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# SafePraxeis Policy

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**We affirm that all people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected, and have their views and opinions valued at all times.** Our mandate comes directly from God. God identified classes of vulnerable people who were to be protected and given special care and treatment in society because of their powerlessness (e.g. Ex 22:21-22, Deut 10:17-19, Jer 22:2-4, James 1:27).

Protection of vulnerable people is our responsibility. This policy takes into consideration all vulnerable people in our churches, whether they be children, young people, elderly, those with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), Indigenous and the emotionally and or spiritually vulnerable (i.e. those under the authority of church leaders).

We also live in a country that legislates for people's safety, particularly in the area of child protection. Our policy has been developed to help us live out our Biblical mandate and our responsibilities under VIC legislation. We acknowledge that we have workers and teams operating all around the world however due to Melbourne being the home base for systems operations, we are choosing to comply with VIC legislation.

Praxeis has zero tolerance of all forms of child abuse (physical, emotional and psychological, neglect, racial, cultural or religious) and we are committed to children's best interests and keeping them safe. **We aim to create environments where all children regardless of gender, cultural background, religion or disability can encounter the love of Jesus through prayer and the Word in a safe and welcoming space.**

## Our Policy Aims:

- To minimise the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power within the church.
- To ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and ministry misconduct are handled in a consistent, unbiased and thorough manner.
- To ensure that all people are respected and valued, irrespective of their gender, age, country of origin, cultural heritage, socio-economic background or ability.
- To ensure that workers and Praxeis activities are safe.

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Who must comply with this Policy:

This policy applies to the following persons, referred to in this document collectively as “workers”:

- i. Supported workers;
- ii. Volunteer workers;
- iii. Finance and Administration;
- iv. All members of the Board.

Scope of the Policy:

This Policy covers the following:

- i. Worker screening and selection;
- ii. Standards of behaviour expected of staff and volunteers (Code of Conduct);
- iii. Prevention of harm through creating safe environments;
- iv. Minimisation of harm through procedures for dealing with and reporting allegations of harm;
- v. Risk management processes for high risk activities and special events.

We commit to:

**1. Safe recruitment of workers.**

- We will screen all prospective workers to Praxeis, before they are appointed.
- All workers will have to have a current Working with Children Check or state equivalent.
- All potential workers will have had an active relationship with a Praxeis worker/leader prior to recruitment.

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## **2. Adequate training of Workers.**

- We require that all workers attend a Safe Church Awareness Workshop or local equivalent<sup>1</sup> within their first year of ministry and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.
- We require that team leaders include promotion and awareness of our safe church policies and procedures to their team.
- Supported workers training costs will be paid for by the worker's ministry funds accounts. Application can be made to Praxeis for the covering of volunteer Workers training costs.

## **3. Continued coaching of workers.**

- We commit to ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for all workers.
- All workers will agree to follow the Praxeis Code of Conduct.

## **4. Responding to allegations of harm (abuse) and serious ministry misconduct.**

- All workers will report disclosures of suspicions of child abuse, according to state legislation by using the procedures in the SafePraxeis Handbook.
- Where a worker or leader has an allegation of ministry misconduct made against them, the grievance will be handled using the procedure in the SafePraxeis Handbook.

## **5. Emotionally safe environments.**

- We will offer participants, including children, the opportunity to provide input in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas, and encouraging participation in all areas of the life of the church, as far as is sensible and practical.
- We will obtain appropriate information relating to those we are engaging with, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.

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<sup>1</sup> A local equivalent for SafeChurch Awareness Workshop would need to cover: Foundations and principles of SafeChurch; Protecting vulnerable people- definitions, indicators and response procedures; Training, recruiting and supervising Safe Leaders; How to establish and run Safe Environments for Church Ministry Programs.

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## **6. Safe physical environments.**

- All workers will follow the Safe Church Procedures for Safe Physical Environments.
- Leaders will exercise a duty of care through the use of forms, checklists and templates in the Safe Church manual for establishment and maintenance of safe environments in our church.

## **7. Safety Officer and Team.**

- A Safety Officer and team will be appointed to bring Safe Church Awareness recommendations to Praxeis management for consideration and adoption and oversee the implementation of Safe Church policies and procedures.

## **8. Approval for new Ministry/Access Strategies.**

- Workers are to engage in an approval process to implement new ministry/access strategies or for significant expansion of previous strategies. Workers are to submit their plans to their respective coach for ministry approval and to the National Director/Business manager for management approval.

### Consequences for breach of this Policy

A breach of failure to comply with the Policy or the Code of Conduct may give rise to the following measures:

- Meeting with regional leader of National Director to discuss breach or lack of compliance
- An internal investigation occurring, facilitated by an independent investigator (not affiliated with Praxeis)
- Formal warning being issued
- Report being made to external agencies, i.e. Professional Associations and/or Police
- Close monitoring and live supervision
- Further education being required before recommencing in role
- Any other performance management strategy deemed appropriate
- Immediate suspension
- Immediate termination of Praxeis membership
- Immediate termination