

New Life Christian Church Christian Church



Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People

**A CHILD AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE
PROTECTION POLICY**

CODE OF CONDUCT

AND PROCEDURES

Section 1. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy Statement: A Commitment to Child Protection

The purpose of this Policy is to guide New Life Christian Church in developing a child-protective culture. New Life Christian Church is committed to welcoming children and their parents or carers and providing a 'child-safe'¹ environment, culture and programs for children and other vulnerable people who attend the services and other programs. We see such a commitment as flowing naturally from our vision and mission to operate according to biblical, Christian principles for living and for recognising the unique value and potential of every person, regardless of race, age, gender, ability or disability.

All children who come to New Life Christian Church have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of children in our care will be our first priority. The authorised leaders accept the responsibility of providing a safe and friendly environment where children are listened to, feel safe, have fun, accept challenges, learn and grow. This duty of care applies at all times, although when children attend church and remain with their parents, then the parents have the primary duty of care.

We recognise the particular need for sensitivity for those from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, including those with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. We take into consideration the needs of children with disabilities and seek to include them and make them feel safe and welcome.

This Policy recognises both Federal and State legislation and commits workers to responsibly and reasonably cooperate with Government departments, law enforcement and child protection agencies. The operational principles of our Code of Conduct support and facilitate the protection of children and young people.

1.2 Scope:

The provisions and duties of care expressed in this Child Protection Policy apply to:

- Ministers. A minister of religion is: *A person defined or appointed as a recognised leader in an organised religious institution; or the appointed leader of a local religious congregation in an organised religious institution who has general authority.*
- The (Session), pastors, all employees (including volunteers) members and adherents.
- All activities and programs organised by or with the approval of New Life Christian Church, on the premises or off-site, including camps and day trips.

¹It is recognized that no organisation can guarantee the safety of children and other vulnerable people who are on site at a venue. The term 'child-safe' means that child safety is paramount to this organisation, that it has compliant policies and procedural documents and that risk identification and mitigation practices are embedded in the culture.

- All guests or hirers of the venue and its facilities. Such temporary users of New Life Christian Church facilities will be provided with copies of this Policy Code of Conduct and relevant procedures, and the Hiring Agreement will include a signed commitment to complying with the expectations of these documents.
- Contractors, subcontractors, delivery persons or others engaged to provide services on the premises, whether or not they have direct contact with children whilst on site. Where possible, such temporary visitors to New Life Christian Church premises will be provided with an Induction Pack and required to sign their willingness to comply with the expectations outlined.

1.3 Authority

This Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct was revised and updated to reflect the most recent changes to State and Federal law and guidelines towards being a child-safe organisation.

It was originally approved by the Session and adopted for use by New Life Christian Church on 15/11/17. The October 2020 version was approved 3/11/20. This version was approved 07/09/21

1.4 Policy Review

The Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Code of Conduct will be reviewed at least every two years, or to remain compliant with new legislation.

Any proposed changes or updates will be submitted to the Session of New Life Christian Church for approval at a properly convened meeting for approval before being adopted and implemented.

1.5 Operating Principles

Duty of Care: Means any legal responsibility that New Life Christian Church has to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those who participate in programs or activities of New Life Christian Church and to provide an adequate level of protection against harm.

Vicarious Liability: Means any legal liability that New Life Christian Church may be determined to have for the conduct of those who act on its behalf (e.g. its staff and approved voluntary leaders).

Reasonable Standard of Care: Refers to the level of care that a user may reasonably expect that New Life Christian Church will take in providing any program, activity, service, or facility.

Reasonable Foresight: Refers to a responsibility that New Life Christian Church has, when planning activities for children and young people, to identify any reasonably foreseen danger/risk and take reasonable steps to prevent or avert such risk.

Child Protection Reporting Obligations: This principle covers mandatory reporting, for those professions and roles that are defined by law, and the moral and legal responsibility that all

adults have to report all types of known or possible child abuse, where there is a reasonable belief that a physical or sexual offence has occurred or may be committed against a child.

Reasonable belief: A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds, through disclosure by the child or a third party or personal observation of indicators that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk.

2. Safety and Participation for Children and Vulnerable People

The staff and leadership of New Life Christian Church encourage children to feel a part of New Life Christian Church by seeking their feedback regarding children's programs, and through listening to them when they speak about matters that directly affect their sense of safety or wellbeing.

Part of our work with children is to *teach and inform* them of what they can do if they feel unsafe, threatened or upset by the behaviour of adults or other children. *We will listen to and act on* any concerns children or their parents/carers raise with us.

We value diversity and we will treat people with respect in our words or practices or in those of others.

We are committed to protecting children from harm. 'Harm', as used in this policy, includes any and all of the following types of abuse or neglect of children and young people: physical; sexual; emotional/psychological; racial/cultural or spiritual/religious. (See Appendix 2)

We recognize that vulnerable people need protection from harm which includes the same forms of harm identified for children, and may also include Family and Domestic violence, Financial abuse, Indecent assault, Sexual harassment, Image Based abuse etc. (See Appendix 2).

2.1 Feedback from Children

Children and young adults will have the opportunity to reflect on their experience of church programs and to make comments regarding the standard of planning for and delivery of programs for their age-group. We will invite comments on other aspects of wellbeing, including staff conduct. Such feedback will inform New Life Christian Church and guide adjustments to practices, programs and training.

3. Employment of Staff and Volunteer Leaders

3.1 Recruitment, screening and selection practices

New Life Christian Church will be vigilant in the recruitment, selection and screening of all staff, contractors, leaders and volunteers to ensure they are safe and suitable to work with children and young people. It is important that every person who works with children under the auspices of this church upholds and exemplifies our Christian beliefs and values, especially in their interaction with children and other vulnerable people.

1. Our statements of commitment to child safety and our behavioural expectations of employees and volunteers are included in all advertisements and Job Descriptions.
2. We will conduct thorough screening to determine whether a prospective staff member, contractor, volunteer or leader may pose a risk to children. This will include New Life Christian Church making reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:
 - a. The applicant will have been a member of the congregation for a period of at least 12 months;
 - b. Child-related Employment Screening Clearance;
 - c. proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
 - d. the person's history of work involving children; and
 - e. at least 2 references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
3. The type of evidence that an applicant is required to provide to New Life Christian Church will vary depending on the type of position that they are applying for. However, New Life Christian Church will not offer any applicant a position at New Life Christian Church until they provide the required evidence to the Team Leader who will then pass on to the Child Safe Co-ordinator. We conduct reference checks prior to engagement, using an agreed set of questions. Conversations will be documented and kept as part of the employment file of successful applicants.
4. Short-listed applicants for paid positions will be interviewed by Pastors / Elders, prior to appointment being made official. The Senior Pastor will make appointments to a specific role in the form of an Employment Contract. Such an Employment Contract will include a commitment to New Life Christian Church's Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Code of Conduct.
5. All workers who do not have a current written employment contract are to enter into a ministry/organisational covenant dealing with their suitability to be workers and agreeing to these child protection policies, procedures and the Code of Conduct.

6. People that do not have a valid and current Child related Employment Screening Clearance (WWCC) are not allowed to be engaged in any children's programs.
7. We have a clear staff and volunteer induction process that includes providing them with a copy of this Policy, the Code of Conduct and other relevant documents detailing standard operating procedures.

3.2 Support and Training

We provide a system of support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. This system will train and guide our staff and volunteers in their interactions with children and clear procedures for managing programs and activities.

1. Staff and volunteers are provided with a copy of this **Child Protection Policy** and the **Code of Conduct and Procedures** that defines unacceptable conduct, boundaries and expectations for behaviour. Staff will sign a pledge stating they have read, understand and will comply with guidelines and follow procedures faithfully.
2. Annual 'Refresh, Renew, Update' sessions are run for all program staff and volunteers, to ensure staff and volunteers awareness of the importance of child safety and familiarity with child protective practices and expectations and where there have been changes to legislation or practice.
3. Paid staff and the leadership team will attend workshop/training sessions organised by the denomination or other Registered Training Organisations.
4. People that have not successfully completed their training program are not allowed to be engaged in any children's programs.

4. Reporting & Investigation of Suspected Child Abuse

Child abuse, especially sexual abuse of a child must be reported, where a reasonable belief is held that the child concerned has been abused, is being or is likely to be abused. A responsible adult can come to a reasonable belief through:

- i. Disclosure by a child about abuse to his or her self.
- ii. Disclosure by another child or an adult about abuse to a child, or
- iii. Direct observation of the abuse or evidence of it by the reporting adult.

The identity of the abuser and the circumstances of the event determine the procedure that should be followed by the leadership, employees or volunteers of New Life Church.

4.1 Abuse of a Child Outside of the Church

If a child attending a New Life program discloses abuse against them or to another child by a person **outside of the New Life community**, then the procedures outlined in **Reporting Procedure 1** (Appendix 1 and 1A) must be followed. All such disclosures should be written up on a **Complaints Form** (Appendix 6) and the Child Protection Officer/Senior Pastor/Safe Church Coordinator informed.

However, it is the duty of the person to whom the disclosure was made to report the matter to either the Police or Child Protection Services (DHHS), following the Reporting Procedure 1. The church leadership may also decide to make a report.

In this case, ***no further investigation by the church is required***. However, all reasonable steps to protect the child from harm should be taken.

4.2 Abuse of a Child by a New Life employee, volunteer or member

In the case of an allegation being made against staff member, volunteer, leader or contractor at New Life, the Child Protection Coordinator/Safe Church Coordinator will follow the Reporting Procedure in **Procedure 1** (Appendix 1 and 1A) to notify both the church leadership team and either the Police (if the matter is deemed severe or criminal) or the Child Protection Unit of DHHS.

In this case, then the additional requirements of the **Reportable Conduct Scheme** (See Appendix 4) must also be followed by the Chairman of Session, summarised here:

New Life Church will take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child is paramount. (As at July 2020 Reportable Conduct Schemes operate in Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT).

Step 1. Ensure that the details of the allegation are recorded on a church **Complaint Form**, and the Senior Pastor or Leadership Team is informed. Report the matter to the Police or DHHS.

Step 2. Withdraw the accused person from active duty, which could entail standing down (with pay, where applicable), re-assignment to other duties that do not have direct contact with children, or to work under increased supervision while the matter is being investigated.

Step 3. Notify the **Office of the Children's Guardian** who are the state appointed agency to receive Reportable Conduct notifications in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme guidelines, that is, within three (3) working days.

Step 4. The investigation process should be completed within 30 days of notification, and the report of the investigation, including findings and actions taken (or decision not to act) will be sent to the **Office of the Children's Guardian**. In some cases it may be appropriate to bring in an investigator from outside the church, to avoid conflicts of interest. If the case has been reported to authorities – investigations should only be conducted when the authorities have approved this investigation.

Step 5. When a report is made, the leadership will contact Greg Thomas, Managing Director, GJ Insurance Consulting Pty Ltd (greg@gjic.com.au, p.1300 384 799) and he will direct them to New Life Christian Church's insurers.

4.3 Investigations

New Life Christian Church will appropriately investigate all allegations relating to an incident of abuse in accordance with its obligations and to the extent reasonably practicable.

In some circumstances, as described by the **Reportable Conduct Scheme**, it may be necessary for New Life Church to conduct an investigation *in addition to* any investigation conducted by authorities (e.g. the police). New Life Christian Church may conduct an independent investigation into the allegation to the extent that it will not interfere with investigations by the Department or the police and will co-operate with the authorities as required. All people covered by this Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure must co-operate fully with any investigation by the Department, the police or New Life Christian Church.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for New Life to engage a person (or persons) from outside New Life Christian Church to conduct an independent investigation in relation to allegations.²

New Life Christian Church will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other employees, leaders, volunteers and contractors may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation (e.g. to provide witness statements).

4.4 Case management

In the event of a child or vulnerable person disclosing an incident of abuse to someone they trust it is essential that it is dealt with swiftly, sensitively and professionally.

An investigation conducted by New Life Christian Church will be conducted in accordance with procedural fairness to protect the integrity of the investigation and the interests of all the participants involved in the investigation. New Life Christian Church will also handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible. The outcome will depend on the findings of the investigation, but may be (but not limited to):

- withdrawal from current role;
- re-assignment to duties with no contact with children;
- increased supervision;
- disciplinary action, dismissal or criminal prosecution.
- Deposition from office

² It is important to have an arrangement in place. The investigator must be a person of experience and qualification, maybe with a role in the wider church association or sourced through GJIC Insurance.

5 Risk Management

New Life Christian Church will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall approach to risk management. Risk assessment and management practices are embedded in our procedures for all services, programs or activities authorised by New Life Christian Church. We use these practices to inform our planning and implementing of all aspects of operation at New Life Christian Church.

Risk management applies to Work Health and Safety generally. This policy applies specifically to the minimising of risks of abuse of any kind to children who are in our care and to ensuring their physical safety in the buildings or activities of New Life Christian Church. New Life Christian Church has zero tolerance of child abuse of any kind.

In situations where a person seeks to attend or join New Life Christian Church with a record of offending in child abuse of any kind, the leadership will put in place appropriate boundaries restricting access, to ensure the safety of children. This is not to say that such a person, with a proven reformed attitude, cannot be received into fellowship and benefit from the pastoral care of New Life Christian Church.

New Life Christian Church will have a Safety and Care team³ committed to identifying and managing risks within New Life Christian Church and its environment.

If the Child Safe Co-ordinator and/or Safety and Care Team identifies risks of child abuse occurring in New Life Christian Church or its environment the committee will make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the Child Safe Co-Ordinator and /or New Life Christian Church Session will take to reduce or remove the risks (i.e. risk controls).

As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the Child Safe Co-ordinator and/or Safety and Care Team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

A Child Protection Officer (Child Safe Co-ordinator) is appointed by the leadership for responding to complaints made by staff, contractors, volunteers, children or other attendees and members of the congregation.⁴

³ This may be a function of the Board or governing body, rather than a separate group. If so, there should be a standard Agenda item re Risk Management in meetings.

⁴This person is mature, experienced and readily accessible during those times children are on site, but does not directly work with children. The Child Safety Officer appointed by New Life leadership is accountable to the

The Child Protection Officer (CPO) will be identified and their role explained at appropriate times in New Life Christian Church year. Guests, staff and volunteers are expected to use either the **Complaints Form** or the **Incident Form** to note concerns arising from observations or experience. (See Appendix 3 and 4) Copies of these forms will be uploaded onto ChildSafe by the CPO.

6 Record keeping

All reports of alleged abuse or harm, or risk thereof, must be recorded in the form of a Complaint or Incident Report. This will record places, times, dates, names of people, observable behaviours or evidence of harm. Reports must be securely stored by the CPO/Safe Church Coordinator. They provide valuable legal documents for any investigations and demonstrate the churches due diligence.

The denomination has established a National Register, with specific reference to implementing Recommendation 16.58* of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. New Life Christian Church which employs and/or appoints individuals to roles within the Church will be required to contact the Safe Church Unit prior to employment/appointment, to gain clearance via the Register. The National Register records information that assists the Church to identify and respond to any risks posed to children by people in ministry. (NOTE: The Safe Church Unit and National Register will be set up after Synod 2021, until then data is stored in Safety Management Online (SMO))

The names of all persons who:

- apply for a Working with Children Check (or equivalent)
- are Ministers
- are paid employees or volunteer ministry workers of the Church
- will require a clearance via a check of the Church National Register by the Safe Church Unit before they may be admitted to any new role or ministry.

The National Register will include information about persons who have been involved in the life of the Church, and are or have been:

- Charged with or convicted of an offence or offences against the person – including sexual offences;
- Had a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance withdrawn, suspended, barred or revoked;
- The subject of a substantiated complaint of child sexual abuse;
- Listed on the Sex Offenders Register; and
- Subject to a risk management plan or party to a relevant behavioural [or safety] agreement under the authority of a relevant Court of the Church.

Senior Pastor. The CPO has access to the Complaints and Incident Forms and is familiar with the legal requirements applying to the reporting of abuse against children.

Once established, the procedure for requesting and attaining clearances will be communicated to all churches and Safe Church Coordinators.

*The recommendations can be found at www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au

7 Privacy and Confidentiality

New Life Christian Church will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information in accordance with relevant privacy legislation. Such data will be securely stored and protected.

As much as is reasonably possible, an individual's confidentiality is to be protected. Both those who are making reports and those about whom accusations are being made are entitled to confidentiality. Where there is suspected abuse or misconduct, staff members, leaders, volunteers and contractors must not disclose or make use of the information in a manner that breaches confidentiality, other than to report and act consistent with the Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure, and relevant statutory requirements.

This Child and Vulnerable People policy complies with the *The Privacy Act (1988)*, the federal law which regulates the handling of personal information about individuals. This includes the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personally identifiable and sensitive information.

New Life Christian Church collects personally identifiable and sensitive information in order to implement its function and in accordance with the 'Australian Privacy Principles' as described in the Act.

8 Guidelines

Care and supervision ratios of workers to children

There is no fixed ratio which (unless prescribed by state or territory legislation) will necessarily satisfy the duty of care in all situations. It will depend on all of the circumstances which will include:

- The age, needs and behavioural history of the children present;
- The skills and experience of the workers;
- The environment in which the children are placed;
- The nature of any risks to which the children may be exposed;
- The ready availability of backup if there are difficulties.

The following table is based on similar tables used in the child care industry and may be used as a rough 'rule of thumb', but even compliance with it may not be sufficient to satisfy the duty of care in all situations.

RECOMMENDED MINIMUM SUPERVISION RATIO'S:

Under two years of age:	1 approved worker to every 5 children.
Two years to school age:	1 approved worker to every 5 children.
Primary school age:	1 approved worker to every 5 children
Secondary school age Jnr:	1 approved worker to every 10 children
Secondary school age Snr:	1 approved worker to every 15 children

Notwithstanding these minimum ratios it is recommended that, for children of primary school age or younger, a minimum of two (2) workers be present at all times. If any lesser ratios are used, it should only be after a conscious and responsible decision by **New Life Christian Church** that the supervision provided does satisfy its duty of care for the children. (ChildSafe SP3's recommended Team Member to participant ratio for every activity is no greater than 1:8 ie. 1 leader for every 8 participants. When your children or people with special needs are present the ratio should be lower. *Reference SP3 Team Members Guide 2013* www.childsafe.org.au)

Transportation

When a young person is travelling in a vehicle driven by a worker, or designated person, the vehicle will be driven carefully, adhering to the legal speed limits and road laws at all times. At no time should there be more passengers in a car than the number of seat belts which are in working order and available for use. Cars must be registered and driven by licensed drivers, holding current licences relevant to the type and class of vehicle driven. In addition, motorcycles may be used by the registered owner, but the carrying of children and youth during official church activities as a pillion passenger without parental consent is prohibited. Hitch hiking is prohibited at all times.

In the event of an accident in which any person is injured, management, pastors, staff and parents must be informed as soon as possible. All state legislations regarding the reporting of an accident must be followed.

Negligent driving can have painful emotional and legal consequences. Anyone who cannot/does not drive responsibly must not transport children. In addition, drivers must take children directly to and from arranged venues and not spontaneously detour or make additional arrangements without parental/leadership consent.

If a child is travelling in a vehicle driven by a worker or designated person who possesses a P2 Provisional licence (green P's), prior written consent must be obtained from a parent/guardian except in the case of a genuine emergency. Children are not to travel in cars when the driver has a learner's permit or a P1 Provisional licence (red P's).

Alcohol must not be consumed eight hours prior to or during church/organisational children's or youth activities. The use of illegal drugs is not permitted at any time.

In addition, no driver may provide transport if there is any possibility that he/she may be driving under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol, or under any condition that would inhibit their ability to safely control a motor vehicle. It is the responsibility of the driver to inform senior or key leaders of any situation that may inhibit their ability to safely be in charge of a motor vehicle.

Punctuality

Workers and designated helpers should stick to timetables to the best of their ability. If an activity is running significantly overtime, parents should be notified as soon as possible of the new anticipated time that their child/ren may arrive at the pre-determined point. If the activity is off-site and a delay has occurred, it may be appropriate to telephone one person who could inform all parents of the circumstances.

Moral wellbeing

Workers must ensure that any television programmes, videos, music, magazines and/or displays shown or used as part of the group's activities are suitable in content and appropriate to the age group represented, with due regard to Christian values. Whilst official television and movie ratings should be observed, there will be situations where those in leadership will have the responsibility of approving the viewing of certain material.

Every worker is expected to maintain a high moral code. Foul, demeaning, bullying, racist or sexist language is not acceptable, and will not be tolerated by anyone working in ministry.

Inappropriate Behaviour of a worker

Any person who is concerned about the behaviour of any worker must refer the matter to a pastor and/or elder/manager of the church/organisation for consideration and intervention which is deemed appropriate.

Bullying

Bullying is a form of persistent harassment which demeans, threatens, intimidates or humiliates a person. For any person in leadership to act in such a manner is unacceptable, and will not be tolerated.

Meetings/Locations

To ensure that safety and integrity is maintained for all concerned, workers should always conduct one on one meetings in an area that is private but not isolated. It is not considered

wise to meet with an individual child in a secluded/blind area. Where possible it is desirable that the room used for such meetings have glass inserts in doors which will maintain confidentiality, whilst eliminating a secluded or blind area. Where there is a perceived risk that a child might falsely allege inappropriate behaviour by a worker, a third person should be present.

Pastoral Care/Support/Counselling

It is the responsibility of **New Life Christian Church** to ensure that all workers are made aware of the difference between a qualified “counsellor”, and a person providing “pastoral care” support. The term “counsellor” relates to a suitably qualified person.

Workers should at all times keep their senior pastor/manager informed of their ministry/organisational case load, who they are meeting with, and who they are providing direction or support to via an ongoing process of supervision and support.

Any form of touching in a secluded or blind area must be avoided at all times.

Workers must not visit children at home without obtaining parental/guardian permission.

Workers must not visit young people in the home or at isolated locations if no other person is present.

Managing Inappropriate Behaviours in Children

If a young child misbehaves within a **New Life Christian Church** program or activity, firm but gentle verbal correction which is respectful and age-appropriate should be the first response. For a younger child a short period of “time out” may also be appropriate. A useful guide for determining the amount of time out is one minute for each year of the child’s age. However, it is not appropriate to use a time out strategy for children under three years of age. Parents should be made aware of these practices and procedures when enrolling children into activities/programs.

When a child is unresponsive or responds unsatisfactorily to reasonable requests to comply with a standard of behaviour which is respectful to him/her, or other children, and/or those supervising, the matter must then be immediately reported to the parent/guardian.

In extreme cases, children may be precluded from activities for a period of time, until an undertaking is given, appropriate to age, to behave within acceptable limits. If this decision is made, the parent is to be informed and where possible included in the negotiations regarding management strategies and restoration to that activity.

At no time is physical punishment or verbal intimidation permissible, even with parental approval.

Toileting small children

When a small child needs assistance in toileting, the following procedures should be observed:

Where practicable the parent should be responsible for attending to the child.

- If this is not practicable the child should be encouraged to manage him/herself to the fullest possible extent, according to ability.
- When crèche workers or designated helpers must assist a child, another adult worker should be informed upon leaving the activity and upon returning.
- Where possible, it may be useful to accompany more than one child to the toilet at any given time.
- Male leaders are not to assist in the toileting of girls.
- At no time should a child be allowed to enter a public toilet alone whilst placed in a 'kids' church/ crèche or other organisational related activity/program.

Crèche/Kids Program activities/Programs

The issue of crèche/kids program workers with respect to 'Duty of Care' is a vexed one, since so much depends upon volunteers, often on a very casual and perhaps even spontaneous basis. While a basic Duty of Care exists whenever any worker undertakes to supervise children (i.e.: with respect to reasonable foreseeability and proximity), it is highly recommended that there be at least one worker who is cognisant of rudimentary Duty of Care, WHS and Child Protection requirements somewhere on site, and who could be available as a reference person/supervisor whenever such a program is functioning.

Where young children accompany their parents to Home Groups and other similar functions in private homes, arrangements which are made for the children's care and well-being and the nature of the activities in which they engage should be formally agreed upon and accepted by all the parents concerned, and the church advised in order to ensure that all standards are met. Any person/worker who specifically takes on the responsibility of the care of children should be expected to provide a level of care which fulfils Duty of Care standards Including a National police clearance/working with children check. It is the responsibility of **New Life Christian Church** to establish and promote such procedures.

Crèche and Junior Church/programs check in/out procedures

New Life Christian Church will use a roll for Kids Church to monitor children placed into the supervision and care of those running the program. JAM, Youth and Crèche will have a sign in/out procedure with authorised pick up and a list of prohibited people.

Children in junior programs (under 5 years of age) once checked into an activity must not be permitted to leave that activity or program unless collected by a parent or authorised person.

General medical/information forms should be completed and filed in relation to all children attending the above programs.

Worker identification

All workers whilst actively carrying out their appointed responsibilities should at all times be issued with and wear New Life green shirts with the New Life logo. Identification tags will be also used for Holiday Club programs. This not only identifies accredited workers, but communicates a clear message of professionalism and accountability. T-shirts must be worn at all times when rostered.

Camping/Excursions/Activities

New Life Christian Church leadership must approve of and endorse all camps and excursions as an official church/organisation activity and parental consent must be obtained at all times for activities that are conducted off site. All standards previously identified in this document in terms of transportation, child/youth management and ethical standards apply.

Appropriate risk assessment, management and reporting should be undertaken (refer to Insurer for further detail).

In the case of camps and off site special events, parents/guardians must be supplied (in writing) specific information about the activity, including venue, contact details, all proposed activities as well as transport and sleeping arrangements, emergency/first aid arrangements and the names of designated leader/s. Special event medical/information forms (**Appendix 10**) and permission to attend special event form (**Appendix 11**) must be supplied to, completed by parents and maintained by the responsible program/ministry leader and workers.

Leaders who have the ultimate oversight and responsibility must be appointed and have undergone all relevant training and preparation for such events. All leaders and workers must have completed a **New Life Christian Church** approved mandatory reporting/child protection awareness training programme as well as undergone a National Police clearance check and/or working with children check (where required by state/territory legislation).

For camps/overnight activities each person must have separate bedding and provision must be made for private changing and showering facilities.

Leaders and workers are not permitted share accommodation with one child/young person, unless they are a parent or guardian.

Other than married couples, leaders and workers are not permitted to share a bed together at any time.

Children should not (where possible) be permitted to sleep in close proximity to leaders or workers. If unavoidable, or for younger children requiring closer supervision, increased levels of supervision and monitoring procedures must be implemented. No less than two approved

leaders should be present at all times. This also applies to children (boys and girls) sleeping in close proximity to each other.

No persons are permitted to shower together at any time.

At no time are leaders or workers permitted to provide, allow or consume alcohol or illegal drugs. If leaders are taking prescribed medication that would impair their ability to perform their role effectively, it is their responsibility to advise their designated leader.

In the case of camp fires, the leaders and workers in charge must follow all local statutory rules and regulations including total fire bans at all times and ensure that appropriate fire safety precautions are in place.

Activities where a degree of risk is involved, for example pioneering, boating, air activities, abseiling, bushwalking, rock climbing, water activities, including sailing, scuba diving, canoeing etc, such activities must only be undertaken under the direction and supervision of fully qualified persons. All laws, rules and regulations pertaining to these activities must be followed at all times.

Precautions must be taken by leaders and workers in relation to swimming/water activities. The safety of the swimming area must be thoroughly examined in relation to depth, currents and obstacles. A leader/worker must be appointed to oversee and supervise the activity at all times.

It is desirable to pair swimmers off (“Buddy System”) with each swimmer taking responsibility for keeping the other in view and immediately reporting any mishap or disappearance. At least one person with suitable life-saving and first aid qualifications should be on standby at all times.

Appropriate swimming attire must be worn by all persons at all times.

It is the responsibility of individual church/organisation leaderships to familiarise themselves with all legislative standards and safety procedures in relation to activities undertaken.

Hiring out of New Life Christian Church facilities to outside groups

Group’s privately hiring or using **New Life Christian Church** facilities where children will be a part of that program have the responsibility for ensuring children are safe in their program. (responsibility is included in the hiring contract)

Internet Access

Internet access, email, social media and ‘smart-phone’ facilities are in most cases available for the purpose of communication, research and business purposes.

Workers hold positions of trust and leadership and are at all times prohibited from: sending, receiving, downloading, displaying, printing or otherwise disseminating material that is sexually explicit, obscene, profane, discriminating, fraudulent, offensive, defamatory or otherwise in any way unlawful.

Initiation/secret ceremonies

Initiations and or secret ceremonies are prohibited.

A CODE OF PRACTICE FOR CARING

The care of children, young people and adults begins with the attitude of leaders. It is through what we do and the way we do it that demonstrates care in action.

1. Attitude of Leaders.

Modelling

Children, young people and adults learn as much from what leaders do as what they say. For this reason, leaders should ensure that what they do matches what they say and in all ways honours Christ.

Favouritism

No behaviour should give the impression of favouritism or encourage special relationships with individuals. The person who is not easy to love often needs more love from us. It is also important to remember that the way leaders communicate with one another is observed. Nicknames, 'put downs' and sexist language only reinforces behaviour that children and young people, especially, may already see all too often.

Wisdom

Leaders will find there are many situations that cannot be covered in a policy statement. At these times the leader needs to use the gift of discernment and wisdom in making a decision. A wise leader/carer is also mindful of the principle of not only doing the right thing, but being seen to do the right thing.

A Caring Style

Where participants or members of the wider community observe leaders at work they need to see a caring style that is genuinely Christian.

Duty of Care

Every leader has what is termed a 'duty of care'. This means that it is their duty to do all things within their power that they can be reasonably expected to do to ensure the safety and security of those within their care. Operating within the framework and principles of this 'Child Protection Policy' will result in the leader faithfully exercising their duty of care. Leaders cannot transfer their duty of care to others, e.g. a non-leader. Responsibility can be shared, but not totally delegated.

2. Physical contact

Choice and Initiation

Some people do not seek or enjoy physical contact and are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact they have with others except in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when needing medical attention. It is therefore inappropriate, in the normal course of events, to initiate physical contact.

Adult Responsibility

Physical contact between adults and children may be misconstrued. Any physical activity that is or may be construed as sexually stimulating to the adult or child is inappropriate and must

be avoided. As children may or may not be aware of creating such situations, it is the duty of the adult to be alert to such circumstances and to act accordingly.

Toileting and Touching of Infants

Toileting and handling of infants will be done by female carers where appropriate. There should be no touching of the private parts nor hands placed under clothing of children by adults.

Privacy

Care needs to be exercised so that in situations where physical contact occurs, it does not occur in private. Where private conversations are necessary with a child or a member of the opposite sex, the leader and participant should remain visible to other leaders.

Corporal Punishment

On no account must any form of corporal punishment be administered. The only form of physical restraint appropriate is to protect someone from harm, e.g. reasonable restraint to stop a fight, to stop bullying or to avoid an accident.

3. Program Considerations

Medical Permission Form

All programs or activities involving children and/or young people up to the age of 18 must obtain a Medical & Health Information Permission Form at the beginning of each year or reviewed each year (see Appendix 9). This needs to be available at ALL meetings and activities for the group throughout the year in case of medical emergencies and must be kept safe and secure between meetings.

Purpose of activities

When planning activities, leaders should consider the purpose of the activity within the context of the program goals. Consideration should include:

1. The site and nature of activities and the nature of what happens should minimise risks.
2. For activities involving children and young people, a discipline policy needs to be decided upon prior to the activity which sets out in writing the rules and consequences of not following those rules. This needs to be sent home to parents prior to the activity. Sample forms are available from the Childsafe Co-ordinator.
3. Activities or games that require children and young people to act alone or in pairs, independent of leaders, need to be very carefully considered.
4. If at all possible, activities for children and young people that provide access to or contact with strangers should be avoided. If, during an activity, it is impossible for them not to come into contact with strangers, then great care must be exercised.
5. For children and young people, all activities need to have defined boundaries that are easily observed or patrolled.
6. Leaders need to avoid situations where it is possible for participants to become physically isolated.
7. Games or activities that may exploit gender, physical or intellectual differences must be assessed as to whether or not they are appropriate.

8. Consideration needs to be given to the 'message' given to participants by activities and events that are organised. That is, the way things are done 'speaks' loudly.
9. Not compelling participation in certain types of activities, but trying to design activities that maximise participation.

Check List: It can be helpful for leaders to develop a check list before program activities occur. This can best be done within the leadership group.

Key questions should be asked like:

Have you thought about...?

Have you checked.....?

Have you communicated....?

Risk Assessment

Activities where there is a risk of possible injury e.g. outdoor adventure activities, require leaders to discuss the activity with the participants or the parents of the child and young person. A risk assessment needs to be carried out prior to conducting the activity. A risk assessment form is available at Appendix 15. The ChildSafe website also has guidelines "checklist for assessing a safety plan" & "permission to proceed" which should be used during the planning stages of activities. If leaders are in doubt about any aspect of safety they should seek further advice. Leaders who take responsibility for these activities must possess the necessary skills and/or training required for the safe conduct of the activity. All completed documentation should be filed as a part of the Programs documentation.

Leaders/Carers who are under 18 years of age

Leaders/carers who are under 18 years of age should not be considered an "adult in charge" and therefore must not be included in the Leader to Participant ratios listed below. No person under 18 years of age may be a carer in the crèche (they may be a helper).

Male/Female Representation

As a general guide, leaders ought to be aware of the need for both male and female leaders at an activity where there are both male and female children or young people. On a residential activity this should be considered as part of the risk assessment. In an activity or programme for young boys only, it is advisable for there to be one or two female leaders as well as the male leaders.

Two Person Rule

It is a requirement of our liability insurance and also of this policy that the two person rule is in place at all times. This means that on no occasion should a carer or leader be on their own with a child or young person up to the age of 18. When transporting a child or young person, there must be a minimum of two children/young people in the car when there is only one leader.

Guidelines for mentoring young people under the age of 18

The mentor will comply with the NSW screening guidelines before commencing mentoring the young person. A permission form needs to be signed by the parent/guardian of the young person before commencing mentoring. Forms are available from the Church Office or from

the Childsafe Co-ordinator. Verbal permission needs to be obtained from the parent/guardian by the mentor before every meeting or activity with the young person. Meeting suggestions will also be provided to the mentor, such as all meetings between the mentor and the young person to be in the home of the young person while the parent/guardian is present or in a public place.

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs for activities involving Children & Young People

All programs involving children and young people are to be alcohol free. Where the use of alcohol and illegal drugs has been a problem, leaders should consider training in detecting and dealing with issues of substance abuse.

Special Needs

The special needs (including behavioural, emotional and physical) of participants need to be taken into account when planning activities. Leaders should be aware of what is possible in the circumstances and have thought through the approaches for meeting these challenges.

Equipment

Equipment is required to be checked prior to use to ensure it is functional and safe for its intended use. For specialist equipment the ability/qualification to use the equipment is necessary.

Emergency Considerations

For every residential program the leader must complete an emergency information sheet available from the Church Office. This will include information about the expected duration, location, participants and contact details for their activity. Depending on the activity, an emergency plan might be required.

Whenever an accident occurs leaders should:

1. Deal with the immediate situation ensuring the safety of the group and ascertain the nature of the emergency.
2. Ensure that any injured persons are attended to and determine whether the available first aid is adequate for the situation or whether the injured party requires emergency medical attention.
3. If relevant, contact the appropriate emergency service.
4. Inform parents/guardians when a child or young person is involved in the situation.
5. Reassess the planned activities in the light of the incident. Plan for ways to proceed.
6. Take notes of the situation and photograph if appropriate.
7. Contact the relevant church leader if the situation requires it.
8. Fill out an Accident Report Form (available from the Church Office) and return it for filing.
9. Debrief the situation with the participant group.
10. Follow up insurance aspects if relevant.

First Aid

Program leaders must consider what level of first aid training the team should possess. This will depend on the nature and location of the program. Camps, for example, must include at least one leader who has first aid qualifications. Programs should have access to a well

equipped and maintained first aid kit. If the nature of the program warrants it, leaders should be aware of access avenues for further medical assistance.

Insurance

All youth events that are cooperative (i.e. they involve participants from more than one Christian Reformed Church) are covered under various aspects of the Youth Committee's denominational insurance cover. This includes accidental injury. The Church's own 'public liability' insurance is not as extensive as the denominational cover, but does cover all church appointed leaders and volunteers and program activities anywhere in Australia. High risk activities like parachuting and canyoning are not covered.

Section 2. CODE OF CONDUCT

1.1 Purpose:

New Life Christian Church is a group of followers of Jesus Christ in Woodcroft seeking to reflect the teachings of Christ and of the New Testament with integrity and humility. We accept that our faith is worked out and expressed in the quality of relationships we develop as a church community and all those with whom we interact in our daily lives. Jesus summarised God's expectation for the conduct of His people into one famous and succinct sentence: *'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbours as yourself.'* He reinforced this 'law of love' by adding, *'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples; you love one another!'* Jesus also taught and demonstrated the importance of truth and honesty, of justice and mercy as essential to healthy relationships.

This **Code of Conduct** seeks to apply to the ministerial, or pastoral relationship those ethical standards that God expects of all people. People in various forms of recognised ministry are therefore expected to be examples and models of Christian faith and practice. It is the duty of any person in a ministry position not to use the influence or authority of their position for personal gain, whether that gain is financial or in terms of power, sexual gratification, or otherwise. This includes any action, verbal, written or electronic, physical or emotional that could be interpreted as emotional, sexual or spiritual abuse, and applies especially when working with children. We recognize the power differential between children and adults in ministry roles, and these guidelines seek to ensure that such a power is not used to harm children or any vulnerable person.

The adoption of this **Code of Conduct** and the related **Procedural Documents** for investigating breaches of the Code, reflects a deep desire to follow an open, accountable process that seeks to express justice, acceptance and compassion to all parties, rather than to protect the organization.

1.2 Our Commitment

Our commitment to expressing the love of Christ leads us to the view that all people should be able to live, work and learn in an environment that is free from abuse of any kind. Our commitment is to cultivate an environment where a diversity of people, regardless of age, gender, race and culture can thrive and grow holistically. That is, we are committed to New

Life Christian Church being a safe place for all people, with a special focus on the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people.

This **Code of Conduct** aims to detail the standards of conduct expected by staff (paid and voluntary) in the performance of their duties and to provide guidance in areas where there is a need to make personal and ethical decisions.

The **Code of Conduct** recognises and is aligned with all statutory and compliance requirements enshrined in State and Federal law. New Life Christian Church is committed to operating in accordance with the law in all its operations.

2. Specific Expectations to Protect Children from Abuse

All those who minister or work under the auspices of New Life Christian Church with children should be fully aware of our **Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy** and **Code of Conduct**. Abusive behaviour towards children will not be tolerated. Any and all allegations will be investigated and reported if found to be substantially true.

2.1 DO:

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of, or in connection with, New Life Christian Church must:

- contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone '000');
- adhere to the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and uphold New Life Christian Church's statement of commitment to child safety at all times;
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse, recognising your duty of care;
- conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as an employee, volunteer, leader or contractor of New Life Christian Church and as a positive role model to children and young people;
- work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of New Life Christian Church;
- be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
- establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
- be fair, considerate and honest with others;
- treat children and young people with respect. Value their ideas, opinions and consider their age, backgrounds and abilities;

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island** children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island child's self-identification);
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with **culturally and/or linguistically diverse** backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of **children with a disability**;
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they are or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child;
- ensure (as far as practicable) that adults are not alone with a child, or, at least, observable by another adult.
- raise concerns about suspected abuse with the Child Safe Co-Ordinator or Pastor as soon as possible;
- comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to reporting under legislation;
- record and act upon all allegations or suspicions of abuse, discrimination or harassment;
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure that as quickly as possible that the immediate and ongoing safety of the child or children;
- be professional , consistent and responsible in all your actions;
- maintain strict impartiality;
- respect confidentiality when sharing information about children in accordance with the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy and Procedures and your reporting obligations;

2.2 DO NOT:

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of New Life Christian Church must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child (or any other) abuse;
- put a child at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors for an improper reason);
- speak to a child in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Some examples are:
 - swearing or using inappropriate language in the presence of a child;

- yelling at a child, except in an emergency situation where the a child's safety may be in danger;
 - dealing with a child in anger; and
 - using hurtful sarcasm.
- discuss sexual activities with a child unless it is a specific job requirement and the person is trained to discuss these matters (and it is part of an approved program or activity);
 - have private contact with a child outside of church activities without the knowledge and/or consent of New Life Christian Church's leadership;
 - have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family (unless necessary and approved by the church and the child's parents/guardians, using an approved church email or social media account);
 - use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account to communicate with a child without parental knowledge;
 - exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child (unless necessary and approved by the church and the child's parents/guardians as the agreed form of communication)
 - use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol while in the presence of or while supervising a child (unless your contact with the child is accidental/incidental and you are not performing your duties as directed by New Life Christian Church);
 - use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of or while supervising a child;
 - provide or allow a child to consume alcohol;
 - provide or allow a child to consume illegal drugs;
 - initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
 - engage in rough physical games, hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way ;
 - engage in any sexual contact with a child for any purpose;
 - take a child to your home or encourage meetings outside program activities (unless necessary and approved by the church and the child's parents/guardians);
 - be naked in the presence of a child;
 - possess sexually explicit printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) in the presence of children;

- sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag, room or tent with a single child;
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender identity, sex, race, culture, sexuality, or disability;
- engage in any activity with a child that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them (e.g. watch a movie that is age or content inappropriate for a child);
- be alone with a child unnecessarily and for more than a very short time, unless you are observable by another adult or it is unavoidable;
- develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child for their own needs;
- show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
- do anything in contravention of New Life Christian Church's policies, procedures or this Code.

DECLARATION

I, _____ have read the Code of Conduct and the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy and Procedures that express the intent of New Life Christian Church to protect and nurture children and other vulnerable people.

I agree to comply with these rules and expectations. I understand that if I breach the Code of Conduct or commit an act of serious misconduct or break the law, this may lead to my:

- suspension from duties during investigation of allegations against me;
- termination of employment without notice or payment in lieu (summary or instant dismissal);
- being reported to the police and charged with a criminal offence.

Signed: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / 20__

Signed: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / 20__

Employer/Senior Officer/Child Safe Co-Ordinator of New Life Christian Church

Section 3. CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES & FORMS

3.1 Complaints and Allegations

Any person who believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse should telephone 000.

Certain professions are referred to as 'mandatory reporters'. This includes medical practitioners, nurses (including school nurses), members of the police force, religious leaders (pastors), counsellors and primary and secondary teachers and principals. Penalties may be incurred by those named as 'mandatory reporters' if they fail to notify the Child Protection agency if they have reasonable grounds for a belief (not proof!) that a child or young person is in need of protection, because they have suffered, or are likely to suffer significant harm, particularly physical or sexual abuse.

In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, **any person** who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse, should disclose that information to the Police or the Child Protection. In Victoria and New South Wales 'Failure to Report' is a crime!

3.2 When is a child or vulnerable person in need of protection?

A child or vulnerable person is in need of protection if any of the following grounds exist—

- a) the child has been abandoned by his or her parents;
- b) the child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person willing and able to care for the child;
- c) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;
- d) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;
- e) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is, or is likely to be, significantly damaged and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;
- f) the child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be, significantly harmed and the child's parents have not provided, arranged or allowed the provision of, or are unlikely to provide, arrange or allow the provision of, basic care or effective medical, surgical or other remedial care.
- g) The child or vulnerable person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, bullying, image based abuse or similar harm of such a kind that the vulnerable person's emotional or intellectual development is, or is likely to be, significantly damaged;

- h) The vulnerable person has suffered, or is likely to suffer financial abuse or similar harm of such a kind that the vulnerable person's financial position is, or is likely to be, significantly damaged;
- i) The child or vulnerable person has suffered, or is likely to suffer spiritual abuse or similar harm of such a kind that the vulnerable person's emotional or intellectual development is, or is likely to be, significantly damaged;

3.3 Making and Managing an Allegation of Abuse

1. Where possible, any person (including a child or parent) making an allegation of child abuse should be encouraged to fill out a **Complaints Form** (Appendix 6) and give this to the CPO/ChildSafe Church Coordinator. If they are not willing or able to fill out the Form, the CPO (or other leader) may take notes and fill out the form at a later time. The CPO **will** share the allegation with the senior leader of New Life Christian Church. A copy of this Form **must** be kept by the CPO. The complainant may keep the original. This is an essential record of the event.

If a child is concerned about their own safety or the safety of another person, the child may speak to the **Child Protection Officer (CPO)/ChildSafe Church Coordinator**. The CPO will meet with the complainant, and hear the story, taking notes and seeking clarification, ensuring that the complainant feels listened to, understood and protected. (Some complaints may be able to be dealt with at this time, where there is misunderstanding, a lack of evidence of any abuse or no reportable act has been committed.)

2. Any responsible adult should, if they have come to a reasonable belief that abuse of a child has happened, is or is likely to happen, follow the steps outlined in **Reporting Procedure 1** (Appendix 1A) below. This includes senior leadership, or any concerned member of the church.

3. If the allegation is made against an employee, volunteer or worker in a church program or activity, then the Chairman of Session must ALSO follow the steps outline in **Reporting Procedure 2:** (Appendix 1B)

1. Clarifying, Recording Evidence and Specific Information about the Child

A Report is required if you believe, based on reasonable grounds, that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm as a result of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect AND that the child's parents or caregivers have not, or are unlikely to, protect the child from such harm.

The following information will be required when making a formal report to either the Police or Child Protection Services.

- The child's name, age (date of birth is preferable) and address
- The name, age and address of any known siblings
- Your reasons (observations or disclosures) for believing that the child is at risk of abuse, or actually being abused or neglected
- Your assessment of the immediate danger to the child
- Current whereabouts of the child or vulnerable person (if not in the home)
- Your description of injuries or 'sign' behaviours you have observed
- Any other information you may have of relevance to the investigation
- Information link for all States/Territories – click [here](#)

2. Fill out a Complaints Report Form (Appendix 2)

N.B. You do not have to be given permission by church authorities to make such a report. Your identity as notifier will remain confidential unless you choose to inform the child or family.

3. Reporting. Making a report is to lay a serious allegation of a criminal offence against another person, so clarify your perceptions carefully before reporting.

You can make your report to:

- **New Life Christian Church Child Protection Officer/ChildSafe Church Coordinator**, using a Complaint Form. Attach your notes to the form, keeping a copy. Please note, the CPO will inform the senior leadership of the church of your report, and they will act in accordance to law. You may still make an independent report to:
- **The Police.** (Ring 000) The police are the most appropriate first responders if the report is regarding abuse that is immediate, criminal or endangering the child either on church premises in another location.
- **Child Protection Helpline:** 132 111- 24/7 specialist unit
- **National Child Abuse Helpline:** 1800 99 10 99 Mon- Friday 9am -5pm
- **All State Child Protection Services** – click [here](#).

<http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/preventing-child-abuse-and-neglect/reporting-suspected-abuse-or-neglect>

<https://www.childwise.org.au/page/41/state-legislation-reporting-nsw>

Reporting Child Abuse- External to your Workplace

The chart below outlines the process that a person working with children in a specific setting should follow to protect a vulnerable child from actual or possible abuse, from someone **with no relationship or connection with the organisation.**

Disclosure	By a child who is being abused
	By another child or adult
	By personal observation
'Reasonable Belief'	Through observation, listening, checking with other adults you come to a reasonable belief that a child <u>has been</u> abused, <u>is being</u> abused or <u>in danger</u> of being abused (see definitions of abuse)
Recording/Documenting	Make notes of observations and information gathered. Record data on the name, age, gender, current location or address of the child: describe any visible injuries or relevant behaviours; any info on the abuser (if known). Do not interrogate the child! Fill out a compliant form if possible
Severity	Criminal- sexual or physical abuse, grooming
	Misconduct- physical, emotional abuse, bullying or severe neglect
Report to:	The Police- Risk of immediate harm or risk to life: Call 000 Child Protection Services: 133 627- if you are a Mandatory Reporter 132 111- if you fall under the General Public Definition Lodge a Complaint Report Form with the Child Protection Officer or Chairman of Session. These officers may also report to the appropriate agencies

There is nothing else you need to do as a responsible adult.

Your identity as notifier will remain confidential unless you choose to inform the child or family

Reporting Child Abuse- In your Workplace

The chart below outlines the process that a person working with children in a specific setting should follow to protect a vulnerable child from actual or possible abuse, from someone who is an employee, volunteer, member or adherent of the church organisation. Even if you know the person as a colleague, your first duty of care is to safeguard the child.

Disclosure

By a child who is being abused

By another child or adult

By personal observation

'Reasonable Belief'

Through observation, listening, checking with other adults you come to a **reasonable belief** that a child has been abused, is being abused or in danger of being abused (see definitions of abuse)

Recording/Documenting

Make notes of observations and information gathered.

Record data on the name, age, gender, current location or address of the child: describe any visible injuries or relevant behaviours; Note the identity of the abuser.

Do not interrogate the child!

Fill out a **Compliant Report Form** if possible, even if you wish to make a verbal compliant.

Severity

Criminal- sexual or physical abuse, grooming

Misconduct- physical, emotional abuse, bullying or severe neglect

Report to:

The Police- Risk of immediate harm or risk to life: Call 000

Child Protection Services:

133 627- if you are a Mandatory Reporter

132 111- if you fall under the General Public Definition

Lodge a Complaint Report Form with the **Child Protection Officer or Chairman of Session.**

These officers may also report to the appropriate agencies

There is nothing else you need to do as a responsible adult.

Your identity as notifier will remain confidential unless you choose to inform the child or family

Reporting Obligation of the Chairman of Session under a **Reportable Conduct Scheme**:

- Notify:** The Chairman of Session has 3 working days to notify the Agency responsible for a reportable conduct allegation
- Investigate:** You **must investigate** an allegation (subject to Police clearance on criminal matters); advise the Office of Children’s Guardian as to who is investigating, manage the immediate risks to children (eg. remove alleged offender from any contact with children)
- Update:** Within 30 days, provide a report which updates the Office of Children’s Guardian with information and actions you have taken.
- Outcomes:** Notify the Office of Children’s Guardian of findings and actions (or why no action was taken)

APPENDIX 2 DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST CHILDREN

Child Abuse includes:

- a. any act committed against a child involving
 - i. a sexual offence; or
 - ii. an offence under section 498(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming);and
- b. the infliction, on a child, of-
 - i. physical violence; or
 - ii. serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- c. serious neglect of a child.

“Child” means a person under the age of 17 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child. Collective term for “child” is “children”.

There are five common types of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional, neglect and racial/cultural

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as:

- Hitting, punching, kicking, beating (marks from belt buckles, fingers).
- Shaking (particularly babies).
- Burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair.
- Alcohol or other drug administration.

Sexual Abuse, including ‘grooming’

Sexual abuse is any sexual act or threat to perform such upon another person. It occurs when a person uses their power and authority to take advantage of another’s trust to involve them in sexual activity. It does not necessarily involve genital contact but is any act which erodes the sexual boundary between two persons. It may appear consensual but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential.

Sexual grooming is a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging a child, as a precursor to sexual abuse. Examples include inappropriate special time with the child, inappropriately giving gifts, ‘accidental touching’, allowing the child to sit on lap, having secrets. In isolation, such behaviours may not indicate the risk of abuse occurring, but if there is a pattern of behaviour occurring, it may indicate grooming. Grooming behaviours often mimic the kind of relationship-developing strategies that Christian ministries use for the benefit and wellbeing of children, that is, gaining the trust of the child, demonstrating care and concern, spending time, visiting in the home, finding out about family, friends and hobbies. However, grooming to involve a child in sexual activities for the personal gratification of an adult is a crime.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Emotional abuse is the chronic attitude or behavior of one person, which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a child's development, self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include: devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising or chronic and extreme domestic violence in the child's presence.

Neglect

Neglect is characterised by the failure to provide for the child's basic needs. And includes any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person's development. Examples include the failure to provide food, shelter, adequate hygiene or schooling for a child.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated, unreasonable, unwanted behaviour conducted by an individual or group against another person, which has a negative impact on health and wellbeing. This includes aggression, verbal, emotional/psychological or physical acts that intimidate or threaten. It often involves an abuse of a power differential between the bully and the victim.

Other Forms of Abuse

Racial, cultural or religious abuse

Racial abuse is any harmful conduct that discriminates against, or demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, ethnic origin, skin colour or other evidence of 'difference'. It may be overt, such as racial vilification or discrimination, or covert, such as demonstrating a lack of cultural sensitivity or positive ideas about a different ethnicity.

Religious or cultural abuse is similar to racial abuse, but is directed towards expressions of religious faith or practice or cultural dress, identifying styles of cultural expression or practices. *'The harm that is caused by racial, religious or cultural abuse targets the child's identity.'*

Spiritual abuse

This involves the perpetrator using their position of authority in New Life Christian Church or higher understanding of biblical teaching or God's will to manipulate a child for their own use or benefit, or to pressure a child using guilt, shame, or a strong "works" based ethic. This is not reportable to a Government Child Protection agency, although in extreme circumstances can be classified as emotional abuse.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying occurs when a person uses any form of telecommunication to sexually groom, bully, suggest an inappropriate relationship be formed, or engage a child in sexual

language or behaviours. The explosion of electronic communications (Facebook and other social media sites, text-messaging, internet chat rooms etc.) has seen a sharp increase in cyber-bullying.

Statistics of Abuse

It is very difficult to know precisely the amount of child abuse that occurs in Australia, as many acts go unreported. Statistics of reported acts, though, are available through government agencies. Child Protection Australia 2010-11 report, reported that there were 237, 273 notifications of child abuse involving 163,767 children in Australia..⁵ The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2002) revealed the following breakup of perpetrators: 74% natural parent, 10% step-parent or de facto, 7% other relative or sibling, 5% friend or neighbour, 4% others (including strangers).⁶ The reality of abuse in Australia is a lot worse than the statistics. There are estimates that as many as 1 in 20 men in Australia may sexually offend against a child. As many as 1 in 5 children will be sexually abused during their childhood. On average, it takes a girl 7 years to tell someone about such abuse, and for men the average is well over 25 years, if they ever do.

⁵ NSW and Act Baptist Churches, *Creating Safe Spaces Manual 2012 v1.3, p11*

⁶ Ibid.

Complaint Report Management and Investigation Process

On Complaints Report Form.

Complaint or allegation received Provided as a written text
 Received verbally, recorded as notes

Complaint registered in system (in a Complaints register) identify the complainant

Initial assessment by Chairman of Session

<p>A Is complaint low level: misconduct, non–sexual non-criminal; dispute between students or student-teacher</p>	<p>B is the complaint medium level: reportable misconduct: sexual, physical, emotional or neglect; negligence; abuse of power; Risk to reputation of Church</p>	<p>C is the complaint high level: criminal, sexual or physical abuse; between students; teacher- student; other adult. Risk to person or Church.</p>
---	---	---

Allocation to Investigator

<p>A Chairman of Session or Delegate⁷</p>	<p>B Chairman of Session or Delegate</p>	<p>C Police or Child Protection Agency</p>
---	---	--

Acknowledge complaint Formal letter, from the Senior Leader/Board Chair acknowledging complaint and advising of steps the Church will take in investigation, or that the matter has been referred to the Police or another agency.

Investigation and Report The investigation must be timely (immediate if possible) thorough, fair and impartial. Interviews may be audio recorded or, if notes only are taken, signed off by interviewee as fair and accurate. For criminal matters,

⁷ if there is **any** conflict of interest, an investigator should be appointed by the Governing body, especially if the matter was cleared by the Police after the initial investigation

clearance must be given by Government agencies before investigation.

Written report to the Session by the investigator.

DECISION

Findings (for A and B)

Complaint substantiated or partially substantiated

Complaint not substantiated. No case to answer

Actions

a. Criminal Justice (decision)

b. **Consequences (internal)** fair and appropriate, all things considered.

c. **Communication**- to the church community, respecting privacy regulations

a. Clear and immediate

exoneration of the accused person;

b. Letter to the complainant re findings, and further options open, should they dispute the findings

c. **Restorative actions**- promoting forgiveness, healing and growth

APPENDIX 4 THE REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

From 1 March 2020, the Reportable Conduct Scheme is operated by the Office of the Children’s Guardian under the Children's Guardian Act 2019.

The scheme monitors how certain organisations (‘relevant entities’) investigate and report on types of conduct ('reportable allegations' or 'reportable convictions') made against their employees, volunteers or certain contractors who provide services to children. The scheme will also cover religious bodies, in response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

From 1 March 2020, when the head of a 'relevant entity' becomes aware of a reportable allegation or a reportable conviction, the head of that entity must notify the Office of the Children's Guardian within seven business days and conduct an investigation into the allegations. If the final entity report is not ready to submit within 30 calendar days, the head must provide an interim report with information about the progress of the investigation and an expected timeframe for completion.

These entities are required to notify and investigate certain allegations (reportable allegations) of abuse involving a child when the allegation is against someone they employ, engage or contract in circumstances outlines by the legislation.

While a police investigation may have priority in these matters, the head of an entity still has to notify the Office of the Children’s Guardian within 7 business days of becoming aware of any reportable allegation or conviction and provide a final entity report or interim/update report within 30 calendar days.

Following notification of a reportable allegation, the Office of the Children’s Guardian can provide guidance to your entity about how to respond to the allegation.

The Reportable Conduct Directorate at the Office of the Children’s Guardian can also:

- monitor and guide the progress of the entity’s investigation into the reportable allegation or conviction
- require further information about the allegation or the entity's response to it
- assess whether the entity conducted a fair, transparent, effective and timely investigation
- determine whether appropriate actions have been taken by the entity following the investigation
- work with relevant entities to help them improve their systems for preventing reportable conduct and responding to reportable allegations.

Certain information may be shared within the Office of the Children’s Guardian and with external agencies to keep children safe. Click [here](#) for more information.

APPENDIX 5 NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN CHURCH FEEDBACK SURVEY OF CHILDREN

Name: _____

This survey is your chance to have a say about the children's programs. Think about each statement and mark on the line, somewhere between "Not at all!" and 'Absolutely!'.

1. I feel welcomed and looked after when I come to this church..

|_____||
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

2. My parents like the log-in process and arrangements for my care.

|_____||
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

3. I know which toilets to use and feel safe when using them.

|_____||
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

4. There are good spaces for activities and learning times.

|_____||
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

5. The activities are fun, challenging and well-organised.

|_____||
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

6. I feel safe and relaxed while I am in the children's programs.

|_____||
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

7. I feel that the leaders know what they are doing and are looking after me.

|_____||
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

8. The leaders are friendly and respectful of my friends and me.

|_____||
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

9. If I am worried or upset, I know who I can go to for help.

|_____||
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

10. I would recommend this church program as great for kids.

|_____||
Not at all. Mostly Absolutely!

APPENDIX 6

NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN CHURCH COMPLAINT FORM

Please use this Form to make a Formal Complaint regarding discrimination or abuse of any kind towards yourself or another person, including a child.

Please read the Code of Conduct Document before using this form.

COMPLAINT FORM (Private and Confidential) Date: / /__ Time: __:__ am/pm

<p>Your Name: _____</p>	<p>Role at < New Life Christian Church>: _____</p>
<p>Is the complaint about offending behaviour:</p> <p>a. directed towards you? Yes / No</p> <p>b. concerning a child? Yes / No</p> <p>c. about a vulnerable person? Yes / No</p>	<p>Who was the victim of the behaviour?</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Date of Birth: __/ __/ ____ Age: __</p> <p>Address: _____</p>
<p>Please briefly, but accurately, describe the alleged behaviour about which you are lodging this Complaint Form. (Keep to the facts, without interpretation or opinion.)</p> <p>Who was the offending person: _____</p> <p>What abusive behaviour did you observe or come to hear about? _____ _____</p> <p>Is the abuse still happening or was it a past event? _____ - _____</p> <p>Where did the event/behaviour take place? _____ _____</p> <p>Were there other witnesses? If so, provide name(s) _____ _____</p> <p>What is the level of risk to the victim now? (Low – High; Immediate – possible; _____ _____</p> <p>Any other comments: _____ _____</p>	
<p>Statement of Intent: I make this complaint in all sincerity, recognising that such a complaint may have a serious or long term impact on all those involved. I will act in good faith in the process and accept the ruling of the ‘investigator’ where I believe it is fair and transparent.</p> <p>Signed: _____ Date: ____/ ____/ 20____</p> <p>Witness: (Print name) _____ Date: ____/ ____/ 20____</p> <p>Signature: _____</p>	

APPENDIX 7 NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN CHURCH INCIDENT REPORT

This form is to record the details of any incident involving the writer of the report, especially where there was an accident, near miss or emotional reaction involving another person.

Name: _____ Phone contact: _____

Date of Incident: ____/____/201__ Time of Incident: _____ am /pm

Location of Incident on Site: _____

Name (s) of anyone else involved in the incident: _____

Provide the name of any witnesses of the incident who can provide additional evidence or view.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Please describe what happened, your actions and/or words and the actions and/or words of others involved. Do not give your opinion about other’s motives or intentions. (PTO if necessary)

I, (name: _____) hereby declare that what I have written is true and accurate in the details I have provided.

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ /201__

APPENDIX 8

LEGISLATION RELEVANT TO CHILD PROTECTION

Both Federal and State legislation is relevant to the concepts discussed in this policy. This legislation includes:

Federal:

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012

Fair Work Act 2009

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

Family Law Act 1975

Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986

New South Wales

Principal Acts:

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Other relevant Acts:

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Parental Responsibility Contracts) Act 2006

Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000

Crimes Act 1900

Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998

The Ombudsman Act 1974

International:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

What forms of communication do you allow your child and leaders to communicate on? (JAM & Youth only)

Mobile

Social Networking Sites

Email (please circle all that apply)

AUTHORISATION

'In the event of an accident or sudden illness, I authorise the person in charge to call an ambulance or to seek medical attention at my expense, should I not be contactable.'

Signed: _____

Date: ___/___/20___

Parent/guardian/caregiver [Print name if not one of the above] _____

Witness Name: _____ Signature: _____

APPENDIX 11

PERMISSION TO ATTEND EVENT/CAMP FORM
NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

As a parent/caregiver of:

I,give my consent for him/her to take part in the (special activity or camp) to be held at the(event site) from.....to..... (or on.....) (date) (date) (date)

I have seen the attached copy of the programme for the (event) and acknowledge that risk of injuries is inherent in physical activities. While I am aware that staff will take all due care I recognize that accidents may occur.

The staff and supervisors have my authority to take whatever action they think necessary to ensure the safety, wellbeing and successful conduct of the participants as a group or individually in the above-mentioned activity.

If my child becomes ill or is accidentally injured, I authorise the person-in-charge to obtain on my behalf whatever medical treatment my child requires. I will agree to pay all such medical expenses.

I have attached information as asked concerning my child's health including any relevant details of his/her limitations for the planned activity. My child's own local doctor or medical specialist may be contacted in an emergency.

I also acknowledge that the (**Insert organisation name) and all its representative leaders or other helpers at (event) can accept no liability for any personal injury or property loss suffered by my child during the period of theEvent.

Signed: _____ Date: ___/___/20___
Parent/Guardian/Care-giver

APPENDIX 12 MINISTRY/ORGANISATIONAL COVENANT OF NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

I, _____
(Print name)

1. Declare that, except as is stated below,
 - (1) have not been guilty of any sexual misconduct against any person;
 - (2) have never committed any criminal offence involving fraud, violence or drugs;
 - (3) am of good character and suitable for ministry within New Life Christian Church.(If exceptions to the above give details and if insufficient room place them in an attachment).
2. Acknowledge I have read and agreed to New Life Christian Church's Child Protection Policies, Code of Conduct and the Child Protection Manual of Procedures.
3. Agree I will cooperate with New Life Christian Church in any investigation undertaken in relation to a complaint or allegation of impropriety made against me.
4. Agree I will attend and take part in education courses to fit me for ministry with children.
5. Acknowledge that by signing this covenant no legal contract is created between myself and New Life Christian Church, but accept that it acts as a consent for the operation of the Child Protection Policy and the Child Protection Procedure Manual and that legal consequences may follow if I have knowingly given false answers to any of the questions 1 – 3 above.

Signature:

Address:.....

Date:

Witness Full name: Witness date:

Dignity of Man: All human beings have been made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26,27) and are therefore capable of deep interpersonal relationships. Human beings have an inherent dignity, given by God himself which carries with it an implied right to safety and respect (Genesis 9:6; James 3:9).

Ideal of the Family Unit: Marriage is part of God's basic creation order (Genesis 2:18, 24). God intended it to be a lifelong, one-flesh, monogamous union (Mark 10; Matthew 19; Luke 16), in which children are nurtured to maturity. Love and respect for each other are fundamental values for family life (Ephesians 5).

The Sin of all Human Beings: Ever since the fall (Genesis 3:1-8) all aspects of being human have been affected by sin - our wills and our thoughts, and our interpersonal and institutional relationships, including family and church, are all prone to evil. Thus, all human relationships are tainted by sin and in desperate need of redeeming (Romans 3:10, 14-17).

The Call to a Redeemed Life: Deliverance from sin and its perversion depends on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In Christ, the damaged relationships can be restored, not just between God and man, but between people in the family and in the community (Ephesians 2:13-14). Sin must be challenged. Even though the Spirit convicts people of sin, believers are also called to challenge sin and call for repentance (Matthew 18:15-17). While God's love in Christ calls us to repentance, forgiveness and ultimately reconciliation, it is through the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of people that Christ's redeeming work has a real impact. Christians, as representatives of Christ and empowered by His Spirit, are called to be active in the community, seeking the redemption of the whole world (Colossians 1:15-20).

Seeking Justice for the Oppressed: Justice and care for the oppressed has always been part of God's agenda for the world (Luke 4:14-21). He is angry with all forms of injustice and oppression and calls His people to stand against it (Psalm 82; Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:7; Matthew 25:31f).

APPENDIX 14 PROCEDURES FOR CO-ORDINATORS OR LEADERS IN CHARGE

Co-ordinators or leaders in charge of the following groups within our church communities need to be diligent in carrying out this policy of safety and care.

Session

Deacons

Cell Groups

Pastoral Carers

Youth groups JAM Children's Church Playgroups Creche Anyone child minding for Bible Study groups, camps or other activities.

1. The **co-ordinator or leader in charge is responsible to keep the Church Childsafe Coordinator informed** of all new children's workers, youth workers, carers or leaders.
2. **Before a new appointment is made**, the co-ordinator or leader in charge must give the person a copy of this policy, together with the Application Form for a Position of Leadership. Both are available from the church office. Completed application forms and police checks need to be submitted to the Childsafe Coordinator **prior to taking up the role or appointment**. The forms will be stored in a locked file for confidentiality.
3. The Childsafe Coordinator will send a letter of confirmation to the co-ordinator or leader in charge when references and WWC checks have been received and the appointment can go ahead.
4. The co-ordinator or leader in charge should spend some time with the new worker discussing this booklet. It is expected that the co-ordinator will be familiar with the policy.
5. Whenever a training session or workshop is held, the co-ordinator or leader in charge should encourage all leaders and carers to attend.

To be completed by leaders of any activities where there is a risk of injury to leaders and/or participants.

Name of Group:
.....

Name of Leader in Charge:
.....

Names of other leaders who will attend:
.....
.....

Number of participants anticipated:Age range:

Date of proposed activity:
.....

Nature of proposed activity
.....

Location and description of proposed activity:

COMPLETE THIS FORM THOUGHTFULLY AND HONESTLY, & FILE.

<p>Assess the risk.</p>	<p>What is the calculated level of risk?</p> <p>HIGH</p> <p>MEDIUM</p> <p>LOW</p>	<p>Consider the probability of risk, exposure to the risk and possible consequences.</p>
<p>List ways of reducing the calculated level of risk.</p> <p>(e.g. cancel activity, have more leaders present, raise age range, choose a different site)</p>		
<p>Do the decisions made in the previous section reduce the risk to an acceptable level?</p>	<p>If no, consider further ways of reducing possible risk.</p>	
<p>Do the decisions made create any secondary hazards?</p> <p>(e.g. further to drive, higher to climb, deeper water.)</p>	<p>If yes, consider how to reduce the secondary hazards.</p>	

<p>Do leaders have the skills and/or training to run the activity safely?</p>	<p>If yes, no further action.</p> <p>If no, make arrangements to acquire skills and/or training.</p>
<p>For water based activities, do you have competent and confident swimmers familiar with water safety?</p>	<p>If yes, no further action.</p> <p>If no, the water based activity should not be included in the program.</p>
<p>If there is a risk that is not at an acceptable level, is it necessary for the activity to be carried out?</p>	<p>Consider alternative activities.</p>

- **ChildSafe website:**
 - www.childsafe.org.au

- In our congregations the people to whom you can bring a complaint are:
 - **Glenn Dillon** 0403872900
 - **Chantelle Eschler** 0402 956 058
 - **Jason Spits** 0419 108 437

- **Christian Reformed Church of Australia Sexual Abuse Complaints Committee (SACC).**
 - Chairman: **Rev. Leo Douma.** 9754 6809.
 - NSW Representative: **Rev. Gerald Vander Kolk.** 9548 0068.
 - “Healing a Broken Trust Revised 2012” document:
www.crca.org.au/synod-2012-documents/3-abuse-prevention/724-healing-a-broken-trust-revised-2012-pdf.html

- **CRCA Safe Church**
 - www.safechurchcrca.org.au

- **NSW Government:**
 - **Working With Children Check:**
www.kids.nsw.gov.au/Working-with-children/New-Working-With-Children-Check/apply/-apply
 - Guidance on **making a Child Protection report** is available from **Child Story Reporter**
<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>
 - **Child Protection Helpline:**
 - 133 627, if you are a Mandatory reporter.
 - 132 111, if you fall under the General Public definition.

For people in ministry roles

The following guidelines are to assist all people who work with young people and all people who are in positions of authority within the CRCA. Where the phrase “young person” or “young people” is used it is always defined as a person or people under 18 years of age. This advice provides useful general guidance in regard to online and smart phone communication (i.e. all electronic communication). In cases where ministry outcomes are in part effected through the use of social media then it is recommended that particular practice guidelines pertaining to that ministry are developed and clearly communicated to the leaders. The SCU is available for assistance in establishing such particular guidelines.

Safe Church

The Safe Church Code of Conduct states that: “This **Code of Conduct** seeks to apply to the ministerial, or pastoral relationship those ethical standards that God expects of all people. People in various forms of recognised ministry are therefore expected to be examples and models of Christian faith and practice. It is the duty of any person in a ministry position not to use the influence or authority of their position for personal gain, whether that gain is financial or in terms of power, sexual gratification, or otherwise. This includes any action, verbal, written or electronic, physical or emotional that could be interpreted as emotional, sexual or spiritual abuse, and applies especially when working with children. We recognize the power differential between children and adults in ministry roles, and these guidelines seek to ensure that such a power is not used to harm children or any vulnerable person.” This point has application to your use of all electronic communications as a person of authority or person working with young people in the CRCA.

Basic Principles

There are three basic principles when having any type of conversation with a young person:

1. Remember God is listening: • The ‘God test’ – is this conversation honouring God?
• The ‘parent test’ – if this young person’s parents were listening/reading this, would they feel comfortable with this conversation?
2. Seek transparency in conversations with young people and do not converse where you can’t be observed by others.
3. Don’t get in deeper than you can handle – if issues arise that are greater than your ability or in an area of your weakness refer the young person to others who are better equipped to deal with it. When in doubt, ask for help

Online and smart phone communications can create an intense, relational situation because of the ease of access, the comfort of distance and its unobserved nature. A relationship can be developed far more quickly than was possible before online communication was common. Therefore, the church considers talking with young people online and via smart phone to be exactly the same as talking to them face to face. The same code of conduct for

leaders interacting with young people face to face applies to all types of online and smart phone communication.

Specific conduct guidelines:

Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/blogs/websites

If your church ministry or organisation establishes any of the above social media platforms as a method of communication within the group this is the best place for leaders to converse with members of the group as all conversations may be held in public. Ensure there is no option for private conversations to take place on this facility. Best practice is for leaders not to be individual friends on social media with young people within the church or organisation. This is due to the risks inherent in private relationships which may develop over social media. These risks affect both young people and leaders. However it is recognised that leaders may be individual friends on social media with young people where the relationship is pre-existing or established via other connections, for example they may be related or may have formed the friendship via knowing each other external to the leader/group member relationship. In circumstances where leaders are individual friends with young people on social media leaders are at all times to adhere to the basic principles above.

SMS Text messaging/emails

Parental permission will be sought on the enrolment form/permission form for communication between leaders and individuals. Best practice is to only use the above methods of communication as a “one-way” avenue for communicating within the group. Make it clear to all members of the group that while SMS texts/emails will be used for communication leaders will not reply individually to any response from group members, unless a matter of urgency arises and in every case, with a fellow leader copied in on the reply. Give parents the option of always being copied in on any communication from the ministry or organisation leaders and add those parents to the contacts list. When sending group emails always remember to send any email to yourself first and put all contacts into the blind copy (BCC) field to ensure you do not distribute email addresses without permission. Always copy in fellow leaders. Follow the same privacy protocols if using SMS texts to do mass communication within the group.

Phone/Skype/Zoom/FaceTime/Messaging Apps/In-game messaging

In the main seek to avoid where possible individual contact with young people via online and smart phone communication. Aim to have 100% of communication to young people via group communication. Should a need arise to use phone/Skype/FaceTime/Zoom you should be accountable – always get parental permission before you talk with a young person over the phone and tell a co-leader that you are conversing with a young person by phone. If using Skype, Zoom or FaceTime again always get parental permission before you talk with a young person using this facility. Ensure both you and the young person are using this form of communication in an open area where people can see you or there are others present, e.g. not alone in your room. Do not use Messaging Apps or in-game messaging to

communicate individually with children or people under your pastoral care in your Church role.

In the case where an inappropriate message or image is sent to a leader by a child or a person under pastoral care/leadership via any online or smart phone communication, whether publicly or privately, the leader should not reply under any circumstances. Do not delete the image or message. The leader must immediately notify the ministry or organisation leader that this has occurred. The ministry or organisation leader may then contact the SCU for advice on how to proceed.

Cyber bullying and image based abuse

Sadly, there is an increase in the prevalence of cyber bullying and image based abuse targeting both adults and children in Australia, mostly via social media. Both State and Federal parliaments have begun to address this societal problem through legislation and the provision of assistance to Australians via the Office of e-safety – www.esafety.gov.au If you become aware of cyber bullying or image based abuse within the church context visit www.esafety.gov.au and contact SCU for assistance and reporting.