



Redoubt North Wesleyan Methodist Church

51 Diorella Drive, Redoubt North/Clover Park

Auckland 2019



Church Home Group Health & Safety

Home group ministry is an important area of church life and relies on the generosity of people opening their homes for gatherings. However, any time a group of people gathers for fellowship, food, and fun, there is an element of risk involved.

Due to the risks involved, although low risk, it's also important for churches to develop a process to distinguish home groups working under the authority of church (church approved) from those that are independent of church oversight.

For church approved home groups, it's a good idea to have policies/procedures in place that require ministry leaders to regularly monitor them to ensure best practices, as referenced below.

Home Group ministry leaders should be aware that the church, as well as the home group leader or host, might be the target of an investigation if someone were injured during a church approved home group activity which they lead or host.

This does not need to be an over the top process, rather a common sense approach and at regular training nights for home group leaders, make sure you mention health and safety in the home.

For independent groups, ministry leaders might decide to offer training, support, and oversight to the hosts/leaders. If such an offer is accepted, such a group might then be recognised as a church approved, group. If, on the other hand, the group refuses such assistance, its leaders should be politely advised that they are not formally approved by the church and are "on their own" from a liability perspective.

So to assist your Home Group ministry here are some important things to consider when conducting home group meetings:

HOME SAFETY

- Are there defects or dangers in the home where the group meets that participants should be made aware of (i.e. frayed carpet; loose handrails on stairs; uneven pathways; bad lighting)?
- Is there any work being done on the house, which could propose a hazard? (i.e. scaffolding from painting, holes dug in the ground)

- Is the entrance way free from clutter so that people can enter and exit easily?
- Do you have any pets? Are large dogs restrained?
- Are there any special risks like swimming pools or trampolines? What are the guidelines for use of these?
- Are appropriate safety measures taken in rooms where small children will play (i.e., outlet covers, gates to block stairs, etc.)?

CHILDCARE

- Parents are ultimately responsible for the safety of their children. Are the parents participating in the home group comfortable with childcare arrangements, including the individual(s) who will be supervising?
- Does the home group leader need a copy of the church's child supervision policy? This can help communicate the church's commitment to child safety and guide the home group leader in making appropriate childcare arrangements for small group activities.

FOOD

- Do any home group participants (including children) have food allergies? If so, what are they? Does the small group host know what measures must be taken in the event of an allergic reaction?

Should an accident/incident happen during a Home Group provide your Home Group leaders with an Accident Investigation form, and instructions on who they need to notify.

I/we have read the above guidelines and as home group leaders we will do our utmost to abide by these guidelines and abide by the churches Health & safety policy.

Home Group Leader

Date

Approved for use by: The Servant Leaders
On: 22 September 2022
To be reviewed: September 2024