

West Preston Baptist Church
Policy & Process document
Pastoral Care Policy

1. Purpose

Pastoral care is a broad field encompassing many and varied functions. The purpose of this policy is to outline the scope of pastoral care activities at WPBC and associated roles and responsibilities.

This document should be read in conjunction with the church's Safe Church and Conflict resolution Guidelines.

2. Definition:

"Pastoral Care is a person-centred, holistic approach to care that complements the care offered by other helping disciplines while paying attention to spiritual care. The focus of pastoral care is upon the healing, guiding, supporting, reconciling, nurturing, liberating, and empowering of people in whatever situation they find themselves." (Professor Bruce Rumbold, La Trobe University, School of Public Health)

Pastoral care ministries express the love of God for every person and declare the worthiness of each life to feel loved, to be set free from that which holds people captive, to discover wholeness and to grow in relationship with the Holy Spirit.

3. Policy:

This document outlines the approach taken by West Preston Baptist Church for Pastoral Care activities.

There are a number of situational areas that make up pastoral care, which include:

1. Caring for those in crisis or circumstances of great stress.
2. Supporting those with ongoing challenges or continuing circumstances for which there are no clear or visible resolutions.
3. Relationship building through regular contact, social visits or events.
4. Support for each other through prayer
5. Providing practical assistance to those in need.

Pastoral care at WPBC is extended to children (under 18 years old) providing they are accompanied by an appropriate adult, and that procedures outlined in the Safe Church and children's ministry guidelines are followed.

This policy does not cover:

- Recruitment of pastoral carers,
- Checks required for pastoral carers,
- Circumstances in which to report to the Safe Church Concerns Person.

These items are addressed in the WPBC Safe Church Policy.

4. Pastoral care initiatives

Specific initiatives undertaken by WPBC are to align with at least one of the ministry areas listed in section 3.

Specific pastoral care initiatives will need to be formally approved by the Diaconate so as to provide coverage under the church's insurance.

Current Pastoral care initiatives at WBPC are listed below:

1. Prayer support:

- Prayer requests will be made known to the Minister, prayer team, or approved prayer support person, in confidence, to pray.
- Prayer requests can also be made to the Prayer coordinator who will share those requests by SMS to the prayer team, who have committed to pray for them. The volunteers agree to keep such concerns confidential. In the case of sensitive matters, a smaller prayer core group will pray for those matters.
- No records are to be kept.

2. Maintaining regular contact with Parishioners:

- The pastoral care team will contact parishioners who have been absent from Sunday services for a period of time (2-3 weeks) as a way of affirming the church's care and commitment to them and being able to ascertain whether they may have any needs that the church can assist them with.
- No records are to be kept.

3. Welcome to visitors and follow up:

- Congregation members are encouraged to obtain visitor contact information at a 1to1 level to facilitate a follow up.
Repeat visitors will be asked whether they are willing to provide their contact details to the minister and details are recorded in church database as per the church privacy policy.

4. Visitations to Parishioners:

- This could be triggered by a specific request, or a general visit to further build relationships.
- The minister will provide a general statement regarding any visits conducted during the past month.
- No records are to be kept.

5. Buddy Program:

- This is a specific initiative to build relationships and support for children in the congregation, by providing them an adult mentor.
- Processes outlined in the WPBC Safe Church Awareness Policy will be followed.
- No records are to be kept.

6. **Small Groups** are a vital source of pastoral support for each member.

7. Crises care and support:

- Unplanned visits to the person in need.

- Phone calls and follow-up activities.
- Further assistance as required e.g., provide transport to the doctor or hospital.

Further references:

- The BUV Code of Ethics for Pastoral Leaders - [Code-of-ethics.pdf \(buv.com.au\)](http://www.buv.com.au/code-of-ethics.pdf)

Control

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Document control					
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1	Development of policy	Paul Hicks	Deacon Secretary	10 Nov 2014	Diaconate
2	Review of policy	David Buesnel	Minister	7/3/16	deacons
3	Review of policy	Sylvia Griffiths / Tim Verwoert	Interim Minister / Pastoral Care Team Coordinator	7/5/18	diaconate
4	Review of policy	Paul Huglin/Kirsty O'Donohue	Minister/ chair	30/5/2022	diaconate
5	Review of policy	Paul Huglin	Minister	04/04/2023	diaconate