

# Guiding Principles for Online Ministry

## Definitions:

**Director** refers to the Director of Soul Survivor NSW inc.

**Staff/Staff member** refers to a paid employee of Soul Survivor NSW inc. and/or a member of the Ministry Leadership Team.

**Volunteer** refers to a team member as identified by Soul Survivor NSW inc. A Volunteer will have filled out a Soul Survivor Team application form and been accepted by the Director.

**Host/s** refers to the nominated leader/s of online ministry session/s by Soul Survivor NSW inc

**Child/Children** refers to any person/s under the age of 18.

**Participant/s** refers to any person joining an Online Meeting or other online ministry event that is not a Staff member, Volunteer or in a position of leadership within the participating Church/es (including Children).

**Youth Leader** refers to any leader or pastor in charge of a youth group associated with a church or other youth ministry organisation.

**Leader/s** refers to persons in a recognised ministry position in a hosting church that are over 18 years of age.

**Online Meeting** refers to a ministry event hosted by Soul Survivor NSW inc being conducted via an online private meeting platform.

## 1. General

- 1.1 Soul Survivor NSW inc. (also known as Soul Survivor NSW, and referred to hereafter as “Soul Survivor”) aims to provide a youth ministry that is safe, transparent and accountable. Soul Survivor seeks to model the love of Jesus, build a strong youth ministry community, and continue to encourage young people in their faith.
- 1.2 The Guiding Principles for Online Ministry (“Guiding Principles”) are to be read with the Soul Survivor Child Safe Policy and Procedures (“Child Safe Policy and Procedures”). The Guiding Principles should also be read in conjunction with the Soul Survivor privacy and media policies. These policies are available on the Soul Survivor website.
- 1.3 The Guiding Principles set out additional safeguards applicable to all online ministries. All requirements of the Child Safe Policy and Procedures continue to apply.
- 1.4 The Guiding Principles seek to comply with the child protection policies governing the mainstream denominations of the Australian church, set out in Clause 2 of the Child Safe Policy and Procedures, and with the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- 1.5 The Guiding Principles will be communicated to attending Staff, Volunteers and Participants prior to an Online Meeting and any other online ministry.
- 1.6 The Guiding Principles are designed to be adhered to whenever Soul Survivor is hosting an online event or ministry. In the event that Staff or Volunteers are joining a ministry or event hosted by another church, organisation, youth group or other group all Staff and Volunteers will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the spirit of the Guiding Principles and will follow the Child Safe Policy and Procedures, where applicable.

## **2. Social Media Platforms**

- 2.1** Soul Survivor has public Facebook pages (“Soul Survivor NSW” and “Soul Survivor ACT & Regions”), public Instagram accounts (“soulsurvivornsw” and “soulsurvivoract”) and a Youtube account (“soul survivor nsw”), which are operated by Staff. Children are encouraged to interact with Soul Survivor using its public social media accounts for any communication, rather than contacting Staff or Volunteers via the Staff or Volunteer’s own personal social media accounts.
- 2.2** Staff and Volunteers should not initiate “friending” or “following” Children online with whom they interact solely as a part of their work or involvement with Soul Survivor using their personal social media accounts.
- 2.3** The Soul Survivor NSW and Soul Survivor ACT public Instagram accounts may “follow back” Children who have initiated “following” the Soul Survivor NSW or Soul Survivor ACT Instagram accounts. Children are welcome to refuse the request.
- 2.4** Staff and Volunteers may “Like” or otherwise interact with content posted by Children and respond to comments made by Children on Soul Survivor’s public social media accounts. Soul Survivor’s public social media accounts may also “Like” or otherwise interact with content posted by Children and comment on posts made by Children on the Child’s own social media account.
- 2.5** Material posted by Children on their own social media accounts will not be shared or re-posted on Soul Survivor’s public social media accounts or website without prior permission from the Child and their Parent/guardian.
- 2.6** Whenever Soul Survivor Staff or Volunteers invite the community to post content (including photos and/or videos) on Soul Survivor’s social media pages or on their own social media linked to Soul Survivor’s social media accounts (e.g. by tagging Soul Survivor or using a hashtag connected to Soul Survivor) it should be noted that this content may then be viewed by members of the public. If a Parent or guardian raises concerns regarding the content posted by their Child, Soul Survivor will take steps to address the content and/or the hashtag (see also Part 7 – Feedback and Community Involvement).
- 2.7** Staff and Volunteers must not contribute to any communication or content that:
  - A. constitutes unlawful discrimination;
  - B. is bullying, harassing, threatening or derogatory;
  - C. is obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic;
  - D. attempts to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else;
  - E. Is defamatory; and/or
  - F. otherwise conflicts with the requirements and aims of the Child Safe Policy and Procedures.
- 2.8** Soul Survivor reserves the right, and will take proactive steps, to address any content, comments or similar made on Soul Survivor’s social media accounts that are offensive, inappropriate, unsafe, not suitable for children and/or in conflict with the requirements and aims of Child Safe Policy and Procedures.
- 2.9** Should Soul Survivor register other social media accounts in the future (e.g. TikTok) these same requirements and guidelines will apply.

## **3. Communication between Staff/Volunteers and Children**

- 3.1** To maintain and respect parental involvement, promote child safety and minimise risk, Staff and Volunteers will strive for minimal direct communication with Children.

- 3.2 All direct communication between Staff/Volunteers and Children should be limited to conveying information about Soul Survivor ministries and basic encouragement and should be conducted via official Soul Survivor email accounts and/or social media.
- 3.3 Where direct communication occurs, Staff and Volunteers must ensure that all communication (including text messages, social media messages, emails and photographs) are above reproach and is consistent with the requirements and aims of the Child Safe Policy and Procedures.
- 3.4 If a Child reaches out to a Staff member or Volunteer through a telephone or online platform call, the call should be limited to answering direct questions regarding Soul Survivor ministries and ended quickly. Where practical, the Child should be encouraged to be in the presence of their Parent/guardian during the call.
- 3.5 If a Child reaches out to a Staff member or Volunteer in a private forum (including online or via text message), the communication should be limited to answering direct questions regarding Soul Survivor ministries and ended quickly. If there is a need for further direct communication, the Child's Youth Leader or another member of Staff should be brought into the communication. Where a second person is brought into the communication, an effort should be made to have at least one person involved in the communication being of the same gender as the Child.
- 3.6 Screenshots of ministry related direct private communications (text messages, online messaging applications) should be uploaded to a secure electronic storage folder maintained by Soul Survivor and accessible by the Director. The screenshots should include the time, date, and duration of the communication, as well as the names of the persons involved in the communication and the circumstances. Records of telephone calls with Children, noting the above information, should also be stored in this folder. This folder will be monitored by the Director and reviewed on a regular basis.
- 3.7 Under no circumstances should Staff or Volunteers communicate with a Child using any disappearing messaging services (e.g. direct Instagram stories, Snapchat, Messenger secret conversations).

#### **4. Ministry conducted via online private meeting platforms (e.g. Zoom)**

- 4.1 All Soul Survivor ministry conducted via an Online Meeting must have at least one Staff member as a Host.
- 4.2 Children can only join an Online Meeting if a permission form has been completed by a Parent/guardian and the Child. One permission form can be completed for multiple meetings. Where a Child seeks to join an Online Meeting without having submitted a completed permission form, a Parent/guardian may give permission for the Child to participate verbally or in writing using the 'chat' function. The Child must also indicate their consent to participate in the Online Meeting using the same methods. The permission given by the Parent/guardian and the consent of the Child must be recorded and stored (e.g. by a screenshot of the chat message or similar).
- 4.3 Each Online Meeting will be password protected. The "waiting room" feature of Zoom (or similar feature on other online private meeting platforms) will be utilised by the Host/s to ensure no uninvited guests can enter an Online Meeting. Each Zoom meeting will also be password protected. The Host/s may remove a person from an Online Meeting and/or obstruct their entrance if the person is not registered or known to Soul Survivor.
- 4.4 Where an Online Meeting involves a Child, at least two Staff, Volunteers or Leaders (or combination thereof) must be present in the Online Meeting before any Participants are given access.
- 4.5 Where a Child is present in an Online Meeting, the following features will be disabled:
  - A. The ability of Participants to record the Online Meeting

- B. Private chat between Participants
- C. File transfer between Participants
- D. Annotation
- E. Screen sharing
- F. Joining before the Host/s
- G. Access using dial-in connection (e.g. joining via telephone)

**4.6** Where a Child joins an Online Meeting, the Child will be encouraged to join from an area of their home or current location where they can be observed by a Parent/guardian/caregiver (e.g. a living room). Parents/guardians/caregivers of Children who are participating may observe the Online Meeting, if they wish to do so. Parents/guardians/caregivers will be requested to respect the privacy of other Participants and treat any information overheard as confidential. Parents/guardians/caregivers will be encouraged to raise any concerns as to information heard during an Online Meeting with Staff.

**4.7** All Participants, Volunteers and Leaders must abide by the following guidelines when joining an Online Meeting:

- G. Refrain from recording or otherwise capturing and/or storing images, videos and/or audio of an Online Meeting.
- H. Refrain from sharing the content of an Online Meeting, including by sharing their screen or allowing others to view and/or listen to an Online Meeting as it occurs. Parents/guardians/caregivers of Participants may observe the Online Meeting, if they wish to do so and will be requested to abide by the guidelines set out at Part 4.6 above.
- I. Join an Online Meeting with their camera on and otherwise turn their camera on when requested to do so by the Host/s.
- J. Conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in line with the Soul Survivor values. This includes joining from a location appropriate for ministry purposes, wearing appropriate attire, using an appropriate username and displaying an appropriate background.
- K. Refrain from sharing and/or creating any content in the Online Meeting, including via the 'chat' function that is inappropriate or conflicting with the requirements and aims of the Child Safe Policy and Procedures.

**4.8** Participants, Volunteers and Leaders must not contribute to any communication or content that:

- A. Constitutes unlawful discrimination;
- B. Is bullying, harassing, threatening or derogatory;
- C. Is obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic;
- D. Attempts to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else;
- E. Is defamatory; and/or
- F. Breaches the requirements and aims of the Child Safe Policy and Procedures.

**4.9** Staff and/or Host/s will remove Participants who do not comply with the requirements of Parts 4.7 and 4.8 above from an Online Meeting.

**4.10** Online meeting will be recorded for child safety and/or reporting purposes. All recorded meetings or sections thereof will be uploaded to a secure electronic storage folder maintained by Soul Survivor and accessible to Staff and the Director. When an Online Meeting is recorded, this must be announced to all Participants at the commencement of the Online Meeting.

**4.11** The following guidelines will be observed in relation to the use of "Breakout Rooms":

- A. Participants will be pre-assigned to Breakout Rooms by the Host/s and/or Leaders.
- B. One Staff member, Volunteer or Leader must be present in each Breakout Room.

- C. Each Breakout Room will have two or more Participants (in addition to at least one Staff member, Volunteer or Leader), unless it is not practical for this to occur. Where a Child is present in a Breakout Room, there must be at least two other persons (one of whom must be a Staff member, Volunteer or Leader).
- D. The Host/s will assign a Staff member, Volunteer or Leader to record each Breakout Room session. This recording must be provided to a Staff member following the Online Meeting and stored in accordance with the provision Part 4.10 above.

**4.12** Staff will ensure that online private meeting platform software is kept up to date and appropriate security settings are activated.

## **5. Public Live Streamed Events**

**5.1** Soul Survivor may conduct public live-streamed ministry events ("a Live-Streamed Event") via Facebook Live, Instagram Live or YouTube.

**5.2** At the commencement of a Live-Streamed Event, a Staff member or Volunteer acting as a Host will:

- A. Welcome viewers to the Live-Streamed Event.
- B. Announce that the Live-Streamed Event is being recorded.
- C. Remind viewers that any comments posted will be visible to other viewers.
- D. Remind viewers that any comments should be in keeping with Soul Survivor values.
- E. Encourage child viewers to watch the Live-Streamed Event in the presence of their Parent/guardian/caregiver.

**5.3** Staff and/or Volunteers may encourage viewers to post in the comments and/or other public thread related to the Live-Streamed Event. Children should be encouraged to post comments only with the permission of their Parent/guardian/caregiver. Staff and/or Volunteers must refrain from asking viewers to provide any personal information (including, for example, the location they are viewing from, where they live, or what school or workplace they are attending).

**5.4** During all Live-Streamed Events, a Staff member or Volunteer will monitor the comments and any other public input thread. The Staff member or Volunteer monitoring the comments will:

- A. Delete any content or comments that are offensive, inappropriate, unsafe, not suitable for children and/or in conflict with Soul Survivor values and/or the Child Safe Policy and Procedures.
- B. Delete any content or comments that pose a risk to the safety of the viewer who made the post or other viewers (e.g. comments disclosing the location they are viewing from, where they live, or what school or workplace they are attending).

**5.5** Hosts will present and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in line with the Soul Survivor values and requirements and aims of the Child Safe Policy and Procedures at all times during the Live-Streamed Event.

**5.6** If the Live-Stream Event is interrupted or intruded upon in an unsafe, inappropriate or disruptive manner, physically or technologically, the Live-Streamed Event will be stopped as soon as possible.

**5.7** Live-Stream Events will be recorded for child safety and/or reporting purposes. All recorded Live-Stream Events or sections thereof will be uploaded to a secure electronic storage folder maintained by Soul Survivor and accessible to Staff and the Director.

## **6. Pastoral Care**

**6.1** Staff members and Volunteers will inform the Director should the need for pastoral care arise during an interaction on social media, in an Online Meeting or otherwise in the course of online communication.

**6.2** If the person in need of pastoral care is a Child, the Child's Parent/guardian and/or Youth Leader will be notified as soon as possible and the relevant provisions of the Child Safe Policy and Procedures followed.

- 6.3** If the person in need of pastoral care is 18 years or older and known to Soul Survivor Staff and/or Volunteers, the Youth Leader or Church Pastor may be informed (with the consent of the person) or other steps taken in consultation with the person and as considered appropriate by the Director.
- 6.4** Staff and Volunteers are not to engage in providing pastoral care online without the permission of the Director. The provision of basic encouragement is permitted.
- 6.5** Reportable conduct and other child safety matters must be reported to the Director immediately and the appropriate steps taken as outlined in the Child Safe Policy and Procedures. Mandatory reporting requirements must be adhered to.

## **7. Feedback and Community Involvement**

- 7.1** Open dialogue with the community is valued. Church Pastors, Youth Leaders, Participants, Children, Parents/guardians and other stakeholders may provide feedback to the Director at any time. Feedback channels are available on the Soul Survivor website.
- 7.2** If a Child, Parent/guardian, Youth Leader, Church Pastor or other member of the community is concerned about the behaviour of a Staff member or Volunteer, or any aspect of Soul Survivor's content, they are encouraged to contact the Director, Matthew Gelding ([matt@soulsurvivorsw.org.au](mailto:matt@soulsurvivorsw.org.au)) or another appropriate Staff member ([info@soulsurvivorsw.org.au](mailto:info@soulsurvivorsw.org.au)) (should a female be required).
- 7.3** If the concern relates to the conduct of the Director, the person should contact a Staff member who should report the allegation to the co-chairs of the Soul Survivor Board of Directors.
- 7.4** Concerns should be managed in a discreet manner. Where possible, the content of concern will be immediately removed from the relevant platform.

## **8. Privacy**

- 8.1** All records containing the personal information of Children and other Participants will be kept secure.
- 8.2** Images of Children will not be used in promotional material without prior consent of the Child and their Parent/guardian.
- 8.3** All data collected containing personal information of any individual will be kept in accordance with Soul Survivor Privacy Policy and Procedures.

## **9. Review**

- 9.1** The Guiding Principles will be reviewed annually by the Director. The Director will provide Staff members with one month's notice of the proposed date of review. Staff members are welcome to provide any comments or suggested amendments in writing for the Director's consideration. Any proposed changes will be submitted to the Soul Survivor Board for consideration and approval before being implemented.
- 9.2** Any feedback provided by the community in accordance with Part 7.1, including in relation to the Guiding Principles, should be considered by the Director when reviewing the Guiding Principles.
- 9.3** All data collected containing personal information of any individual will be kept in accordance with Soul Survivor Privacy Policy and Procedures.