

TASMANIA

# Breaking the Silence & The Child and Youth Safe Standards

## WHAT IS THE CHILD AND YOUTH SAFE ORGANISATIONS FRAMEWORK AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO BREAKING THE SILENCE?

The Framework will be established by the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Bill 2022* which was tabled in November 2022 and compliance will start 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 (TAS). The Presbyterian Church NSW as a 'religious denomination or faith through which adults have contact with children' is required to implement the **Child and Youth Safe Standards** under the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework*.

## WHAT ARE THE CHILD AND YOUTH SAFE STANDARDS?

A list of 10 standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission), will be mandated under the *Child and Youth Organisations Framework*. Implementing the standards keeps children safer from harm and abuse. They are:

1. Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the Child and Youth Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

One distinctive feature of the 10 Standards is the Universal Principle. The Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety embeds the right of Aboriginal children and young people to cultural safety sits across all 10 Child and Youth Safe Standards.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR BREAKING THE SILENCE AND OUR CHURCHES?

**Breaking the Silence (BTS)** is aligned with the **Child and Youth Safe Standards**. The Presbyterian Church is committed to making our churches safer for children and vulnerable people and we are already implementing the Child and Youth Safe Standards in a number of ways.

We hope this info sheet assists you in understanding how the Child and Youth Safe Standards (CYSS) are embedded within BTS and what this can look like in practice.

<b>STANDARD 1: CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING IS EMBEDDED IN ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE.</b>	
<b>How it is reflected in BTS policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both the National Safe Ministry Framework and the BTS Policy commit us to protecting children and other vulnerable people. We want to set a culture that priorities safety of the vulnerable.</li> <li>- The BTS Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers setting a clear standard of behaviour expected of all leaders towards children and young people.</li> <li>- The establishment of the Conduct Protocol Unit (CPU) is an expression of PCNSW's commitment to child safety.</li> </ul>
<b>What this might look like in practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Displaying BTS posters – commitment to child safety occurs at all leadership levels.</li> <li>- Make child safety a standing agenda item at Session meetings and other meetings overseeing children's ministries.</li> <li>- Session appoints and supports a BTS rep and displays this in publicly accessible areas.</li> <li>- Sessions understand their obligations in reporting, sharing information and keeping records.</li> <li>- Leaders regularly communicate collective responsibility for children's safety via services, when running activities, on social media etc.</li> <li>- Church websites have the link to BTS and contact information for CPU.</li> <li>- Weekly bulletins have the link to BTS and contact information for CPU.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant BTS or other resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BTS Policy and Code of Conduct</li> <li>- BTS 2024 poster and children's posters</li> <li>- Info sheets               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o "BTS Implementation Guide"</li> <li>o "Running youth group games and activities"</li> <li>o "Risk management"</li> <li>o BTS camping statement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>How do we show we're doing this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sessions complete the Annual Compliance statement to document their adherence to implementing the BTS policy.</li> </ul>

<b>STANDARD 2: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE INFORMED ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS, PARTICIPATE IN DECISIONS AFFECTING THEM AND ARE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.</b>	
<b>How it is reflected in BTS policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BTS training promotes respect and inclusion of all people, including children and young people.</li> <li>- Children’s ministry posters are available to assist children and young people access information on abuse prevention.</li> <li>- BTS training covers signs of harm and how to respond when children disclose concerns.</li> <li>- Children and young people are informed of their rights and how to report concerns</li> </ul>
<b>What this might look like in practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribute copy of ‘Giving a Voice to Children &amp; Young People’ to kids’ and youth ministry leaders.</li> <li>- Seek creative ways to gather feedback and input from children and young people regarding ministry programs.</li> <li>- Children know what safe behaviour at church is and who to speak to if something is wrong, they are worried or feel unsafe.</li> <li>- Age-appropriate language is used when communicating with children.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant BTS or other resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kids’ Ministry posters:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o “I’m worried about my friend”</li> <li>o “My feelings matter”</li> <li>o “I don’t have to keep a secret that makes me feel scared”</li> <li>o “Listen to me when I speak”</li> <li>o “I have an idea”</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Info sheets:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o “Giving a Voice to Children and Young People”</li> <li>o “How to Really Listen”</li> <li>o “Telling our Children about Sexual Abuse”</li> </ul> </li> <li>- BTS camping statement</li> <li>- Young Helper Agreement</li> </ul>
<b>How do we show we’re doing this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Display the Kids’ Ministry posters to provide age-appropriate information to children about seeking help*.</li> <li>- Promote the participation of children of giving input and feedback into their ministry programs.</li> <li>- Have all those working with children and young people been given a copy of the BTS info sheet “Giving a Voice to Children and Young People?”</li> <li>- Have all young helpers (aged 12-17) completed the Young Helper Agreement?</li> </ul>

<b>STANDARD 3: FAMILIES, CARERS AND COMMUNITIES ARE INFORMED AND INVOLVED IN PROMOTING SAFETY AND WELLBEING.</b>	
<b>How it is reflected in BTS policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The BTS Manual recognises that others are impacted when allegations are made and consideration needs to be made for how others, including families and communities are informed and involved in relation to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Leadership</li> <li>o Pastoral care</li> <li>o Provision of information, training and education</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>What this might look like in practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing information to parents via regular updates.</li> <li>- Families are encouraged to participate in the life of the church and have opportunities to participate (e.g. annual Congregational Meetings, raising issues with the Minister or Elders.)</li> <li>- Provide opportunities for families and communities for feedback or suggestions.</li> <li>- Display BTS posters to make people aware who they can speak to.</li> <li>- Have a 'child safety' section on your website.</li> <li>- Church websites have the link to BTS and contact information for CPU.</li> <li>- Weekly bulletins have the link to BTS and contact information for CPU.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant BTS or other resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Speak Out Seek Help" Poster</li> <li>- "Sunday School Expectations" Poster - Template</li> <li>- BTS Policy and Code of Conduct booklet informs families of child safe expectations.</li> <li>- Info sheets:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o "How to Really Listen"</li> <li>o "Making a Complaint or Allegation about Abuse"</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>How do we show we're doing this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completing the Annual Compliance Statement ensures BTS posters are displayed, copies of "Policy &amp; Code of Conduct" and "Speak Out Seek Help" booklets available in your church* and ensure people know how to have a say.</li> <li>- Are BTS children's posters displayed in an appropriate place where they are visible to children?</li> </ul>

<b>STANDARD 4: EQUITY IS UPHELD AND DIVERSE NEEDS RESPECTED IN POLICY AND PRACTICE.</b>	
<b>How it is reflected in BTS policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BTS training promotes treating all people with respect and understanding. This includes children, young people, people with a CALD background, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with a disability.</li> </ul>
<b>What this might look like in practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure buildings are accessible for people with mobility issues.</li> <li>- Consulting with the Jericho Road Disability Advocate regarding inclusive and accessible ministry practices.</li> <li>- Ensure communications are culturally sensitive.</li> <li>- Welcome and support children with additional needs, seek advice from the CPU if you are unsure how to do this.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant BTS or other resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CPU is working to develop BTS resources in a number of community languages and can be contacted for advice on diverse needs.</li> <li>- Disability Advocacy – Jericho Road: <a href="http://jerichoroad.org.au/disability-advocacy">jerichoroad.org.au/disability-advocacy</a></li> </ul>
<b>How do we show we're doing this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completing the Annual Compliance Statement ensure Session has considered the needs of children or young people from Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander background, with a disability or from CALD<sup>1</sup> backgrounds*.</li> <li>- Communications are sensitive to issues of equity and diversity.</li> <li>- Effort made towards making ministry venues as accessible as possible to people with diverse needs.</li> <li>- Expressions of culture are encouraged.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Culturally and linguistically diverse

BTS Audit requirements indicated with \*

<b>STANDARD 5: PEOPLE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SUITABLE AND SUPPORTED TO REFLECT CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING VALUES IN PRACTICE.</b>	
<b>How it is reflected in BTS policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The BTS Manual and training includes information on reporting notifiable circumstances to the CPU.</li> <li>- The CPU provides guidance for the handling of a complaint which includes having a child-focused perspective.</li> <li>- BTS Foundations Training is required every 3 years by people in a position of authority within the church, which includes all those working with children and young people in any capacity.</li> <li>- Leaders are required to contact the CPU to report notifiable circumstances and seek advice on any child-safe matters.</li> </ul>
<b>What this might look like in practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Session oversees the provision of pastoral care to those working with children to ensure they remain supported.</li> <li>- Leaders are encouraged to make use of the resources on the BTS website and to participate in relevant additional training that is offered by the CPU.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant BTS or other resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Application to work with Children or Young People" form.</li> <li>- "WWCC Registration" form.</li> <li>- "Young Helper Agreement" form.</li> <li>- "Record of Reference check" form.</li> <li>- Breaking the Silence – Getting Started: <a href="https://breakingthesilence.org.au/resources/getting-started">breakingthesilence.org.au/resources/getting-started</a></li> <li>- Breaking the Silence: Foundations Training: <a href="https://breakingthesilence.org.au/training">breakingthesilence.org.au/training</a></li> </ul>
<b>How do we show we're doing this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have all ministers, home missionaries, deaconesses, licentiates, elders, paid employees, church workers whether paid or volunteers and all those working with children completed the appropriate BTS training for their role?* Do they all have a current Working with Children Check which has been verified by the CPU*?</li> <li>- Has Session appointed anyone to a child-related position in the last year*? If so, did Session follow the BTS child-related employment process (for employees and volunteers) set out in BTS and on the website*?</li> <li>- Has a job description been provided to all those working directly with children and young people (excluding elders, ministers, licentiates, deaconesses or home missionaries)*?</li> <li>- Are there any young helpers (aged 12-17) working with children or young people? Have they completed the Young Helper Agreement*?</li> <li>- Do all SRE teachers have current training and up-to-date authorization through the CPU*? If the SRE teacher is not part of the pastoral charge, do they have an annual letter for a local arrangement completed*?</li> </ul>

**STANDARD 6: PROCESSES TO RESPOND TO COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS ARE CHILD FOCUSED.**

<p><b>How it is reflected in BTS policy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The BTS Manual and training includes information on reporting notifiable circumstances to CPU.</li> <li>- The CPU provides guidance for the handling of a complaint which includes having a child-focused perspective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What this might look like in practice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People wanting to make a complaint are responded to sensitively and respectfully.</li> <li>- Leaders are aware of how to make a report and seek guidance from the CPU.</li> <li>- The safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people is the most important consideration and concerns are addressed effectively whilst support is provided to all family members affected.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relevant BTS or other resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BTS Manual</li> <li>- Info sheets:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o "Making a Complaint or Allegation about Abuse"</li> <li>o "How to Really Listen"</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Breaking the Silence: Foundations Training - Section 3 'Bringing Issues to Light'.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How do we show we're doing this</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is the Session aware of any breaches of the BTS Code of Conduct or allegations of abuse since your last audit*? Were these reported to the CPU*?</li> <li>- Report all notifiable circumstances, including child-safe concerns, to the CPU.</li> <li>- Ensure we respond sensitively to disclosures and seek advice from the CPU if unsure.</li> <li>- The CPU provides guidance for the handling of a complaint which includes having a child-focused perspective</li> <li>- Session has spoken to CPU about a safety agreement and management for anyone in the congregation that would be considered to be a person of concern.</li> </ul>

<b>STANDARD 7: STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ARE EQUIPPED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND AWARENESS TO KEEP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE THROUGH ONGOING EDUCATION AND TRAINING.</b>	
<b>How it is reflected in BTS policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The BTS Manual and training includes information on responding effectively to issues of child safety and reporting notifiable circumstances to CPU.</li> <li>- The CPU provides guidance for the handling of a complaint which includes having a child-focused perspective.</li> </ul>
<b>What this might look like in practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The BTS Policy, Code of Conduct and training covers managing risk in both online and physical environments.</li> <li>- Leaders are encouraged to make use of the resources on the BTS website and to participate in relevant additional training that is offered by the CPU.</li> <li>- Conduct risk assessments for all activities including physical and online.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant BTS or other resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Breaking the Silence: Foundations Training: <a href="https://breakingthesilence.org.au/training">breakingthesilence.org.au/training</a></li> <li>- Range of BTS Info sheets: <a href="https://breakingthesilence.org.au/resources">breakingthesilence.org.au/resources</a></li> </ul>
<b>How do we show we're doing this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completing the Annual compliance statement ensures:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o leaders are up to date with BTS Foundations Training</li> <li>o adequate ratios of adults are provided for supervision</li> <li>o physical and online communications are safe</li> <li>o cultural and diverse needs are considered</li> <li>o leaders have completed the appropriate training for their role</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Reading and reviewing the Policy &amp; Code of Conduct annually is highly recommended in the years between the Foundations Training.</li> <li>- Support and facilitate leaders to attend further or external appropriate training opportunities.</li> </ul>



<b>STANDARD 8: PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS PROMOTE SAFETY AND WELLBEING WHILE MINIMISING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE HARMED.</b>	
<b>How it is reflected in BTS policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The BTS Policy and Code of Conduct outlines the expected behaviour of leaders in respect to contact with children, regardless of whether it is in person or online.</li> </ul>
<b>What this might look like in practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The BTS Policy, Code of Conduct and training covers managing risk in both online and physical environments.</li> <li>- Ensuring leaders are never alone with a child and maintain lines of sight at all times.</li> <li>- Ensuring risks assessments have been completed of all ministry activities involving children, young people and vulnerable people.</li> <li>- Following the PATH principles of wise ministry; prepare, be accountable, transparent and humble.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant BTS or other resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Breaking the Silence: Foundations Training: <a href="https://breakingthesilence.org.au/training">breakingthesilence.org.au/training</a></li> <li>- Info sheets:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o "Connecting and communicating online"</li> <li>o "Online meetings with young people"</li> <li>o "Transport"</li> <li>o "Physical Contact"</li> <li>o "Running Youth Group Games &amp; Activities"</li> <li>o "Pastoral Care"</li> <li>o "Child-safe toileting guidelines"</li> </ul> </li> <li>- BTS Children's posters</li> <li>- PCNSW Work Health and Safety Guidelines for our Church Organisations: <a href="https://pcnsw.org.au/work-health-and-safety">pcnsw.org.au/work-health-and-safety</a></li> </ul>
<b>How do we show we're doing this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Session completing the BTS Annual Compliance statement ensures:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Any changes to supervision arrangements in point 11 of the Code of Conduct and informed the CPU of the changes*.</li> <li>o E-communications with children and young people are safe</li> <li>o BTS Children's posters are displayed</li> <li>o Relevant risk assessments are undertaken in relation to activities for children and young people</li> <li>o Any breaches of the Code of conduct or allegations of abuse have been reported</li> <li>o Any camps for children and young people comply with the BTS camping requirements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>STANDARD 9: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH SAFE STANDARDS IS REGULARLY REVIEWED AND IMPROVED.</b>	
<b>How it is reflected in BTS policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The BTS Manual is regularly reviewed, and changes are requested at General Assembly to ensure BTS reflects legislation and best practice.</li> <li>- The CPU has a continual improvement program.</li> <li>- The CPU is overseen by the Child Safety Subcommittee.</li> <li>- After an investigation, a report will include any recommendations.</li> </ul>
<b>What this might look like in practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Churches incorporate the Child and Youth Safe Standards into their review processes.</li> <li>- BTS Audits support churches and identifies areas to improve safe ministry.</li> <li>- The CPU provides support, assistance and advice to churches in relation to safe ministry and implementing BTS.</li> <li>- Churches can submit local policies and procedures to the CPU for review to ensure they are compliant with BTS and the CYSS.</li> <li>- The CPU is part of an interdenominational network that provides information on best practice from a variety of sources and receives input from the OCG in relation to latest developments on resources and training.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant BTS or other resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Breaking the Silence: Foundations Training: <a href="https://breakingthesilence.org.au/training">breakingthesilence.org.au/training</a></li> <li>- BTS Manual</li> </ul>
<b>How do we show we're doing this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in the BTS Audit program.</li> <li>- Completion of the BTS Annual Compliance statement</li> </ul>

<b>STANDARD 10: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES DOCUMENT HOW THE ORGANISATION IS SAFE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.</b>	
<b>How it is reflected in BTS policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BTS and the National Safe Ministry Framework address both policy and procedure for how allegations of abuse are handled and to minimise the risk of abuse occurring.</li> <li>- The BTS Policy, Manual and National Safe Ministry Framework are committed to the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework and integrate the Child and Youth Safe Standards within its' policy.</li> <li>- The CPU is established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to provide congregations, presbyteries, organisations and committees with the best possible support, advice and resources in relation to abuse matters.</li> </ul>
<b>What this might look like in practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All people in a position of authority undertake BTS Foundations training including awareness of the BTS procedures for dealing with and preventing abuse within the church.</li> <li>- Congregations are audited with regard to BTS compliance.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant BTS or other resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BTS Policy and Code of Conduct booklet</li> <li>- BTS Manual</li> <li>- BTS Camping Statement</li> <li>- Breaking the Silence: Foundations Training: <a href="https://breakingthesilence.org.au/training">breakingthesilence.org.au/training</a></li> </ul>
<b>How do we show we're doing this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of the BTS Annual Compliance Statement ensures:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pastoral charge has a copy of and reviewed the BTS Manual*.</li> <li>○ Minister and elders are up to date with BTS training and aware of the online resources*.</li> <li>○ Session ensures that their BTS Compliance List in the CPU's system is kept accurate through providing timely updates*.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Participate in the BTS Audit program.</li> </ul>

**FOR FURTHER RESOURCES:**

Conduct Protocol Unit - Presbyterian Church of NSW/ACT, 'Resources', *Breaking the Silence*. Online: [breakingthesilence.org.au/resources](https://breakingthesilence.org.au/resources) for resources, templates, job descriptions and documents.

Department of Justice, Child Abuse Royal Commission Response Unit, *Creating Child and Youth Safe Organisations*, 2022 [justice.tas.gov.au/carcru/child-and-youth-safe-organisations-framework](https://justice.tas.gov.au/carcru/child-and-youth-safe-organisations-framework)