

Newcastle Conference 2024

Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct

- D.1. This Code of Conduct outlines the behavioural expectations of Conference attendees being ecclesial Members and non-Members when interacting with children. It is in place to protect children from harm and abuse when engaging in Conference activities.
- D.2. This Code of Conduct applies to all Conference attendees who are involved or engaged in an activity of the Conference where they interact with children. Conference attendees are required to read and sign this Code of Conduct prior to working with children.
- D.3. **Please note:** A child or young person is a person who is under the age of 18 years. In this Policy, reference to:
 - a. Child also includes a young person
 - b. Children also includes children and young people.

D.4. Safeguarding Responsibilities

- 1. Conference attendees being ecclesial Members and non-Members must:
 - a. Comply with the Conference's *Safeguarding Children Policy* and this Code of Conduct
 - b. Report any concerns, allegations, or disclosures of abuse in accordance with the Conference's *Safeguarding Complaints Handling Procedure*
 - c. Comply with NSW child safe legal obligations
 - d. Report any breaches of the Conference's *Safeguarding Children Policy* or this Code of Conduct
 - e. Ensure the parent/caregiver of a child is involved in all relevant decisions involving the child, including signing of documents or consent forms
 - f. Always promote and monitor the safety of children
 - g. Respect the individual needs and circumstances of children, and their families who have diverse needs. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Children and families from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds
 - ii. Children and families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds
 - iii. Those with a disability
 - iv. Those who have experienced abuse or trauma
 - v. Children with impaired intellectual or physical functioning
 - vi. Children with low levels of literacy or education

D.5. Professional Boundaries

- 1. Conference attendees must:
 - a. Act in accordance with the scope of their role and the Conference activity that is being provided
 - b. Respect boundaries and the privacy of children and their families
 - c. Maintain a professional relationship with all Members (including children) if appointed to a role working or volunteering with the Conference. For example, a Member appointed to volunteer as a Youth Worker must adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct when interacting with children as part of their role.
 - d. Report to the Organising Committee if they become aware of a circumstance where a child requires support that is outside the scope of their role.
- 2. Members and non-Members must not:
 - a. Spend time alone with a child
 - b. Develop close, personal, intimate, sexual, or 'special' relationships with a child associated with the Conference
 - c. Initiate, seek or request to contact a child outside Conference activities without the explicit approval of the child's parents/guardians. For example, social functions, babysitting, sports coaching, or housesitting (unless a pre-existing relationship has been disclosed to the Organising Committee)
 - d. Provide children with alcohol, drugs, tobacco (including vapour or any other nicotine-containing product), or pornography
 - e. Be under the influence of any alcohol, illicit drugs, medication, or fatigue that may affect capacity to perform their role
 - f. Allow bullying or inappropriate behaviour of children
 - g. Buy gifts or other items for children without authorisation from the Organising Committee and without the knowledge of parents / caregivers
 - h. Engage in any form of unlawful or sexual behaviour with a child, parent / caregiver associated with the Conference

- i. Misuse power or authority to exploit, manipulate, abuse, or coerce a child to engage in sexual activity
- j. Unlawfully discriminate against any child, or their family on the basis of gender, age, identity, culture, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, ethnic or national origin, physical or intellectual impairment, or gender identity.

Notes: The Conference committee is responsible to decide on a case-by-case basis whether a person has engaged in unlawful discrimination. The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) includes an exemption (s 37) for religious bodies to discriminate on the basis of a person's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, in relation to:

- i. *the ordination or appointment of priests, ministers of religion or members of any religious order (including persons in training/education seeking the listed roles) the selection or appointment of persons to perform duties or functions for the purposes of or in connection with, or otherwise to participate in, any religious observance or practice; or*
- ii. *any other act or practice of a body established for religious purposes, that conforms to the doctrines, tenets or beliefs of that religion or is necessary to avoid injury to the religious susceptibilities of adherents of that religion.*

D.6. Communication

1. Conference Attendees must:
 - a. Speak to children in a professional and supportive manner
 - b. Use positive language that creates an inclusive environment
 - c. Listen to and respect what children have to say
 - d. Encourage children to have positive friendships with other children and encourage them to support each other during Conference activities
 - e. Use the online environment in accordance with the *Safeguarding Children Policy* and this Code of Conduct.
2. Conference Attendees must not:
 - a. Use abusive, derogatory, offensive, violent, culturally insensitive, or threatening language
 - b. Have open discussions about inappropriate adult themes in the presence of children
 - c. Single out a child in a humiliating manner
 - d. Use personal or private avenues to communicate with children without parental or caregiver knowledge. This includes (but is not limited to) befriending, following, tagging on social media, mobile phone, texting, or email communications.
 - e. Use sexual language, comments, conversations, or communications with a child
 - f. Use a computer, mobile phone, camera, or other device to exploit or harass a child.

D.7. Supervision

1. Conference Attendees must:
 - a. Interact with children in areas with clear visibility. Ensure doors are open and windows are transparent as a minimum.
 - b. Ensure appropriate adult to children ratio requirements are adhered to when delivering Conference activities (appropriate ratios should be determined when developing activity guidelines)
 - c. Ensure third party contractors who may provide facilities or services are supervised by a Committee Member, or other authorised adult.
2. Conference Attendees must not:
 - k. Be in one-on-one situations with a child ie. work alone with children without having another adult present or being able to see them (see also D.9. Use of Bathrooms / Change Rooms)
 - a. Take a child or children into areas where they are not visible by another Conference Member or and non-Member who is authorised to work with children
 - b. Take a child or children into rooms that can be locked
 - c. Provide unauthorised transportation to a child
 - d. Travel alone with a child except in the event of an emergency. In this circumstance, consent should be obtained from child's parent/caregiver or alternatively, a member of the Organising Committee.

D.8. Physical Contact

1. Conference Attendees must:
 - a. Only use physical contact that is appropriate to the activity and if necessary (e.g. if it is required for the child's safety)
 - b. Seek consent from a child prior to using physical contact (if the contact is necessary). Ensure you explain to the child why the physical contact is required.
 - c. Respect and respond to signs that a child is uncomfortable with physical touch

- d. Use verbal directions rather than physical touch
 - e. Ensure that any necessary physical contact is also culturally and religiously appropriate
 - f. Use non-intrusive touch to comfort a child who is upset or to encourage a child to participate e.g. handshake or pat on the back / upper arm.
2. Conference Attendees must not:
- a. Perform acts that are of a personal nature with a child, if they are capable of doing so themselves such as changing clothes and going to the bathroom
 - b. Touch a child in areas of a sexual nature such as the breasts, buttocks, or genitals
 - c. Initiate, permit, or request unacceptable physical contact with a child such as hugs, massages or kisses
 - d. Use intrusive forms of discipline such as smacking, hitting, slapping, kicking
 - e. Allow a child to smack or hit another child
 - f. Facilitate situations which unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a child, such as tickling
 - g. Threaten to hurt a child through words or gestures
 - h. Use hostile force towards a child

Use of Bathrooms / Change Rooms

1. Conference Attendees must:
- a. Ensure adequate levels of supervision of children when using bathrooms. Where practicable, the child's parent / caregiver should accompany the child to the bathroom. If this is not practicable, then the child should be encouraged to self-manage (according to their age and ability).
 - b. Respect the child's right to privacy
 - c. Use the correct gender marked bathrooms at all times
 - d. Knock and announce themselves prior to entering the bathroom for the purposes of supervision (if it is required, for example if using public bathrooms at an Conference activity or at overnight camps).
 - e. If possible, avoid using the bathrooms or changing areas when children are present
 - f. Not enter the bathrooms of the opposite gender
 - g. Not use photographic or video devices in toilets or changing areas. Cameras and mobile phones cannot be used in these areas.
 - h. Not allow a child to enter a public toilet alone when participating in a Conference activity/program.

D.9. Overnight Stays as part of the Conference activity

1. Conference Attendees must:
- a. Have booked accommodation at the venue prior to commencement of an overnight stay
 - b. Allow for families to have accommodation in rooms that are connected or close in proximity if room size does not allow for the full family to be in the one room.
 - c. Acknowledge that the supervision of children remains the responsibility of parents / guardians
 - d. Ensure children can contact their parents/caregivers if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or have any concerns
 - e. Ensure sleeping arrangements do not compromise the safety of children e.g. children sharing a bed with other children, or with another adult
 - f. Ensure children are provided with privacy when changing or using the toilets.
2. Conference Attendees must not:
- a. Be accommodated in the same room as a child during an Conference activity, unless it is the child of the adult (i.e. the child's parent) or if it is an authorised caregiver of the child
 - b. Leave children unsupervised with unauthorised persons such as accommodation staff.

D.10. Use of Photographic, Audio/Video Devices including mobile phones

1. Conference Attendees must:
- a. Allow for the child's parent/caregiver to deny approval before taking photographs and videos of children.
 - b. Ensure the parent/caregiver is aware of how the Conference will use authorised photographs or videos
 - c. Ensure photographs or videos taken do not include other children (who have denied approval), especially where the individual can be identified.
 - d. Report inappropriate photography/videoing to the Organising Committee.

2. Conference Attendees must not:
 - a. Use a computer, mobile phone, camera, or other device in a way that is inconsistent with the *Safeguarding Children Policy* or supporting procedures
 - b. Share personal information, including photographs of children without the informed consent of the parent/caregiver
 - c. Tag a child in a photograph on social media platforms such as Facebook
 - d. Share explicit photographs of a child
 - e. Expose children to inappropriate material that is not suitable to the age and developmental stage of the children present. Under no circumstances should children be exposed to pornographic material, e.g. through movies, the internet, television or games.
 - f. Possess or create child abuse material.

D.11. Breach of the Code of Conduct

Any Conference Attendees who engage in behaviour that is in breach of this Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The Organising Committee promptly responds to all breaches, and will manage the process in a fair, unbiased, and supportive manner.

Depending on the nature of the breach, suitable actions may include:

- a. Referral to authorities and police if there are allegations of criminal behaviour
- b. Emphasis on the relevant component of the *Code of Conduct* that was breached
- c. Providing closer supervision to Members and non-Members
- d. Providing specific education and training
- e. Mediation between the parties involved in the incident (where appropriate)
- f. Disciplinary measures (if necessary)
- g. Review of current policies and procedures, with updates and developments if necessary.

D.12. Reporting a Breach of the Code of Conduct

All Conference Attendees who are involved or engaged in a Conference activity are encouraged to raise their concerns about a child's safety. If you have a concern or are aware of a breach of this Code of Conduct, you **must** report it to the Safeguarding Representative or a member of the Organising Committee.

Signed Acknowledgement

- I have watched the introduction video on Child Safety at the Newcastle 2024 Conference

I have read and understand my responsibilities in accordance with this Code of Conduct. I understand that I will be subject to disciplinary action if I breach this Code of Conduct.

Name _____ Signed _____ Date _____