



WORKING WITH
CHILDREN
POLICY &
PROCEDURES

(Including Risk Management Strategy)

Updated May 2024

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Statement of Commitment

1. **RIVERLIFE**'s philosophy of care is based upon the conviction that we must care for our children (that is, people under 18 years of age) in ways that respect their dignity and value as unique individuals in a Christ-like manner. **RIVERLIFE** is committed to ensuring that the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of children is maintained at all times during their participation in activities that **RIVERLIFE** runs. **RIVERLIFE** aims to promote a safe environment for all children and to assist all relevant staff and volunteers to recognise **Harm** and follow the appropriate notification procedures when reporting **Harm**.

Related documents

2. Documents that relate to or are affected by this policy include:
 - (a) **RIVERLIFE** Code of Conduct (Schedule 1);
 - (b) The Working with Children (Risk Management & Screening) Act 2000 (Qld);
 - (c) **RIVERLIFE** Workplace Health & Safety Policy & Procedures; and
 - (d) **RIVERLIFE** Crisis Management Policy.

Definitions

3. The dictionary in Schedule 2 defines particular words in this policy.

Who must comply with this policy?

4. This policy applies to **staff and relevant volunteers**, that is, **all** paid employees as well as volunteers, contractors, and agents whose usual functions include or are likely to include providing services directed towards children or conducting activities involving children.

Scope of policy

5. In the context of working with children at **RIVERLIFE**, the scope of this document includes:
 - (a) Definition of risks and their management;
 - (b) Policies;
 - (c) Procedures; and
 - (d) Compliance requirements and expectations.

Risks to Manage

6. To understand the need for a risk management strategy we must also define the risks we intend to manage. The risks to a child relate to their physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological vulnerability. This vulnerability can be abused whilst in our care or prior to us accepting them into our care. The risks can therefore be defined as:
- (a) Inappropriate people being allowed to have direct contact with children in our care
 - (b) Creating or not managing the circumstances and opportunity for people to commit abuse
 - (c) Ignorance about recognising the signs of abuse
 - (d) Ignorance about the process of dealing with the signs of abuse
 - (e) Not doing anything about abuse when it or evidence of it is observed
 - (f) Insufficient care of the victim
 - (g) Inappropriate visibility of confidential information about children, incident records and perpetrator information
 - (h) Non-compliance with legislation
 - (i) Not doing anything about any other behaviour or conversation which indicates a child may have been subject to Harm or is at risk of being subject to Harm.

Risk Matrix

7. The following table illustrates the level of risk assessed for each type of risk identified in relation to working with children

Likelihood	Consequence if risk occurs				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
Very likely (expected to occur in most circumstances)	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Likely (will probably occur in most circumstances)	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Possible (might occur at some time)	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely (occurs only in unusual circumstances)	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare (possible but not expected to occur)	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Where an activity is assessed to carry a risk rating of "High" or "Medium", measures must be considered in the risk assessment that assist in reducing the likelihood of a risk occurring with a view to, where possible, reducing the residual risk rating. A residual risk rating of "High" or "Medium" in relation to activities involving working with children is prima facie unacceptable and any activity that produces this result must be suspended and referred to the Elders for review. The Elders may decide to allow the activity to continue but must weigh up the risks versus the benefits of the activity in making this decision.

Risk Management Strategy

8. RIVERLIFE's Child Protection Risk Management Strategy exists to ensure the above risks are appropriately managed and mitigated. The strategy includes:

- (a) The creation and nurturing of a culture of child safety within **RIVERLIFE** through the commitment to that culture by its leadership, through understanding and advocating **RIVERLIFE's** Working With Children Policy and Procedures;
- (b) Defining **RIVERLIFE's** Working With Children Policy;
- (c) Establishing **RIVERLIFE's** Working With Children Procedures, including roles and responsibilities that can be directly aligned to the management and mitigation of the above risks. This will include but will not be limited to:
 - i) Procedures for the screening and selection of relevant staff and volunteers;
 - ii) Procedures for receiving and reporting of disclosures of harm; and
 - iii) Procedures for collection, storage, and access to confidential data;
- (d) Establishing and executing a program of **RIVERLIFE's** Working With Children Policy and Procedures training for **RIVERLIFE** leaders, relevant staff, and volunteers;
- (e) Establishing and executing a program of **RIVERLIFE's** Working With Children Policy and Procedures compliance audits;
- (f) Establishing and maintaining a Working With Children Risk Register that also records risk mitigations, incidents, and their treatment and who was involved in the incident and its management; and
- (g) Establishing and executing a regular program of review of **RIVERLIFE's** Working With Children Policy and Procedures with a view to improving their effectiveness.

Part 3

RIVERLIFE's Working With Children Policy

9. **RIVERLIFE's** Working With Children Policy comprises general, preventative, incident management and review components.
10. General Policies are:
 - (a) **RIVERLIFE** will do all in its power to comply with all legislation relevant to 'working with children';
 - (b) All **RIVERLIFE** leaders, relevant staff and volunteers must comply with this document; and
 - (c) Ignorance of the content of this document is not regarded as an acceptable reason for non-compliance with it.
11. Preventative Policies are:
 - (a) Only Blue Card holders are permitted to be involved in providing services directed mainly towards children whilst those children are under the care of **RIVERLIFE**;
 - (b) Screening and selection of relevant staff and volunteers of **RIVERLIFE** must be performed only with strict compliance to the procedures described in this document; and
 - (c) Training in the use of and compliance with this document is mandatory for all leaders, relevant staff and volunteers working with children whilst those children are under the care of **RIVERLIFE**.
12. Incident Management Policies are:
 - (a) All incidences of suspected **Harm** must be reported immediately to the Senior Pastor, or, where relevant, the Chair of Elders;
 - (b) All necessary effort must be taken to protect and care for any child who has suffered any form of harm during or prior to their being under the care of **RIVERLIFE**;
 - (c) All allegations of **Harm** must be managed in accordance with the procedures contained in this document in order to minimise **Harm**; and
 - (d) Only those who need to know will be informed of incidents requiring management in compliance with strict confidentiality requirements.
13. Review Policies are:
 - (a) The Working With Children Procedures will be reviewed and updated as necessary by the the Senior Pastor and Business Manager by 31 March each year as a minimum, or more frequently if necessary or prudent. Liaison with key ministry leaders including the Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry, legislative changes and preceding period experiences will be used with a view to improving effectiveness; and
 - (b) The Working With Children Policies will be reviewed by 31 May each year as a minimum, or more frequently if necessary or prudent, by the Elders with a view to improving overall effectiveness.

Screening, Selection & Appointment

Clauses 14 to 68 apply to **staff and relevant volunteers** that is, paid employees as well as volunteers, contractors, and agents whose usual functions include or are likely to include providing services directed towards children or conducting activities involving children.

Where screening, selection and/or appointment procedures are not followed by staff whose main role is to minister to or supervise Riverlife children or to supervise other staff in that role, disciplinary action will be taken, including possible termination of employment.

Volunteers

14. An application for a **Blue Card** must be made prior to a new volunteer commencing duties. A new volunteer must not commence duties until the application has been made and a current **Blue Card** has been issued to the volunteer, unless the volunteer is exempt from the requirement to hold a **Blue Card**. Where a potential volunteer is considering whether or not to undertake volunteer work with children, that person may attend the relevant ministry as an observer for up to 3 weeks without holding a **Blue Card**, provided that at all times the potential volunteer is supervised by an existing volunteer who holds a valid **Blue Card** and who is not a member of the potential volunteer's family.
15. An application for a new **Blue Card** must be made before an existing volunteer's **Blue Card** has expired. Existing volunteers must not be allowed to continue to work with children until a current **Blue Card** has been issued to the volunteer.

Employees

16. An application for a **Blue Card** must be made prior to a new employee commencing work. New employees must not commence work until the application has been made and a current **Blue Card** has been issued to the employee.
17. An application for a new **Blue Card** must be made before an existing employee's **Blue Card** has expired. Existing employees must not be allowed to continue to work with children until a current **Blue Card** has been issued to the employee.

Blue Card linked to Riverlife

18. Once a volunteer or employee has received their **Blue Card**, they must provide the relevant information to Riverlife to enable Riverlife to be linked to their **Blue Card**.

Persons legally entitled to hold an Exemption Card

19. Persons entitled to hold an **Exemption Card** under **The Act** must continue to hold a current and valid **Exemption Card**. In such cases, any reference to a **Blue Card** in this policy shall be read as a reference to an **Exemption Card**. An **Exemption Card** must be renewed before it expires for the person to be allowed to continue working with children. Once a volunteer or employee has received their **Exemption Card**, they must provide the relevant information to Riverlife to enable Riverlife to be linked to their **Exemption Card**.

Withdrawal of screening authority

20. Where a person withdraws their consent to screening under a **Blue Card** application, that person cannot commence or continue to work with children. If a person withdraws their consent, all relevant leaders must be advised of such withdrawal and those leaders must take any reasonable steps that ensure the safety of children.

Recording of Blue Card information

21. The Business Manager (or nominee) is responsible for ensuring the timely and accurate recording of information relating to active **Blue Cards** on the **Church** database.

Agreement to comply with policies and codes

22. Before commencing employment, **staff and relevant volunteers** must be provided with a copy of this policy including the Code of Conduct and must provide written acknowledgement that they have read the policy and understand it's requirements.

Application process – obligations of applicant

23. All **staff and relevant volunteers** must undergo the following application process:
 - (a) Submit an application (see Schedule 3);
 - (b) Agree to apply for a new **Blue Card** or supply details regarding an existing **Blue Card** in accordance with the processes outlined in this policy;
 - (c) provide the relevant information to Riverlife to enable Riverlife to be linked to their **Blue Card**;
 - (d) Where the applicant has not been attending the **Church** for at least two years, provide the name and telephone numbers of at least two referees;
 - (e) Attend an interview with the relevant ministry leader or Business Manager (see Schedule 4); and
 - (f) Where the applicant is offered and accepts a position involving working with children, sign an agreement (see Schedule 5) including an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct (see Schedule 1).

Application process – obligations of RIVERLIFE

24. Where a person makes an application to work with children;

- (a) Where the applicant has not been attending the **Church** for at least two years, the relevant ministry leader must contact the applicant's referees and complete a record of the reference check (see Schedule 6);
- (b) If it is determined that an interview should take place, the relevant ministry leader or other authorised **Church** nominee must interview the applicant to ascertain the suitability of the applicant to work with children;
- (c) The relevant ministry leader may make further enquiries about the applicant as a result of reviewing the written application or interviewing the applicant;
- (d) The relevant ministry leader may decide that an applicant should not be appointed to a position to work with children, irrespective of whether a positive **Blue Card** notice has been received by the applicant; and
- (e) Work with the person to ensure the relevant information has been provided by them to enable Riverlife to be linked to their **Blue Card**.

Appointment process

- 25. Where an applicant is offered a position involving working with children, the following steps must be undertaken;
 - (a) The person must be provided with induction training as outlined this policy;
 - (b) The person must sign an agreement (see Schedule 5) including an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct (see Schedule 1); and
 - (c) The person's **Blue Card** details must be entered into the **RIVERLIFE** database.

Compliance

Guidelines for Involvement with Children

- 26. All **staff and relevant volunteers** must comply with the Code of Conduct (see Schedule 1a) while being involved with children and must report breaches of the Code of Conduct, instances of Harm, accidents, and incidents in accordance with this policy.
- 27. The leaders of age-based ministries involving school aged children (eg prep, junior primary, senior primary, junior high school, and senior high school) will develop Codes of Conduct that children in those ministries are expected to follow, based on the principles outlined in Schedule 1b and using varied language, where necessary, that is appropriate for the age level of each ministry. Relevant staff and volunteers will explain the expected standard of behaviour to the children.

Monitoring Blue Cards

28. The Business Manager (or nominee) must review the **Blue Card** Register regularly as follows:
- (a) **Monthly - Blue Cards** are still current;
 - (b) **Monthly** – Leaders of ministries where any Blue Cards are due to expire within the next month are advised accordingly; and
 - (c) Annually at a minimum - All **staff and relevant volunteers** are included in the register.

Stolen or lost cards

29. If a **Blue Card** is lost or stolen,
Staff and relevant volunteers must notify **The Agency** and the **Church** leadership (or its nominee) as soon as possible but in any event within seven (7) days of the card being lost or stolen.

Criminal Convictions - obligations of staff and relevant volunteers

30. If **any staff and relevant volunteers** have any changes to their criminal history, they must:
- (a) Notify **The Agency** immediately;
 - (b) Notify the Business Manager (or nominee) immediately;
 - (c) Stand down from their position until they receive a new **Blue Card**.
31. If any **staff and relevant volunteers** are charged with a criminal offence or are listed as a respondent in a domestic violence application, they must advise the Business Manager (or nominee) of the charge or application within seven days and must thereafter inform the Business Manager (or nominee) about every development in the case.

Criminal Convictions - obligations of Business Manager or nominee

32. As soon as the Business Manager (or nominee) receives notification or otherwise becomes aware of a change in criminal history of or the issue of a domestic violence order against **any staff and relevant volunteers** (other than a disqualifying offence dealt with in clause 33) the person must be suspended from all ministries involving children until they receive a new **Blue Card**, at which time the person may recommence their position if the church leadership approves such resumption. If a negative notice is received, the person cannot apply, start, or continue in their position.

Criminal ‘Charges’ for disqualifying offences pending conviction or acquittal

33. If **any staff and relevant volunteers** are merely ‘charged’ with a disqualifying offence (as defined in Schedule 7) the following procedure must apply;
- (a) The person charged or the Business Manager (or nominee) must notify **The Agency**;
 - (b) The person charged cannot apply, start, or continue to work in the **Church** ministries involving children;
 - (c) The relevant ministry leader or Business Manager (or nominee) must suspend the person charged from all ministries involving children. The person’s employment cannot be terminated solely or mainly because their **Blue Card** has been suspended.
 - (d) If a new **Blue Card** is later received from **The Agency**, the person can be re-employed in ministries involving children.
 - (e) If a negative notice is received, then the person cannot continue to work in **Church** ministries involving children.

Negative Notice

34. If a person is convicted of a serious offence or **The Agency** cancels their **Blue Card** and issues a negative notice to the person that person must immediately cease working with children.

Breaches

35. A breach of this policy is any action or inaction by anyone who fails to comply with any clause in this policy. If **any staff and relevant volunteers** breach the requirements set out in this document, the relevant ministry leader, the Business Manager, and the Senior Pastor will be advised, and the following will apply:
- (a) Where the person has breached legal requirements under **The Act, The Agency** will be notified.
 - (b) If the breach falls outside the scope of the Act, the Senior Pastor will determine what steps should be taken and the following will apply;
 - (i) The Senior Pastor will follow biblical principles with a view to protecting the children in our care, respecting the person responsible for the breach, and bringing closure to the matter in a manner that is gracious and dignified; and
 - (ii) Any decision of the Senior Pastor may be referred by the offending person to the Elders for review. The decision of the Elders will be final; and
 - (iii) Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include providing closer supervision, further education and training, disciplinary procedures or reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.
36. Parents, carers, and guardians should be actively encouraged to share any concerns they have about the care of their children during any RIVERLIFE ministry with a member of the church leadership. In the event that those concerns are not handled by RIVERLIFE to their satisfaction, information will be provided as to how

these concerns can be addressed externally to Blue Card Services, or where relevant, to the Queensland Police Service or other appropriate agency.

37. Where any breach by relevant staff or volunteers occurs that affects children, parents, carers, and guardians of those children will be advised by the Senior Pastor (or his delegated authority).
38. Where children are consistently not following the Code of Conduct as explained to them, or where any breaches of the Code of Conduct are considered by relevant staff or volunteers to be serious, parent, carers and guardians of those children will be advised. Possible consequences of breaches including suspension or exclusion of relevant children from attending the RIVERLIFE ministry.

Other procedures

Personal & Medical Information

Staff and Volunteers involved with Children

39. All **staff and relevant volunteers** must supply personal information as required, as part of their application. They must also supply any medical information of which they believe Riverlife should be aware. Personal and medical information must be kept secure and confidential. This information will be accessible to relevant ministry leaders as required and in the event of a medical concern. Relevant ministry leaders will be informed of the location of personal and medical information and must therefore understand that this information has limited confidentiality status.

Children attending RIVERLIFE

40. Except in the case of one-off attendances by a child, all **Parents or Guardians** will be asked to supply personal and medical information for their children in respect of any events that will be held away from the Riverlife premises and for any purpose, of which they believe Riverlife should be aware (see Schedule 7). All information supplied will be kept in a secure, confidential place.

Training for Those Working with Children

41. Training within the **Church** will be provided. It will be a requirement that all **Church** workers working in activities involving children attend this training or confirm they have read this policy document and have viewed a recording of the training material, both on commencing work and on an ongoing basis.

The focus of the training will be that participants will gain:

- (a) A vision for creating a 'safe place' for children and their families and for those who work with them.
- (b) A general understanding of the issues of Child protection and of the policies and procedures adopted by **RIVERLIFE**.
- (c) An appreciation of the roles and responsibilities within **RIVERLIFE** and an understanding of any guidelines for those working with children in the relevant ministry area.
- (d) An understanding of Work Health & Safety.
- (e) An understanding of procedures for responding when **Harm** is disclosed.

- (f) An understanding for procedures involving reporting **Harm**, accidents, and incidents.

Annual Risk Assessment of All Church Activities Involving Children

42. In order to strengthen the safe practices within the **Church** an annual review of activities undertaken by the **Church** for children must be carried out.
43. A risk assessment must be undertaken and the risk assessment proforma in Schedule 8 must be completed for each activity undertaken by the **Church** for children.
44. Where the risk assessment for an activity result in a risk rating of “High” or “Medium”, the risk assessment proforma **must** identify measures that will be undertaken to help to prevent the risk occurring and assign responsibilities to relevant staff and volunteers to each mitigation measure. Mitigation measures **may** also be identified where the assessed level of risk is “Low”.

Complaints involving Harm – child sexual offence

45. Under Section 229BC of the Queensland Criminal Code, where an adult becomes aware of a child sexual offence committed against a child who was under 16 years old at the time (or against a child with an impairment of the mind who was under 18 years old at the time) but fails to report the matter to a police officer without a designated reasonable excuse, that adult is guilty of an offence punishable by up to 3 years imprisonment.
46. A full summary of Section 229BC is outlined in Schedule 9. This law applies to all adults and not just **staff and relevant volunteers**.
47. For disclosures of a child sexual offence to a person in their capacity as **staff and relevant volunteers**, whilst an adult is required to report directly to a police officer (rather than to the Senior Pastor as required regarding other instances of Harm), Riverlife’s preference is that the Senior Pastor be engaged to assist with the process so that adequate support can be provided to the **staff and relevant volunteers**.
48. In any event, staff and relevant volunteers must still complete a Harm Report Form (Schedule 10) regarding disclosures of a child sexual offence to them in their capacity as **staff and relevant volunteers**.

Complaints involving Harm – other than child sexual offence

49. “**Harm**” to a **Child** is defined as any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the **Child’s** physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. If any **staff and relevant volunteers** become aware of incidence of **Harm** or a breach of the Code of Conduct, the incidence or breach must be reported in accordance with this policy and with Schedule 9.
50. **Staff and relevant volunteers** must be familiar with the details outlined in Schedule 9 regarding the recognition and reporting of **Harm**, including:
- (a) When it is reasonable to suspect **Harm**;
 - (b) What to do if **Harm** is suspected;
 - (c) The flowchart to follow when reporting **Harm**;
 - (d) How to respond to a **Child** who discloses **Harm**;

- (e) Behavioural & physical indicators associated with sexual abuse;
 - (f) Behavioural & physical indicators associated with physical, emotional abuse and neglect; and
 - (g) Indicators that may point to a perpetrator of **Child** abuse.
51. **RIVERLIFE** will utilise a **Harm** Report Form (Schedule 10) to document observed or suspected **Harm**. The staff or relevant volunteer will, jointly with their relevant ministry leader, record factual information on the **Harm** Report Form and discuss this with the Senior Pastor. The completed **Harm** Report Form will be kept in a central **RIVERLIFE** confidential file. Suspected Harm has a lower standard than Harm and would include cases where **staff and relevant volunteers** believe Harm may have occurred and cases where **staff and relevant volunteers** are not sure if the effect is “detrimental” or not. Instances of suspected Harm must be reported, and it is the Senior Pastor’s role to determine whether Harm has occurred.
 52. Except for allegations involving the Senior Pastor, if any **staff and relevant volunteers** become aware of incidence of **Harm** (or suspected **Harm**) or a breach of the Code of Conduct, they must report the matter to the Senior Pastor, following the process outlined in Schedule 9 where relevant.
 53. In respect of allegations involving the Senior Pastor, if any **staff and relevant volunteers** become aware of incidence of **Harm** (or suspected **Harm**) or a breach of the Code of Conduct, they must report the matter to the Chair of Elders, following the process outlined in Schedule 9 where relevant.
 54. If staff or relevant volunteers are concerned that there may be a conflict of interest due to family relationships or other reasons, they should complete the Harm Report themselves and discuss it directly with the Senior Pastor (or, where clause 53 applies, the Chair of Elders) rather than involving the relevant ministry leader.
 55. The Senior Pastor (or the Chair of Elders in relation to clause 53) must decide whether **Harm** has occurred, taking the following into consideration:
 - (a) The severity of the allegation;
 - (b) The likelihood that the report is false, vexatious, or malicious; and
 - (c) Whether the victim is at any danger of future **Harm**;
 56. If the Senior Pastor (or Chair of Elders where applicable) is unable to make a determination, legal advice must be sought.
 57. If the Senior Pastor determines that **Harm** has been caused by a family member of the **Child** or that the **Parents or Guardians** of the **Child** are failing to act to protect the **Child** from **Harm**, then the Senior Pastor must report the matter to the Department of Child Safety.
 58. If the Senior Pastor determines that the **Child** has been the victim of a crime, then the Senior Pastor must report the matter to the police.
 59. Where the person who is the victim or alleged victim is at least 18 years old at the time an allegation is made, there is no instance of a “child in need of protection” as defined in the Child Protection Act, notwithstanding that the allegation may relate to a time when the victim or alleged victim was a Child. In such a case, there is no prima facie need to report to the police or the Department of Child Safety. However, if the Senior Pastor, acting on legal advice, concludes that, given the particular set of circumstances, there is a reasonable likelihood that another Child or Children may be at risk of suffering Harm, then the Senior Pastor must report the matter to the police or relevant agency.

60. Where a person is charged, or convicted of a criminal offence, the procedures in clauses 30 to 33 also apply.
61. **RIVERLIFE** will endeavour to appropriately support **staff and relevant volunteers** through any investigative process.
62. **RIVERLIFE** encourages all **staff and relevant volunteers** involved in working with children to maintain current knowledge of **Child** protection and **Child** abuse issues.

Crisis Management Policy

63. **RIVERLIFE's** Crisis Management Policy outlines processes that must be followed when RIVERLIFE staff become aware that someone is a risk of harming themselves or others in the near future. **RIVERLIFE** staff have been trained about the processes to follow in such situations.
64. If volunteers working with children become aware that a child is at risk of harming themselves or others in the near future, they should immediately let a **RIVERLIFE** staff member know the details, so that the staff member can assist them.

Reporting of Accidents & Incidents

65. Accidents & incidents must be documented (Schedules 11 & 12) in situations where the matter is serious, an ambulance has been called, or the person has been taken to a doctor or hospital. In situations of a less serious nature the **Church** worker will use their discretion about completing an Accident or Incident Report form.

Record Keeping

66. The Commonwealth Privacy Act established standards about how personal information may be collected, used, and accessed.
- (a) All records pertaining to **staff and relevant volunteers** will be stored confidentially and securely, including any application forms, referee forms, letters from **The Agency** regarding the applicant's 'suitability' status and other information deemed necessary.
 - (b) Access to these records will be limited to staff approved by the Business Manager or Senior Pastor. The information on these records has been collected to assist the assessment process for an applicant's suitability for working with children. **Staff and relevant volunteers** who wish to know what is in their file must approach the Business Manager or Senior Pastor.
 - (c) Medical information will be kept in a confidential, secure place. This information is accessible to ministry team leaders in the event of a medical concern. **Staff and relevant volunteers** must be informed of this so that they understand that this information has 'limited' confidentiality status.
 - (d) All matters pertaining to **Child** protection concerns within the **Church** will be stored confidentially in a secure place. Access to this information will be restricted to the Business Manager, Senior Pastor, approved staff and relevant internal or external advisors.
- 67 A register will be kept for all **staff and relevant volunteers** containing the following information:
- Name & Date of birth
 - Whether blue card is required
 - Card type (employee, volunteer)
 - Date application submitted & blue card issued
 - Blue card number & expiry date
 - Date renewal form to be submitted (2 months prior to expiry)
 - Whether blue card status has changed

Communication & Support

- 68 Strategies for ensuring that all relevant people are aware of and compliant with this policy and that this policy is kept up to date are as follows:
- (a) Training within the **Church** will be provided – see clause 41
 - (b) This policy will be reviewed at least annually – see clause 13
 - (c) Activities undertaken by the **Church** for children will be reviewed annually– see clause 42
 - (d) The following will be displayed on the website of the **Church**
 - that the **Church** has a Working with Children Policy
 - the **Church's** Statement of Commitment regarding children
 - an offer to supply a copy of the **Church's** Working with Children Policy without charge on request.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT (example)

1. **Staff and Volunteers must respect persons & property and acknowledges they:**
 - a) Must be responsive and courteous to others & avoid improper use of their position;
 - b) Must avoid discriminatory or harassing treatment of others;
 - c) Must not use inappropriate or crude language in the presence or, or towards others;
 - d) Must show integrity at all times and act in a manner consistent with a **Church** representative; and
 - e) Must respect privacy and protect confidential information of others, subject to the requirement to comply with the Working with Children Policy & Procedures document and to comply with any other obligations under the law.
2. **The Church is committed to maintaining a drug free environment and the staff and volunteers acknowledge that the use, sale of or being under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs (other than properly prescribed and administered drugs) will result in dismissal and may result in a report being made to the police.**
3. **In relation to behaviour Staff and Volunteers acknowledge that they:**
 - a) Must not be alone with a child where activity cannot be seen by other staff or volunteers;
 - b) Must not take a Child to their home or visit a Child in their home unless consent from the child's **Parent or Guardian** is received;
 - c) Must not make any sexual or crude innuendos such as suggestive looks, comments, jokes, sounds, display visuals, words, acts or gestures towards any child, staff member or volunteer;
 - d) Must not touch, hug, or kiss any person in a way that is inappropriate to the situation;
 - e) Must not drive a Child unaccompanied unless in extreme circumstances and after gaining permission from child's **Parents or Guardians** and the **Church** leader in a direct position of responsibility;
 - f) Must not commit any sexual offence, sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a Child (including a Child pornography offence) or any assault, ill treatment of or neglect of a Child or any behaviours that is reasonably likely to cause psychological or other **Harm** to a child; and
 - g) Must not attempt to do any of the things described above or do any act in preparation of doing any of the things described above.
4. **In relation to pastoral care Staff and Volunteers acknowledge that they:**
 - a) Will not step beyond their level of competency or training;
 - b) Will not encourage children to keep secrets from their **Parents or Guardians** or other leaders;
 - c) Will not provide pastoral care for members of the opposite sex, recognising the validity of normal conversations;
 - d) Will always provide pastoral care in an open area, never in a closed room;
 - e) Will only console (if a Child is distressed and needs to be consoled) as same gender of child, with the permission of the Child and with another Staff and volunteer within sight; and
 - f) If a Child makes a disclosure regarding any kind of **Harm**, this disclosure must be divulged to relevant **Church** leadership forthwith, but must not be revealed to any person, except as required by this policy or the law.
5. **In relation to pornography and sexuality Staff and Volunteers acknowledges that they have a commitment to striving for purity, and to that end:**
 - a) Recognise it is inappropriate to access or view pornography;
 - b) Will not display, discuss, or distribute pornography to other adults or children;
 - c) Sexuality of staff must be under the guidelines and Lordship of Christ; and
 - d) Will dress modestly and not sexually suggestive, insulting or using slogans contrary to Christian principles.
6. **In relation to workplace health & safety, Staff and Volunteers acknowledge that they:**
 - a) Must not put themselves or others in danger;
 - b) Must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with /misuse anything in the interests of safety;
 - c) Must follow safe work practices an encourage others to do the same;
 - d) Staff must use all safety devices including knowing the locations of phones, first aid kits and fire extinguishers and the identity of the first aid attendant in their area; and
 - e) Staff must report all incidents or accidents.
7. **If there is a breach of this Code of Conduct by any person, Staff and Relevant Volunteers agree to:**
 - a) Report any suspected breaches of this Code of Conduct or of the law to the relevant **Church** leadership immediately;
 - b) Take careful written records of any suspected breaches;
 - c) Not make a report which is false, vexatious, or malicious.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN (example)

Children who attend RIVERLIFE ministries will agree to the following principles:

- I will respect other children, young people, and adults
- I will follow and obey the rules
- I will listen and receive instructions
- I will control my temper and not be rude
- I will have a say about what I am involved in
- I will speak up if I am worried or concerned about something
- I will not be a bully or accept any bullying that I see
- I will show care and kindness to others
- I will not intimidate others.
- I will stay within the boundary of the playing/activity area.
- I will take care of toys and equipment.
- I will not use bad language
- I will not be mean
- I will not bring inappropriate games, toys, or devices to activities. If I do, I recognise that leaders have the right to remove those things from me and return them at the end of the session activity.

Children who attend RIVERLIFE ministries have the right to:

- Be safe and happy in my chosen activity.
- Be listened to.
- Be respected and treated fairly.
- Be protected from abuse by other member or outside sources.
- Be believed.
- Ask for help.

DEFINITIONS

The Agency	Blue Card Services, which manages the blue card system
Authorisation to determine valid Blue Card	A form from The Agency confirming that the person has obtained a valid Blue Card and listing the name of the organisation or business who originally forwarded the application to The Agency .
Blue Card	means the card issued by The Agency after an application is received, verifying the suitability for working with children. A positive notice always accompanies a Blue Card and accordingly where the term ' Blue Card ' is used in this policy document, this also refers to the positive notice issued by The Agency .
Exemption Card	means the card issued by The Agency to a police officer or registered teacher who is exempt from holding a Blue Card but who works for RIVERLIFE as staff and relevant volunteers .
Child	is an individual under 18 years <small>(Child Protection Act 1999)</small> .
Church or RIVERLIFE	means Riverlife Baptist Church and also includes the associated ministries of the Church .
Relevant staff and volunteers	refers to paid employees, volunteers, contractors, and agents whose usual functions include or are likely to include providing services directed mainly towards children or conducting activities mainly involving children.
Harm	to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. <small>(Child Protection Act 1999)</small>
Parent or Guardian	means the child's mother, father, or someone else having or exercising parental responsibility for the child. <small>(Child Protection Act 1999)</small>
The Act	means the <i>Working with Children (Risk Management & Screening) Act 2000</i> .

Confidential Volunteer Application Form (example)

SECTION A: All applicants

Name: _____

Male/Female

Birth date: _____

Marital status: Single / Married

Email: _____

Home Phone: _____

Mobile: _____

Address: _____

Occupation: _____

Emergency contact: 1 _____

Number/s : _____

Private Health Fund: Yes/No Medicare No _____

Do you have any health or lifestyle issues that RIVERLIFE should be aware of as you carry out your duties, or that could impair you as you volunteer? (Eg; back problems, asthma, allergies, anxiety attacks, etc.) Please include necessary medications, what to do and who to contact (doctor and relatives etc).

Are there any current or previously circumstances that may be reasonably expected to prevent you from becoming a volunteer (eg substance abuse, mental health issues, being found guilty of a criminal offence, being listed as the respondent in any domestic violence or similar application or order?)

Do you have a current first aid certificate? Yes / No Expires / /

List any churches/organizations that you have been involved with in the last 5 years:

Have you made a decision to follow Jesus? Yes / No / Not sure

How long have you attended RIVERLIFE? _____

Blue Card Number: _____ *** Applied Yes/No Expires __/____

*** Please note that if you are a disqualified person you cannot apply for a blue card.

*** If you do not have a blue card, please complete an application and submit this to the RIVERLIFE office.

*** **If your blue card was obtained elsewhere, you will need to fill in an authority ('link') form so that RIVERLIFE receives notification of your status.**

Preferred Age Group:

Splash (1-4yr olds) Kindy/Prep Grade 1/Grade 2 Grade 3/Grade 4
Grade 5/6 Girls Brigade ROCK Foundations
Check in Team Kids band

SECTION B: For all applicants excluding Check-in Team

What other ministry areas are you serving in?

Please list any previous ministry experience:

Do you have any specific dietary requirements?

SECTION C: All applicants

REFEREE

Referees should not include a family member. It is acceptable that the referee be a church leader. You may be asked to provide additional referees following an interview, if required.

1st referee's Name: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Relationship to you: _____

2nd referee's Name: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Relationship to you: _____

I authorise the referee and organisations above and any other referees I provide to give you information they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with children and release them from any liability for providing this information.

I authorise the church leadership to make enquiries and obtain information relevant to this application.

Covenant

I declare that the details I have supplied are true and correct and understand that whilst this document will remain confidential and will be stored confidentially, some information will be accessible to ministry team leaders for use when relevant and that the information therefore has limited confidentiality status.

I understand that if circumstances change and the information I have provided is no longer up to date it is my responsibility to provide updated information.

I am committed to serving voluntarily as part of the RIVERLIFE Kids Church Team. I will work under their leadership and will support them. I will make every effort to come prepared and on time and to let RIVERLIFE know in advance when this is not possible.

I will maintain my relationship with Christ through prayer, reading His word and attending church. I will maintain an ethical, moral, and honest lifestyle in accordance with scripture.

I agree to undertake ongoing training as required and to abide by the RIVERLIFE Code of Conduct.

I authorise the relevant ministry leaders, in the event of an emergency, to obtain at my expense, any medical or similar services considered necessary by the leaders.

I agree not to use or disclose any Confidential Information that I become aware of at any time, whether or not I am still working as a volunteer, without RIVERLIFE’s prior written permission, unless I am legally obliged to do so by a court, commission, or tribunal.

I agree not to (and not to permit anybody else to where reasonably possible) seek to obtain confidential information to which I have not been granted access, nor to remove confidential information from RIVERLIFE’s premises.

Printed name _____

Signature _____ Date / /

Returned email documents will be assumed as signed documents

You may terminate your application at any time

Please notify us of any change in details as soon as possible

Acknowledgment statement

I hereby confirm that I have received the policy of “Working with Children” and Leader training guide. I have perused the documents and am aware of the contents.

PRINTED NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

RETURN OF EMAIL IS CONSIDERED A SIGNED DECLARATION

Application sign off

Office use only (to be completed by ministry team leader)

Interview completed & attached?	Yes	/	N/a
Reference check/s completed & attached?	Yes	/	N/a
Applicant name read out at a weekly staff meeting?	Yes	/	No
Code of Conduct given to applicant?	Yes	/	No
Applicant has been offered and accepted the position and has signed the covenant and agreed to abide by the code of conduct?	Yes	/	No
Application for Blue Card completed and sent?	Yes	/	N/a
Where Blue Card already held, 'link' form completed?	Yes	/	N/a

NOTE: All answers above must be Yes or N/a before applicant can be approved.

Applicant accepted as Kids Ministry Volunteer (commencement as volunteer is subject to Blue Card being received, where relevant)	Yes	/	No
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Printed name _____

Signature _____ Date / /