

Extract minute

At Epping and within the Presbyterian Church Hall on the 27th Day of March 2012 the session of the congregation at Epping met and was constituted with prayer by the Moderator, the Rev. Matthew Oates.

Among other things the minutes state:

It was resolved that Session:

- 1. receive the Breaking the Silence July 2011 Edition material "Our Policy", "Code of Conduct" and "Speak Out Seek Help"*
- 2. adopt Breaking the Silence July 2011 Edition as the policy and process for dealing with and preventing abuse within the church and acknowledge that the pastoral charge must participate in compliance audits as and when required*
- 3. confirm the appointment of Mrs Elizabeth Timmins to keep the administration of Breaking the Silence up to date*
- 4. note that the majority of Session has completed the training on the Breaking the Silence July 2011 Edition and direct that the others complete the training by 30 April 2012*
- 5. note that Session has a copy of the booklet "From Allegation to Restitution" Edition 3.*

It was resolved that it be a requirement that the Review Form be filled in by persons who have already undergone Child Protection Training for their professional life, so as to show they have read the Breaking the Silence Policy and Code of Conduct documents.

It was resolved that Session note:

- 1. Although the four subparagraphs of item 11 of the Code of Conduct are known areas of risk, they are also activities that are very common in ministry and, in some instances, adhering to them as they are written in the code would prevent good ministry from occurring. When making the change, the risks need to be considered; ways to address the risks and a balance between accountability and visibility must be maintained.*
- 2. The Session must make the change and record it in a minute. The changes should be carefully thought out and make as small a 'hole in the fence' as is practical. Session should make the change for a set period of time, noting who it applies to and for what activities.*

It was resolved that Session adopt the following amended four subparagraphs of item 11 of the Breaking the Silence Code of Conduct to apply to this Session and congregation until March 2013:

- You will take care to ensure an appropriate balance of transparency and confidentiality so that the private concerns of others are not disclosed or revealed improperly. In ordinary circumstances, when you are providing pastoral care to, or working with members of the opposite sex, you will strive to do so in an environment that allows visual surveillance and, where reasonable, have other people within hearing distance. With adults e.g. elders visiting communicants, you will tell spouse or another leader you will/did spend time with that person, especially if that person is known to have problems that may increase their vulnerability or yours e.g. dementia, mental illness or emotional issues*
- You will not allow a child to sleep in close proximity to an adult, other than a parent or guardian unless there is a significant separation, and privacy of all parties is respected. Where adults share accommodation with children there will be two adults of the same sex as the children present who need to have up to date Breaking the Silence training and screening.*
- You will not allow an adult to share accommodation with one child or one young person only unless they are a parent or guardian of that child or young person*
- You will not drive a child or young person unaccompanied. If this is unavoidable you will abide by the following guidelines:*
 - a) Parental permission is required to transport a child or young person. A permission form is available from the group leader who should incorporate the generic form into their specific permission slip.*
 - b) Ideally avoid a one leader one child scenario. If one leader then have more than one child, if one child have more than one leader.*
 - c) You will not pick up first or drop off last a child or young person who is not known to you or whose parents are not known to you.*

d) You will not pick up first or drop off last a child or young person who has any known problems that may increase their vulnerability or yours.

e) Where possible, more senior leaders should provide transport and leaders must have at least a green P plate to provide transport.

However, leaders transporting their own siblings with parental knowledge would be exempt from this and from the preferred passenger ratio of more than one to one if only transporting their sibling(s) and no other children or young people.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Extracted from the minutes of the session of the congregation at Epping this 4th Day of April 2012 by me.

R.P. (Jock) Brodie
Session Clerk