



## SAFE BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY

Everyone has the right to feel safe and be safe while attending worship and other activities at church. While most interactions in the life of the church are positive and life affirming, from time to time a person may display behaviour that is seen by others as offensive, abusive or demeaning.

If that behaviour is brought to the attention of someone in a leadership role in the church (through a complaint, the outcome of the behaviour on another person or direct observation) the church community will take reasonable steps to address the behaviour to ensure that our community is safe for everyone.

If, on inquiry or through observation, it does appear that a person is behaving in a way that is offensive, abusive or demeaning the first level of response is generally to have someone (or more usually 2 people) approach the person respectfully and privately to explain the difficulty with the behaviour and ask them to stop, moderate or change the behaviour.

Generally this approach leads to an agreement to moderate the behaviour in the interests of a more harmonious outcome and the desire to continue in community. We respect that choice.

If a person is offended by being asked to change their behaviour the person may decide not to continue in community. We respect that choice.

If the steps above do not result in an agreement to moderate the behaviour, or if there is some issue as to whether particular characteristics of a person make behavioural change more difficult than usual additional steps may be required. This may involve asking for additional information about the particular situation, and consulting with professional people about any strategies that can be employed to ensure the safety of the community in the light of the particular situation.

These actions are only possible if the person concerned agrees to participate in them. If they do agree we will listen to the person and the professional advice available and seek to put in place strategies to allow participation in the community in a way that does not subject anyone to behaviour that is offensive, abusive or demeaning.

We do not accept that behaviour that is offensive, abusive or demeaning has a place in our community. As a result if a person is not willing to undertake not to engage in unacceptable behaviour, or to participate in the process of developing a strategy to allow for continued participation, we will ask them not to be involved in the community until such time as they are able to agree.

This strategy will apply only to behaviour that while offensive, abusive or demeaning falls short of being criminal in nature. If behaviour is, or appears to be, criminal in nature it will be reported to the police to allow for the proper legal processes to apply.