



CODE OF CONDUCT

JUNE 2025



Seventh-day
Adventist Church™
South Pacific

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Adsafe Ltd ABN 61 615 376 997 Adsafes is a service of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (South Pacific Division)

Preamble

The vision of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific is to be a thriving Adventist movement, living our hope in Jesus and transforming the Pacific. To do this effectively, recognising that every human being has been created in the image of God, the Church needs to be a safe place for all people to encounter Jesus and to experience Christian community (Hebrews 10:25).

Isaiah 1:17 sets out some important principles regarding how we should conduct ourselves as believers. It says that we should, *“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”* Jesus affirms these principles further in Matthew 25:40 *‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me!’*

In the context of our biblical mandate, Adsafes has been established as a ministry of healing and teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Adsafes partners with local churches, schools & denominational entities to **protect children and vulnerable adults from sexual and physical abuse**. While Adsafes’s formal response is focused on sexual and physical abuse, the Church recognises that all forms of abuse - including emotional and psychological - are harmful and unacceptable. This Code of Conduct sets out behavioural expectations designed to prevent abuse in all its forms and foster a culture of safety, dignity, and respect

Adsafes operates in a protection and response framework. **Protection** is provided for the Church through safeguarding resources, training and the screening and management of risks to children and vulnerable adults. **Response** is provided through addressing to allegations and supporting victims/survivors of abuse in local churches, schools and other entities of the Church.

Purpose

The Adsafes Code aims to foster a safe and respectful culture in all ministry contexts within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its affiliated entities by outlining behavioural expectations that promote the safety wellbeing, and participation of children and vulnerable adults, and to support those in ministry roles to act with integrity and care.

It is crucial for anyone in roles engaging with children and vulnerable adults to think about what is best for children and vulnerable adults and to act in ways that promote their safety, wellbeing and participation. Power imbalance, which occurs when one person holds more authority or influence over another, must be recognised and managed appropriately. This responsibility includes ensuring the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults from abuse and harm.

Scope

This Code applies to:

1. Employees of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its affiliated entities in ministry roles working directly or indirectly with children and vulnerable adults in a church or affiliated entity.
2. Members of local church, conference, union and division boards or committees overseeing services for children or vulnerable adults in a church or affiliated entity.
3. Volunteers in roles involving children in any program, activity or event run by a local Seventh-day Adventist Church or an affiliated entity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Programs include ministries such as Pathfinders and events which include overnight camps.

Our Guiding Principles (Code of Conduct)

I endeavour to:

As a member of a faith community committed to safety, dignity, and healing, I want to support and nurture a church where abuse has no place and healing begins. In that spirit, I endeavour to:

1. Uphold the teachings, values and principles of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in my conduct.
2. Always be truthful and reliable, upholding biblical principles and acting in a loving Christian manner that supports healing and care.
3. Promote an environment that is welcoming to all.
4. Support a culture where children and vulnerable adults are valued and encouraged to participate.
5. Familiarise myself with and apply best practice recommendations from the Adsafes Safeguarding Framework for my role as outlined on Adsafes website.
6. Identify, declare and manage any situations where personal interests could potentially conflict with my responsibilities in the church by withdrawing from related decisions, seeking leadership guidance, and ensuring transparency.
7. Take reasonable and appropriate steps within my role to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, ensuring their safety and wellbeing.

I will:

To contribute to a safe and respectful environment, I commit to the following actions and responsibilities. I will:

8. Respect and follow the principles and standards outlined in the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.
9. Complete the Adsafes safeguarding requirements relevant to my role, whether as an employee, volunteer, or board/committee member. This means maintaining my own current Working with Children check, completing the Adsafes Awareness Training, and signing this Code of Conduct.
10. Treat all people with fairness, courtesy and respect.
11. Take all reasonable steps to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse.
12. Respect the personal boundaries set by individuals.
13. Ensure that all my communication and activities are age appropriate, lawful, conducted in settings that are observable by others where appropriate, and can be stopped at any time.
14. Where appropriate to my role, actively plan and supervise to minimise the risk of children and young people harming one another physically, sexually, emotionally, or through exposure to inappropriate or degrading materials or behaviours – including digital, audio, visual or printed content. Based on my training, I will intervene promptly and report any such behaviour, and ensure that group environments are safe, respectful, and appropriately monitored.
15. Communicate with Church leaders and/or parents/carers about situations that require safe management but fall outside the scope of this Code of Conduct.

In relation to reporting concerns, I will:

16. Report behaviour that could potentially harm a child or vulnerable adult in accordance with the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and the Reporting and Notification Guidelines developed by Adsafes.
17. Respect the privacy and maintain the confidentiality of personal information related to others. Information should only be shared when it is necessary to protect the safety or wellbeing of a person, or where sharing may be required by law or as set out in the Reporting and Notification Guidelines and Information Sharing Guidelines developed by Adsafes.

In relation to disclosures of abuse, I will:

18. Take all disclosures of abuse seriously.
19. Seek advice and guidance from Adsafes and communicate with the Adsafes Responsible Officer if I receive a disclosure of sexual or physical abuse.

I will not:

Because I want to act in a Christian manner that protects others from harm, I agree not to engage in the following behaviours:

Note: *The following commitments apply to individuals in their roles within the Church, affiliated ministries, or programs. While this Code is not intended to govern private family life or cultural approaches to parenting and discipline, certain behaviours — including those occurring in domestic settings — may still fall within scope if they breach reportable conduct obligations under relevant legislation.*

The Code also recognises that some forms of physical contact — including playful touch or spontaneous group activities — may occur in ministry settings such as camps or youth events. However, individuals in leadership or child-related roles must avoid facilitating or encouraging situations that could blur boundaries, involve power imbalances, or lead to harm. All physical contact must be appropriate, respectful, and clearly understood by all parties.

20. Endorse or partake in any form of harmful behaviour towards children, nor condone such actions by children towards their peers. Harmful behaviours include but are not limited to physical, sexual or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect or grooming.
21. Use or encourage the use of profane or harmful language in the presence of children or vulnerable adults.
22. Engage in unnecessary and inappropriate physical contact with children or vulnerable adults - for example:
 - (a) Corporal punishment, such as smacking or other forms of physical discipline.
 - (b) Breaching their personal space.
 - (c) Initiating, permitting or requesting inappropriate physical contact, that is not clearly appropriate to the ministry context or role, such as massages or kisses.
 - (d) Facilitating situations that unnecessarily result in close physical contact such as wrestling or tickling.
 - (e) Undertaking a task of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult if they can do it for themselves, such as dressing, feeding, personal grooming or toileting.
 - (f) Pressuring a child or vulnerable adult to have unnecessary physical contact.

23. Make sexually suggestive or explicit comments to children and vulnerable adults or engage in conversations of a sexual nature.
24. Share or send sexually suggestive or explicit material to children or vulnerable adults.
25. Use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children or vulnerable adults.
26. Engage in conversations that are inappropriate and overly personal with children and young people. This includes enquiring about their romantic or sexual relationships.
27. Share information about my sexual experiences with children or vulnerable adults.
28. Make offensive or inappropriate comments to a child or vulnerable adult regarding their appearance, abilities, or sexuality.
29. Encourage or arrange to be alone with a child or vulnerable adult (other than immediate family) in a one-to-one, unsupervised situation that is out of view of others. All interactions, including those with family, should be appropriate, respectful, and safe.

For leaders and those in governance roles:

As a local church leader, local church board member or affiliated entity board /executive committee member with decision making responsibilities, I will also endeavour to:

1. Be informed by relevant policies, safeguarding guidance, and accurate information, rather than opinions or rumours, when making decisions that impact children and vulnerable adults.
2. Familiarise myself with and adhere to the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Adsafesafeguarding Framework.
3. Ensure decisions protect everyone involved from harm especially children and vulnerable adults.
4. Ensure that decisions involve evaluating and managing risks to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.
5. Understand the importance of my governance role in creating and maintaining a safe Church environment.

For pastors/Adsafesafeguarding Responsible Officers (ARO)

1. As the Adsafesafeguarding Responsible Officer (ARO), with responsibility for safeguarding in the local church I will also endeavour to understand and take seriously the responsibilities of this role as outlined in the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Adsafesafeguarding Framework, and to ensure they are fulfilled in relation to child and vulnerable adult protection.

For Adsafesafeguarding Compliance Assistants (ACA)

1. As the Adsafesafeguarding Compliance Assistant (ACA), appointed to support safeguarding responsibilities within the local church, I will also endeavour to understand and take seriously the responsibilities of this role as outlined in the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Adsafesafeguarding Framework, and to ensure they are fulfilled in relation to child and vulnerable adult protection.

Reporting concerns or breaches of this Code

All employees, volunteers, church members, families and members of the wider community who engage with the Church or affiliated entity services, programs, and events are encouraged to speak up if they have concerns about the safety of children and vulnerable adults. Complaints about a breach of this Code should be reported either to the Adsafes Responsible Officer at your local church or directly to Adsafes. Adsafes can be contacted via the following options:

Telephone	Australia: 1800 220 468 New Zealand: 0800 442 458	Email	info@adsafe.org.au survivors@adsafe.org.au
Web	www.adsafe.org.au		
Post:	Adsafe Ltd PO Box 966 Wahroonga NSW 2076 Australia	Hours	9:00am – 5.00pm: Monday - Thursday (AEST) 9:00am – 12:30pm: Friday

Some breaches of this Code of Conduct may need to be reported to the Police, the relevant child protection authority and relevant reportable conduct scheme oversight body. This may include conduct that occurs outside of a formal church or ministry setting, including in domestic or private contexts, particularly where individuals hold child-related roles subject to reportable conduct laws. *Adsafe's Reporting and Notification Guidelines* provide more information about your reporting obligations to external authorities and describes protections and confidentiality provisions for anyone making a report.

Employees and volunteers who breach the Code may also be subject to investigation and possible risk management and/or disciplinary action. This can include increased monitoring/supervision, appointment to a different role, direction to cease acting in a volunteer role, suspension, termination or exclusion.

Pastors also need to be aware that a breach of this Code of Conduct may also breach the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Australian Union Conference) Ltd *Pastoral Code of Conduct*.

Volunteers in child-related roles are entrusted with responsibility and accountability. Any alleged breach of the Code of Conduct may result in being stood down from the role at the discretion of the church or affiliated entity.

Updates to Our Shared Commitment

Adsafe is a ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is committed to working in partnership with the Church to ensure the continuous improvement of the Church's Adsafes Safeguarding Framework. As a result, our Shared Commitments (Code of Conduct) may be updated periodically. Adsafes will communicate any significant changes and prompt signatories to review and sign the updated Code of Conduct.

My Commitment

- ☐ If I do not agree with any parts of the Code of Conduct, I will hold off signing it and will reach out to Adsafes for further clarification.
- ☐ I confirm that I have read and understood this Code of Conduct.
- ☐ I agree to the rules and guidelines outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- ☐ I am aware that an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct may be subject to investigation. If the breach is confirmed, I understand the entity may take the actions specified in the Code of Conduct.
- ☐ I acknowledge that I will only be bound by versions of the Code of Conduct that I have personally signed.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Name: _____

A signed copy of this document should be retained by both the signatory and the relevant entity.

What to do next:

To ensure Adsafes has a copy of your signed Code of Conduct on record, please scan and email a signed copy of page 7 of this Code of Conduct to training@adsafe.org.au for uploading into your Adsafes eLearning account.

Definitions

Adsafe Safeguarding Framework	The set of policies, procedures, and guidelines developed and maintained by Adsafes to guide the Church and its affiliated entities in creating safe environments for children and vulnerable adults.
Affiliated entity	Any incorporated organisation that operates under or is connected to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This includes, but is not limited to, Church Ltd, Schools Ltd, ADRA, and other entities that deliver services, programs, or ministries on behalf of or in partnership with the Church.
Child	A person under the age of 18 years.
Conference	A regional administrative body of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that oversees and supports the operations of local churches and affiliated entities within its geographic area. Conferences may coordinate programs, camps, and other events involving children and vulnerable adults.
Employee	A person employed by a conference or affiliated entity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
Immediate Family	Includes a person's parent, child, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, spouse, de facto partner, or any other family member acting in a recognised caregiving or relational role within the family.
Local Church	This includes organised churches, companies and groups/plants as well as the physical premises of the church as well as any programs, activities, or events run by the church, whether on-site or off-site.
Union	A regional administrative body of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that provides oversight and support to Conferences and affiliated entities within a broader country or geographic region. In addition to its governance role, a Union may also coordinate programs or events involving children and vulnerable adults, such as camporees.
Vulnerable Adult	A vulnerable adult is a person who is aged 18 or over who, at the time of the alleged abuse, was or may have been unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves from significant harm, exploitation, or abuse due to a pre-existing psychological, mental and/or physical impairment. Because vulnerability is complex and shaped by multiple factors, Adsafes will determine whether a person meets this definition on a case-by-case basis, considering how different aspects of their situation may interact. (Adsafe Operating Policy February 2025)
Volunteer	A person, whether a church member or not, who serves in a nominated role that involves engagement with children or vulnerable adults, or who is appointed to a board or committee that makes decisions affecting children or vulnerable adults. This excludes individuals who assist informally or occasionally in ways that do not involve child-related work or decision-making responsibility, unless otherwise appointed to a role covered by this Code.