



SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Policy number	PL 30	Version	1.0
Drafted by	Safe Church Team 2024	Approved by Church Council on	04/09/2024
Responsible person	Senior Pastor	Scheduled review date	1 year

INTRODUCTION

The Supportive Environment Policy of Gymea Baptist Church is an essential aspect of the pastoral care within the church. Gymea Baptist Church seeks to promote a secure and safe environment free from violence, threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a supportive environment by minimizing the risk of violence, threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour for staff, volunteers, and attendees of Gymea Baptist Church ministry programs. The church shall provide positive action to prevent violence, threat, harassment or bullying from occurring through a clear policy of prevention, response and action.

POLICY

Gymea Baptist Church will:

- Ensure that all people who attend and/or are associated with Gymea Baptist Church and its ministries are safe.
- Create a supportive environment by taking positive action to prevent violence, threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour from occurring with a clear prevention, response and action.
- Show a commitment to overcoming bullying quickly and appropriately.

DEFINITIONS

- **Violence** – the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or

destroy

- **Threat** – an expression of intention to inflict evil, injury, or damage
- **Harassment** – to create an unpleasant or hostile situation for another especially by uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct. Refer to Safe Work NSW for expanded definition or further information.
- **Bullying** – the act of a person or group of people with more power repeatedly and intentionally cause hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond.
- **Forms of Bullying**
 - **Physical Bullying** – Includes hitting, kicking, rude gestures, exhortation, pushing and shoving, taking or damaging belongings i.e. any form of physical behaviour that hurts others or their property
 - **Verbal Bullying** – Name calling, insulting, repeated teasing, racist remarks, threatening, sexual harassment and any other form of verbal behaviour designed to hurt another.
 - **Social Bullying** – Includes spreading lies, slander, rumours, playing nasty jokes, mimicking, excluding someone from the group, isolating someone and isolating others by preventing others from befriending them. Damaging a person’s social reputation or social acceptance.
 - **Psychological Bullying** – Includes threatening, manipulative and stalking behaviour
 - **Cyber Bullying** – Cyber Bullying is causing hurt by modern technologies such as the internet, and through the use of smartphones and other devices.

TABLE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities	EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE
CHURCH COUNCIL & SENIOR PASTOR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the development of this policy within the church • Ensure procedures are maintained that enable compliance with this policy • Operate within delegated authority as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is reviewed and updated when needed • Debrief on critical incident process
MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS & STAFF <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate within his/her delegated authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief on critical incident process • Policy and procedures reviewed in team meetings
ALL VOLUNTEERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate within delegated authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief on critical incident process • Policy and procedures followed and understood

Policies can be established or altered only by the Church Council: **Procedures** may be altered by the Senior Pastor or designated team.

AUTHORISATION

Version Control Documentation

Date	Person/Team	Details of Changes Made	Version Updated Number	Reviewed and Accepted by Church Council Date
12/07/2024	Safe Church Team: Marjy Robertson, Susan Kusch, Leisel Savage, Greg Williams	Policy created	1.0	04/09/2024



SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT ANTI BULLYING PROCEDURES

Procedures number	PR 30	Version	1.0
Drafted by	Safe Church Team 2024	Approved by CC on	
Responsible person	Senior Pastor	Scheduled review date	1 year

RESPONSIBILITIES

It shall be the responsibility of all participants including staff, volunteers, and attendees to uphold this policy and its procedures.

Volunteers' compliance with this policy and its procedures will be supervised and managed by the Coordinator of their ministry.

Staff compliance with this policy and its procedures will be supervised and managed by the Senior Pastor of Gymea Baptist Church.

General participant compliance with this policy and its procedures will be supervised and managed by the Ministry Leader.

PROCEDURES

Strategies for Managing violence, threats, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour:

Gymea Baptist Church seeks to take a proactive and reactive response to violence, threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour.

A proactive response includes:

- Developing a safe environment for Gymea Baptist Church attendees
- Informing staff and volunteers about Gymea Baptist Church's Emergency Procedures and how to respond in the event of a violent, threatening, harassment, or bullying incident.
- Informing staff and volunteers about how to recognize bullying behaviour
- Informing staff and volunteers on how to respond when bullying behaviour is noticed and reported
- Developing and maintaining a commitment to conflict management and dispute resolution across Gymea Baptist programs and ministries. See "**Procedure for Conflict Resolution**" and "**Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers.**"

Our proactive strategies include but are not limited to:

- Establishment of the Safe Church Team with an email address that anyone can report a safe church concern including bullying behaviour: safechurchteam@gymeabaptist.org.au
- Establishment of the WHS Team and Emergency Management strategies.
- Training of staff and volunteers within First Aid and/or Emergency Response appropriate to their role.
- Short awareness raising campaigns for staff, volunteers, and participants
- Identification of problem areas – increase supervision in those areas
- Training of staff and volunteers to facilitate activities to promote involvement from participants
- Clear behaviour expectations on display in program/ministry areas
- Training of staff and volunteers addressing behaviour management including a prompt and decisive response.

Our reactive response includes but is not limited to:

- Clear report of incident is recorded. (Report to be made as soon as possible after the incident.)
- Enacting of emergency response procedures
- Perpetrator and victim to be separated and interviewed separately by a trained ministry leader or Safe Church Team. Interviews to be documented.
- Explanation and clarification of the nature of the inappropriate behaviour
- Interview other participants as appropriate to the situation.
- Creation of an action and/or behavioural plan to address inappropriate behaviour.
- When incident involves young people, parents and/or guardians to be contacted.

Issue & Procedure Table

Issue	Description/Example	Procedure
External Threat	Examples: Car Bomb, Armed dangerous person known to be in the area, bomb threat in the area (Threats not directly aimed at GBC)	Wardens to take control – Follow Emergency Plan: Shelter in Place or Lockdown procedures
Direct Threat made to GBC (group)	A threat directed at GBC via written, telephone, text, social media threat received or suspicious substance found on premises.	Wardens to take control – Follow Emergency Plan: Code Purple or substance threat procedures
Direct Threat made to individual at GBC program	An individual may have had a direct threat made to them via someone outside of GBC programs or within a GBC program but no one is currently not immediate danger.	Complete a Safe Church Concerns form and contact the Safe Church Team.
Targeted Violence to GBC (group)	Intruder enters the premises and is acting violently.	Wardens to take control – Follow Emergency Plan: Armed confrontation or intruder
Violent act against an individual or select group	A violent act has occurred between individuals and/or select groups of people during a GBC program.	Respond, Report, Refer: Take immediate action to ensure safety for all See Supportive Environment Procedure
Harassment towards an individual and/or select group	An individual or select group is creating an unpleasant or hostile situation through uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct. (eg: Racial Slurs, Sexual Slurs, etc)	Respond, Report, Refer: Take immediate action to ensure safety for all See Supportive Environment Procedure
Bullying	The act of a person or group of people with more power repeatedly and intentionally cause harm to another person or group of people: Physical, Verbal, Social, Psychological and/or Cyber	Respond, Report, Refer: Take immediate action to ensure safety for all See Supportive Environment Procedure

Ministry leadership, volunteers, and attendees to abide by the following guidelines:

RESPOND, REPORT, REFER

- Attendees and participants within Gynea Baptist programs/ministries
- Staff and volunteers are committed to handling the issue immediately and in the same manner.
- The violence, threat, harassment and/or bullying is managed in a timely manner following the **GBC Emergency Plan**, the **Supportive Environment Procedure**, and/or the **Procedure for Conflict Resolution** to ensure the physical, social and psychological well-being of participants
- Staff and volunteers are vigilant in supervision

RESPOND:

May involve one or more of the following actions:

- Take necessary immediate response actions to ensure safety of all participants. If a behaviour management plan is in place, follow the management plan.
- Make sure that all are protected, safe and moved to a safe environment.
- Attend to any physical needs that the individuals may present eg First Aid

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- Depending on the seriousness of the incident consider having other staff, volunteers, or safe church team present when you question the people involved
- Let the alleged victim/s become calm and collected before questioning them over the circumstances
- Listen and document the issues and facts only. Do not add personal opinions.
- Meet with and question the alleged aggressor.
- Meet with and question any witnesses
- Meet with the alleged victim/s
- If incident involves a young person, contact and inform the ministry leader within 24 hours of incident.
- If incident includes a young person, contact and inform the parents or guardians regarding the incident preferably the same day of the incident. If the incident is minor, parents can be informed the following business day. If necessary, arrange a meeting.

Response to Alleged Aggressor

- Explain facts and why the behaviour is classified as unacceptable referring to definitions given in the policy and/or behaviour expectations of a program. Suggested approach for this conversation is to follow the **6 Steps for Straight Talk**:
 1. State the purpose of the conversation. "I want to talk about ..."
 2. Describe the behaviour specifically. Focus on what you witnessed the other person do.
 3. Describe the impact of the behaviour. "I thought...I felt..."
 4. Give the other person an opportunity to respond. "What were you thinking about at the time?"
 5. State what you would like the other person to do differently. "I need you to ..." "I'd like you to..."
 6. Return responsibility to the person – and offer support. "Will that work for you?" "What can I do to support you in this?"
- Make clear that the aggressive/bully behaviour is unacceptable. Disapproval should be unambiguous. Stress that the behaviour is unacceptable.
- Outline the sanctions that will be imposed if the aggressive and/or bully behaviour continues
- Ask the alleged aggressor to reflect on how others and the alleged victim may feel
- Support and guide the individual in changing his/her behaviour. Allow the individual to talk freely about behaviour in the context of change
- Write down an agreed action plan. Set a date for review.
- Review. The setting should be formal to help the alleged aggressor understand the seriousness of the situation.

Response to Alleged Victim

- Explain facts and why the behaviour is classified as unacceptable referring to definitions given in the policy and/or behaviour expectations of a program.
- Make clear that the aggressive and/or bullying behaviour is unacceptable
- Be empathetic to the emotional needs of the alleged victim
- Collaborate with the alleged victim to identify strategies to implement in the event that there is future aggressive behaviour and to help the alleged victim to feel safe.

- Make a written/electronic record of the incident/s.
- Review. Set a time to review the strategies and to ensure safety for the alleged victim.

REPORT

- Complete a Safe Church Concerns form, attach any additional documentation as required.
- If first aid is administered, complete an Incident form.

REFER

- Submit the completed reports to the Safe Church Team as soon as possible.
- The Safe Church Team may refer the alleged victim, alleged aggressor, staff and/or volunteers to pastoral counselling.
- If necessary and dependent on the severity of the situation, inform the Police.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- GBC Safe Church Policy
 - Located on GBC Links or the Gymea Baptist Web Site
- Procedure of Conflict Resolution
 - Located on GBC Links or the Gymea Baptist Web Site
- Procedure for Complaints against Staff and Volunteers
 - Located on GBC Links or the Gymea Baptist Web Site
- PL28 Procedure for meeting one-on-one with a young person
 - Located on GBC Links or the Gymea Baptist Web Site
- Gymea Baptist Emergency Plan
 - Located in A4 Frame next to fire panel

AUTHORISATION

Version Updates Documentation

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12/07/2024	Safe Church Team: Marjy Robertson, Susan Kusch, Leisel Savage, Greg Williams	Procedure created	1.0	04/09/2024