

# CityLife Church Child Safety Code of Conduct

## 1. Introduction

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The following Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to staff, leaders, contractors and volunteers, who work with children incidentally or as part of a specific work program or service at CityLife. This applies whether the activities take place on church premises or elsewhere.

The purpose of this document is to set standards and guidelines for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, outlining responsibilities when working with children or observing other working with children.

General safe and respectful principals of behaviour in the Code of Conduct are expected to extend to all behaviours (whether explicitly stated here or not) when interacting with children involved with CityLife programs and services.

These behaviours and boundaries apply with equal force in all online platforms and spaces where they can be understood to apply. In some places this application has been detailed specifically, but otherwise it is intended to be interpreted as applicable for the entire document.

The behaviours and boundaries of this Code also extend to non-ministry contexts where the leader-to-child power dynamic exists because the leader and child know each other only because of the ministry through which they were introduced.

Every individual working or volunteering with children at CityLife is obligated to read, sign, and adhere to this code. Non-compliance with the CityLife Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary measures as per the *Complaint or Grievance Policy* for employees, or the *Church Discipline Policy* for unpaid leaders and volunteers, and may also lead to criminal prosecution.

In this document “CityLife” will refer to both CityLife Church Inc. and CityLife Community Care.

## 2. Definition

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**Bullying:** The ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm<sup>1</sup>.

**Child/ren:** Any person/s under the age of 18

**Child abuse:** All forms of physical-, emotional-, sexual-abuse including grooming, family violence, and neglect, or any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.

**Child safety:** Any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/bullying.aspx>

**Discriminate:** Treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as age, sex, gender identity, race or disability<sup>2</sup>.

**Grooming:** Any actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and influencing a child, and in some circumstances members of the child's family and other adults, for the purpose of sexual activity with the child, at a later time<sup>3</sup>.

### 3. Code of Conduct

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In the pastoral care and engagement of children within CityLife Church programs and services, staff, contractors, leaders, and volunteers are expected to:

#### 1. Respect:

- a. Treat everyone with respect, honesty, and openness to diversity.
- b. Establish and maintain a nurturing environment protecting children from various forms of abuse including spiritual, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, and grooming, bullying or discrimination.
- c. Do not discriminate against any child based on age, gender identity, sex, race, culture, or disability.
- d. Serve as a positive role model to children.
- e. Respect personal boundaries at all times.

#### 2. Communication:

- a. Communicate appropriately, using positive language and tone in all interactions, including online platforms.
- b. Do not provide written communication (e.g., prophecies) directly to primary age children without prior discussion with a parent/guardian, supervisor or manager.
- c. Avoid communicating one-to-one with a child online, via text message or written communication if another authorised person is not part of the communication. If this is not possible, alert a supervisor or manager to the nature and reason for the communication.
- d. Do not use Snapchat as a form of communication with children.
- e. Provide opportunities for children to express their views, with particular attention to concerns raised for the safety of that, or any other, child.
- f. Encourage open communication from children and parents/guardians about pertinent issues.

#### 3. Engagement and Supervision:

- a. Ensure the presence of another authorised adult when working with or supervising children at all times, with exceptions for toileting situations where one adult can accompany a minimum of two children, whilst remaining outside the toilet.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/discrimination>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/WEB.0189.001.0001.pdf>

- b. Engage with a supervisor or manager and a parent/guardian regarding any discipline issues presented by a child in a group setting.
- c. Conduct pastoral meetings with a child in an appropriately supervised open or public setting.
- d. Consider gender and power dynamics in interactions with children; another adult must be present if a male leader is looking after a female child in a one-on-one situation.

**4. Identification:**

- a. Be visually identifiable, especially online (e.g., wear a t-shirt, name tags, have video turned on, and display full name).

**5. Transportation:**

- a. One-to-one transport of a child is not permitted and transporting children is strongly discouraged. If transport is necessary while on duty, the following conditions must be met:
  - i. The arrangement must be approved by a CityLife staff member, the child's parent/guardian, and the volunteer.
  - ii. A *Transporting Children Information Form* will be provided to all parties for their acknowledgment.
  - iii. The children may only be transported in a vehicle with at least one other adult present, in addition to the driver.
  - iv. The driver must hold a full driver's licence and have comprehensive insurance.
  - v. Adults must sit in the front seats only.
  - vi. Children must sit in the back seats only.

**6. Technology:**

- a. Use technology (computers, mobile phones, cameras) respectfully and appropriately, and in compliance with the CityLife Privacy Policy with regards to personal and sensitive information.

**7. Immediate Reporting:**

- a. Immediately advise a supervisor or manager if an unauthorised person is seen near a child-related activity.
- b. Immediately take action to report allegations or suspicions of abuse, or grooming behaviours, in accordance with the CityLife Child Safety policy.

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Staff, leaders and volunteers of CityLife church will not engage in the following examples of conduct (that can be sexual in nature and/or considered grooming), which in some cases may constitute a criminal offence.

CityLife Church staff, leaders, contractors, and volunteers are **prohibited** from:

**8. Inappropriate Conduct:**

- a. Do not wear inappropriate clothing around children.

- b. Do not share phone numbers or other personal contact details with a child, without accountability to another authorised person, except as allowed by CityLife formal communication for professional purposes and documentation.
- c. Do not take photos of a child who is under the care of CityLife outside of official duties, in accordance with the CityLife Privacy Policy.
- d. Do not share or transmit personal or sensitive information of any child, except in strict accordance with the CityLife Privacy Policy and with the permission of a parent/guardian and a supervisor or manager.
- e. Do not show favouritism or provide gifts to a child.
- f. Do not visit a child in their home without parental/guardian permission and presence, and without a professional reason and permission from a manager or supervisor.

**9. Physical and Verbal Restrictions:**

- a. Do not engage in corporal punishment of a child.
- b. Do not engage in behaviour that shames, humiliates, belittles, degrades, or verbally/emotionally abuses a child, including online and social media interactions.
- c. Do not be alone in a room with a child during activities requiring clothing changes. Immediately remove yourself from the room/vicinity.
- d. Do not allow or participate in anything done in a closed, dark, or secretive environment.

**10. Sexual Prohibitions:**

- a. Do not hold, kiss, cuddle, or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary, or culturally insensitive manner.
- b. Do not engage in any romantic or sexual relationship with a child.
- c. Do not make written or verbal sexual advances or share inappropriate material or information with a child.
- d. Do not act in a sexually provocative manner or engage and encourage a child to participate in any form of sexual activity or sexually orientated conversation.
- e. Do not share details of your own sexual experiences with a child.
- f. Do not ask children to keep a relationship secret.

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**4. Declaration**

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I .....,  
agree to follow the CityLife Child Safety Code of Conduct completely, recognising that principles of expected and prohibited behaviours apply to all interactions with children, whether explicitly mentioned here or not.

**Sign:** ..... **Date:** .....