

## **Sexual Misconduct Policy**

God's people have been called to the highest standards of sexual morality and conduct. This is particularly important for those in ministry. Young people place great trust in their Young Life Australia leaders. That trust must never be violated by staff or volunteers of Young Life Australia. Cases of sexual misconduct have profound effects on victims as well as offenders. Therefore, we have developed this sexual misconduct policy as Young Life Australia's policy and course of action for all persons involved. Every attempt has been made to address both the biblical and legal concerns.

### **The Pastoral and Biblical Challenge**

Young Life Australia's understanding of appropriate sexual conduct comes from the Scriptures, which affirm intimate sexual activity between married sexual partners. The biblical narrative also reserves intimate heterosexual activity exclusively within the context of the marriage covenant.

The teaching of creation narratives (Genesis 1-2) is clear that God created humankind as male and female in the image of God in order to reflect the glory of God to the rest of the creation (Genesis 1:26-27). The conclusion which the Scriptures draw from this creation purpose for sexual conduct is that men and women are to engage in intimate sexual activity with each other exclusively in the context of the heterosexual marriage covenant (Genesis 2:23-25). In the gospels, Jesus affirms this creation purpose by citing the creation narratives in His dispute with the Pharisees over the nature and purpose of marriage (Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7-8).

The Scriptures are also clear that sexual activity outside of these creation purposes, either of heterosexual or homosexual nature, is a rejection of the divine creation purpose to reflect the glory of God to the creation.

With regard to the delicate matter of homosexual lifestyle and practice, in the light of the biblical data regarding creation, Young Life Australia believes such activities to be clearly not in accord with God's creation purposes.

On the basis of these theological affirmations, which flow from our understanding of the Scriptures we therefore, must state very clearly that Young Life Australia staff members and volunteers shall not engage in sexual misconduct.

We do not in any way wish to exclude persons who engage in sexual misconduct or who practice a homosexual lifestyle from being recipients of ministry of God's grace and mercy as expressed in Jesus Christ. We do, however, believe that such persons are not to serve as staff or volunteers in the mission and work of Young Life Australia.

As in all things, we believe in the forgiveness of sin and loving all unconditionally. We want to continue to minister to those engaged in sexual misconduct but will not condone this behaviour. Medical, psychological, spiritual and in appropriate instances, economic assistance may be offered in the spirit of justice and love. Legal counsel, if appropriate in Young Life Australia's judgment, may be provided via the Young Life Australia National Office.

It is critical to Young Life Australia's mission and ministry that Young Life Australia staff and volunteers conform to the highest standards of sexual morality and conduct. In their work with Young Life Australia and in their

private lives, Young Life Australia staff and volunteers shall not engage in any relationship or activity, which constitutes sexual misconduct, including but not limited to the following:

1. Sexual relations or activities with any person outside of the marriage covenant.
2. Sexual relations or activities which constitute sexual offences as defined by federal, state and territory law (laws including offences under state and territory law vary from state to state); and
3. Any other sexual relations or activities, which are contrary to the theological and moral affirmations of Young Life Australia's ministry.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Due to the sensitive nature of sexual misconduct and out of concern for the safety and privacy interests of all involved, Young Life Australia requires that when staff or volunteers become aware of or have reasonable cause to suspect that another staff or volunteer is engaging in sexual misconduct, the staff or volunteer must report such misconduct immediately, and in strict accordance with the following procedures. If uncertain as to whether or not behaviour is misconduct, call the Regional Director in your area or the CEO or COO at the Young Life Australia National Office.

1. The staff or volunteer must immediately provide an accurate and verbal report of all relevant details to the immediate supervisory staff member or next line supervisor of the volunteer or staff person suspected of sexual misconduct. If the staff or volunteer has a concern that the matter might not be adequately reported by such supervisor to the CEO or COO, he/she may contact the CEO or COO directly.
2. Any supervisor who receives a report of possible sexual misconduct must then:
  - 2.1. Immediately contact the CEO or COO at the Young Life Australia National Office at 1300 557 647.
  - 2.2. Provide the CEO or COO with a verbal account of the report received from the staff or volunteer.

Until a course of action is developed by the CEO or COO and/or other Young Life Australia board members and the appropriate field or Regional Director, staff and volunteers with knowledge of the sexual misconduct must refrain from:

1. Contacting the person alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct, or
2. Investigating the case, or discussing the details of the case with any person other than appropriate National Office personnel, as described above.

Any communication with the press or report to governmental agencies must be coordinated in advance with the CEO or COO or his / her designate.

If other specific questions relating to sexual misconduct arise, contact the CEO or COO at the National Office.