

Induction and Training Manual

**Children and Young Persons
Assemblies of God Queensland**

Section 1:

Introduction

The Assemblies of God in Queensland is committed to providing safe places where all ages can find and practice their faith.

We believe that church should be a caring, nurturing and faith sustaining environment for all and especially for children.

The Bible advocates the need to develop a physically, spiritually and emotionally safe environment for children in which to grow and learn.

Our Children's ministries are established on the premise of a fun, safe and loving environment where children can grow in their faith and find salvation through Jesus Christ.

To achieve this we embrace the outworking of a moral, ethical and legislative role to achieve that outcome.

The following scripture illustrate this belief:

Ps 10:17,18

Mark 9:36,37

Mark 13-16

1 Cor 13-16

Objectives:

The objectives of this manual are:

1. To provide explanation and background behind the State Policies
2. To provide a platform for training and induction in local church ministries that deal with children and young people
3. To provide a "sample bag" of resources for local churches to develop their own Policies and Procedures. This has been achieved through the kind contribution of many local church Children's Ministries who had donated their Templates, Forms and Training Material to assist others.
4. To establish a clear standard of practices in all churches associated with AOG Qld
5. To provide a way a local church can minimise risk especially abuse to children and young people who are part of their ministries
6. To ensure all churches handle any cases of or suspected cases of abuse in a manner that is consistent with current legislation and with a heart for pastoral care

Legislation:

After each policy is listed the legislation that is related to that area. It is important that every church acquire a current copy of the legislation and that their Pastors and Board Members be aware of its scope and relevance to any ministry within the church.

Scope of the Policy:

It is expected that all Pastors, staff members, Board members (Governance level) and Volunteers within any AOG Qld ministries to Children and Young People complied with these Policies and Key Procedural Elements.

Why have “Policies and Procedures”?

I will quote from ACROD (Qld):¹

“All organisations have policies and procedures that guide how decisions are made and how the work is done in that organisation. Well written policies and procedures increase organisational accountability and transparency and are fundamental to quality assurance and quality improvement programmes.

Even where policies and procedures are not written down they exist, guiding the decisions and determining how people who interact with the organisation are treated. The problem with unwritten policies and procedures is that they are not subject to the usual organisational reviews and accountability processes.”

In summary, they produce an organisation that inconsistent, unaccountable, unprofessional and subject to substandard practices.

Code of Conduct:

A sample code of Conduct for the Children’s worker is included.

Codes of conduct outline expected minimum standard behaviour in any ministry. There are three Codes that are relevant to this document.

1. The AOG National Ministers Code of conduct which is applicable to all AOG Credentialed ministers within Australia
2. The Children’s Worker Code of Conduct which does not preclude the above but covers all Children’s Workers whether Credentialed or not

¹ ‘How and when to write policies and procedures’ ACROD Qld Division, 1990
www.safework.sa.gov.au

3. **The Code of Behaviour for children/Young People attending the Ministry. More will be discussed about this later on.**

Queensland State specific policies and procedures:

Each State and Territory within Australia has laws and practices peculiar to that state. Queensland has a number of these. It is very important that we are aware of these and ensure in the development or adoption of any Interstate initiatives within our Church or Children's/Young People's Ministries are scrutinised against our state's laws.

Some of these are:

- 1. The Blue Card and its requirements**
- 2. Mandatory reporting requirements on abuse**
- 3. Reporting agencies and Child Services**

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. Statement

As a church we abhor any kind of child abuse and take any incidence of abuse within the church very seriously indeed. We find the sexual abuse of children to be particularly abhorrent. This series of protocols concerning such sexual abuse has two goals. The first is to provide a way in which the church can minimise risk in this area to the children and those under 18 years of age within the ministries of the church. Secondly, for the sake of the victims, it is our desire to ensure that all cases of sexual abuse are handled in a consistent and thorough manner. In an effort to ensure the best interests and on-going safety of any victims, the Eldership requires that the following procedures be followed in cases of known or suspected sexual abuse.

2. Definition

3. Sexual Abuse

“Sexual abuse occurs when someone in a position of power to the child or young person uses his or her power to involve the child/young person in sexual activity. This can include a range of behaviours including sexual suggestion, exhibitionism, mutual masturbation, oral sex, penile sex or other penetration of the genital or anal region.”² Sexual behaviour involving a child is ALWAYS abuse since the child is considered to be unable to alter and/or understand the perpetrator’s behaviour due to that child’s early stage of development and/or powerlessness in the situation.³

4. 3. Mandatory Reporting/ Duty of Care

There are some people in Queensland that have a legal obligation to report suspicions of child abuse to the appropriate authorities. These include:

1. Medical practitioners under the Health Act 1937;
2. Commissioner for Children & Young People under the Commission for Children & Young People Act 2000;
3. Family Court personnel, including court counsellors, mediators, welfare officers and registrars under the Family Law Act 1975;
4. Under the Child Protection Act 1999, an authorised officer of the department or a person employed in a licensed care service must report harm caused to a child in residential care;

² *Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect – Mandated Notification Guidelines*, Family and Youth Services, 2003, p.5

³ Adapted from *Reporting Child Abuse*, South Australian Child protection Council, 1994, p. 4

5. Under the Juvenile Justice Act 1992, a detention centre employee of the department must report harm, or suspected harm, caused to a child in a detention centre;
6. Licences of child care services under the Child Care Act 2002 where abuse/allegations relate to the child care service; and
7. Staff members of a State or Non-State school under the Education and other Legislation (Student Protection) Amendment Act 2003.

While the clergy (as a specified category) are currently exempt from mandatory reporting requirements (although some Pastors or other workers may fall within some of the categories listed above), the Eldership requires that all cases of child sexual abuse or suspected child sexual abuse within the church of which a Pastor, staff member, worker, church member or attendee becomes aware be reported to the Department of Families (DOF) or the Queensland Police Service (QPS) as soon as possible.

5. 4. Responding to Suspected Sexual Abuse

As a church we have a moral responsibility to children in our care to ensure that we provide a safe and protected environment for them to grow and be nurtured.

We are absolutely and thoroughly opposed to child sexual abuse of any kind and believe that:

8. At all times the abused person must be protected from further abuse.
9. The alleged abuse and its alleged perpetrator ought to be reported to the Department of Families (DOF) or the Queensland Police Service (QPS) as soon as possible.
10. The alleged perpetrator must be reported as well to the leadership of the local church as soon as possible.
11. In the case of a person with denominational credentials, a report must also be made to the State headquarters of the denomination as soon as possible.
12. The alleged perpetrator should be no longer in a position to abuse.
13. Support and counselling should be offered to the abuse victim and the family.
14. If the alleged abuse is confirmed by investigation, the perpetrator should face the full legal implications of his/her actions and that any pastoral care offered should be in line with that policy.

15. The family of the perpetrator should be offered appropriate pastoral care.

Everything must be done to ensure the ongoing safety of the child concerned along with any other child in the alleged perpetrator's circle. Indeed, the child is the primary concern and ALL other concerns (including the guilt or innocence of the alleged offender) must be secondary. This does not mean that the alleged offender is to be considered guilty without due investigation, but that the child's concerns and safety come first. In no way must any child or children be left in a hazardous situation or in a possibly hazardous situation.

Any person in the church who becomes aware of, or who suspects, sexual abuse within the church or its ministry **must** take **immediate** action to report that abuse or suspected abuse to the Department of Families or the Queensland Police Service and to the leadership of the church (see below, p. 6).

6. 5. Characteristics of a Perpetrator of Child Abuse

The church believes that the safety of children within its ministry is of paramount concern. The culture of the church includes accountability at all levels, and this area of the protection of children within the church's ministry is no exception.

With that in mind the attention of all workers/volunteers/pastors is drawn to the following list of characteristics that often apply to the person who is carrying out or who intends to carry out abuse.

It must be stressed that one or two characteristics on their own do not necessarily indicate that the person is an abuser, or a potential abuser. However, several characteristics together provide reason to raise concern – such a person would need to be observed closely.⁴

If there is no known victim or suspected victim, the worker who has concerns about someone else with respect to the following characteristics, must report their observations to the Children's Pastor or Youth Pastor, or to an elder or other senior leader (e.g., Pastor, Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, Regional Pastor) within the church. **In this situation there is no need to make a report to the Department of Families or the Queensland Police Service.**

If there is a victim or suspected victim, then the reporting process outlined below must apply. That is, **a report must be made as soon as possible to the Department of Families or the Queensland Police Service as well as to the church leadership** (see below p.6)

⁴ The following list of characteristics is adapted from Kids R Us, *Protect the Child*, pp. 12ff

7. a) General Indicators

4. Majority of an abuser's relationships are with children. (Abusers don't relate well to people of their own age).
5. Is overly friendly with children.
6. Has low self-esteem, poor self image (possibly due to emotional deprivation as a child).
7. Can be seen to be in the church for only a short period of time and seeks to join the children's' ministry. They can seem obsessive when they say they "love" children.
8. Can be found wandering around children's church areas etc.
9. May remove himself/herself mid-way through a church service to have time with children who may be in the toilets.
10. Gives articles of his/her clothing to a child as gifts, e.g., a cap, a jacket, footy-shirt etc. This is an attempt to demonstrate ownership of the child.
11. Carries photos of children other than his/her own, often indicating that these children love him/her.
12. Gives extreme affection to children, e.g., front-on close hugging, always touching or flirting.
13. Withdrawn, placid.
14. Can be single or married. In fact some figures show that 47% of child abusers are married. May be experiencing marital problems, but not necessarily.
15. Over-emphasis upon morality – are legalistic and inflexible. Could well be a reflection of his/her own bad actions.
16. Strong denial of offence or any intention to offend.
17. Convincing in protests of innocence – has developed this as a defence mechanism.
18. Avoids screening processes, or attempts to do so.
19. Attempts to engineer opportunities to be alone with a child, e.g., babysitting (targets single parents), child minders at conferences
20. Offers to take or takes child shopping or on an outing. Offers to pick child up from school.
21. Dislikes submission to authority, prefers to work alone, and is negative (or dismissive) when sexual abuse topics are raised.
22. Spends considerable time with children.
23. Voices opinion on sex education, suggesting that children

are not taught properly.

24. Can be of any personal or social make-up, e.g. extrovert, introvert, married, single, old, young, rich or poor. While the majority of abusers are male, they are not limited to that particular gender.

b) Domestic indicators⁵

25. Shows improper behaviour towards developing daughter.
26. Showers with children at an inappropriate age.
27. Expects an open door policy in the bathroom.
28. Attempts to get children on lap, even when child or adolescent resists.
29. Exhibits inappropriate hugging and/or kissing.
30. Attempts to shut down mother – daughter communications.
31. Children don't want to be home alone with their father or male member of the family.
32. Is jealous of daughter's (or sister's) boyfriend.
33. Daughter is treated like a wife in conversation or decisions.

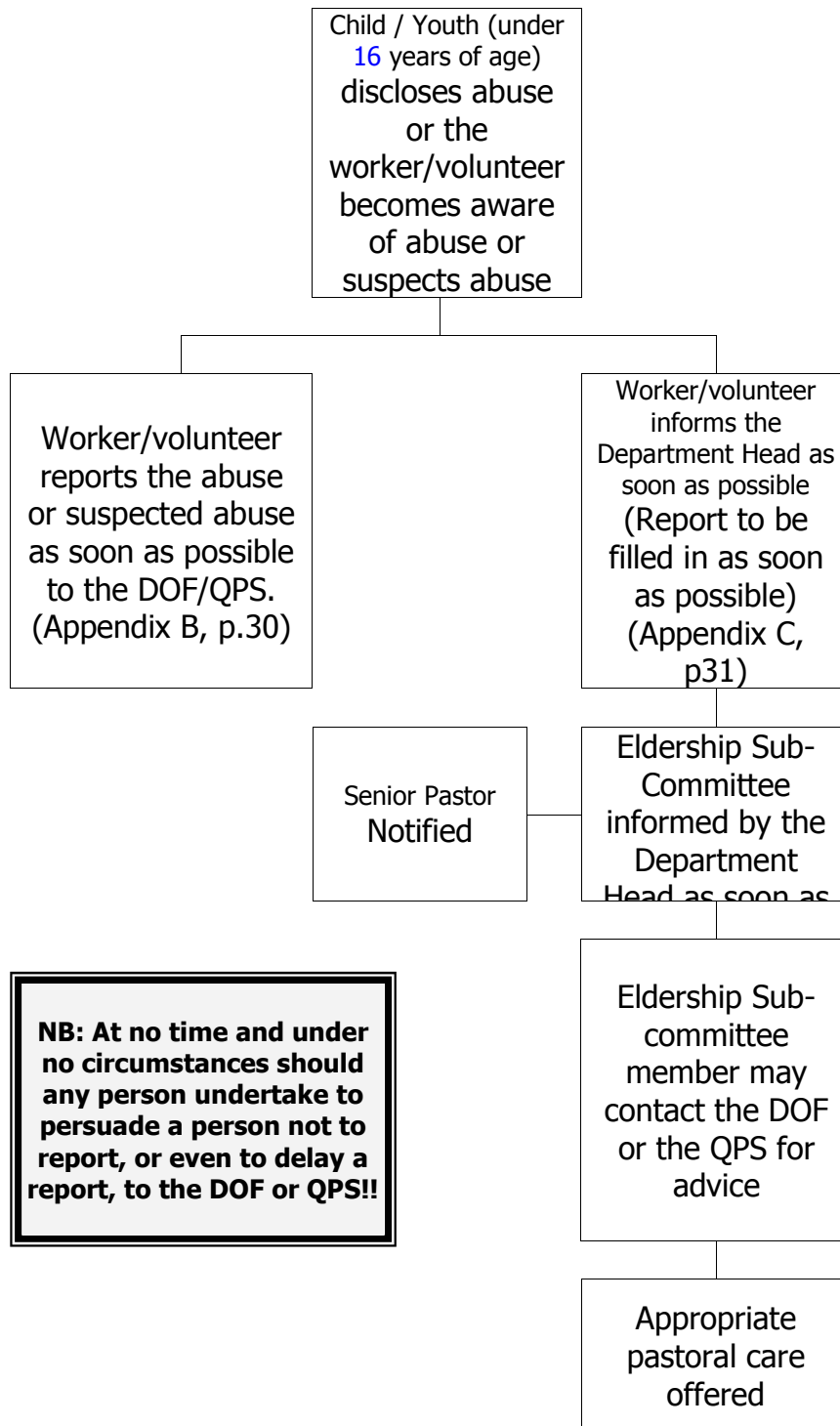
8. 6. Sexual Abuse Notification Procedure

9. a) When the victim is under eighteen years of age

The following diagram outlines the procedure to be followed when someone in the church becomes aware of sexual abuse or suspects sexual abuse involving a child or youth under 16 years of age.

Please note: If the alleged perpetrator is a church worker/volunteer/Pastor please go to p. 20 for the appropriate reporting protocol.

⁵ Adapted from Ibid., p. 13



10.b) Responding to a Child who Discloses Abuse

If the victim is under eighteen years of age then they fall within the province of Family and Youth Services. Under this policy the church worker/volunteer or Pastor is obligated to report such abuse **as soon as possible** to the Department of Families or the Queensland Police Service (See Appendix B, p.30). It matters little that members of the clergy, as a specified category, are not currently mandatory reporters under any Queensland legislation. This policy makes such reporting **compulsory** for all workers or volunteers or pastors involved in every level of ministry within the church.

At the same time the worker/volunteer/pastor is to begin the process of informing the church leadership through the department head. This will involve the completion of a written report (See Appendix C, p31).

However, all cases of reporting begin with the worker becoming aware of the sexual abuse or suspected sexual abuse.

One way that this may occur is through disclosure by the victim. When a child under 18 begins to share with the worker an experience of abuse the following guidelines should be followed.

The worker/volunteer/pastor should:

34. Listen carefully to the child.
35. Reassure the child that the worker believes the child.
36. Reassure the child that the abuse is not the child's fault. The child is not responsible for the abuse.
37. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling someone, and that the worker is pleased that the child has shared this with the worker (Perpetrators often threaten a victim in an attempt to ensure silence).
38. Acknowledge that it is hard to talk about these things.
39. **Not press the child for details.** It is not the worker's role to conduct an investigation, and asking leading questions may in fact prejudice any subsequent investigations.⁶
40. Not make promises that the worker cannot keep (e.g. confidentiality).
41. Tell the child that certain adults need to be informed who can protect them so that the abuse can stop.
42. As soon as possible after the conversation, contact the Department of Families or the Queensland Police Service and

⁶ Child protection Council, 1994, p.8

submit a report.

43. Concurrently or as soon as possible after contacting the Department of Families or the Queensland Police Service submit a verbal and then a written report to the relevant Department Head.
44. Make notes of the conversation held whilst the facts are still fresh in the mind of the worker/volunteer/pastor.

The worker/volunteer/Pastor to whom the child is disclosing the sexual abuse, must work hard at not showing emotions such as disgust, horror, disbelief or panic in front of the child. These will serve to reinforce to the child their feelings of disgrace and shame. They might also cause the child to lose confidence in the worker and not disclose other experiences.⁷

11.c) If the victim is now 18 years of age and over

In the case of a person 18 years of age or over who has disclosed their own childhood abuse, an attempt ought to be made to counsel them to see the wisdom of reporting their situation to the police. This has a two-fold result. It will give the opportunity to begin the process of closure for the victim, but it will also alert the authorities to the identity of the alleged perpetrator and appropriate action to protect other children, or even to solve other cases where abuse has occurred, will be taken.

While reports concerning people who are 18 or over ought not to be made without their consent, the worker/volunteer/pastor who has become aware of the situation may well have cause to believe that other children under the age of 18 could be at continued risk from the alleged perpetrator.

If that is the case, then the procedure above for reporting such suspicions to the Department of Families (or the Queensland Police Service) and the leadership of the church must be followed AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

12.d) Reasonable suspicion

The report procedure must be followed as soon as possible after a child or young person discloses the abuse to the worker/volunteer/pastor. Rarely, if ever, do children lie about abuse. Every disclosure must be taken very seriously indeed.

If a child informs the worker/volunteer/pastor that the child knows someone

⁷ This section adapted from *Protect the Child* developed by KIDS R Us., p.19

who has been abused, then a report should also be made. If the child identifies the victim then that information can form part of the report. However, the child could actually be speaking of itself. So even if they don't name this "friend" reasonable suspicion of their own abuse has been raised, and a report must be made.

If a child displays some of the symptoms of abuse, then reasonable suspicion has arisen and a report should be made. A list of behavioural indicators and physical indicators of abuse appears below. However, it is important to recognise that one or two indicators alone do not necessarily mean that abuse is occurring. The worker should try to see if there are any patterns of indicators emerging. If there is any doubt, the Department of Families or the Queensland Police Service should be contacted for advice.

If someone else who is in a position to know (perhaps a relative, friend, neighbour or sibling of the child/young person) informs you that a child is suffering abuse then this procedure must be followed.⁸

13. e) Some behavioural indicators associated with sexual abuse⁹

The sexually abused younger child may:

45. Engage in persistent and inappropriate sexual activity, e.g. rubbing genitals against an adult, playing games that echo the abuse, sexual themes in artwork or stories.
46. Have a detailed understanding of sexual behaviour beyond what would be expected at their age.
47. Display regressive behaviour (bedwetting, speech loss, infantile or immature behaviour).
48. Suffer sleep disturbance and night terrors.
49. Inhibition to play.
50. Serious difficulty relating to peers and/or adults.
51. Constant complaints of headaches or abdominal pains.
52. Sudden appearance of material goods (given as gifts).
53. Sexually inappropriate language.
54. Outside interests may wane.
55. Onset of fears and phobias.
56. Lack of concentration or significant change in school performance.

⁸ Adapted from South Australian Child Protection Council, 1994, p. 9, and FAYS 2003, pp. 9-10

⁹ Adapted from South Australian Child Protection Council, 1994, pp. 6 ff. and *Protect the Child*, pp. 7-8

As they become older, the child may present with some of the following in addition to the above:

57. Exhibit delinquent or aggressive behaviour.
58. Show signs of depression.
59. Display injurious behaviour such as:
 - Drug and alcohol abuse
 - Self mutilation
 - Attempts at suicide
 - Prostitution

f) Some physical indicators associated with sexual abuse

There may be some physical indicators associated with sexual abuse. Obviously all bruising and bleeding in the genital areas, breasts, or in the lower abdomen or thighs are prime indicators, as are complaints of soreness in these areas. Sexual abuse is indicated in the case of early pregnancy or infections including STDs.¹⁰

The Queensland Criminal Code covers the practice of Female Genital Mutilation of any kind except for a “sexual reassignment procedure” or a medical procedure that has a “genuine therapeutic purpose”. Under this Code anyone who performs FGM on another person commits an offence. FGM therefore needs to be reported in terms of this policy in the same way as sexual abuse (Queensland Criminal Code, Chapter 29, Ss 323A, 323B).

14.g) When the alleged perpetrator is a church worker/volunteer/Pastor

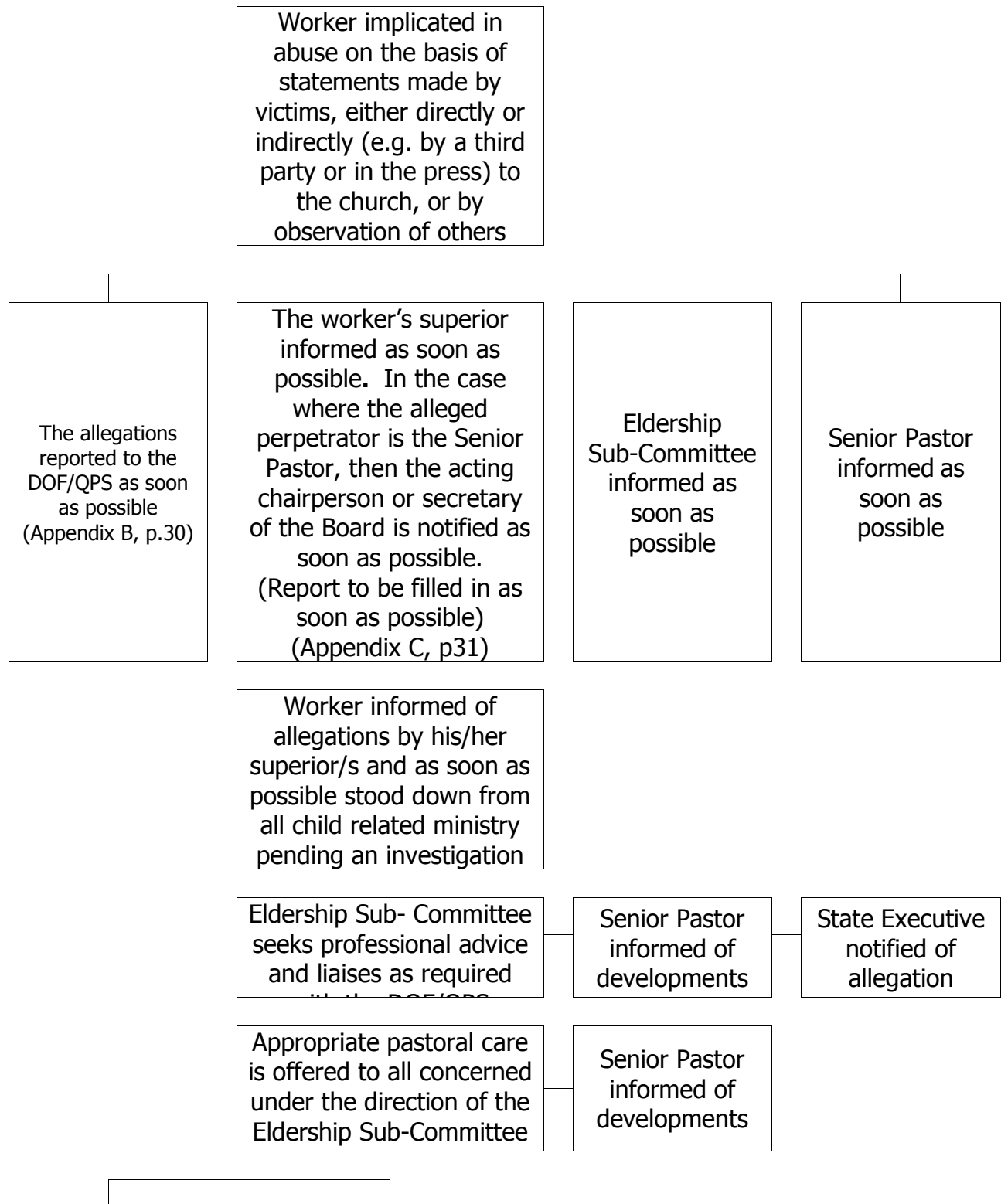
In outlining the procedures for dealing with allegations of child abuse made against church workers, volunteers or pastors, the Eldership requires that the principles stated under section 4, *Responding to Suspected Abuse*, (p.12) apply as they would in any other circumstance.

In addition, although any accused person is essentially innocent until proven guilty, it is a requirement of the Eldership that the worker/volunteer/Pastor (designated by the term “worker” in the following table) should be **as soon as possible stood down from all child related ministries** pending an investigation. In the case of a paid staff member, salary will continue during this time of investigation. To expedite proceedings the process outlined in

¹⁰ Adapted from *Protect the Child* pp. 7-8

the following diagram should be adopted.

If the alleged perpetrator is a pastor or a person holding any Assemblies of God credential, then the State Executive must also be informed of the allegations.



If the worker is found to be guilty or makes an admission of guilt, the appropriate authority will terminate ministry (and any salary) on the recommendation of the sub-committee

If the worker is found to be innocent, the Eldership will offer reinstatement on the recommendation of the sub-committee.

15. 7. Screening of Workers in Child Related Ministries

The most effective strategy against abuse within the ministry of the church is prevention. With that in mind the leadership makes no apology for adopting stringent measures when it comes to the screening of prospective workers in child related ministries, or in ministries that deal with children under 18 years of age. Every worker must be screened.

16.a) Suitability Cards (the Blue Card)

In Queensland, the issue of screening of persons wishing to work with children is dealt with through the application for and issuing of a Suitability Card under the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000 (the Blue Card). It is a requirement by those intending to work in child-related ministries to obtain such a card. There is an application fee for an employee applying for a blue card. There is no cost for a volunteer worker.

17.b) Departmental Manuals

It is recommended that each church develop a departmental manual used for the induction and training of staff.

This Child Protection Policy will be an important part of that manual.

The manual must include specific instructions regarding the safe conduct of all ministry to persons under 18 years of age.

The Ministry Manual must cover areas such as:

Screening of workers (specific instructions)

Registration of children

Child drop off and collection protocols

Teacher identification protocols

Adult visitor protocols

Toileting procedures

Nappy changing protocol

Child contact guidelines

On Campsite and Outings Protocols

18.c) Additional internal checks

Each church should put in place additional internal checks that must be completed before a person can be appointed. The following protocols established by Paradise Community Church are worth adopting.

“All people who desire to work in a child related area must also have the recommendation of their pastor or regional pastor.

They must then attend a formal interview with the Children’s Pastor or Youth Director. During the interview a detailed application form will be completed in which the prospective worker or staff member will agree to a police check, and provide a name of a personal referee other than their pastor. They are then given a copy of the Departmental Manual, including the Child Protection Policy.

The prospective staff member must then attend an induction-training meeting in which all aspects of the Child Protection Policy of the church will be outlined. The candidate will complete an induction checklist (see Appendix D) and then sign it to indicate agreement with the policy.

Other departmental training may also be required by the individual department.

Once the prospective staff member has successfully completed the induction process, and has received a favourable result on successfully obtaining a suitability card, the department head may appoint them for an eight-week probationary period.

Upon completion of the eight weeks, the department head may (but not necessarily) then appoint the prospective worker to a regular position within the ministry.

All staff members and workers in child related ministry are expected to attend staff accountability days at least bi-annually where any developments in Child Protection Policy will be canvassed. A form similar to the induction check list will be completed and signed.”

19. 8. Staff/Worker Induction and Training

As part of its commitment to the minimisation of the risk of abuse within its

ministries the church requires all staff -- workers, volunteers and pastors -- to attend an induction session including a detailed presentation of the Child Protection Policy and strategies adopted by the church.

Each worker/volunteer/pastor must complete a checklist and sign indicating his/her agreement with the policies. The outline of training provided appears on the checklist and a copy of the checklist appears in Appendix D, p.33.

The eldership reserves the right to enlist professionals and experts in the field of child protection to address the workers/volunteers/pastors from time to time. It will be compulsory for all invited staff to attend these seminars.

In addition, biannual staff accountability days will be conducted by individual departments in which any developments in Child Protection Policy will be canvassed.

Specific department protocols in the area of child protection will be addressed in an on-going fashion with the relevant workers and at the staff accountability days.

20. 9. Dealing with People with Child Sexual Abuse Histories

As in all situations the primary concern of the church lies with the victims and potential victims of those with histories of child sexual abuse.

The Eldership's concern is with the apparent high level of re-offending that exists among people with this kind of history, and the patent responsibility of the church to protect the most vulnerable members of its community.

The Eldership recognises that child sexual abuse is a choice of the perpetrator and that despite the abuser's own personal history, that abuser has freely chosen to abuse children. He or she is directly responsible for past actions and must be held accountable for any future actions.

The following controls must be read in that light.

Certainly, it is the hope of the Eldership that all people who attend the church will come to healing and that includes past abusers. Nevertheless, the eldership will do everything in its power to protect the children of the church during this process.

The Eldership believes further that child sexual abuse thrives in an atmosphere of secrecy. Therefore it requires all offenders to be open, transparent and accountable in an effort to defeat the secrecy and darkness that breeds child abuse.

The Eldership requires all people with child sexual abuse histories as perpetrators,

who wish to attend Church or Church related activities, to sign a contract with the church and keep to its conditions (See Appendix E, p.38).

That contract must cover the following:

21. A willingness on the part of the offender to have his/her name and appropriate details to be made known to all Pastors, elders, and key leaders in all children's, youth and sporting ministries in the church, and to any other person that the eldership sub-committee deems appropriate. The offender must also be willing to have his/her name recorded on the Partner's Database in line with this policy.
22. The offender must agree to never be alone with a child on church property or at any church function, or function attended by church personnel including home fellowship groups and private parties.
23. The offender must agree to not become involved in any church activity or small group without the PRIOR permission of the Senior Pastor or his/her nominee. The eldership is aware that even so-called "harmless" areas of ministry such as "welcoming people at the door" is fraught with difficulty, since it results in a "normalising" of the offender. **What single mum would not agree to have the offender baby-sit her kids when he/she has been greeting her warmly at the church door for three years and she has no idea of his/her history?**
24. [The offender must agree to not become involved in any church activity \(except for public meetings\) or event where children participate.](#)
25. The offender must agree to never attend any church hikes, trips, church camps or overnight stay or conference where children are present. If children arrive unexpectedly, then the offender agrees to make immediate arrangements for his/her departure.
26. The offender must agree to never become involved in counselling ministry.
27. The offender must agree to not have any contact at the church or at home or at any other place with any other people known to have histories of child abuse.
28. The offender must agree to regular meetings with a designated church leader for accountability and pastoral care purposes.
29. The offender must contact that leader or the Senior Pastor, or if both are not available, another pastor, the moment that he/she is having difficulty with his/her history or with temptation in this area. The offender must agree to immediate open and frank acknowledgement of such difficulties so that referral to professional help can be arranged and checks and balances protecting the children of the church and the offender will be put in place.
30. The offender must be prepared to obey the direction of pastoral staff or of eldership in all matters dealing with his personal conduct at church, or at

church functions, whether or not children are present.

31. The offender must agree never to approach, initiate conversation with, or continue conversation with a child on church property or at any church function.
32. The offender must agree to NEVER accept invitations or offer to baby-sit, hold or care for a child or baby, even for a moment, and even if others are in the room.
33. The offender must agree to never allow any family from the church with children to visit him/her in the home. If the family insists then BEFORE the visit the offender must contact the Senior Pastor or his/her nominee, who will appraise the family of the possible risk factors from the point of view of the church's duty of care.
34. Similarly, the offender must agree not to visit any church family with children in their home – whether or not others are present.

35. 10 Concluding Statement

In adopting this policy the concern of the Eldership and of the church is primarily for the protection of the children who are such an important part of the church's ministry. As a church we make no apology for this Policy's bias toward victims and toward children in general.

We believe that for a church to be derelict in its duty of care toward the most vulnerable members of its community would be a tragedy.

It is our hope and our prayer that we will be ever vigilant and ever protective of the child's right to hear about and learn about the Lord Jesus Christ and His love for them in a safe environment.

That is also our commitment!

Appendix A:

Extracts from the Child Protection Act 1999

36.The Definition of Harm

9 What is “harm”

- (1) “harm”, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing;
- (2) It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
- (3) Harm can be caused by:
 - (a) Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
 - (b) Sexual abuse or exploitation

37.Protection from Liability for Notification

22 Protection from liability for notification of, or information given about alleged harm.

- (1) This Section applies if a person, acting honestly,
 - (a) notifies the chief executive or another officer of the department that the person suspects a child has been, is being or is likely to be, harmed; or
 - (b) gives the chief executive, any authorised officer, or police officer information about alleged harm to a child.
- (2) The person does not incur liability for giving the notification or information.
- (3) Also, merely because the person gives the notification or information, the person cannot be held to have -
 - (a) breached any code of professional etiquette or ethics; or
 - (b) departed from accepted standards of professional conduct

Appendix B:

Notifying the Department of Families (DOF) or the Queensland Police Service (QPS)

In the process of notifying DOF with respect to child abuse or suspected child abuse:

- You do not have to be able to prove that the abuse has occurred
- Your identity as a notifier will remain confidential in accordance with Section 186 of the Child Protection Act 1999
- You are immune from civil liability for reporting your suspicion providing you are acting honestly (section 22 Child Protection Act 1999)
- You are not breaching any code of professional etiquette or ethics, nor are you departing from any accepted form of professional conduct when you act honestly in making a report

Under section 186 of the Child Protection Act 1999, your identity will be kept confidential unless it is necessary to disclose your name in the course of “official duties” to another person acting in the course of “official duties” e.g. a police officer, or where the court deems that the identity of the notifier is evidence of critical importance to the proceedings and that failure to admit it would prejudice the proper administration of justice, or where you have consented to the release of your name.

Christian workers/volunteers/pastors/church members and attendees ought to understand that confidentiality in the counselling room is NOT to be held to be of higher value than a child’s right to protection and safety. Consequently, the church requires child abuse and suspicion of abuse to be reported to DOF **no matter what the source of the information.**

To make a notification contact the Department of Families on:

(07) 3224 8045 or 1800 811 810

Appendix C:

Confidential Internal Written Report

In accordance with this church's policy, all incidences of child sexual abuse or suspected child sexual abuse **(including those involving staff/workers/volunteers/pastors associated with the church)** are to be reported to the Department of Families or the Queensland Police Service and then reported to the Department Head who will as soon as possible pass the information to the Eldership sub-committee. This form to be filled out by the one making the report to the Department Head, preferably in the presence of the Department Head, will facilitate that process.

In no way, nor under any circumstances, is anyone in the church to attempt to persuade someone not to notify, or even to delay notifying, the Department of Families or the Queensland Police Service in the case of child sexual abuse or suspected child sexual abuse.

If the worker or church attendee making the report is nervous about reporting to the Department of Families or the Queensland Police Service the Department Head can assist, or even make a joint notification.

Date: _____

Has DOF/QPS been notified? _____ Date of notification: _____

Child's name (s) _____

Name of person making report: _____

Name of person suspected: _____

Please record what has been observed or what information has been received by whom, when, where and who else may have been affected.

How did the person making the report become aware of this situation?

Name of Department Head _____ Signature: _____

Date referred to Eldership sub-committee

38. Appendix D:

39. Staff Induction/Training Program and Checklist

40. Section One: Introduction and Notification

| CONTENT | DETAILS | REFERENCE | YES/ NO |
|----------------------------------|--|--|------------|
| Introductory Statement | Emphasise primary concern is for children and for any victims of abuse. The commitment of the church to provide a safe place with minimal risk to the children in its community. | Child Protection Policy p.11 | 41. |
| Definitions | Introduce all staff/workers/volunteers and pastors to the Child Protection Act 1999 and its relevant provisions. Explain definitions of Child Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Neglect | Child Protection Policy, p. 11. Appendix A, p.29 Departmental Manuals | 42. |
| Mandatory Reporting | Introduce staff to the concept of mandatory reporting and who in the community are mandated notifiers. | Child Protection Policy, p. 11 | 43. |
| Duty of Care | The concept of Duty of Care explained. Staff informed of the Eldership's stance that it is compulsory for all staff/workers/volunteers or pastors to notify DOF/QPS as soon as possible when abuse is known or suspected. | Child Protection Policy, p 11-12. Departmental Manuals | 44. |
| Responding to Suspected Abuse | Introduction to principles upon which the church's Child Protection Policy is based. Reiteration that eldership requires immediate notification of DOF/QPS in the event of actual or suspected abuse. | Child Protection Policy, p. 12. Departmental Manuals | 45. |
| Abuse Notification Procedure | Discussion of flow-chart indicating IMMEDIATE notification to DOF/QPS and to the Church Leadership of any abuse or suspected abuse. Clear statement from the Eldership that no one is allowed to attempt to talk anyone out of reporting to DOF/QPS or even to delay their report. | Child Protection Policy, p.15 Departmental Manuals | 46. |
| DOF | Introduction to the Family and Youth Services and their role under law. Method of notifying and telephone number to ring. | Child Protection Policy, Appendix B, p.30. Departmental Manuals. | 47. |
| Internal Reporting | Guidelines for Internal Reporting. Introduction to the written form and when it is to be completed. | Child Protection Policy, Appendix C, p.31 | 48. |
| Disclosure | How to handle disclosure by the victim sensitively and in a way that will not disadvantage the victim or prejudice any subsequent investigation by DOF/QPS | Child Protection Policy, p. 17. Departmental Manuals | 49. |
| Victims 18 years of age and over | How to deal with a situation when the victim, although a child at the time of abuse, is now an adult. | Child Protection Policy, p.18. Departmental Manuals | 50. |

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|-----|
| Reasonable Suspicion | Guidelines as to what constitutes reasonable suspicion and how to deal with it. | Child Protection Policy, p. 18. Departmental Manuals. | 51. |
|----------------------|---|---|-----|

52. Section Two: Indicators of Possible Child Abuse

| CONTENT | DETAILS | REFERENCE | YES/ NO |
|--|--|---|------------|
| Behavioural Characteristics Associated with Sexual Abuse | Discussion of some behavioural characteristics that may be present in younger children and in older children as the result of sexual abuse | Child Protection Policy, p.19. Departmental Manuals | |
| Physical Indicators associated with Child Abuse | Discussion of some of the physical indicators that might be present in a child who is experiencing abuse. | Child Protection Policy, p.20 Departmental Manuals | |

53. Section Three: When the Alleged Perpetrator is a Church Worker/Volunteer/Pastor

| CONTENT | DETAILS | REFERENCE | YES/ NO |
|---|--|--|------------|
| Principles which Apply | Emphasise that the principles involved in dealing with allegations of abuse made against church workers/volunteers or pastors are exactly the same as those stated in the policy under section 4. In a matter such as this, staff cannot expect any treatment different from anyone else. | Child Protection Policy, pp. 20. Departmental Manuals. | |
| Immediate Stand Down from all areas of child ministry | Emphasise that allegations such as these require that the staff member will be stood down as soon as possible from all child related ministry pending an investigation by DOF/QPS. If the person is part of the paid staff, then they will be stood down on full pay until the investigation is completed. | Child Protection Policy, pp. 20. Departmental Manuals | |
| Notification Procedures | Explain notification procedures. Emphasising DPF/QPS' role in the investigation, and possible outcomes. | Child Protection Manual, Appendix B, p. 30. | |

54. Section Four: Characteristics of a Perpetrator of Child Abuse

| CONTENT | DETAILS | REFERENCE | YES/ NO |
|----------------------|---|--|------------|
| General Indicators | Discussion of the things to watch for that might indicate that someone is an abuser or potential abuser. | Child Protection Policy, pp. 13-15. Departmental Manuals | |
| Reasonable Suspicion | Some discussion about how to determine when the existence of a number of indicators constitutes reasonable suspicion, and to reaffirm what to do with such suspicion. | Child Protection Policy, pp. 13. Departmental Manuals | |
| Domestic Indicators | Discussion of the things to watch for in a person's home that might indicate that someone is an abuser or potential abuser. | Child Protection Policy, p. 15. Departmental Manuals | |

55. Section Five: The Screening of Prospective Staff Members

| CONTENT | DETAILS | REFERENCE | YES/ NO |
|----------------------------|--|--|------------|
| Prevention Strategy | Inform the workers that prevention is the best strategy and that part of the risk management process in this area is to insist on rigorous screening of all prospective workers/volunteers/pastors. This requirement is applied to those workers who will be dealing in any way with children under 18 years of age. | Child Protection Policy, p24. Departmental Manuals | |
| Understanding of screening | Mention the understanding that the church has, which allows it to require screening of all prospective workers and to release the results of those checks to the Eldership sub committee. | Child Protection Policy, pp. 24; Appendix F. p. Error! Bookmark not defined. Departmental Manuals | |
| Suitability Checks | Checks for a Suitability Card are compulsory for all workers who are to be involved in ministry to children under 18 years of age. It is a condition of ministry that the prospective worker agrees to such a check. Details about fees associated with checks. | Child Protection Policy, pp. 24; Appendix F. Error! Bookmark not defined. Departmental Manuals | |
| Partners' Database | Explain existence of confidential database and how it works. | Child Protection Policy, pp. Error! Bookmark not defined. Departmental Manuals | |
| Departmental Manuals | Explain the existence of manuals specific to the different departments and how each worker must agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations in the manual. | Child Protection Policy, pp. 24. Departmental Manuals | |
| Additional Internal Checks | Explain Departmental Processes, including any specific training required re Departmental Manuals. The wisdom of filling in Departmental Application Forms, having probationary periods etc. | Child Protection Policy, pp. 25. Departmental Manuals | |

56. Section Six: Staff Training and Induction

| CONTENT | DETAILS | REFERENCE | YES/ NO |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------|
| Check List | Explanation of Training Process and how to indicate on the checklist what staff training topics have been covered by the trainee. | Child Protection Policy, p. 25 | |
| Signature | Explanation that staff member's signature on checklist indicates that he or she is happy to comply with the Child Protection Policy of the church | Child Protection Policy, p. 25 | |
| Biannual Staff Accountability Days | The purpose of such days and their compulsory nature. | Child Protection Policy, p. 25 | |

57. Section Seven: Dealing with People with Child Sexual Abuse Histories as Offenders

| CONTENT | DETAILS | REFERENCE | YES/ NO |
|----------------------|---|--|------------|
| Need for this Policy | High rate of re-offending. Every abuser freely chooses to abuse. The need to hold past abuser's accountable. Responsibility to protect children. | Child Protection Policy, p. 26-28 | |
| Contract | Cover all aspects of contract. Look at blank contract. Take any questions. | Child Protection Policy, pp. 26-28, Appendix E, p.38 | |
| Normalisation | Point out that to have a person with a history in this area involved in any ministry presents difficulties because of the process of normalisation. | Child Protection Policy, pp. 26 | |

NAME OF STAFF/PROSPECTIVE STAFF MEMBER INDUCTED: _____

SIGNED DECLARATION

I declare that I have participated in training as indicated by the checklist above and that I agree with and will abide by the Child Protection Policy of the church.

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

NAME OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR TRAINING: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

Appendix E:

Contract between Church and Person with a History of Sexual Abuse

1. I, declare that I am willing to have my name and such details as the Eldership sub- committee members see fit, communicated to all Pastors, Elders and key leaders in all children's, youth, and sporting ministries in the church, and to any other leader that the Eldership sub-committee might nominate. I also agree to having my name recorded on the Partner's Database in accordance with the Child Protection Policy of this church.
2. I, agree NEVER to be alone with a child on church property, or at any church function, or function attended by church personnel including home fellowship groups and private parties.
3. I, also agree NOT to become involved in any church activity or small group without the prior permission of the Senior Pastor or his/her nominee.
4. I, also agree NOT to become involved in any church activity (other than Sunday services), church small group, or church sporting event where children participate.
5. I, also agree NEVER to attend any church hikes, trips, church camps, overnight stays or conferences where children are present. If children arrive unexpectedly, then I agree to make immediate arrangements for my departure without fuss and at my own cost.
6. I, also agree NEVER to become involved in the counselling ministry or to be involved in counselling others in any way.
7. I, also agree NEVER to have contact at church or at home or at any other place with other people known to have a history of child sexual abuse.
8. I, also agree to regular meetings with a designated church leader for accountability and pastoral care purposes.
9. I, also agree to contact the Senior Pastor or that leader, or if both are not available, another pastor, **the moment** I experience difficulty or temptation in this area of sexual interest in children. I also agree to open and frank acknowledgment of such difficulties so that professional referral and checks can be made.

10. I, also agree to commit myself to obey the direction of pastoral staff or the Eldership in all matters dealing with my personal conduct at church, or at church functions, whether or not children are present.

Continued over the page

- 11. I, also agree NEVER to approach, initiate conversation with, or continue conversation with a child on church property or at a church function.
- 12. I, also agree NEVER to accept invitations to, or offer to, baby-sit, hold or care for a child or a baby, **even for a moment**, and even if others are in the room.
- 13. I, also agree NEVER to allow any family from the church with children to visit me in my home. If they insist, then BEFORE the visit I agree to contact the Senior Pastor or his/her nominee, who will appraise the family of the possible risk factors from the point of view of the church's duty of care.
- 14. I, also agree NEVER to visit any church family with children in their home – whether or not others are present.
- 15. I understand that failure to comply with the above mentioned requirements will forfeit my right to attend Church or any of its activities.

FULL NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

WITNESS (1) FULL NAME: _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE: _____

WITNESS (2) FULL NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

REFERENCES

Family and Youth Services, *Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect – Mandated Notification Guidelines*, Human Services, Government of SA, 2003

Kids R Us, *Protect the Child*

South Australian Child Protection Council, *Reporting Child Abuse*, Department for Family and Community Services, 1995

Queensland Department of Families website (www.families.qld.gov.au under “Child Protection”)

The Department of Families website (www.families.qld.gov.au under “Reporting Child Sexual Abuse”)