

# MCC Newcastle Child Protection Policy

At MCC Newcastle, we are committed to protecting the children in our community. However, we strive to be an inclusive church, and this means that occasionally people who are sexually attracted to children and other young people, whether convicted sex offenders or potential offenders, will seek support, fellowship and a welcome from the Church. We recognise that many such people are deeply religious and genuinely wish to resist the temptations to which they may be susceptible. But these attractions often resurface, particularly at times of stress or loneliness in a person's life. We do believe that, by the Grace of God, change is possible for some people, and while the instinct of Christian compassion is to be generous, we also know there remains a risk, which we have to manage to ensure the safety of our children. We have, as a Board, adopted the following guidelines.

**For people who have a history of sexual abuse towards children, or who struggle with sexual attraction towards children:** We recognise that there are risks, both for the children and young people in our Church community and for those attracted to them of being placed in a vulnerable position. We aim to manage the risks for the well-being of all concerned. Often it will be possible for someone attracted to children and young people to remain fully within our community, whilst observing certain specified boundaries and whilst receiving proper support from us. Occasionally, we will feel the risk to all concerned is beyond our abilities, and needs to be managed outside the usual Church gatherings. If we feel this, we will still work with those who are vulnerable, and provide spiritual and pastoral support, as we believe in GOD's boundless and forgiving love for us all.

In order to assess the risks, we will seek complete honesty and openness. We ask anyone who may be vulnerable in these ways to inform the Child Protection Co-ordinator or the Interim Pastor of any past or pending convictions, or any attraction you may experience towards children or young people. We may want to ask your permission to speak to your probation officer, social worker, doctor, or any other officials with whom you have been involved. Any information you give us will remain confidential between you, the Interim Pastor and Child Protection Co-ordinator, and the statutory services with which we work, unless there would be risk of serious harm to you or someone else if we did not disclose the information.

**For parents and carers:** Before, during, and after services and all other MCC activities, your child remains your responsibility. You may prefer them to sit with you during worship, or they may sit at the back, where activities are provided, under the general supervision of a nominated adult. If they go into a different room you should always be aware where they are, whom they are with and what they are doing. It is good to talk to children of any age about the dangers posed by some people, and that even people they know well and like, can touch them in ways they don't like; that this is not their fault and they need to tell you about it. If you would like advice on how to speak about this subject with your children, please speak to the interim Pastor or a member of the board.

***If you have any concerns at all about how someone in MCC is behaving towards your child, speak to one of the leadership team immediately.***

**For all of us:** We must always treat the children and young people in our Church community with respect.

- Don't touch them unnecessarily. We wouldn't do this to an adult we don't know well.
- Don't ask for personal information, such as their address or what school they are at. They will have been taught not to give this information to people they don't know well.
- ***Above all, keep your eyes and ears open. If you have any concerns or suspicions about anyone within our community, speak to one of the leadership team immediately.***