Zion Bishan Bible-Presbyterian Church

Children & Young Persons Safety Policy

Updated September 2026

1. CHURCH DETAILS

1.1 Name: Zion Bishan Bible-Presbyterian Church (hereafter, “The Church”)

1.2 Address: 4 Bishan Street 13, Singapore 579792

1.3 Tel No: 6353 8081

1.4 Office Email Address: office@zionbishan.org.sg

Church Safeguarding Officers

- *Pastor Danny Chua*, Safeguarding Pastoral Staff: danny@zionbishan.org.sg
- *Ms. Deborah Yang-Liew*, Safeguarding Team Member: deborahliew@gmail.com
- *Elder Chen Ching Hong*, Safeguarding Team Elder: ch.chen@yahoo.com.sg

If you are concerned about the behavior of a leader or hear allegations of misbehavior and/or abuse, you may reach out for help via our Whistle-Blowing channel (refer to Annex A).

2. PURPOSE

2.1 Safeguarding the welfare of children and young people committed to the Church's care is crucial. In fact, this is the responsibility of the whole Church for the whole Church.

2.2 Care of children and young people is primarily provided by the Church's pastors, children and youth ministry staff, the Children's Discipleship (CD) teachers, CD assistant teachers, the Youth Discipleship (YD) leaders and other youth leaders (such as the Youth Fellowship Committee and small group leaders).

2.3 This document sets out the safety policy for children and young people. All staff and volunteers involved in the Church's activities catering to children and youth are strictly required to adhere by the document's guidelines.

How this policy applies:

- All volunteers are to be familiar with this Child and Young Person safety policy.
- All volunteers and Staff/Leader/Lay Leader involved in ministries to children and/or young persons must re-affirm their declaration and refresh their familiarity with this policy (along with the Church's Code of Conduct) at the beginning of each calendar year, or sooner if the policy is updated.

If you have any concern for a child or in relation to any child protection matter, please speak immediately to one of the pastors of the Church, the children/youth ministry staff, or the Safeguarding Team (contact details provided below).

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions are adopted:

Child	Any individual below the age of 13, including infants (aged 0 to 18 months) and toddlers (aged 18 months to 3 years)
Young person	Any individual below the age of 21
Volunteer	Individuals who of their own free will offer to help, lead or provide care for children and young people during the Church's activities. These do not include individuals who do not have direct interaction with a child or a young person (for example, an individual who is providing logistical assistance to a ministry is not included in this policy)
Staff	A paid employee of the Church (including the pastor, the ministry staff and apprentice, the administrative staff and interns)

4. COMMITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

Volunteers and Staff / Leader / Lay Leader who have committed to serve in the children or youth ministry activities should comply by the following good practices:

4.1 Screening Procedures

4.1.1 All volunteers involved in teaching Scripture to children or young persons must be communicant members of the church, without exception.

4.1.2 In terms of volunteers in a non-teaching capacity, they should be known and integrated to the congregation for a minimum period of 6 months with regular attendance/involvement before serving with children or youth.

a) Example 1: a non-teaching youth ministry volunteer such as a YF small group leader may not be a communicant member of the church, but may serve in this role as long as he/she is known to the congregation and youth community for a minimum period of 6 months with regular attendance. The added requirement is for parental/guardian affirmation that said volunteer is serving in such a capacity.

b) Example 2: a non-teaching children's ministry volunteer e.g. a CD assistant may not be a communicant member of the church, but may serve in this role as long as he/she is known to the congregation for a minimum period of 6 months with regular attendance. The next guideline (4.1.3) also serves to ensure an added level of relational foundation and screening by the children's ministry team in this case.

4.1.3 Volunteers are interviewed by Staff/Leader/Lay Leader before engaging in work with children and young people. Volunteer lists are reviewed by pastoral leadership.

Children's Ministry	Youth Ministry	Tuition Ministry
Respective Congregational Pastors & Shepherding Teams	Pastor Danny Chua, Jacqueline Ong (Youth Ministry Staff) & Youth Ministry Lay Leaders	Pastor Zhi-Wen, Timothy Ong (Home Missions Staff) & Dns Li Hwee

4.1.4 Volunteers must declare if they have any criminal record/history pertaining to children and young people. If volunteers are found to have criminal record/history pertaining to children and young people, the pastors and ministry staff will convene a meeting to discuss the nature of the past offence, how it may affect his/her service and reassess the volunteer's suitability for service.

4.2 Two-Adult Visibility Principle (previously "Presence of Two or More Volunteers")

4.2.1 As far as possible, do not be alone with a child/young person where your activity cannot be seen. This may mean leaving the doors open in a room or informing another adult on the same premise that a meeting is taking place.

4.2.2 This principle applies across all children and youth ministry settings; a minimum of two adult volunteers/Staff/Leader/Lay Leader is additionally required whenever a child aged 6 or under is present, except in fully public spaces.

4.3 Behaviour of Volunteers and Staff when Dealing with Children & Young People

4.3.1 **Respect:** All children and young people should be treated with respect and dignity appropriate for their age, watching the language, tone of voice and body language that is used in our interactions with them. All volunteers and Staff/Leader/Lay Leader are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct.

4.3.2 **Discipline:** When disciplining children and young people, there should strictly be no physical punishment or verbal abuse. If you need to discipline a child or young person, do so apart from the group and not in front of everyone. Reject the behaviour, not the child/young person, and encourage the child/young person when you notice good behaviour. When you face challenges, do approach the Staff/Leader/Lay Leader for support and guidance.

4.3.3 **Restroom Use**

a) Infants and toddlers: Diapers should be changed preferably by parents or caregivers. Should they not be available, a **female** volunteer/Staff/Leader/Lay Leader should do so in the presence of another volunteer.

b) Pre-school Children: Preschoolers (aged 18 months to 6 years and are toilet trained) should be accompanied by a **female** volunteer to the toilet. Another volunteer should be kept informed of the visit to the toilet. The accompanying volunteer should wait at the entrance of the toilet, and first offer assistance verbally, with minimal & appropriate physical contact only as required. The volunteer may offer assistance to the child only after encouraging the child to handle as many of the processes herself/himself as

possible. The volunteer is to contact the child's parent or caregiver if more physical contact is required – especially about what contact was required (if any).

c) Primary-school-going children: Although most primary-school-going children can visit the toilet independently, our church's practice for these is similar to that for pre-school children (as above in 4.3.3(b)). The reason is for safeguarding and safe behaviour between children visiting the toilet together as well.

4.3.4 **Physical Contact:** Volunteers may engage in safe and appropriate physical contact with children and young people, exercising godly wisdom, such as:

- Brief hugs
- Pats on shoulders or back
- Handshakes
- Hands on shoulders
- Holding hands of children
- Holding hands during prayer

4.3.5 **Inappropriate Physical Contact:** Refrain from inappropriate physical contact with children and young people such as:

- Long hugs / embraces (except when the child/young person is in distress and requires immediate comfort. In such a case, only female volunteers should respond as such)
- Kisses
- Holding and/or placing children over 3 years of age on the lap
- Touching the bottom, genitals or chests of children and young people
- Occupying a bed or any equivalent object with a child or young person
- Tickling a child or young person
- Giving massages to a child/young person or asking for one from a child/young person
- Commenting or complimenting a child/young person's physique or body development
- Giving money to a child or young person
- Any other contact/affection that is unwanted by the child/young person

4.3.6 **Homes:** Do not invite a child or young person to your home alone. Invite a group and always ensure that another adult is in the home. Ensure that the parents are aware of the whereabouts of the child/young person.

4.3.7 **Gifts:** Staff/leaders/volunteers are not encouraged to give special attention or gifts to any particular child/young person. If a child/young person does need extra attention (e.g. due to special learning/emotional needs) care should be taken to ensure visibility, such as rotation of volunteers so that extra attention is provided by multiple individuals/in observable spaces.

4.3.8 **Digital Communications:**

a) In general, Volunteers and Staff/Leader/Lay Leader should not interact with children or youth via digital communications (e.g. personal messaging or social media platform messaging) in ways that create a private or exclusive relationship with them.

b) Do not initiate or accept 1-1 private messages, calls, or video calls with a child. All communication should preferably be with the child's parent/guardian instead, or otherwise be in a group setting, or in the presence and with the knowledge of a parent/guardian or another volunteer.

c) Zoom or other video sessions with children should be co-hosted by at least two volunteers/Staff/Leader/Lay Leader wherever possible. Parents/guardians should know in advance why, when and how their child will be contacted online.

d) Photos or videos of children/young people taken for Church use require parental/guardian awareness, and should not be shared beyond the stated and agreed scope of use.

4.4 Volunteers who are themselves Minors

4.4.1 Youth helpers/junior leaders under the age of 21: parental consent is required for them to serve.

4.4.2 They must not have an unsupervised sole responsibility for younger children.

4.4.3 They must have a known and specified named adult within the same ministry that they report to (this is especially relevant given e.g. Youth or Youth Camp Committee members and Youth Fellowship small-group leaders are often themselves 14–21).

5. SAFEGUARDING RESPONSES

5.1 How do I respond to a child or young person wanting to talk about abuse?

5.1.1 **Listen** and show acceptance of what the child or young person says (even when the story seems unlikely).

5.1.2 **Do not try to investigate** (beyond gathering basic facts of what happened), as you are likely to contaminate any evidence and testimony such that conviction of any guilty abuser can be made impossible.

5.1.3 **Stay calm.**

5.1.4 Look at the child or young person directly.

5.1.5 Tell the child or young person you will need to let someone else know (DO NOT PROMISE CONFIDENTIALITY).

5.1.6 Even when the child or young person had broken a rule or had been delinquent, they are NOT responsible for the abuse.

5.1.7 Never push for information. But inform a Staff/Leader/Lay Leader so that the child or young person can be followed up with. In the event the alleged abuser is a Staff/Leader/Lay Leader, please inform either a member of the Safeguarding Team or any other Staff/Leader/Lay Leader that is trusted.

5.1.8 **Helpful responses:** “You have done the right thing”; “That must have been really hard”; “I am glad you have told me”; “It's not your fault”; “I am sorry this happened to you”; “I will help you”.

5.1.9 **Avoid saying:** “Why didn't you tell anyone?”; “I don't believe it!”; “Are you lying?”; “It's a serious allegation!”

5.2 I am worried that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse or neglect by someone in a family, household or community. What should I do?

5.2.1 **Identification**

a) Physical abuse: note any injuries that is not consistent with the explanation given for them, or any injuries that occur in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc (such as the forearm).

b) Sexual abuse: any allegations made by a child or young person should be taken seriously. Sexually provocative or seductive behaviour of a child or young person is sometimes an indicator of possible sexual abuse. All of such reports should be made known to the Staff/Leader/Lay Leader involved in the activity.

c) Emotional abuse: regression of mood or behaviour, particularly when a child becomes withdrawn or clingy. Depression, aggression and severe anxiety are also sometimes displayed.

d) When unsure, always speak with the Staff/Leader/Lay Leader responsible for the activity and seek clarification.

5.2.2 **Escalate:** Contact the Staff/Leader/Lay Leader responsible for the ministry or a pastor IMMEDIATELY. Speak only to that one person and no one else, even in confidence. Staff/Leader/Lay Leader who observe or receive any concerns should inform a pastor or member of the Safeguarding Team.

5.2.3 **Reporting:** The Church will consider the circumstances and where appropriate contact the Ministry of Social and Family Development Protective Service, National Anti-Violence and Sexual Harassment Helpline and/or other relevant authorities. Do not try to investigate the claim.

5.2.4 **Self-Care:** Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

5.2.5 If you see another volunteer or Staff/Leader/Lay Leader behaving in ways that might be misconstrued or inappropriate, speak with the Staff/Leader/Lay Leader responsible for the ministry/activity.

Note: anyone who raises a safeguarding concern in good faith — including about a leader, teacher, or pastor — is protected from retaliation, and can go directly to any one of the three Safeguarding Team Members (or otherwise as the case may require) if the concern involves someone in their usual reporting line.

6. PERSONAL DATA OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS

- The Church collects and stores children's and young persons' personal data (e.g. contact details, attendance, photos) only for ministry purposes, with parent/guardian awareness.

- Access to safeguarding-related records (including reports of concerns and volunteer screening declarations) is restricted to the pastors, and the Safeguarding Team, and such records are retained securely for as long as needed for child protection and legal purposes.

7. CONTACT DETAILS

- *Pastor Danny Chua*, Safeguarding Ministry Staff: Danny@zionbishan.org.sg
- *Deborah Yang-Liew*, Safeguarding Team Member: deborahliew@gmail.com
- *Elder Chen Ching Hong*, Safeguarding Team Elder: ch.chen@yahoo.com.sg
- *Deborah Wong*, Children's Ministry Staff: deborah@zionbishan.org.sg
- *Hira Elizabeth*, Children's Ministry Staff: hira@zionbishan.org.sg
- *Jacqueline Ong*, Youth Ministry Staff: Jacqueline@zionbishan.org.sg

8. EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

- Emergency (immediate danger to a child or youth): Police — 999
- National Anti-Violence and Sexual Harassment Helpline (family violence, abuse, or neglect; sexual assault or harassment): 1800-777-0000

9. REFERENCES

- The American Church in Paris (20 March 2012) *Child and Youth Safety Policy*. Retrieved from http://www.acparis.org/acp-child-and-youth-safety-policy
- Rev Dr Laurie A Vervaecke's (2009) Child Protection: Guidance for Churches.

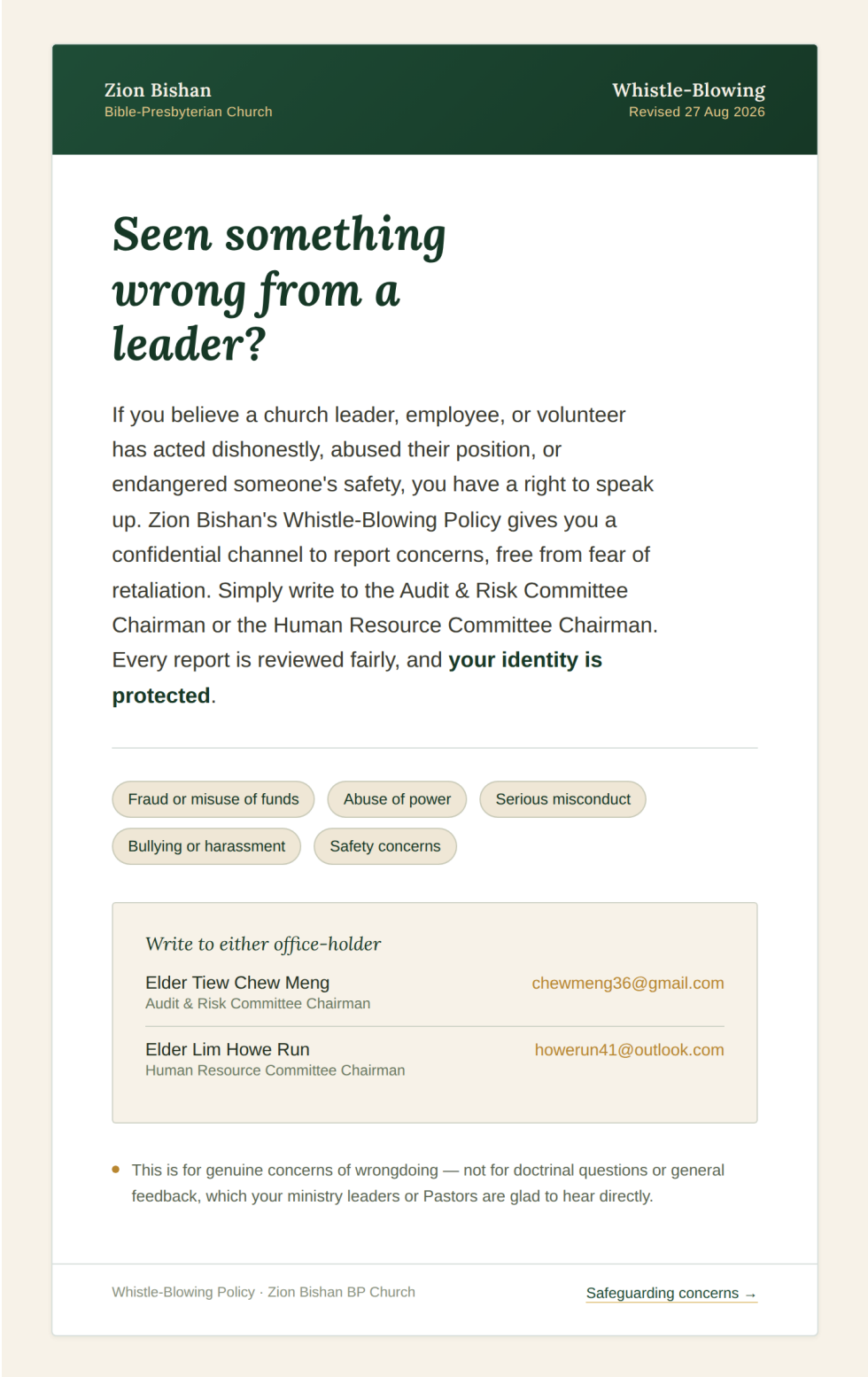
Notes

1. The Children and Young Persons Act 1993 (Section 2, 2020 Rev. Ed). (Singapore's child protection law) defines “child” as a person below 14, and “young person” as a person aged 14 and below 18. The Church's definitions above are intentionally broader for the purposes of this policy.

2. Leaders of AGs with young persons should note the guidelines of this policy as well.

3. Escalating through the Church's process is intended to ensure a report reaches the relevant authorities in the appropriate circumstances without delay. Where an immediate risk to harm or safety is concerned, you may immediately call the Police at 999.

Annex A



Read more in our Whistle-Blowing Policy here.