

DIAMOND VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

SAFE CHURCH POLICY

The Christian faith strongly upholds the virtues of love, mercy and justice. As a community of God's people, we are committed to ensuring, to the best of our ability, that our church is a safe place for all who come into contact with the various ministries of our church and related organizations.

We affirm that all people have a right to be emotionally, spiritually and physically safe, respected and have their views and opinions valued at all times.

Our policy reflects both our biblical mandate and our responsibilities under Victorian & National legislation.

Our policy has the following goals to make our church safe for all people, but especially children and the vulnerable with whom we come in contact in order to prevent injury or distress (physical, spiritual and emotional):-

- In our ownership and occupation of land and buildings.
- In our employment of paid and voluntary workers and leaders.
- In our activities and programs being safe for all people (regardless of age, gender identity, countries of origin, cultural heritage, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or ability etc).
- In our handling of church finances.
- In our use of electrical and other equipment in the course of our activities.
- In food safety.
- In our responsibilities of leadership and governance:
 - By minimizing the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power.
 - By ensuring that all cases of suspected abuse and ministry misconduct are handled in a consistent, unbiased and thorough manner.

SAFE LEADERS

We commit to:

a) Safe recruitment of leaders.

- We will screen all prospective (paid or unpaid) Senior Leaders, Audit, Risk and Safety Leaders, Children's Program Leaders, Pastoral Carers, Key Ministry Leaders, Small Group Leaders, before they are appointed.
- Senior Leaders, Audit, Risk and Safety Leaders, Children's Program Leaders, Pastoral Carers, Key Ministry Leaders, Small Group Leaders (where members are under the age of 18), will hold a current Working with Children Check.

b) Adequate training of leaders.

- Senior Leaders, Audit, Risk and Safety Leaders, Children’s Program Leaders, Pastoral Carers, Key Ministry Leaders, will attend the BUV Safe Spaces training within their first year of ministry and attend a refresher every 3 years.
- All leaders are required to attend additional ministry specific training as required by our church leadership.

c) Continued supervision of leaders.

- We commit to ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for leaders.
- All leaders will agree to follow our Code of Conduct.

d) Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and ministry misconduct.

- All leaders are required to report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, according to state legislation by using the procedure in the DVBC Reporting of child abuse Procedure.
- The Baptist Union Complaints Process is required to be followed for all serious allegations of misconduct by a leader.

SAFE PROGRAMS

We commit to:

a) Emotionally safe environments.

- We will offer participants, including children, the opportunity to provide input into the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas, and encouraging participation in all areas of the life of the church, as far as is sensible and practical.
- We will utilise all relevant information (including legal directions) provided to DVBC by the program participants, including relevant health and family situation, to assist us in caring for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

b) Physically safe environments.

- Leaders will exercise a duty of care through the use of relevant DVBC forms, checklists and templates for establishment and maintenance of safe environments in our church.
- The DVBC Safe Church team will use the BUV Be Safe online checklists to maintain a safe physical environment in the following areas: fire safety, building safety, first aid, food safety practices, risk assessment for activities, children’s playgrounds & play equipment.