

LCAVD Youth and Young Adult Ministry Behavioural Expectations Policy

Theological Foundation

All people have an innate dignity and are worthy of respect by virtue of the facts that they have been created by God (Proverbs 14:21; 32:2) in his image (Genesis 1:26-27,), and that Jesus Christ suffered and died for them in order to bring them to God (2 Corinthians 5:14, 1 Peter 3:18, 1 Timothy 2:3-6, John 3:16). The Christian community gives expression to this dignity of the human being by the way in which it lives out its God-given calling in the world. Christians have a joyful calling to be holy as our heavenly Father is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16) and to model purity, compassion, gentleness and reasonableness in dealing with each other (1 Timothy 5:1-2, Ephesians 4:1-3; Galatians 5:22-23; Matthew 5:1-9). We mirror God in protecting the vulnerable of all kinds (Ps 35:10, Mark 10:13-16, John 4), and we deal honestly and loving with those who go astray (Ephesians 4:31-32, Galatians 6:1-2, 1 Peter 4:8). In these ways, we seek to be above reproach and show the life of God to the wider world (John 13:35, 1 Peter 2:15; 3:16).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all who engage with the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA or 'the Church') through the Victoria/Tasmania District's (LCAVD) Youth and Young Adult Ministry (YYAM) are treated with dignity and respect in an environment free from physical, psychological, sexual or spiritual harassment or abuse or the perception of harassment or abuse of any kind, and that Christian life and ethics are lived and modelled at all YYAM events.

Scope

This policy covers all people, whether staff, volunteers or participants at all LCAVD YYAM events and activities of any kind. It includes camps, training events, gatherings, social functions, worship services and the Sunday Night at St John's community.

Policy

The LCAVD YYAM, including all operations under the name of Lutheran Youth of Victoria (LYV) or Lutheran Students Fellowship (LSF), desires to ensure that Christian behaviour is practiced and modelled in its activities, and that all who engage with the Church are treated with dignity honour and respect in an environment free from physical, psychological, sexual or spiritual harassment or abuse or the perception of harassment or abuse of any kind. It expects its events to be places of safety where Christian behaviour and concern for others are manifest by all. It considers any form of harassment or abuse to be unacceptable and not tolerate it under any circumstance. It requires all people at its events to abide by its expectations of participants.

Expectations of participants

The LCAVD YYAM expects and requires all people at its events to conduct themselves in a Christian manner at all times, showing sensitivity and respect for others.

Without limitation to the above, participants will demonstrate God's love by:

- Setting a good example of Christian living
- Treating each other with dignity and respect
- Being courteous, kind and compassionate in our words and actions
- Cultivating a lifestyle of reconciliation
- Obeying the laws of the land and seeking to act so as to be above reproach in the community
- Not abusing, harassing or causing discomfort to any person, verbally, physically, emotionally, sexually or spiritually
- Being conscious at all times of behaviours that could be construed as harassment.
- Acting responsibly in public displays of affection, considering their impact on other people, and distinguishing the private and public spheres
- Acting responsibly in our use of alcohol or other addictive substances or activities such as gambling
- Refraining from viewing, possessing, or circulating material that is pornographic, violent, racist, malicious, or slanderous
- Refraining from sending messages which could be perceived as harassing, threatening or abusive or obscene, and exercising good judgment in all communications whether electronic or otherwise
- Respecting the privacy rights of others, and in particular being responsible in their use of social media and electronic communication, including asking permission before posting photos of others
- Refraining from actions which may cause harm to the reputation of the Church

It is expected that all people will at all times be sensitive to the perceptions of those around them and seek to do what enhances the comfort and edification of others, taking into account that repeated behaviours and patterns of behaviours which alone may be relatively minor can cumulatively become a serious form of harassment.

LCAVD YYAM does not consider the furthering of romantic interests or special friendships to be part of the purpose of its events. It urges caution in these relationships and asks people to be conscious of the effect of their behaviour on those around them.

All participants are to refrain from behaviours and relationships that lead to the exclusion of other people or the inability of any participant (themselves or others) to participate fully in the wider communal life and activities of the event.

Participants are expected to lend their willing co-operation to the intention of this policy, choose their behaviours appropriately, and comply with any direction given by authorised persons or their delegates (e.g. the leadership team on a camp).

Where transgression occurs individuals will be encouraged to grow in their Christian life and understanding by owning responsibility for their behaviour and its impacts and seeking appropriate and safe reconciliation.

Where it can be done without further damage, we seek to help people reconcile. We encourage all people to recognise that disagreements and conflicts can be an opportunity for a deeper conversation together and seek to bring our Lord's forgiveness and unity to human relationships and by doing so bring glory to his name.

Procedures

LCAVD YYAM authorises its event directors, its event pastors, the Pastor for Youth And Young Adult Ministry, and the Facilitator for Youth And Young Adult Ministry to take any and all such action as to provide a safe place, wherein the aims of LCAVD YYAM and its specific events, and the wider desire for those who engage with the LCA, can be met. They may make rules and guidelines for all participants at events in order to ensure the safe and Christian environment desired by this policy. They are explicitly given the right to request changes of behaviour, put limits and guidelines of behaviour on people (for example, to separate one person from another who is uncomfortable around them) and to refuse or revoke any permission to be at an LCAVD YYAM event.

The arrangements for and costs of travel from an event in which permission to participate has been withdrawn will be the responsibility of the individual to whom permission has been withdrawn and their parents/guardians in the case of a child.

In considering behaviours under this policy, responsible persons shall also take into account behaviours which happen outside YYAM events or which may spring from YYAM events.

In considering behaviours under this policy, it shall be considered that the fact that an individual is negatively affected by behaviour is sufficient for action to be taken, regardless of the intention behind the behaviour. Where a mistake or accident has happened we expect that an apology for the negative affect will be forthcoming, and behaviour amended. It may be (but does not have to be the case) that this will resolve the issue. Behaviour which has deliberate intent to cause harm or have a negative effect on others, or behaviour which is reckless about its effects is more serious.

Where items of significance are noted, records will be made and lodged with the Pastor for Youth and Young Adult Ministry for recordkeeping and relevant follow up.

LCAVD YYAM will review the handling of significant events and attempt to learn from and grow in dealing with issues as they arise.

Wider Policy Framework

This policy is in addition to the constitution, by-laws, policies and procedures of the Lutheran Church of Australia, and the Victoria/Tasmania District, including but not limited to the Safe Place Policy, Child Safe Policy and Prevention of Harassment and Abuse Policy, and in no way replaces them. Actions and obligations under those policies must be followed. If there is any conflict between the implementation of this policy and the aforementioned, those policies will take precedence.

In applying this policy, persons should also refer to the LCA Professional Standards Unit's suggested Guidelines for Ethical Standards of Behaviour.

Glossary

LCA – Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand

LCAVD –Victoria Tasmania District (of the LCA)

YYAM – Youth and Young Adult Ministry (of the LCAVD)

LYV – Lutheran Youth of Victoria – (an operational name of the YYAM)

LSF – Lutheran Students Fellowship (an operational name of the YYAM)