Card** notices shall be stored for at least seven years.

### **Agreement to comply with policies and codes**

22. Before commencing employment, staff and relevant volunteers must be provided with a copy of this policy including the Code of Conduct and must provide written acknowledgement that they have read the policy and understand its requirements.

### **Application process – obligations of applicant**

23. All staff and relevant volunteers must undergo the following application process:
  - (a) Submit a relevant written application (Schedule 3);
  - (b) Agree to apply for a new **Blue Card** or supply details regarding an existing **Blue Card** in accordance with the processes outlined in this policy
  - (c) if the applicant has an existing **Blue Card** that has not been obtained through the Church, sign an '**Authorisation to determine valid Blue Card**' form and agree to re-sign this form each time their **Blue Card** is renewed;
  - (d) Where the applicant has not been attending the Church for at least two years, provide the name and telephone numbers of at least two referees;
  - (e) Attend an interview with the relevant ministry leader or Church Administrator (see Schedule 4); and
  - (f) Where the applicant is offered and accepts a position involving working with children, sign an agreement (Schedule 5) including an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct (Schedule 1).

### **Application process – obligations of Riverlife**

24. Where a person makes an application to work with children;
  - (a) Where the applicant has not been attending the Church for at least two years, the relevant ministry leader must contact the applicant's referees and complete the record of reference check in Schedule 6;
  - (b) If it is determined that an interview should take place, the relevant ministry leader or other authorised Church nominee must interview the applicant using the questions in Schedule 4 as a guide to ascertain the suitability of the applicant to work with children;
  - (c) The relevant ministry leader may make further enquiries about the applicant as a result of reviewing the written application or interviewing the applicant;
  - (d) The relevant ministry leader may decide that an applicant should not be appointed to a position to work with children, irrespective of whether a positive **Blue Card** notice has been received by the applicant; and

- (e) If the applicant has a **Blue Card** that has not been obtained through the Church, the Church Administrator (or nominee) must obtain an '**Authorisation to determine valid Blue Card**' from the applicant and lodge it with **The Agency**.

### **Appointment process**

- 25. Where an applicant is offered a position involving working with children, the following steps must be undertaken;
  - (a) The person must be provided with induction training as outlined this policy;
  - (b) The person must sign an agreement (Schedule 5) including an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct (Schedule 1); and
  - (c) The person's **Blue Card** details must be entered into the **Riverlife** database.

## COMPLIANCE

### Guidelines for Involvement with Children

26. All **staff and relevant volunteers** must comply with the Code of Conduct (Schedule 1a) while being involved with children and must report breaches of the Code of Conduct, instances of Harm, accidents and incidents in accordance with this policy.
27. The leaders of age-based ministries involving school aged children (eg prep, junior primary, senior primary, junior high school and senior high school) will develop Codes of Conduct that children in those ministries are expected to follow, based on the principles outlined in Schedule 1b and using varied language, where necessary, that is appropriate for the age level of each ministry. Relevant staff and volunteers will explain the expected standard of behaviour to the children.

### Monitoring Blue Cards

28. The Church Administrator (or nominee) must review the **Blue Card** Register regularly as follows:
  - (a) Monthly - **Blue Cards** are still current;
  - (b) Monthly – Leaders of ministries where any **Blue Cards** are due to expire within the next month are advised accordingly; and
  - (c) Annually at a minimum - all staff and relevant volunteers are included in the register.

### Stolen or lost cards

29. If a **Blue Card** is lost or stolen, the following procedure will apply:
  - (a) **Staff and relevant volunteers** must notify the **Church** leadership (or its nominee) as soon as possible but in any event within seven (7) days of the card being lost or stolen;
  - (b) The **Church** leadership (or its nominee) must arrange for an application to **The Commission** for a new card within fourteen (14) days of the card being lost or stolen.

### Criminal Convictions - obligations of staff and relevant volunteers

30. If any staff and relevant volunteers have any changes to their criminal history they must:
  - (a) Notify **The Agency** immediately;
  - (b) Notify the Church Administrator (or nominee) immediately;
  - (c) Stand down from their position until they receive a new **Blue Card**; and
  - (d) Apply to **The Agency** for a positive **Blue Card** notice.
31. If any **staff and relevant volunteers** are charged with a criminal offence or are listed as a respondent in a domestic violence application, they must advise the Church Administrator (or nominee) of the charge or application within seven days and must thereafter inform the Church Administrator (or nominee) about every development in the case.

### Criminal Convictions - obligations of Church Administrator or nominee

32. As soon as the Church Administrator (or nominee) receives notification or otherwise becomes aware of a change in criminal history of or the issue of a domestic violence order against **any staff and relevant volunteers** (other than a disqualifying offence dealt with in clause 33) the person must be suspended from all ministries involving children until they receive a new **Blue Card**, at which time the person may recommence their position if the church leadership approves such

resumption. If a negative notice is received, the person cannot apply, start or continue in their position.

### **Criminal 'Charges' for disqualifying offences pending conviction or acquittal**

33. If **any staff and relevant volunteers** are merely 'charged' with a disqualifying offence (as defined in Schedule 8) the following procedure must apply;
- (a) The person charged or the Church Administrator (or nominee) must notify The Agency;
  - (b) The person charged cannot apply, start or continue to work in the Church ministries involving children;
  - (c) The relevant ministry leader or Church Administrator (or nominee) must suspend the person charged from all ministries involving children. The person's employment cannot be terminated solely or mainly because their **Blue Card** has been suspended.
  - (d) If a new **Blue Card** is later received from The Agency, the person can be re-employed in ministries involving children.
  - (e) If a negative notice is received then the person cannot continue to work in Church ministries involving children.

### **Negative Notice**

34. If a person is convicted of a serious offence or **The Agency** cancels their **Blue Card** and issues a negative notice to the person that person must immediately cease working with children.

### **Breaches**

35. A breach of this policy is any action or inaction by anyone who fails to comply with any clause in this policy. If **any staff and relevant volunteers** breach the requirements set out in this document, the relevant ministry leader, the Church Administrator and the Senior Pastor will be advised and the following will apply:
- (a) Where the person has breached legal requirements under **The Act**, **The Agency** will be notified.
  - (b) If the breach falls outside the scope of the Act, the Senior Pastor will determine what steps should be taken and the following will apply;
    - (i) The Senior Pastor will follow biblical principles with a view to protecting the children in our care, respecting the person responsible for the breach and bringing closure to the matter in a manner that is gracious and dignified ; and
    - (ii) Any decision of the Senior Pastor may be referred by the offending person to the Elders for review. The decision of the Elders will be final; and
    - (iii) Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include providing closer supervision, further education and training, disciplinary procedures or reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.
36. Parents, carers and guardians should be actively encouraged to share any concerns they have about the care of their children during any **Riverlife** ministry with a member of the church leadership. In the event that those concerns are not handled by **Riverlife** to their satisfaction, information will be provided as to how these concerns can be addressed externally to **Blue Card** Services, or where relevant, to the Queensland Police Service or other appropriate agency.
37. Where any breach by relevant staff or volunteers occurs that affects children, parents, carers and guardians of those children will be advised by the Senior Pastor (or his delegated authority).

38. Where children are consistently not following the Code of Conduct as explained to them, or where any breaches of the Code of Conduct are considered by relevant staff or volunteers to be serious, parent, carers and guardians of those children will be advised. Possible consequences of breaches including suspension or exclusion of relevant children from attending the **Riverlife** ministry.

## **OTHER PROCEDURES**

### **Personal & Medical Information**

#### Staff and Volunteers involved with Children

39. All **staff and relevant volunteers** must supply personal and medical information as required, as part of their application. Personal and medical information must be kept in a secure, confidential place. This information will be accessible to relevant ministry leaders as required and in the event of a medical concern. Relevant ministry leaders will be informed of the location of personal and medical information and must therefore understand that this information has limited confidentiality status

#### Children attending **Riverlife**

40. Except in the case of one-off attendances by a child, all **Parents or Guardians** will be asked to complete a Personal & Medical form for their children (Schedule 7). All completed forms for children will be kept in a secure, confidential place.

### **Training for Those Working with Children**

41. Training within the **Church** will be provided. It will be a requirement that all **Church** workers working in activities involving children attend this training or confirm in writing they have read this policy document and have viewed a recording of the training event.

The focus of the training will be that participants will gain:

- (a) A vision for creating a 'safe place' for children and their families and for those who work with them.
  - (b) A general understanding of the issues of Child protection and of the policies and procedures adopted by **Riverlife**.
  - (c) An appreciation of the roles and responsibilities within **Riverlife** and an understanding of any guidelines for those working with children in the relevant ministry area.
  - (d) An understanding of Workplace Health & Safety.
  - (e) An understanding of procedures for responding when Harm is disclosed.
  - (f) An understanding for procedures involving reporting **Harm**, accidents and incidents.
42. Relevant training will be provided for **staff and relevant volunteers** of other ministries associated with the **Church** that occur offsite, such as Netball and Football ministries.

### **Annual Risk Assessment of All Church Activities Involving Children**

43. In order to strengthen the safe practices within the **Church** an annual review of activities undertaken by the **Church** for children must be carried out.
44. A risk assessment must be undertaken and the risk assessment proforma in Schedule 8 must be completed for each activity undertaken by the **Church** for children. Where the risk assessment for an activity results in an assessed level of "High" or "Critical", the risk assessment proforma

**must** identify measures that will be undertaken to help to prevent the risk occurring and assign responsibilities to relevant staff and volunteers to each mitigation measure. Mitigation measures **may** also be identified where the assessed level of risk is “Medium” or “Low”.

### Complaints involving Harm

45. “**Harm**” to a **Child** is defined as any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the **Child’s** physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. If any **staff and relevant volunteers** become aware of incidence of **Harm** or a breach of the Code of Conduct, the incidence or breach must be reported in accordance with this policy and with Schedule 9.
46. **Staff and relevant volunteers** must be familiar with the details outlined in Schedule 9 regarding the recognition and reporting of **Harm**, including:
  - (a) When it is reasonable to suspect Harm;
  - (b) What to do if Harm is suspected;
  - (c) The flowchart to follow when reporting Harm;
  - (d) How to respond to a Child who discloses Harm;
  - (e) Behavioural & physical indicators associated with sexual abuse;
  - (f) Behavioural & physical indicators associated with physical, emotional abuse and neglect; and
  - (g) Indicators that may point to a perpetrator of **Child** abuse.
47. **Riverlife** will utilise a **Harm** Report Form (Schedule 10) to document observed or suspected **Harm**. The staff or relevant volunteer will, jointly with their relevant ministry leader, record factual information on the **Harm** Report Form and discuss this with the Senior Pastor. The completed **Harm** Report Form will be kept in a central **Riverlife** confidential file. Suspected Harm has a lower standard than Harm and would include cases where **staff and relevant volunteers** believe Harm may have occurred and cases where **staff and relevant volunteers** are not sure if the effect is “detrimental” or not. Instances of suspected Harm must be reported and it is the Senior Pastor’s role to determine whether Harm has occurred.
48. Except for allegations involving the Senior Pastor, if any **staff and relevant volunteers** become aware of incidence of **Harm** (or suspected **Harm**) or a breach of the Code of Conduct, they must report the matter to the Senior Pastor, following the process outlined in Schedule 9 where relevant.
49. In respect of allegations involving the Senior Pastor, if any **staff and relevant volunteers** become aware of incidence of **Harm** (or suspected **Harm**) or a breach of the Code of Conduct, they must report the matter to the Chairman of Elders, following the process outlined in Schedule 10 where relevant.
50. If staff or relevant volunteers are concerned that there may be a conflict of interest due to family relationships or other reasons, they should complete the Harm Report themselves and discuss it directly with the Senior Pastor (or, where clause 48 applies, the Chairman of Elders) rather than involving the relevant ministry leader.
51. The Senior Pastor (or the Chairman of Elders in relation to clause 49) must decide whether **Harm** has occurred, taking the following into consideration:
  - (a) The severity of the allegation;
  - (b) The likelihood that the report is false, vexatious or malicious; and
  - (c) Whether the victim is at any danger of future **Harm**;

52. If the Senior Pastor (or Chairman of Elders where applicable) is unable to make a determination, legal advice must be sought.
53. If the Senior Pastor determines that Harm has been caused by a family member of the Child or that the Parents or Guardians of the Child are failing to act to protect the Child from Harm, then the Senior Pastor must report the matter to the Department of Child Safety.
54. If the Senior Pastor determines that the Child has been the victim of a crime, then the Senior Pastor must report the matter to the police.
55. Where the person who is the victim or alleged victim is at least 18 years old at the time an allegation is made, there is no instance of a “child in need of protection” as defined in the Child Protection Act, notwithstanding that the allegation may relate to a time when the victim or alleged victim was a Child. In such a case, there is no prima facie need to report to the police or the Department of Child Safety. However, if the Senior Pastor, acting on legal advice, concludes that, given the particular set of circumstances, there is a reasonable likelihood that another Child or Children may be at risk of suffering Harm, then the Senior Pastor must report the matter to the police or relevant agency.
56. Where a person is charged, or convicted of a criminal offence, the procedures in clauses 30 to 33 also apply.
57. **Riverlife** will endeavour to appropriately support staff and relevant volunteers through any investigative process.
58. **Riverlife** encourages all staff and relevant volunteers involved in working with children to maintain current knowledge of **Child** protection and **Child** abuse issues.

### **Crisis Management Policy**

59. **Riverlife’s** Crisis Management Policy outlines processes that must be followed when **Riverlife** staff become aware that someone is a risk of harming themselves or others in the near future. **Riverlife** staff have been trained about the processes to follow in such situations.
60. If volunteers working with children become aware that a child is at risk of harming themselves or others in the near future, they should immediately let a **Riverlife** staff member know the details, so that the staff member can assist them.

### **Reporting of Accidents & Incidents**

61. Accidents & incidents must be documented (Schedules 11 & 12) in situations where the matter is serious, an ambulance has been called, or the person has been taken to a Doctor or hospital. In situations of a less serious nature the **Church** worker will use their discretion about completing an Accident or Incident Report form.

### **Record Keeping**

62. The Commonwealth Privacy Act established standards about how personal information may be collected, used and accessed.
  - (a) All records pertaining to **staff and relevant volunteers** will be stored confidentially in a secure place, including any application forms, referee forms, letters from **The Agency** regarding the applicant’s ‘suitability’ status and other information deemed necessary.

- (b) Access to these records will be limited to staff approved by the Church Administrator or Senior Pastor. The information on these records has been collected to assist the assessment process for an applicant's suitability for working with children. **Staff and relevant** volunteers who wish to know what is in their file must approach the Church Administrator or Senior Pastor.
  - (c) Medical information will be kept in a confidential, secure place. This information is accessible to ministry team leaders in the event of a medical concern. **Staff and relevant volunteers** must be informed of this so that they understand that this information has 'limited' confidentiality status.
  - (d) All matters pertaining to **Child** protection concerns within the **Church** will be stored confidentially in a secure place. Access to this information will be restricted to the Church Administrator, Senior Pastor, approved staff and relevant internal or external advisors.
63. A register will be kept for all **staff and relevant volunteers** containing the following information:
- (a) Name & Date of birth
  - (b) Whether **Blue Card** is required
  - (c) Card type (employee, volunteer)
  - (d) Date application submitted & **Blue Card** issued
  - (e) **Blue Card** number & expiry date
  - (f) Date renewal form to be submitted (2 months prior to expiry)
  - (g) Whether **Blue Card** status has changed

### **Communication & Support**

64. Strategies for ensuring that all relevant people are aware of and compliant with this policy and that this policy is kept up to date are as follows:
- (a) Training within the Church will be provided – see clause 41
  - (b) This policy will be reviewed at least annually – see clause 13
  - (c) Activities undertaken by the Church for children will be reviewed annually– see clause 43
  - (d) The following will be displayed on the website of the **Church**
    - that the **Church** has a Working with Children Policy
    - the **Church's** Statement of Commitment regarding children
    - an offer to supply a copy of the **Church's** Working with Children Policy without charge on request.

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

1. **Staff and Volunteers must respect persons & property and acknowledges they:**
  - (a) Must be responsive and courteous to others & avoid improper use of their position;
  - (b) Must avoid discriminatory or harassing treatment of others;
  - (c) Must not use inappropriate or crude language in the presence or, or towards others;
  - (d) Must show integrity at all times and act in a manner consistent with a Church representative; and
  - (e) Must respect privacy and protect confidential information of others, subject to the requirement to comply with the Working with Children Policy & Procedures document and to comply with any other obligations under the law.
  
2. **The Church is committed to maintaining a drug free environment and the staff and volunteers acknowledge that the use, sale of or being under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs (other than properly prescribed and administered drugs) will result in dismissal and may result in a report being made to the police.**
  
3. **In relation to behaviour Staff and Volunteers acknowledge that they :**
  - (a) Must not be alone with a children where activity cannot be seen by other staff or volunteers;
  - (b) Must not take a Child to their home or visit a Child in their home unless consent from the child's **Parent or Guardian** is received;
  - (c) Must not make any sexual or crude innuendos such as suggestive looks, comments, jokes, sounds, display visuals, words, acts or gestures towards any child, staff member or volunteer;
  - (d) Must not touch, hug, or kiss any person in a way that is inappropriate to the situation;
  - (e) Must not drive a Child unaccompanied unless in extreme circumstances and after gaining permission from child's **Parents or Guardians** and the **Church** leader in a direct position of responsibility;
  - (f) Must not commit any sexual offence, sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a Child (including a Child pornography offence) or any assault, ill treatment of or neglect of a Child or any behaviours that is reasonably likely to cause psychological or other **Harm** to a child; and
  - (g) Must not attempt to do any of the things described above, or do any act in preparation of doing any of the things described above.
  
4. **In relation to pastoral care Staff and Volunteers acknowledge that they:**
  - (a) Will not step beyond their level of competency or training;
  - (b) Will not encourage children to keep secrets from their **Parents or Guardians** or other leaders;
  - (c) Will not provide pastoral care for members of the opposite sex, recognising the validity of normal conversations;
  - (d) Will always provide pastoral care in an open area, never in a closed room;
  - (e) Will only console (if a Child is distressed and needs to be consoled) as same gender of child, with the permission of the Child and with another Staff and volunteer within sight; and
  - (f) If a Child makes a disclosure regarding any kind of **Harm**, this disclosure must be divulged to relevant **Church** leadership forthwith, but must not be revealed to any person, except as required by this policy or the law.
  
5. **In relation to pornography and sexuality Staff and Volunteers acknowledge that they have a commitment to striving for purity, and to that end:**
  - (a) Recognise it is inappropriate to access or view pornography;
  - (b) Will not display, discuss or distribute pornography to other adults or children;
  - (c) Sexuality of staff must be under the guidelines and Lordship of Christ; and
  - (d) Will dress modestly and not sexually suggestive, insulting or using slogans contrary to Christian principles.
  
6. **In relation to workplace health & safety, Staff and Volunteers acknowledge that they:**
  - (a) Must not put themselves or others in danger;
  - (b) Must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with /misuse anything in the interests of safety;

- (c) Must follow safe work practices and encourage others to do the same;
- (d) Staff must use all safety devices including knowing the locations of phones, first aid kits and fire extinguishers and the identity of the first aid attendant in their area; and
- (e) Staff must report all incidents or accidents.

**7. If there is a breach of this Code of Conduct by any person, Staff and Relevant Volunteers agree to:**

- (a) Report any suspected breaches of this Code of Conduct or of the law to the relevant Church leadership immediately;
- (b) Take careful written records of any suspected breaches;
- (c) Not make a report which is false, vexatious or malicious.

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN**

**Children** who attend **Riverlife** ministries will agree to the following principles:

- I will respect other children, young people and adults
- I will follow and obey the rules
- I will listen and receive instructions
- I will control my temper and not be rude
- I will have a say about what I am involved in
- I will speak up if I am worried or concerned about something
- I will not be a bully or accept any bullying that I see
- I will show care and kindness to others
- I will not intimidate others.
- I will stay within the boundary of the playing/activity area
- I will take care of toys and equipment
- I will not use bad language
- I will not be mean
- I will not bring inappropriate games, toys or devices to activities. If I do, I recognise that leaders have the right to remove those things from me and return them at the end of the session activity.

**Children** who attend **Riverlife** ministries have the right to:

- Be safe and happy in my chosen activity
- Be listened to
- Be respected and treated fairly
- Be protected from abuse by other member or outside sources
- Be believed
- Ask for help

## DEFINITIONS

<b><i>The Agency</i></b>	<b>Blue Card Services</b> , which manages the <b>Blue Card</b> system
<b><i>Authorisation to determine valid Blue Card</i></b>	a form from <b>The Agency</b> confirming that the person has obtained a valid <b>Blue Card</b> and listing the name of the organisation or business who originally forwarded the application to <b>The Agency</b> .
<b><i>Blue Card</i></b>	means the card issued by <b>The Agency</b> after an application is received, verifying the suitability for working with children. A positive notice always accompanies a <b>Blue Card</b> and accordingly where the term ' <b>Blue Card</b> ' is used in this policy document, this also refers to the positive notice issued by <b>The Agency</b> .
<b><i>Exemption Card</i></b>	means the card issued by <b>The Agency</b> to a police officer or registered teacher who is exempt from holding a <b>Blue Card</b> but who works for <b>Riverlife</b> as <b>staff and relevant volunteers</b> .
<b><i>Child</i></b>	is an individual under 18 years. (Child Protection Act 1999)
<b><i>Church or Riverlife</i></b>	means <b>Riverlife</b> Baptist Church and also includes the associated ministries of the <b>Church</b> .
<b><i>Relevant staff and volunteers</i></b>	refers to paid employees, volunteers, contractors and agents whose usual functions include or are likely to include providing services directed mainly towards children or conducting activities mainly involving children.
<b><i>Harm</i></b>	to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. (Child Protection Act 1999)
<b><i>Parent or Guardian</i></b>	means the child's mother, father or someone else having or exercising parental responsibility for the child. (Child Protection Act 1999)
<b><i>The Act</i></b>	means the <i>Working with Children (Risk Management &amp; Screening) Act 2000</i> .