

Trinity Theological College

Prevention of Abuse: Client Protection Policy

Safe Ministry Check Version January 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 Policy Statement

Trinity Theological College is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its Employees, Students, Volunteers and Visitors and particularly to Children and Vulnerable People.

Trinity Theological College's Client Protection Policy aims to reduce the risk of abuse occurring, and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should Abuse occur.

1.2 Scope

This Client Protection Policy applies to:

- a. All activities under the control of Trinity Theological College
- b. All Employees, Students, Volunteers and Visitors within Trinity Theological College or engaged by Trinity Theological College within or outside the College premises

1.3 Authority

The Client Protection Policy was adopted for use by Council on 28 10,2021.

The Organisation is committed to implementing the Client Protection Policy and to training our Employees and Volunteers who work directly with the care of children in its contact and application.

1.4 Definitions

Abuse can consist of one or more of, but is not restricted to, the following:

- a. **Elder Abuse**, is a single or repeated act, occurring in any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.
- b. **Physical Abuse**, any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as: hitting, punching, kicking, shaking, burning, biting, pulling out hair, alcohol and/or other drug administration.
- c. **Sexual Abuse**, any assault or abuse of a sexual nature, sexual molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation.
- d. **Emotional Abuse**, unwelcome, repeated attitude or behaviour of one person toward another person, and/or the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a person's self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include insulting, bullying, devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising or other extreme acts in the vulnerable person's presence.
- e. **Financial Abuse** may include misappropriation of money, valuables or assets, forging signatures on cheques, unlawful accessing of funds electronically and/or unauthorised changes to legal documents.
- f. **Neglect** characterised by the failure to provide for basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person's health or development.

Child: any person who has not reached the age of 18 years and, in the absence of positive evidence as to age, means a person who is apparently under 18 years of age. (Children and Community Services Act 2011 Section 124A)

Employee: is any person who is:

- a) Employed by the Organisation under a contract of employment as a full-time, part-time, casual or temporary employee or working for the organisation under a contract of service or apprenticeship.
- b) Under a contract of service with another employer but is seconded to work for the Organisation.

Organisation: Trinity Theological College, located at 632-634 Newcastle Street, Leederville, Western Australia.

Student: any person officially enrolled for education or training with the Organisation.

Supervisor: the person to whom the Employee or Volunteer reports.

Visitor: any person who is not an Employee, Volunteer or current Student that has good cause to be on the Organisation's premises or attending an event of the Organisation.

Volunteer: any person who is engaged by the Organisation to work or to provide a service to the Organisation or on their behalf in the carrying out of their operations and who receives no remuneration or compensation in money or other benefit for carrying out these duties.

Vulnerable Person: any person (including children) who is or may need community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness.

2. Policy Review

This Client Protection Policy will be reviewed annually to be presented at the October meeting of Council. Any proposed changes will be submitted for approval before being implemented.

3. Obligations

3.1 Responsibility

The core expectations of any responsible Organisation require us to treat all people with fairness and dignity and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

3.2 Legal

All relevant organisations within Australia are bound by Federal and State legislation and principles established through common law. The Organisation is committed to adhering to all relevant legislation.

3.3 Ethical

The Organisation's Code of Conduct outlines the expected behaviour and actions which may not be regarded as Abuse but are unacceptable behaviour for the Organisation.

The Organisation is responsible for ensuring that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times. Any breach of the Code of Conduct must be reported in accordance with the Organisation's discipline processes.

4. Selection and Screening

4.1 Employees and Students or Volunteers working with Children or Vulnerable Persons.

Employees, Students or Volunteers involved in activities or programs with children or vulnerable people (e.g. Crèche) must be carefully selected and screened. Prior to commencing employment or volunteer services for ongoing or regular programmes, the following precautions will be taken:

- All Employees or Volunteers who are working with children on a regular ongoing basis must complete an application form which requests details of relevant past experience, positions held, details of two referees and permission to contact them (see Appendix 2).
 - Both referees will be checked and spoken to, using an agreed set of questions (see Appendix 4) which have been drafted by the Organisation.
 - The questions will seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the role or position and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.
 - All short-listed candidates must undertake a formal interview which includes an analysis of past experience working with children, the elderly or vulnerable people.
 - A Police and/or Community Services check which complies with the legislative requirements of Western Australia will be requested and received prior to the Employee or Volunteer commencing their proposed role. The check must show that the individual is not precluded from working in childcare or aged care.

4.2 Employees or Volunteers working within the Organisation.

Where the Organisation has identified that an applicant has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence (See [WWC Act at www.slp.wa.gov.au 1](http://www.slp.wa.gov.au)), they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for employment or engagement with the Organisation.

5. Training

All new Employees, Students or Volunteers working with Children will be issued with a copy of this policy and receive formal training in:

- The content and application of the Organisation's Client Protection Policy,
- Reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements.

Refresher training courses based on current "best practice" and changes to legislation will be made available on an annual basis.

6. A Safe Environment

Incidents of Abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons, working in pairs is required for any activity that involves children or vulnerable people. For further best practice suggestions see Appendix 5

7. Disciplining Children

It is not the responsibility of the Organisation or its Employees, Students or Volunteers to discipline a Child, unless they are the parent or carer. If a Child does not abide by the rules set down by the Organisation or becomes an obstruction to the care of other Children and may cause harm to others on the premises, the Child will be removed and referred to their parent or guardian. At no time will anyone administer any form of physical, emotional, financial, or mental discipline. Note Employees, Students or Volunteers may need to make legitimate use of physical restraint if a Child is attacking another Child or staff member or posing an immediate danger to self or others. Where physical restraint or separation from others is used, a Employee, Student or Volunteer should continue to talk with the Child throughout the incident and make it clear that physical restraint or separation from others will stop when it ceases to be necessary and ensure that a calm and professional approach is maintained.

8. Reporting Procedures

The Organisation actively encourages the reporting of all Abuse including Sexual Abuse and is committed to building an environment where either a victim or Employee/Volunteer feels able to report such Abuse.

Employees must report reasonable suspicions of abuse to the Safer College Officer or Business Manager of the Organisation. Reasonable Suspicion means fair and practical reason to believe an incident involving Abuse has occurred based on either verbal communication, hearsay, rumour, or observation of behaviour.

An independent person will be appointed by the Organisation with the specific duty of dealing with any allegations of harm or abuse that may arise. The details of those reporting abuse will be kept private and confidential.

A documented reporting process with escalating procedures has been established by the Organisation for handling allegations of abuse. See APPENDIX 6

9. References

Ansvar Insurance Prevention of Abuse: Child Protection Policy Template.