

Safe Ministry with Children and Youth

Policy & Guidelines

Document Revision

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1. Southern Illawarra Church of Christ Commitment to Safe Ministry with and Protecting Children

1.1. REFERENCES

Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney Professional Standards Unit, *Safe Ministry Blue Print for Churches*

Fresh Hope NSW Churches of Christ, *Safe Ministries Guide*

Penrith Church of Christ, *Child Protection Policy* and related forms

Southern Illawarra Church of Christ Safe Ministries policies, including:

Southside Youth Leadership Policy and Guidelines

Social Media Policy and Guidelines

1.2. INTRODUCTION

Ministry to children and young people is a service to the children and youth, the church family and to God himself that offers great opportunities, but also carries significant responsibilities for the wellbeing of the children and young people in our care. We must do all we can to provide an environment that is safe from any form of harm in the teaching and leadership of our children and young people. Children and young people are vulnerable, they will need help to survive and thrive and at times they will need protecting. They are also trusting of adults and are in fact looking for adults to trust. Child protection is about promoting the best, safest environment for children and young people to thrive.

Southern Illawarra Church of Christ (SICoC) is committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, particularly within the Church community. SICoC is committed to the care and protection of children and young people who are involved in our programs.

Our values are based on the authority of the Bible and as an expression of our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Children and young people matter to God, therefore SICoC believes that those working with them have a duty of care that demonstrates they value children for their own sake through spending time with them, being patient with them, setting clear boundaries for them and respecting them as valuable people who bear the image of God. All who work with children and young people must demonstrate integrity in all their relationships and comply with legal requirements and the procedural guidelines set out by SICoC.

Definitions and Abbreviations

Child: Children are those people **under 16 years** of age.

Young People: Young people are those who are **16 or 17 years** of age.

WWCC: Working with Children Check

SICoC: Southern Illawarra Church of Christ

Children have rights: Children have the right to be safe and well looked after when they are in our care. They have the right to be protected, listened to and their particular needs addressed in all church activities, whether mixed age or child specific.

Leaders are responsible: All those exercising a pastoral ministry involving children in the church have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of the children in their care.

Abuse is power misused: Leaders have authority of children because of their positional power and because of their greater age, maturity, physical size and life experience. Abuse arises from the misuse of authority or power. Any form of abuse is always wrong.

1.3. CHILD SAFE CONTACT PERSON / SAFE MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVE

The Child Safe Contact / Safe Ministry person within SICoC will assist the Senior Minister and Leadership Board to comply with child protection screening requirements; keep records of WWCC clearances and Safe Ministry training of people engaged in child-related work and ministries within the church; monitor and report on safe ministry systems in the church; and ensure that any suspicion of child abuse and incidents of child abuse that they become aware of is reported to the relevant authorities. The Child Safe Contact Person / Safe Ministry Representative may become aware of abuse because they have observed indicators of abuse, another person has informed them of their concerns for a child, or a child has told them that they are being abused.

The Child Safe Contact Person / Safe Ministry Representative is to be appointed by the SICoC Leadership Board and will meet the following criteria.

- Be 21 years or older;
- Have completed Safe Ministry training within the last three years or within three months after their appointment (and every three years after that);
- Hold a verified WWCC clearance;
- Have good interpersonal and communication skills; and
- Have good administrative skills.
- Provide two written referees.

Professional training or expertise in child protection issues (e.g. teacher, children's/youth worker or a person with behavioural or social sciences qualifications and experience) would also be helpful for the role.

The Fresh Hope NSW Churches of Christ Professional Standards Unit are available to provide support, assistance and training to the Child Safe Contact Person / Safe Ministry Representative, Senior Minister and the Leadership Board.

1.4 COMPLIANCE

The church has developed recommended practices that are consistent with:

- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 as amended
- Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
- Ombudsman Amendment (Child Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Regulations and guidelines issues by CCYP, the Ombudsman and the NSW Government relating to child protection and the handling and investigation of allegations of child abuse and sexual assault
- Department of Family and Community Services requirements
- Department of Education and Training requirements
- Freshhope (Churches of Christ NSW) Safe Ministry Policy, Procedures and Guidelines

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS AND REFERENCES

All paid staff are required to obtain a Working with Children Check and a Police Check.

All unpaid staff and volunteers are required to obtain a Working with Children Check for Volunteers.

See *Appendix 1 on How to Apply for a Working with Children Check.*

All persons, staff or new volunteers require two (2) referees and written references.

People who are volunteers and have been in the church for >6 months will require a single verbal referee to vouch for them, and have a current WWCC.

People working with children and youth ministry activities from external third parties (such as Capernwray) will require two written references, and provide a WWCC.

It is a requirement of the SICoC Leadership Board to verify and keep an accurate register of referees and WWCCs for all ministers, children's workers, youth workers, elders, board members and staff. The register must include:

- Full name (including first, middle and last name)
- Date of birth
- WWCC number
- Verification date (the date you verified them)
- Verification outcome (clearance, barred, interim barred or not found)
- Expiry date (when the WWCC number expires)
- Status of the worker (paid or volunteer)
- Name of the person who is providing a reference and date for when the reference is provided.

1.5 TRAINING

Through an agreement with the NSW/ACT Baptist Association the 'Creating Safe Spaces' training program is delivered across all of NSW Churches of Christ (Fresh Hope) ministries. Additionally, the Youthworks Safe Ministry Training is also available, and offered within the Illawarra. These programs include online content and a three-hour face-to-face workshop and cover topics such as:

- Duty of care
- Understanding power and authority and the potential for their misuse
- Understanding and identifying various forms of abuse
- Reporting requirements relating to child abuse
- Responding to abuse of vulnerable adults
- Safe church practices, risk assessments and reporting.

SICoC requires that all SRE teachers, youth leaders and children's leaders and helpers have completed the Youthworks Safe Ministry training. As per Fresh Hope recommendation, the SICoC requires that every minister, children's worker, youth worker, board member and staff member complete Children/Youth Safe Ministry training every three years. More information can be found on the [Creating Safe Spaces website](#) or the Youthworks website at <https://youthworks.net/>.

All employees and volunteers are to be regularly trained in the code of practice and operating procedures. In addition, they are inducted into the values framework that underlies all of the church's activities. Once training has been completed, SICoC staff and volunteers will complete and submit the *Completion of Child Safe / Child Protection Training Confirmation Form (Appendix 2)* to the SICoC Office Administration Officer and the Leadership Board.

Paid staff should demonstrate a broad knowledge of the extent of child abuse and an appropriate Christian and legal response to child protection issues.

All staff/volunteers involved with the church Children's and Youth Ministries, and all people in senior leadership positions should demonstrate an understanding of best practice in relation to supervision of children and identify the steps to take in the event of a child disclosing abuse.

Student Leaders (or Leaders in Training) aged 15 to 17 years will undertake an adapted safe ministry course during their time as a student leader.

1.6 INTEGRITY OF PROGRAMS

All aspects of every child / young person related program are open to observation by parents/guardians at any time. The Safe Ministry with Children and Youth Policy is accessible to the church via the SiCoC Website and through the Church Office.

A *Welcome Letter (Appendix 3)* is provided from the Children's / Youth Ministry leader to parents and guardians that references the Safe Ministry policy and encourages openness and transparency in the conduct and delivery of children's and youth ministry. Parents and guardians will also be asked to complete a *Child and Young Person Information* form to provide important information to children's and youth ministry staff / volunteers about the child / youth in their care to promote safety and facilitate contact between ministry personnel and families/carers (see *Appendix 4*).

SiCoC staff and volunteers who work with children and young people are required to complete a *Children's and Youth Worker's Registration form (Appendix 3)* that is to be held by the Church Office and is readily accessible to the Leadership Board.

There are three golden rules that are relevant to all of the SiCoC Safe Ministries policies guidelines:

Two or More: There must always be two leaders aged 18 years or over present for all children's and youth ministry events.

Never Alone: Leaders must not be alone with a child or young person during an activity, and should make sure, as far as possible, that other leaders are not left alone with a child or young person.

Stranger Danger: Leaders should be on the alert for people wandering around. A person unknown to the leaders or not part of the children's and youth ministry should not be allowed access to children and youth.

All leaders in Children's and Youth Ministry are appointed and approved by the Southern Church Leadership Board. Any use of unappointed leaders will be documented and reported to the Church Leadership Board as soon as possible.

2. Abuse: Definitions and Indicators

2.1 PHYSICAL ABUSE

2.1.1 Definition

Physical abuse refers to non-accidental injury to a child by a parent, caregiver or another person responsible for the child. It includes injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation, female genital mutilation, attempted suffocation or strangulation and death.

2.1.2 Indicators of Physical Abuse

- Facial, head and neck bruising and other injuries
- Lacerations and welts from excessive discipline or physical restraint
- Explanation offered by the child is inconsistent with the injury

- Other bruising and marks which may show the shape of the object that caused it (eg. hand print, buckle)
- Bite marks and scratches where the bruise may show a print of teeth
- Multiple injuries or bruises
- Ingestion of poisonous substances, alcohol or other harmful drugs
- Dislocations, sprains, twisting
- Burns and scalds
- Reluctance to be involved in sport or other physical activities when previously interested
- Difficulties with toileting
- Reluctance to be seen in clothing that may reveal abuse (eg. swimming costume)

2.2 EMOTIONAL ABUSE

2.2.1 Definition

Emotional abuse encompasses a range of behaviours that harm a child. It is behaviour by a parent or caregiver that can destroy the confidence of a child resulting in significant emotional deprivation or trauma. It involves impairment of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and intellectual development and/or a disturbance of a child's behaviour.

2.2.2 Indicators of Emotional Abuse

- Feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves
- Inability to value others
- Lack of trust in people and expectations
- Lack of interpersonal skills necessary for adequate functioning
- Extreme attention seeking behaviour
- Other behavioural disorders, such as disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying

2.3 SEXUAL ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT

2.3.1 Definition

Sexual abuse or misconduct includes:

- Any form of unwanted sexual behaviour, whether by acts or words, including sexual harassment,
- Any form of sexual behaviour involving a child or young person
- Under some circumstances, sexual behaviour which appears to be consensual, if that behaviour takes place in the context of a pastoral relationship or a church worker's activities of a non-pastoral nature.

2.3.2 Indicators of Sexual Abuse

A child:

- Describes sexual acts
- Gives direct or indirect disclosures
- Exhibits age inappropriate behaviour and/or persistent sexual behaviour
- Exhibits self-destructive behaviour, drug dependency, suicide attempts, self-mutilation
- Goes to bed fully clothed
- Has injuries such as tears or bruising to the genitalia, anus or perineal region
- Has indications of trauma to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs.

2.4 NEGLECT

2.4.1 Definition

Neglect is the continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision.

2.4.2 Indicators of Neglect

- Poor hygiene or health
- Inappropriate dress for weather conditions
- Extended stays at other people's houses or at church premises after event has finished
- extreme longing for adult affection
- Self-comforting behaviour eg rocking, thumb sucking
- Delays in developmental milestones
- Low weight for age and/or failure to thrive and develop
- Untreated physical/medical problems
- Extreme anxiety about being abandoned
- Inadequate supervision at home for their age
- Scavenging or stealing food

[A note in regards to indicators of abuse.](#)

A one-off indicator is rarely sufficient to establish abuse. Usually there will be a number of signs observed over a period of time. It is important to avoid jumping to conclusions. Any indicators of abuse should be documented using the *Risk of Significant Harm Report* form (see *Appendix 5*) and filed with the Child Safe Contact / Safe Ministry Person.

In the event an incident occurs during a church activity, the *SICoC Standard Incident/Injury/Property Report* form is to be completed (see *Appendix 6*).

3. Recommended Practices

The following recommended practices are designed to point out attitudes and behaviours that maximise the ability of church staff and volunteers to protect children and young people. Every leader involved in children's or youth ministry, and all people in senior leadership positions should implement these recommendations to promote good practice and avoid misinterpretation of actions.

3.1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES / CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY

The Code of Conduct is written to protect both the children and young people in our church, and leaders from situations where their integrity or actions might be questioned. Breach of this Code of Conduct may raise issues concerning a person's fitness to continue as a leader.

Leaders are to inform the Senior Minister, Child Safe/Safe Ministry Person or member of the Leadership Board if they observe another leader acting in a way that may be contrary to this Code of Conduct.

Leaders should ensure that they:

- Never abuse children or young people, or cultivate relationships in order to initiate or cloak abuse of children or young people.
- Never detain a single child if there are no other leaders or children present.
- Never physically discipline a child or young person.

- Never touch a child or young person in a manner which is inappropriate given their age, gender or cultural background.
- Never have children or young people to his or her home or visit children or young people in their home when no other adult is present, and must never meet privately with a child or young person outside of church activities, except with the permission of a parent or guardian.
- Never develop inappropriate special relationships with particular children or youth that could be seen as involving favouritism or any form of special treatment.
- Never make drugs, alcohol or cigarettes available to children or youth.
- Never become romantically involved with any person under the age of 18 in the youth or children's ministry.
- Leaders should not wear provocative or revealing attire.
- On camps or church sleepovers, strict segregation of sleeping quarters is to be maintained. These should be supervised by a person of the same gender as the children or young people in them. Under no circumstances should an adult ever share accommodation with one child or young person only. There is to be a minimum of 2 leaders and 2 children/young people present in the room being shared.
- Leaders have a responsibility to prevent any breach of trust towards children or young people.

Situations offering privacy or secrecy need to be avoided:

- A leader is not to be left alone, away from the presence of other adults, with a child or young person of either gender, no matter what their age. It is always best that leaders have as many children or young people with them as possible. There should always be at least 2 approved leaders at every activity.
- Never engage in any contact with a child or young person that is secretive (whether physical or through electronic media or in any other way).
- If counselling is to be done, it should be carried out within sight of other leaders.
- Never help children in ways that involve intimate care if the child is capable of doing it on his or her own (such as, toileting or changing clothes).

3.2. SPECIFIC AREAS

3.2.1. Behaviour and Language

- No behaviour should be used which gives the impression of favouritism or encourages 'special' relationships with individual children or young people.
- Leaders need to be sensitive to those from different cultures and traditions.
- There should be no sexually suggestive language or behaviour directed towards children and young people or towards other leaders in their presence.
- Leaders should be diligent to discourage sexually suggestive language or behaviour in their own group setting.

3.2.2. Physical Surroundings

- Teams need to consider safety issues and minimising risks as a part of preparation of a program. This includes checking all equipment and areas to be used in the program for breakages and potential hazards.
- This also includes using age and skill appropriate equipment and ensuring children are not able to enter areas such as kitchens and storerooms unsupervised.

3.2.3. First Aid

- Teams should include someone trained to an appropriate level in first aid.
- First aid should not be administered in private wherever possible. If the injury requires more private treatment, at least two leaders should be present and any treatment documented. At least one of these leaders should be the same gender as the injured child. Parents/Guardians should be informed of any injury and medical assistance sought.

3.2.4. Ratios

A leader to child / young person ratio would ideally not exceed 1:7 (in the case of children/young people of age 12 and over a ratio of 1 :12 is acceptable in most cases).

3.2.5. Activities and Games

- All materials used (eg. videos, pictures, songs, plays) should be consistent with the recommended practices of this policy.
- Leaders should promote an environment of respect towards the privacy of others during activities that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes. Leaders should set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations.
- Nude swimming or other such activities are forbidden.
- The exploitation of gender, physical or intellectual differences is not permitted.
- During overnight activities, at least two leaders / staff members should be the same gender as the children or young people.

3.2.6. Physical Contact

- Leaders, in the normal course of events, should not initiate close physical contact with children or young people.
- There will be occasions where displays of affection are natural and children should not be shunned if they initiate and demonstrate their need for comfort, bearing in mind the age of the child and the circumstances. Care needs to be exercised so that it is appropriate and doesn't occur in private.
- Leaders should employ a 'side-hug' technique wherever possible.
- 12-17 year olds should not receive a 'frontal hug' from any leader at any time.
- Leaders should avoid consistent contact with the same child or young person. This may give the impression of favouritism and result in others competing for their attention or feeling left out.
- Leaders should not administer any form of corporal punishment, even in fun. The only form of physical restraint appropriate is to protect children or young people from harm. (eg. reasonable restraint to stop a fight; to stop bullying; to avoid an accident)
- Leaders should not physically discipline a child. Consequences that do not include corporal punishment should be imposed on children who overstep stated boundaries.
- Leaders working with younger children should never change the nappy of a child (unless it is their own child or grandchild) and should never physically assist a child to use the toilet.

3.2.7. Use of Permission Slips

Permission Slips serve a number of purposes in addition to being required in order to ensure adequate coverage under the SICoC insurance policy. These are *legal documents*. Under no circumstances will a youth member be allowed to participate in any off-site activity unless they have a completed permission slip. These cannot be back-dated and must be submitted prior to the planned activity. See *Appendix 7 - Off-site Permission Form*.

3.2.8. Travel in private vehicles

- Leaders should not transport children or young people unaccompanied. Travel for ministry activities should not occur without permission from a parent/ guardian. As much as possible there should always be at least 2 leaders in the vehicle, and in the event a leader is driving unaccompanied by another leader, the children travelling will not sit in the front seat.
- Drivers with provisional licences are not permitted to drive for organised events unless the Senior Minister / Church Leadership Board and parental permission (of provisional licence holder and children travelling in the vehicle) is given.
- Leaders transporting children or young people in private vehicles must have at least two children or young people with them at all times and at least one child or young person of the same gender in the vehicle at all times.
- A leader should never transport an individual or group of the opposite gender alone.
- Volunteer drivers are to complete the *Volunteer Driver Information form (Appendix 8)* that will be held by the Church Office and be accessible to the Leadership Board.

3.2.9. Sign in and out procedures

- All ministry areas must employ adequate means of ensuring the safety of the children/young people in their care. Leaders must employ a system to track the whereabouts of each child/ young person while in their care.
- Leaders have the right to ask persons who do not have a valid reason to be present at child related activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

3.2.10. Drugs and alcohol

- The church premises are an alcohol and drug free zone.
- Never make drugs, alcohol or cigarettes available to children or youth.

3.2.11. Technology and Social Media Usage

- The use of information technologies and social media is governed by SCoC Social Media Policy and Guidelines.
- Leaders are not permitted to have on line social media "relationships" with children or young people that attend their ministry. This includes but is not restricted to being "friends" on Facebook, or following on Instagram, Snapchat or Twitter. All on line communication between leaders and children/young people should be via the ministry head only or through the child/young person's parents. Specific instances may occur in which the ministry head instructs a leader to send out a group text or post something on a social media "group" page.
- There is never to be any private one on one texting between a leader and a child/young person. If a child/young person sends a private text message to a leader, the leader is to inform the child/young person that they cannot communicate with them in that way and direct them to public Facebook or Instagram pages OR arrange to speak with them at the next church/youth event.
- Leaders are asked to refrain from using their mobile phones during an organised church event of any kind unless in an emergency. Under no circumstances should a leader use their private phone to take photos or videos of any children/young people in their ministry.
- All social media communication needs to be in a public forum - absolutely no private text messaging. Text messaging is reserved for group messaging by the Youth Ministry Head and used for program information only.
- There are to be no private phone calls between Leaders and kids at any time.

- One person from the youth leadership team will be commissioned by the Southern Church Leadership Board to take photos and videos of children's and youth activities, only if parental consent has been granted.

3.3. COMMITMENT AND CONSEQUENCES

All leaders at the church who minister to children or young people in any capacity are required to read this policy in its entirety and acknowledge in writing that they will abide by the procedures contained within. This is a requirement PRIOR to beginning service in ministry.

Any leader found to be acting in a way contrary to this policy will be asked to explain their actions as soon as possible to their ministry head and to the Child Safety Contact Person (allegations of abuse are handled separately as noted in Section 4). A meeting will take place with both of the parties above to discuss their actions and if necessary, a warning will be given.

Any leader repeatedly acting in a way contrary to this policy will be suspended from ministry pending further investigation. This ensures the safety of our children/young people and the integrity of our ministries going forward. An investigation will be carried out by the Child Safety Contact Person (in conjunction with the ministry head if required).

4. Reporting Procedures

4.1. DISCLOSURE OR STRONG INDICATION OF ABUSE BY A THIRD PARTY

In the event that a SICoC staff member or volunteer becomes aware of the sexual, physical or emotional abuse of a child or young person either by disclosure or presenting strong indicators of abuse, that staff member or volunteer should directly inform the Child Safe / Safe Ministries Contact person immediately. The Child Safe Contact person should then encourage and guide that staff member to contact Family and Community Services (FaCS) on Phone 13 21 11. FaCS will recommend how to proceed with the child or young person who made the disclosure.

If the disclosure is made against the Child Safe Contact person, the staff member should contact the Churches of Christ (Fresh Hope) Professional Standards Unit, who would guide that staff member in contacting FaCS.

A reminder about indicators of abuse:

A one-off indicator is rarely sufficient to establish abuse. Usually there will be a number of signs observed over a period of time. It is important to avoid jumping to conclusions. Any indicators of abuse should be documented and filed with the ministry team.

If someone discloses to you:

It is important that you document the conversation (using the *Significant Risk of Harm Report form – Appendix 5*).

It is the responsibility of the Child Safe /Safe Ministries Contact person to:

Help an individual make a report if they need it, and to pastorally care for them as a leader through this process. There is generally no need for the Senior Minister to be aware of the particulars or persons involved, unless FaCS takes any action that the Church then needs to be aware of.

Please note: Do not contact the Police in the first instance unless there is immediate danger to the child/young person in question or others involved.

FaCS will advise if the Police need to be contacted OR they will contact the Police on your behalf.

4.1.1. Discloser about Self Harm or Risk of Suicide

If a child or young person discloses to a staff member or volunteer that they are engaging in self-harming actions or feel they are at risk of suicide, this must be reported to the Child Safe / Safe Ministries Contact person immediately. If that is not immediately possible, then this needs to be reported to the most senior staff member on site.

In the case of a child under the age of 16, the action will almost always be to contact the child's parents/caregiver as we are not trained in how to deal with this situation.

In the case of a young person aged 16 or 17, privacy issues come into play and we cannot contact parents without the young person's consent. In this case we contact FaCS and ask for specific advice. It is usually advisable to seek professional help, potentially through the hospital system.

It is NEVER OK for a leader to keep information regarding self-harm or risk of suicide a secret, even if asked to do so by the child or young person. We must take all threats of this kind as genuine.

4.2. ALLEGATION OF THE ABUSE OF A CHILD/ YOUNG PERSON AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER.

In the event that a third party makes an allegation of the sexual, physical or emotional abuse of a child or young person against a SICoC staff member or volunteer, the person who had been informed should directly inform the Child Safe Contact person immediately.

The Child Safe Contact person may then carry out preliminary interpretations of the allegation or indicators of abuse.

The Child Safe Contact person will then initiate a conference with the third party to discuss the allegation in an attempt to discover how to proceed with the matter. The implicated staff member or volunteer and the allegedly abused child or young person may be included in this conference at the discretion of the Child Safe Contact person. This conference may conclude in a number of ways:

- Resolution may be found based on misinterpretation of circumstances or a mutual course of reconciliation
- The conference may decide that the allegation should be reported. The Child Safe Contact Person will then encourage and/or assist the third party to make a report to FaCS.
- The conference may reach a deadlock, where no reasonable resolution can be found.
- The Child Safe Contact person will then notify FaCS as an arbitrary third party in the hope of seeking a resolution.

If the allegation is made against the Child Safe Contact person, the staff member should contact the Fresh Hope NSW Churches of Christ Professional Standards Unit, who would perform the role of interpretation and conferencing as set out above.

Note: At any point, the third party may choose to contact FaCS (Phone 13 21 11 or web site www.community.nsw.gov.au). And all churches in NSW are also obliged to inform the Office of the Children's Guardian and the NSW Ombudsmen in cases of alleged abuse by a staff member or volunteer.

4.3. DISCLOSURE OR STRONG INDICATION OF ABUSE BY A STAFF MEMBER (VOLUNTEER OR PAID) OF A STAFF MEMBER (VOLUNTEER OR PAID) WHO IS 16 OR 17 YEARS OF AGE.

In the event that a SiCoC staff member becomes aware of the sexual, physical or emotional abuse of a staff member by another staff member, either by disclosure or presenting strong indicators of abuse, that staff member should directly inform the Child Safe Contact person (or Fresh Hope Professional Standards Unit (PSU) if Child safe Contact person is implicated).

The staff person that has information about the suspected abuse should note details of the staff persons involved, time and place and grounds for forming the belief that abuse has occurred.

The Child Safe Contact person or Fresh Hope Professional Standards Unit will then initiate a conference with the allegedly abused staff member to discuss the situation in an attempt to discover how to proceed with the matter. The implicated staff member and the staff member who initiated the report may be included in this conference at the discretion of the Child Safe Contact person. This conference may conclude in a number of ways:

- Resolution may be found based on misinterpretation of circumstances or a mutual course of reconciliation.
- The conference may decide that the allegation should be reported. The Child Safe Contact person or Professional Standards Unit will then encourage and/or assist the allegedly abused staff member to make a report to FaCS.
- The conference may reach a deadlock, where no reasonable resolution can be found. The Child Safe Contact person or PSU will then notify FaCS as an arbitrary third party in the hope of seeking a resolution of the matter.

Note: at any point, the 16 or 17 year-old staff member may choose to contact FaCS (Phone 13 21 11 or web site www.community.nsw.gov.au). And all churches in NSW are also obliged to inform the Office of the Children's Guardian and the NSW Ombudsmen in cases of alleged abuse by a staff member or volunteer.

* In December 2000, the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 was changed to include the category "Young People", who are 16 or 17 years old. Mandatory reporting requirements do not arise for alleged or disclosed abuse against "Young People". However, with young people 16 or 17 years of age or older, the option of **voluntary** reporting to FaCS is still open.

4.4. STAFF HANDLING

Immediately following a report to FaCS, Child Safe /Safe Ministries Contact person or Fresh Hope Professional Standards Unit will advise the staff member whom the allegation has been made that a matter in relation to their ministry position has been referred to FaCS and that they will be on leave until the matter is resolved. For employed staff, the Child Safe Contact person or Fresh Hope Professional Standards Unit will determine the nature of the leave.

All discretion will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the allegations.

When allegations of abuse are referred by FaCS or the police and a charge is laid, the staff member concerned shall be stood down pending the outcome of a committal hearing and/or trial.

If it is shown after investigation by FaCS that a staff member has responded abusively to a child or young person, this will result in termination of their ministry position.

Counselling and support services may be offered to the staff member or volunteer throughout the investigation process.

Appendix 1: Applying for a Working with Children Check

A Working with Children Check (WCCC) is a requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. Southern Illawarra Church of Christ expects to take steps to ensure that workers have a WWCC and are cleared to work with children.

A child related worker is responsible for applying for his or her own Working with Children Check. An employer cannot apply on behalf of a worker.

Step 1

Applicants fill in an online form at:

<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check>

Once the form is submitted, the applicant will receive an application number.

Step 2

Applicants must take their application number and proof of identity to a Service NSW Centre or a NSW Motor Registry. Proof of identity for the Working with Children Check is the same as for a NSW Driver's License. This cannot be delegated to a third party.

There is no fee for volunteers.

Employees will be required to pay a fee for a five-year clearance. Southern Illawarra Church of Christ will reimburse employees for this cost on presentation of receipt.

Step 3

Applicants are to then provide the Southern Illawarra Church of Christ Office Administration Officer with a copy of their Working with Children Check number (WWC XXX) for verification on the online system. This can be submitted via email to:

Office Administration office@southernillawarracofc.org.au

Once the check has been verified online, the applicant's name, employment capacity (ie: employee or volunteer), birth date, WWC number and expiry date will be recorded by the Office Administrator in the Working with Children Check's register.

The applicant can then commence work / ministry with Southern Illawarra Church of Christ.

In the event that the worker / volunteer has already obtained a Working with Children Check, the process begins at Step 3.



Appendix 2: Completion of Child Safe / Child Protection Training Confirmation Form

Name:

Address:

.....

Phone:

Email:

Area/s of Ministry:

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Pastor/Associate Pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Worker | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Board Member | <input type="checkbox"/> | Scripture Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ministry Coordinator | <input type="checkbox"/> | Outreach Volunteer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Small Group Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Children's Worker (incl. Sunday School & crèche) | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name of training:

Date of training:

Type of training (circle)

Initial training Refresher New Procedures (specify)

Reference Checks

1. Name of Referee 1

Mobile Phone:

Email:

2. Name of Referee 2

Mobile Phone:

Email:

I confirm I have undertaken Child Safe / Child Protection training required for Ministry at Southern Illawarra Church of Christ.

I have received a copy of Southern Illawarra Church of Christ Safe Ministry with Children Policy and am aware of its content.

In signing this form I am declaring that I am not aware of any reason why I cannot be involved in ministry that involves children and young people. I am also indicating my commitment to uphold the guidelines outlined in Southern Illawarra Church of Christ Safe Ministry with Children Policy.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 3: Welcome Letter for Parents and Guardians

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

We would like to welcome you and your child/ren to Southern Illawarra Church of Christ Children's/Youth programme. Thank you for trusting us to provide a fun, safe place for your child/ren.

Here at Southern Illawarra Church of Christ, we understand the need to provide a safe physical and emotional environment for your child/ren. We admit that in the past the church in Australia has, on occasion, been guilty of failing to provide child-safe environments. We, however, have taken several proactive steps towards creating a safe environment for your child/ren. All youth and children's leaders in our church are properly screened and recruited before they are allowed to work with children and young people and have undergone safe church training.

We have also implemented a Safe Ministry with Children and Youth Policy, which all our workers have committed to uphold. We have also made a commitment to report any children who are at risk via our Child Safe / Safe Ministry Contact representative to the government Child Protection services.

In the interest of keeping your child/ren as safe as we can, we would ask that you take a few moments to complete the attached Child Information Form. All information on the form will be kept confidentially in the church records.

[Name of program] begins at [time] and ends at [time]. As part of our commitment to being safe, we ask that you please pick up your child at this time, or inform us in writing of other transportation arrangements on your Child Information Form.

Thank you for your participation in helping provide a safe place for your child/ren. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to us.

Yours truly,

(Name)
Ministry Leader

(Name)
Child Safe Contact



Appendix 4 - Child / Young Person Information Form

General Information

Participant's name:

Date of birth:

Parents' or guardians' names:

.....

Mobile phone no: Home phone no:

Email:

Medical Information

Medical conditions:

.....

Please list any medical conditions or allergies, and any medication or special care they require.

.....

.....

Dietary Restrictions

Is your child on a restricted diet? (Please circle) Yes or No

If yes, please indicate foods or beverages your child should not consume:

.....

.....

In Case of Emergency – Contact Numbers

Name:

Relationship to child:

Phone: (mobile) (work)

(home)

Alternative Emergency Contact

Name:

Relationship to child:

Phone: (mobile) (work)

(home)

- I understand that from time to time, workers may need to contact my child electronically
- I authorise the leader in charge of the abovementioned group to arrange for my child to receive such first aid and medical treatment
- I authorise the use of calling an ambulance by a worker if in his/her judgment it is necessary.
- I accept responsibility for payment of all expenses associated with such treatment.

Please read the follow statement and tick the boxes from which you wish to preclude your children:

- I **DO NOT** give permission for my child to participate in activities outside of the normal meeting complex except where they are within reasonable walking distance.
- I **DO NOT** give permission for my child to be transported in private cars arranged by the leaders of the above-named group.
- I **DO NOT** permit photos taken of my child to be displayed in church publications, e.g. website, newsletters, brochures, or on noticeboards etc.

Transport authority: If I am unable to collect my child at the finishing time they may be transported home from the program with the following people:

Name:

Relationship to Child:

Thank you for providing this important information. The safety and wellbeing of your child is our primary concern.

Signature of Parent / Guardian:

Name:

Date: ____ / ____ / ____



Appendix 5: Children’s and Youth Worker’s Registration Form

PERSONAL DETAILS

First Name Last Name

Address

Phone number Home

Work

Mobile

Email

Date of Birth

MEDICAL DETAILS

Doctor Phone number

Medicare Number

Private Health Care Y / N Details

Details of any allergies or medical conditions we need to be aware of?

.....
.....

PROVIDE DETAILS OF ANY PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN RELATION TO WORKING WITH CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE:

.....
.....
.....

HAVE YOU HAD PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE IN ANOTHER CHURCH?

If so, please provide details including church, brief description of role and contact details for immediate supervisor

.....
.....

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT? If yes, please give details

.....
.....

HAVE ANY ALLEGATIONS OR COMPLAINTS INVOLVING MISCONDUCT WITH CHILDREN EVER BEEN MADE AGAINST YOU?

.....
.....

IS THERE ANYTHING IN YOUR PAST THAT WOULD CALL INTO QUESTION YOUR SUITABILITY TO BE ENTRUSTED WITH THE CARE OF YOUTH OR CHILDREN?

.....



The day-to-day responsibility of the Children’s and Youth Ministries lies with the respective Ministry Co-coordinator under the authority of the church Eldership.

In signing this form, you are agreeing to:

- Uphold the Core Values of the Southern Illawarra Church of Christ (included with this form) and come under the authority of the Ministry Co-coordinator and Church Eldership.
- Complete the online NSW Working With Children with Check (www.newcheck.kids.nsw.gov.au)
- Read Penrith Church of Christ’s Child Protection Policy and Reporting Procedures pertaining to Child Protection
- Be aware of Mandatory Reporting requirements as outlined in the Penrith Church of Christ Child Protection Policy and Reporting Procedures and uphold the guidelines outlined

I confirm the information I have supplied in this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. Should it be found that the answers are untrue, I understand that this may be grounds for dismissal for the position held.

I hereby declare that I have never been convicted of any criminal offences in relation to the physical or sexual abuse of children.

I agree that the church may make a check with police regarding any information they may hold about me.

Name Signature

Date

Office Use:

Contact made with previous Church/supervisor & no concerns noted regarding working with children/young people

Name: Position:

Signature: Date:



Appendix 6: Risk of Significant Harm Report Form

To be completed by the person who hears a disclosure or wishes to report a child or young person at risk of significant harm. The completed form should be given **only** to the Child Safe / Safer Ministries Contact person, and then kept in a locked filing cabinet.

The information will be used for reporting to the Government Child Protection Agency.

Name of Organisation (Church):

Child Safe / Safer Ministries Contact:

DETAILS OF PERSON REPORTING ALLEGED ABUSE/RISK OF HARM

Name of reporter:

Relationship to alleged victim:

Nature of alleged abuse: physical emotional sexual
 neglect witness domestic violence

Is this report due to a direct **disclosure** or **reasonable grounds**? (circle)

If Disclosure – Date: Time:

Where a disclosure has occurred provide a ‘first person’ report. Record the child’s actual words. (Attach transcript).

If Reasonable Grounds describe why you have ‘reasonable grounds’ for this report (add pages if needed). Include when and how you became aware of the information, names of other witnesses, description of any injuries, description of the behaviour of the child, the carer’s attitude regarding the incident (if known).

Details of alleged abuse victim

Name: Age:

Male Female

Address:

Parent/Guardian:

Phone:

Names of siblings:

Names of known support people to the child and family

.....



Have the parents/guardians of the victim been notified? Yes No

If yes, person(s) spoken to:

.....

Date:

What were they told?

.....

Details of alleged perpetrator of the abuse (if known)

Name: Age:

Male Female

Address:

Phone:

Does the alleged perpetrator know about the report? Yes No

If yes, who spoke to him/her? Date:

What was he/she told?

.....

CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO ALLEGED ABUSE/RISK OF HARM

Child Safe / Safer Ministries Contact notified? Yes No Date:

Reported by whom?

Name of Government Service call centre worker

.....

Reference Number:

Have the police been notified? Yes No Date:

Name of officer and station:

Date:

Advice given by police officer:

.....

Signed: Date:



Appendix 7: Standard Incident /Injury/Property Damage Report Form

TO BE COMPLETED BY EVENT/ACTIVITY SUPERVISOR

Date and Time of Incident

Name of Ministry or Activity:

Name of Person/s Supervising Activity:

Name of Injured Person:

Where the incident pertains to a child/young person (under 18 years of age), involved in a Children’s or Youth Activity, the following must also be completed:

Injured Child/Young Person’s Age and Birthdate:

Name of Parent’s/Guardians:

Address:

Details of Incident:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Action Taken:

.....

.....

.....

Items used in First Aid Kit (if any)

.....

Is further medical attention required?

If so, what action was taken? (Include name of Medical Practitioner):

.....

.....

.....



Details of Property Damage (if any):

.....

Name & Signature of person completing report:

Name & Signature of witness/es to incident:

The following is for Administration purposes:

Chairman (or delegate) Southern Illawarra Church of Christ to complete this section:

Acknowledgement & action if required

.....

.....

.....

.....

Is this is an WHS issue and what has been done to address the issue?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Appendix 8: Off-site Permission Form

I , as Legal Guardian of

Parent/Legal Guardian Name *Child / Young Person Name*

Provide my permission for them attend the following function being facilitated by the Children’s Ministry / Southside Youth leadership team (please circle relevant team).

Signed: Date:.....

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature *day / month / year*

Event:

Date:

Start Time: (When Child/ Young Person need to be there)

End Time: (When Child/ Young Person can be collected)

Location:



Photos of children or young people may be used on Social Media. Please circle “YES” here if you consent to your child’s photo being used: **YES / NO**

Transport arrangements are as follows:

.....

.....

Legal Guardian Contact Details etc.

In case of emergency, I can be reached on the following phone number:

..... (Legal Guardian’s contact number)

Allergies and Special Considerations:

.....



Appendix 9: Volunteer Driver Information Form

Please complete if you will drive a vehicle as part of your volunteer service to the church.

Clearance must be obtained from the church’s insurance company before you drive any church vehicle. Check with the church office.

Name of Organisation:

Driver’s full Name:

Driver’s Licence Number: State of Issue:

Date of issue: Expiry Date:

Type of licence: Car Bus Truck Other (please specify)

Do you have any restrictions on your driver’s licence? (i.e. – provisional driver – P plater)
 Yes If yes, please explain here:
 No

Have you been involved in any motor vehicle accidents while driving during the past 5 years?
 Yes If yes, please describe each accident on a separate sheet.
 No

Have you been convicted of any traffic offences (other than parking) during the last 5 years?
 Yes If yes, please list number & describe each conviction on a separate sheet.
 No

Is your vehicle registered?
 Yes If yes, please list your registration
 No If no, you cannot drive as a volunteer in your vehicle

Do you carry comprehensive or 3rd party property insurance on your vehicle?
 Yes If yes, please identify the insurance company & policy No:
 No If no, you cannot drive as a volunteer in your vehicle.

Is your vehicle kept in a road worthy condition as per state laws?
 Yes.
 No If no, you cannot drive as a volunteer in your vehicle until repaired.

Each of my responses is truthful and accurate. I agree to notify the church within a reasonable time of any changes in the above information.

Signature: Date: / ... /