



KIDS R US™ VICTORIA

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**2005
EDITION**

Protect the Child

Kids R Us – Victoria

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Preface

Thank you for purchasing this manual. Your doing so indicates your desire to protect the children that God has entrusted to YOUR care! This manual sets out guidelines to assist you in establishing a policy for your church.

It sends a shiver up my spine to think that many churches operate Children's Ministries without having well documented and practiced child abuse protection policies. Churches try hard to reach children and to bring them to church on Sundays through evangelistic outreaches and bus ministries. They also put great time and effort into training teams on the importance of children's visitation. It is often the case, however, that they do little to protect these children from the people and environment that they introduce them into. This is due to a lack of screening and training of their children's workers. Our hopes of seeing them saved and set free explode into damaged lives because of sloppy philosophies and care.

For too long, Children's Churches have accepted "anybody" into their Children's ministry teams, naively believing that all Christians are new creations who have laid down their lives to follow Jesus who are free of previous struggles. 2 Corinthians 5:17 - "*Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things have been passed away and behold new things have come*". The word "If" clearly points out that the promise of old things passing away is conditional upon being IN Christ.

As children's ministers, we must not blindly trust every smiling person who wants to work with children. Please understand I am not suggesting a level of suspicion that sees every candidate as a pedophile, but rather a concise sexual abuse policy that screens confidentially and stringently to protect:

1. **The children of your church** - (one child abused in a lifetime of ministry is one too many!);
2. **The children's church itself** - its reputation and the confidence of other parents in the church's ability to protect children;
3. **The abuser** - detection of a potential abuser opens the door for potential counselling for that person.

The fact that Jesus is concerned for children is well documented in Matthew 18:5. His warning to those who would seek to hurt children is abundantly clear. Acts 20 carries a powerful warning to us Ministers to children to always be alert for an intruder.

Acts 20:28-31 "*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!*"

Safety and protection from child abuse must become a concern of the church! Please read this manual carefully - a child's life may benefit from you doing so. It seeks to provide guidelines and suggestions to help your team of children's ministers deal with difficult areas like visitation and reporting and to defend the church from attack. Let's close the net, let's protect His children - not only reaching and discipling the lost but protecting them from any attack that may originate in our church. Let's become watchmen taking our place on the walls.

God bless you.

PASTOR ROBERT BRADBURY
NATIONAL DIRECTOR - KIDS R US

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PART A – for Every Church Helper/Worker

Introduction

Children and young people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe at all times. The suggested policy and procedures that follow have been developed for the protection of children involved in church programs.

This section, Part A of the Kids R Us – Victoria “Protect The Child” Manual, provides information, procedures and conduct policies that Kids R Us – Victoria believes are essential for anyone involved in any kind of ministry in their church. This is because, not matter what ministry you are involved in, you are likely to come across children, and those who could be child abusers.

Part A covers, the synopsis of an offender (child abuser), characteristics of an abuser likely to be seen in your church, various conduct policies, and what to do in the case of suspected unusual behaviour. While not all points covered may be relevant to your ministry, Kids R Us – Victoria would encourage you to read everything contained in Part A so that you gain a better understanding of the issues. And also because, not matter what ministry you are involved in, children, and those who could be child abusers, are likely to be present.

The policies and procedures contained in this manual concerning child abuse have the following goals:

- To provide a way in which the church can minimise the risk of abuse to children and youth within the ministries of the church. (Part A – C)
- To ensure that all cases of abuse or suspected abuse are handled in a consistent and thorough manner. (Part B)

As church we abhor any kind of abuse and take very seriously any incidence of abuse within the church. Children and youth are trusting and vulnerable and therefore the church has a particular responsibility to ensure that it takes every reasonable step to ensure that all children and youth who are within the ministries of the church are safe and free from the risk of abuse and that suspected or known instances of abuse are dealt with consistently and appropriately.



A1. Synopsis of Offender

It is important for you, as a children's minister or leader, a pastor, or any kind of helper/worker in the church, to be on the alert always for a child who may be being abused, or for an abuser who will attempt to join the church ministry team. (It is one of the first places untreated paedophiles will go.) If you have any suspicions, you should report it immediately to your Children's or Senior Pastor, as outlined in **A4. Suspected Unusual Behaviour**.

Child molesters come from all walks of life and backgrounds. One report reveals "90% of sexual offenders came from structurally stable families with numerous siblings. Three-fifths of the 90% were involved in an adult heterosexual relationship at the time they committed the child sexual offence." (Hancock Mains, 1987)

Definition

"A child molester is a person, older in age than the victim, whose conscious sexual interests and sexual behaviour are directed either partially or exclusively towards prepubertal children." These people are referred to by the term "**paedophile**" which means child lover.

Two types of Molesters

Researchers Groth, Hobson and Gray (1982) suggest that sexual offenders of children can be divided into two categories based on their level of socio-sexual maturation.

1. Fixed Molesters

From the beginning of some males' maturation, they develop a compulsive and primary sexual preference for children. Their victims are usually male children and these become the objects of their desires. These men may, despite their desires, marry and have a sexual relationship with people their own age. This, however, usually stems from social pressure or the other partner initiating the relationship. Their sexual orientation is fixed on children.

2. Regressed Molesters

These offenders are predominantly sexually orientated towards adults with the majority being married. These people fail to cope with conflicts and stress with life in general and in these conditions revert to sexual contact with a child. The offender's aim is to replace a conflict situation in an adult relationship with a relationship with a child. They will treat this child as a peer or age mate. The target will primarily be a female. In sexual abuse cases, 97% of offenders are male, with offences usually being committed by heterosexual men. In nearly half of these situations the abuser is married.



A2. Characteristics of an Abuser likely to be seen in your Church

A characteristic on its own does not suggest a person is an abuser. However several characteristics provide reason to observe that person closely.

- Majority of abusers' relationships are with children. (Don't relate well with people of their own age.)
- Is overly friendly with children.
- Has low self-esteem, poor self-image (probably due to emotional deprivation as a child).
- Can be in the church for a short period of time and seek to join the children's ministry team. (Seem obsessive when they say they 'love' children).
- Can be found wandering around the children's church areas, etc.
- May remove themselves midway through a church service to have time with children who may be in the toilets.
- Give articles of their clothing to a child as gifts, i.e. their baseball cap, jacket, etc. (An attempt to show ownership of the child).
- Carries photos of children other than their own, saying these children love him.
- Gives extreme affection to children, i.e. front-on close hugging, always touching, flirting.
- Withdrawn, placid.
- Can be single, or married, experiencing marital problems. (47% of offenders are married – p24 Child Abuse in the Church, 1992)
- Over emphasis with morality, are legalistic and inflexible – indicator of their own situation.
- Strong denial of the offence on any intention to offend.
- Convincing in protests of innocence – defence mechanism.
- Avoids screening process, i.e. applies to join children's team, doesn't hand form back due to fear of detection.
- Attempts to engineer opportunities to be alone with a child, i.e. babysitting (targets single parents), child minders at conferences.
- Taking child shopping or on an outing, picking up from school.
- Dislikes submission to authority, prefers to work alone, is negative when sexual abuse topics are raised.



- Does not fit a particular makeup. Can be an extrovert, introvert, married, single, old, young, rich, poor, any nationality.
- Spends considerable amounts of time with children. Relates more to children, perhaps not so capable with people their own age.
- Voices opinion on sex education, children not taught properly.

Indicators in the Home

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

A3. Conduct Policy

The Bible says to avoid the appearance of evil. The enemy will try to destroy your ministry to the Lord. (*Satan is the accuser of the brethren.* Rev. 12:10). Leave no door open for him.

With this in mind, the following conduct policies have been formed as a guideline for the actions you can take to avoid false accusations and to protect the children in your church from those who may wish to harm them. The sections on the following pages are **suggested** conduct policies for different ministries and areas within the church. Please, at the very least, read those sections that most relate to your ministry and involvement in your church.



A3.1 Children's Ministry

Children's Church Services

DON'T ALLOW "ANYONE" TO WALK
INTO YOUR CHILDREN'S SERVICE

Children's church is often a place of fun and excitement. Some people bored by the adult service will come in to spectate. This practice needs to be discouraged. Greet the person with "Can I help you?" The normal response is "just looking" in which case you request they fill out the visitor's book, produce ID and wear a pass. Challenging casual strangers will protect the children.

The children's service should contain:

- The congregation of children themselves
- Screened children's leaders
- Parents & visitors who have filled in the visitor's book and are wearing a visitor's badge.

Anti-Abuse Policy for Children's Leaders

- No-one is permitted to visit a child alone. Visits can only occur in twos, with the visitation partner not being related, i.e. brother, wife, mother.
- If the need to counsel a child arises, it is to be done in public view yet out of hearing range. (John 4) Not to be done in a secluded place, and is to be done in the presence of another leader.
- Only young children (5 years and younger) are permitted on the leader's knee, the lap is never acceptable. We encourage physical contact to be limited.
- There is to be no kissing children.
- Hugs also require monitoring in situations where appropriate. Either hug side on or keep the lower half of your body well away.
- Do not drive a child home alone.
- Children's ministry team must be easily identifiable by wearing the correct uniform and ID pass, with photo if possible.
- Adult and teenage visitors to the children's programs, including parents, must wear "Visitor" badges.
- When a young child needs to go to the toilet, they are to be escorted by two leaders and leave the child in the toilet with the door closed. The leaders stand in/at the toilet entrance. If a child needs assistance it again requires both team members to be present.
- Never leave a child alone.



- Avoid the appearance of any evil – remember a good reputation is hard to build but very easy to destroy.

***You have the privilege of ministering to somebody's pride and joy.
Protect them, protect yourself and God's work.***

A3.2 Camps & Other Out of Church Activities

- No cuddles or kissing children – side hugs are acceptable.
- Never be alone with a child, always in two's.
- Not permitted to shower with the children, or observe the children showering.
- Shower & Toilet monitors again work in two's and stand at the entrance to the shower or toilet block.
- Some camp sites do not have leaders' quarters – again never be alone in the sleeping quarters with a child.
- Children are not permitted to get into bed together.
- Children and leaders must wear a dressing gown when outside. (Include this on your camp form).
- Daytime & Night hikes – no walking off alone with a child. The group must stay intact with all leaders visible.
- Nude swimming is not allowed.
- Camp badge must be worn to identify yourself as part of the team.
- Protect younger children, who may possibly be abused by older children, by never allowing children to be alone – unsupervised. Whilst on camp, children are to have constant leadership protection, always to be achieved in two's.
- Leaders are not to assist children in dressing. (Appropriate age of children eligible to attend camp needs to be considered).
- Designate a confidential counsellor, someone who the child can go to with a complaint/concern. The children need to be told that they do not need permission from another leader to speak with this person.
- If you are taking a group of children on an excursion, make sure there are more than one of you and that you are in public view – above reproach and make sure you are in the reasonable ratio (1:4 under age 6; 1:8 above age 6).
- A risk assessment also needs to be completed, e.g. you would require a person with lifeguard training or a similar certificate if you want to take children surfing.



“The highest risks involve male workers in programs that involve overnight or unsupervised activities.” (Breaking the Silence, p14, Edition 1995)

A3.3 House Meetings

Home groups, or small groups meet during the week, in someone’s home. Sometimes these meetings are intergenerational, other times children are present because the venue is their home.

The leader of the small group needs to inform the group of the church’s position in regard to protection of children, i.e. no adult allowed alone in a child’s bedroom or any other room of the house, and no adult is allowed to be alone with a child in the bathroom or toilet.

A3.4 Foyer Policy

Most churches have people to monitor the exit points to the church, during a service. This is usually implemented with greeting the congregation in mind. When the service is in progress these people usually maintain their position to greet any latecomers or address any concerns with people who perhaps leave the service. Another important characteristic of these people is the monitoring of the foyer and toilets. Unfortunately some people do not remain seated for the duration of the service, some needing to legitimately attend the rest rooms, others looking for a place to escape the service.

It is in this environment that care needs to be taken.

- a) It won’t be the church’s desire to have the same people week after week disturbing the service going in and out.
- b) Damage can occur in the toilets.
- c) Someone can be abused.

It is not uncommon to observe a situation in a church where a man is loitering in the foyer, rather than taking part in the service, in a position near children who are running around unsupervised by their parent. This is a tragedy waiting to happen. The possibility of this occurring can be diminished by training the greeters, foyer monitors etc. to be always on the alert, to approach such people, encouraging them to take their seat.

A3.5 Toilets Policy

Toilets are an area requiring your serious attention since they provide an ideal opportunity for abuse.



In the junior children's programs "infant toilets" grouped together in one room without doors and walls are always the ideal. This however is not always possible in a church environment. To protect the team from any accusation and to prevent any attack on a child we recommend toilet trips with the children are always supervised by two leaders.

When escorting children to the toilets the leader checks to see that the room is safe, (no 'stranger' lurking around), sends the children in and waits in the doorway with the other leader. The children are then escorted back to their classrooms. Discouraging primary aged children from going to the toilet during the service reduces the amount of trips required.

Children, bored with the service, have been known to say they are going to the toilet and wandered off somewhere else. This scenario opens them to abuse – they are in your class, they are your responsibility. Introducing two leaders removes the possibility of this happening.

Visitors to your Children's Church are not permitted to take children to the toilet.

A3.6 Children's Church Visitors & Parents

Visitors

You may have from time to time an adult or teenage VISITOR in the children's area. These could be leaders from another church coming to see how your church operates to receive new ideas and encouragement. They could also be parents, or prospective children's leaders. Again there must be a procedure.

1. Fill out and sign the Visitors Book – photo identification if they are not known.
2. Wear a Visitors Badge at all times while in the children's program areas, even known parents.
3. Never to be left alone, or be allowed to wander off on their own.
4. Prior arrangements first, with exceptions being parents.

Parents

We encourage parents to attend the children's services so that they are comfortable with what the children are being taught and can observe their child's progress, socially and spiritually. However no matter who they are, and how well we may know them, they must follow a procedure, similar to that of any visitor:

1. Fill out and sign the Visitors Book – photo identification if they are not known.



2. Wear a Visitors Badge at all times while in the children's program areas.
3. Never to be left alone, or be allowed to wander off on their own.

When parents are picking up or dropping off their kids, they should not be allowed to "hang around" and chat. Apart from protecting children from possible abuse, this also has the benefit of reducing congestion.

A3.5 For Stewards/Ushers

As a steward or usher, it is important for you to know the basics of the part you can play to keep the children in your church safe.

How To Help

- Patrol the toilets and be on the alert for suspicious characters standing around the toilets or leaving the church service frequently.
- Send any children who are playing in or near the toilets, back to their parent/s.
- Send any child playing outside back into the service.

If you have seen someone acting suspiciously and you suspect that abuse is a possibility, contact the Head Steward, Children's Pastor, or Senior Pastor as outlined in **A4. Suspected Unusual Behaviour**.

A4. Suspected Unusual Behaviour

In the situation where you feel that you have witnessed unusual behaviour, for example:

- A stranger outside the Children's Church looking in, or
- A person not in the children's ministry team leaves the adult service early and heads directly to the children's church, or
- A team member breaking policy (e.g. holding a child on their lap),

A brief report detailing what you observed should be passed on to the Children's or Senior Pastor. The form that should be used is **Appendix AB. Unusual Behaviour Report Form** and includes information such as date, location, and the incident you observed. If the form is handed to the Children's Pastor, they will inform the Senior Pastor.

This procedure protects you and places responsibility on the appropriate persons, the Children's Pastor and the Senior Pastor. While it may seem on the surface to be an overly sensitive procedure, experience has shown that a



team not 'overly' suspicious but primed for any possible abuse has successfully shut down any opportunity for an offender to gain access to the children on a Sunday Service, in one of the children's programs, or during visitation programs.

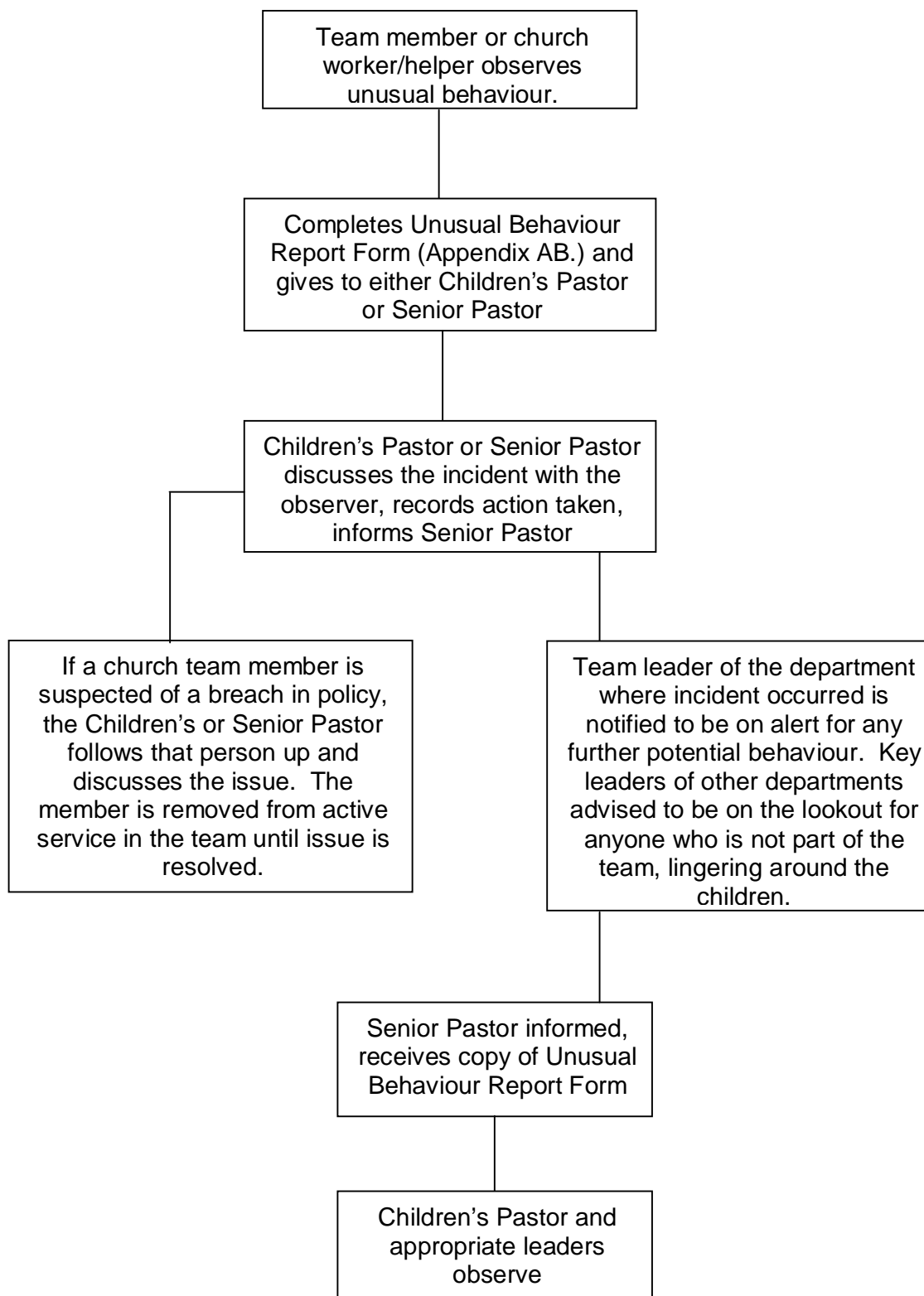
In many situations where abuse has occurred it could be traced back earlier to some unusual behaviour being observed. Then when the incident escalated and became recognized as abuse, no-one seemed to remember exactly what was observed, when. A single observation made by an individual may be viewed as innocent enough behaviour, however a record of repeated observations made by different individuals would obviously indicate further investigation is required. This policy included in your church can eradicate circumspsect evidence.

On the following page is a flow-chart of what to do if you observe unusual, suspicious behaviour.



Unusual Behaviour Procedure

This flow-chart is an explanation of what should occur when unusual behaviour is observed. This flow-chart is duplicated in **Appendix AA. Unusual Behaviour Procedure Flow-Chart.**



Conclusion

This section has given a brief introduction as to what a child abuser may look like, and what you can do to protect the children in your church, and protect yourself against false accusations. Since this is only basic information, all Children's Ministry Workers, Leaders and Pastors, are encouraged to obtain and read the following sections (Part B & C) of this manual.

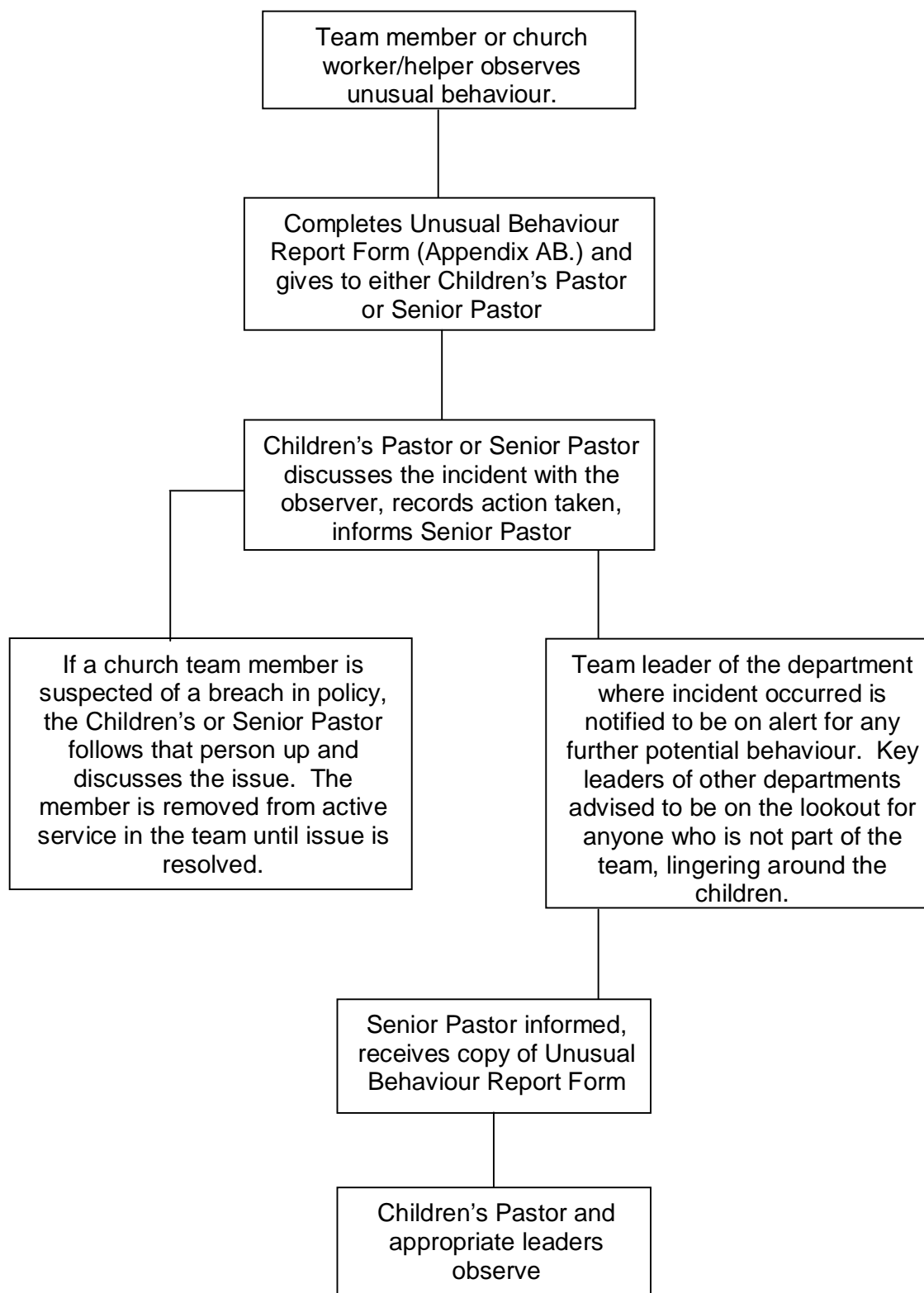
It is recommended that Children's Ministry Workers and Leaders read Part B, and that Pastors and senior Children's Ministry Leaders read Part's B and C.

Please give your input about the contents of this manual and any ideas you may have to improve conduct policies to your Pastors, so that the policies and procedures in place in your church, and in future versions of this manual, can be improved.



Appendix to Part A

Appendix AA. Unusual Behaviour Procedure Flow-Chart



PART B – for the Children’s Leader/Worker

Introduction

This section, Part B of the Kids R Us – Victoria “Protect The Child” Manual, follows on from Part A of the manual. Prior reading and understanding of Part A is essential before reading Part B. Part B builds on the information, procedures and conduct policies of Part A. It is essential that all of those involved in children’s ministry read and understand Part B of this manual.

Part B covers, what child abuse is, Children’s Workers Abuse Policy, abuse disclosure & reporting procedures, seven basic safety principles, Q & A, and an explanation of the standard of conduct contract, and application form. All of the points covered are relevant to children’s ministry, and Kids R Us – Victoria strongly encourages you to read everything contained in Part B so that you gain a better understanding of the issues, and how to respond to them.

B1. What is Child Abuse

Definitions of Child Abuse

A widely held definition for abuse to a child is suggested by the International Society for the prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect:

“Child abuse is the proportion of harm to children that results from human action that is proscribed, proximate and preventable.” (Finkelhor and Korbin 1988)

Child abuse can be grouped into four types:

1. Neglect Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Physical Abuse
4. Sexual Abuse

1. Neglect Abuse

This results from a failure to provide a child’s basic requirements for life which are necessary for their development, i.e. Clothing, shelter, nutrition, medical care, dental care, education needs, etc. This can occur through direct and deliberate action, or by omission or deliberate inaction to care for the child.



It is one of the most frequent practices of child abuse. A description for the neglect of young children is 'Non organic failure to thrive.' This refers to a child not developing and growing at a rate regarded as normal for their age.

2. Emotional Abuse

The failure to acknowledge a child's emotional needs, either intentionally or through ignorance. It is a failure to supply a child with the nurturing, security, love and care they require for normal development. This can extend from physical rejection to simply ignoring the child.

Emotional abuse can also be a chronic behavioural pattern directed at the child whereby their self esteem and social competence is undermined or eroded over time.

A child can also experience emotional abuse by being exposed to a dysfunctional environment which includes domestic violence.

3. Physical Abuse

Refers to a physical injury which is deliberate or non-accidental. Some parents have the philosophy that they can discipline their children in whatever manner they see fit. Even in Christian homes, much emphasis is placed on verses like, *"He that spares the rod hates his son but he who loves him disciplines him properly."* Proverbs 13:24 or *"Do not withhold correction from a children for if you beat him with a rod he will not die"*.

However WHEN Scripture refers to a shepherd's rod it is almost exclusively used to describe 'guiding' the sheep, not beating them. The picture is one of blocking the wrong direction and gently nudging them in the correct direction. The correct form of discipline is through unconditional love, *"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."* Psalm 23:4.

Physical abuse is beyond the acceptable punishment and is the intentional act of inflicting physical injuries on a child. It is commonly characterised by physical injury resulting from practices such as punching, beating, shaking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child.

4. Sexual Abuse

Is the act of someone in a position of power, using that power to involve a developmentally immature and dependant child or adolescent in sexual activities they do not fully understand. The form of abuse, simply put, is the exploitation for an older person's sexual gratification. It can involve pornography, child prostitution, fondling, incest, sexual suggestion, exhibitionism, voyeurism, mutual masturbation, oral sex, penile or other penetration of the genital or anal region.



It is accepted that neglect abuse, emotional abuse and physical abuse may occur to varying degrees of severity and therefore warrant differing responses according to the degree of severity.

Sexual behaviour however 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.¹ Therefore all forms of sexual abuse regardless of the degree of severity warrant the same level of response.

B1.1 Symptoms of Child Abuse

The following indicators are presented to assist with recognition of child abuse. They are simply guidelines and are not intended to be exhaustive. The presence of a single or even several indicators does not prove that abuse exists. However, the repeated occurrence of one indicator or the presence of several indicators in combination, should alert observers to the possibility that a child may be being abused.

1. Neglect Abuse

Behavioural Indicators

Lack of supervision, easily drawn to adults, truancy, delinquency, poor achiever at school, reluctance to go home, stealing of food, starved of attention, child constantly sleepy or hungry, clothes dirty.

Physical Indicators

Poor physical care, i.e. bad teeth, untreated sores, gum disease, unwashed, nappy rash, underweight, fatigue, inadequately dressed in relation to weather, bloodied underwear, lives in unsanitary conditions, lack of heating, infestation of rodents.

2. Emotional Abuse

Behavioural Indicators

Anxiety, delayed or distorted speech, regressive behaviour e.g. soiling, wetting, extremely low self-esteem, aggressive or demanding behaviour, depression, sleep disorders, rocking or thumb sucking, inability to mix with other children, changes in behaviour.

Physical Indicators

All abuse causes emotional distress to children but emotional abuse is the specific term applied to behaviour which destroys a child's confidence (e.g. rejection, verbal abuse).

Therefore there are few physical indicators for emotional abuse although emotional abuse can be accompanied by physical abuse.

¹ Adapted from *Reporting Child Abuse*, South Australian Child protection Council, 1994, p. 4



3. Sexual Abuse

Behavioural Indicators

Inappropriate sexual activity, i.e. rubbing against an adult, fear of being alone with a particular adult, sexual themes in artwork, stories or play. Showing a knowledge of sexual knowledge beyond their years, repressive behaviour, strong fear about going home, sleep disorder, inhibition to play, serious difficulty relating to peers and or adults, self-destructive behaviour, suicidal, constant complaint of headaches or abdominal pains, bedwetting, difficulty walking, frequent infections, appearance of material goods, obsessive talk of someone.

Physical Indicators

Bruises, bleeding in the genital area, complains of soreness in the genital areas, pregnancy, genital infections, bruises to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs, sexually transmitted disease.

B1.2 Conditions that could be mistaken for child abuse

Birth Injuries

Cephalhaematoma surfaces as a soft, boggy swelling confined by suture lines to one or both parietal bones of the skull. Resolution may take up to 6 weeks and leave a rim of bony tissue mimicking a depressed fracture of the skull.

Callous formation may be noted during the first few weeks of life and reflect fractures sustained during birth (e.g. of collarbone).

Bleeding Disorders

Bleeding disorders can cause bruising in infants with normal handling or a trivial injury.

Mongolian Blue Spot

A type of birth mark normally found in the lower part of the back but can appear on the arms and legs in non Caucasian races. The affected area may simulate a bruise but remains unaltered during the first year of life and then fades slowly. Disappears usually by adolescence.

Accidental Injury

Accidental injuries can be common in exposed areas where there is thin tissue cover over hard bony surfaces i.e. chin, knees, forehead, shins, elbows and forearms. Protected areas such as upper legs, arms and cheeks are rarely injured accidentally.



B1.3 Misconceptions concerning child abuse

- ***'Only disadvantaged people with low intelligence will abuse their child'***

While it is true that factors such as lack of finances, poor standard of living, do produce pressures, it is not only care givers of low socio economic backgrounds that will abuse.

- ***'All parents naturally know how to function in their roles and do a good job of caring for the child'***

Bringing up children is a demanding task, one for which there is little or no training. For most parents, their parenting style is largely affected by the role their parents played, so poor parenting can continue. The church must step in and assist these families with strong teaching from the pulpit and training opportunities regarding the family

- ***'Child abuse is rare'***

CSV in Victoria received over 8,000 reports of child abuse. Sexual abuse figures in Victoria suggest that "208,500-350,000 adult women and 40,000-120,000 adult men in Victoria were sexually abused as children." (Hewitt 1996).

- ***'The stranger is danger'***

Most child abuse is committed by a person who is known to the child, who uses their relationship to build trust and power to manipulate the child into an abusive situation. 85% occur within a trusted relationship.

- ***'The offender is a dirty, old man'***

"The majority of perpetrators are under 35 years of age, are often perceived to be friendly and very good with children." (Tuck 1992). Sadly, it can be the highly respected married man with children who is the offender.

- ***'Incest offenders only molest children in their own families'***

"Research indicates that up to 50% of incest offenders also molest children outside their own families." (Moore 1995)



- ***'Sexual abuse of children is normally violent, with physical trauma being the worst effect left after the abuse.'***

Only 5% of reported cases are forced penetration or violent acts. This in no way suggests children are willing participants in these acts. The offender often finds it easy to trick and manipulate the child into sexual contact with presents as bribes, special treatment and affection. Psychological and emotional harm are the most devastating effects of child sexual abuse.

- ***'Most abuse takes place in deserted places.'***

Research shows between 70%-96% of offenders are known by the victim, with abuse occurring at the child's home or the abuser's home.

- ***'Some children act seductively, wanting to have a relationship with adults.'***

Acting in a seductive manner is not natural behaviour for a child. They may be taught this by an adult, they may also further learn that this behaviour gains attention. Adults are always responsible, regardless of the child's behaviour. The child is always the victim, never the cause.

- ***'Children make up stories about being sexually abused.'***

CSV reports that children rarely lie about or imagine sexual abuse. Young children are not able to dialogue about sexual activity which is outside their experience. *"What child knows enough to make up a story like this? If they tell you something about sexual abuse, believe it. It is almost never a lie."* (Pratney 1985)

- ***'Children don't mind abuse or they wouldn't allow it to continue.'***

This view assumes that children have equal power, they do not! The offenders are bigger, older and they have authority over them. Many children are threatened with further harm should they disclose information.



- ***'It is better not to report child abuse to the authorities as this will only increase the trauma experienced by the child.'***

The danger of not reporting abuse, is continued abuse in a child's life. Adult victims say the trauma of continued abuse far outweighs the steps necessary in stopping the abuse.

- ***'Children never get over the harm of sexual abuse.'***

There is hope for these people. Healing is always possible in God. An important factor in recovery is how appropriately the situation is handled by the adults involved in the child's life. These children can experience total healing as adults – they will remember how the church responded.

- ***'Children are safe in the church from abuse.'***

Sadly, this is not true – *"2% of the population of priests in North America are paedophiles abusing pre-pubescent children, about three quarters of them have a preference for abusing boys."* (Parkinson 1997 p36)

B1.4 Indicators of Child Abusers

Please read Part A, **A2. Characteristics of an Abuser likely to be seen in your Church**, for general indicators and indicators in the home that **may** be characteristic of child abusers.



B2. Children's Workers Abuse Policy

While this has already been covered in Part A of this manual under **A3.1 Children's Ministry**, given the importance of this policy it is included again here in Part B. Kids R Us – Victoria strongly recommends that all children's workers familiarise themselves with it.

Anti-Abuse Policy for Children's Leaders

- No-one is permitted to visit a child alone. Visits can only occur in twos, with the visitation partner not being related, i.e. brother, wife, mother.
- If the need to counsel a child arises, it is to be done in public view yet out of hearing range. (John 4) Not to be done in a secluded place, and is to be done in the presence of another leader.
- Only young children (5 years and younger) are permitted on the leader's knee, the lap is never acceptable. We encourage physical contact to be limited.
- There is to be no kissing children.
- Hugs also require monitoring in situations where appropriate. Either hug side on or keep the lower half of your body well away.
- Do not drive a child home alone.
- Children's ministry team must be easily identifiable by wearing the correct uniform and ID pass, with photo if possible.
- Adult and teenage visitors to the children's programs, including parents, must wear "Visitor" badges.
- When a young child needs to go to the toilet, they are to be escorted by two leaders and leave the child in the toilet with the door closed. The leaders stand in/at the toilet entrance. If a child needs assistance it again requires both team members to be present.
- Never leave a child alone.
- Avoid the appearance of any evil – remember a good reputation is hard to build but very easy to destroy.

***You have the privilege of ministering to somebody's pride and joy.
Protect them, protect yourself and God's work.***



B3. Disclosure – Reporting Procedures

It is not usually the Children's Worker's role to assess if a child has been abused. This responsibility belongs to the Child Protection Services and the Police.

“If a counsellor or pastor gets into the work of diagnosing who did what for the purposes of prosecution, he or she will lose their shepherding and pastoral role”. (Kids in Crisis, Goodwin, 1995, p125)

If abuse of a child is suspected or a disclosure has been made, the matter must be given to the people who are trained to deal with these matters and the legal implications that follow. Only after consultation with the Children's or Senior Pastor, one of the Pastors and/or the worker who suspects the abuse, based on what was agreed in the consultation, then the report should be made to the Child Protection Services without delay.

The following sections give advice about what to do in the case of a suspected child abuse. It is important that you familiarise yourself with them so that you are prepared if you ever have to deal with reporting a case of abuse.

The Report and Notifications Procedures are in section **B3.4**, and also in **Appendix BB**. Section **B.3.5** and **Appendix BE**. will tell you how to contact the Child Protection Services.

B3.1 Responding to a child who discloses abuse

When a child does share with you that something has happened to them, show your care and concern by:

- Listening carefully to the child
- Tell the child you believe them.
- Tell the child it's not their fault. They are not responsible for the abuse.
- Do not criticise. Don't say, “You should have told me sooner” or “Why did you let him?”
- Tell the child you are pleased they told you (abusers threaten or manipulate children to prevent disclosure).
- Acknowledge it is hard to talk about these things.
- Let them know they are not alone. Sometimes this sort of thing happens to other children as well.



- Don't press for details. It is not the worker's role to conduct an investigation, and asking leading questions may in fact prejudice any subsequent investigations.²
- Never use leading questions.
- Assure the child you will support them.
- Don't make promises you are not able to keep, e.g. confidentiality.
- Tell the child certain adults need to be informed who can protect them so the abuse can stop.
- Ensure the child's immediate safety. Do not alert alleged abuser.
- As soon as is practical, record details of your conversation and contact the Children's or Senior Pastor, and/or the Child Protection Services as outlined in **B3.4 Reporting Notification & Procedures**, and **B3.5 How to notify the Child Protection Services**.

Discovering abuse, or suspecting it, can bring a chain of emotions including, disgust, shock, disbelief, or panic. It is important for you to remain calm and not express these feelings in front of the child. A horrified response may well reinforce a child's feelings of disgrace and shame. Additionally, the child may feel you cannot handle their situation and not tell you more.

B3.2 Reasonable Suspicion

You must have reasonable suspicion (or grounds) to make a suspected child abuse report.

Reasonable Grounds (Reasonable Suspicion)

The Children and Young Persons Act 1989 Section 64 (1B) describes reasonable grounds as:

- *matters of which a person becomes aware;*
- *any opinions based on those matters.*

What is Reasonable Suspicion?

There may be reasonable grounds when:

- A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused.
- A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves).
- A relative, friend, acquaintance or sibling of the child, states that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

² Child protection Council, 1994, p.8



- Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development lead the mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been abused.
- Signs of physical or sexual abuse leads to a belief the child has been abused, such as the indicators listed under **B1.1 Symptoms of Child Abuse**

Forming a belief that a child has been abused

The concept of forming a belief is a thinking process, where a person is more likely to **accept** rather than **reject** the notion that there is significant harm for the child or young person.

Important Points

Other points to remember are:

- You do not have to prove that abuse has taken place. You only need reasonable grounds for your belief.
- You do not need permission from parents or caregivers to make a notification; nor do they need to be informed that a notification is being made.
- If you make a notification in good faith, you cannot be held legally liable — regardless of the outcome of the notification.

If you are concerned you must take action as inaction leaves the child unprotected.

B3.3 Mandatory Reporting

Under section 64(1) of the *Children and Young Persons Act 1989*, any person may notify any instance of suspected child abuse if they form a belief on reasonable grounds.

However, section 64 (1C) states that certain professionals must report to Child Protection Services, when, in the course of their professional duty:

[they] form the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection[because]

- *The child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury and the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;*
- *OR the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and the child's parents have not or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.*



“It is important to note that the provision does not extend to emotional abuse or neglect.” (Choose With Care, p136)

Specifically, professionals that are mandated to report include:

- Primary and secondary school principals and teachers
- Nurses
- Doctors
- Police

Other members of society not included in the above categories however have responsibilities of providing a *duty of care* to children. This duty of care is a moral responsibility to provide a safe and protective environment for children and includes a responsibility to ensure that suspected abuse is adequately investigated and that children are protected from ongoing abuse.

While the clergy (as a specified category) are currently exempt from mandatory reporting requirements, some church leaders may be legally mandated to notify Child Protection Services based on Section 64 (1C) (g):

a person with a post-secondary qualification in youth, social or welfare work who works in the health, education or community or welfare services field and who is not referred to in paragraph (h);

The church requires that all cases of child abuse or suspected child abuse within the church of which a Pastor, staff member, worker or volunteer becomes aware be reported to the Child Protection Services as soon as possible.

From the 1st of June 1993:

Professionals mandated to report abuse are **not** required to report suspected abuse if it comes to their attention **outside** of their professional duties. It is however recommended that a report be made to protect the child from further abuse.



B3.4 Reporting & Notification Procedures

Everything must be done to ensure the ongoing safety of the child or youth 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.

In line with this policy it is a requirement of the church that where a Pastor, staff member, worker or volunteer becomes aware of or suspects an incidence of child abuse that the following actions are carried out as soon as possible after he or she forms the suspicion:

- The alleged abuse and its alleged perpetrator must be reported to the Child Protection Services as soon as possible
- The alleged abuse and its alleged perpetrator needs to be reported as well to the Senior Pastor / Department Head / Eldership / Board of Directors of the church as soon as possible
- In the case of a person with denominational credentials, a report must also be made to the state headquarters of Assemblies Of God Victoria (or other equivalent body) as soon as possible

Please see **sub-section B3.4.1** for a detailed outline of the notification procedures where the alleged abuser **is NOT in a place of ministry** within the church.

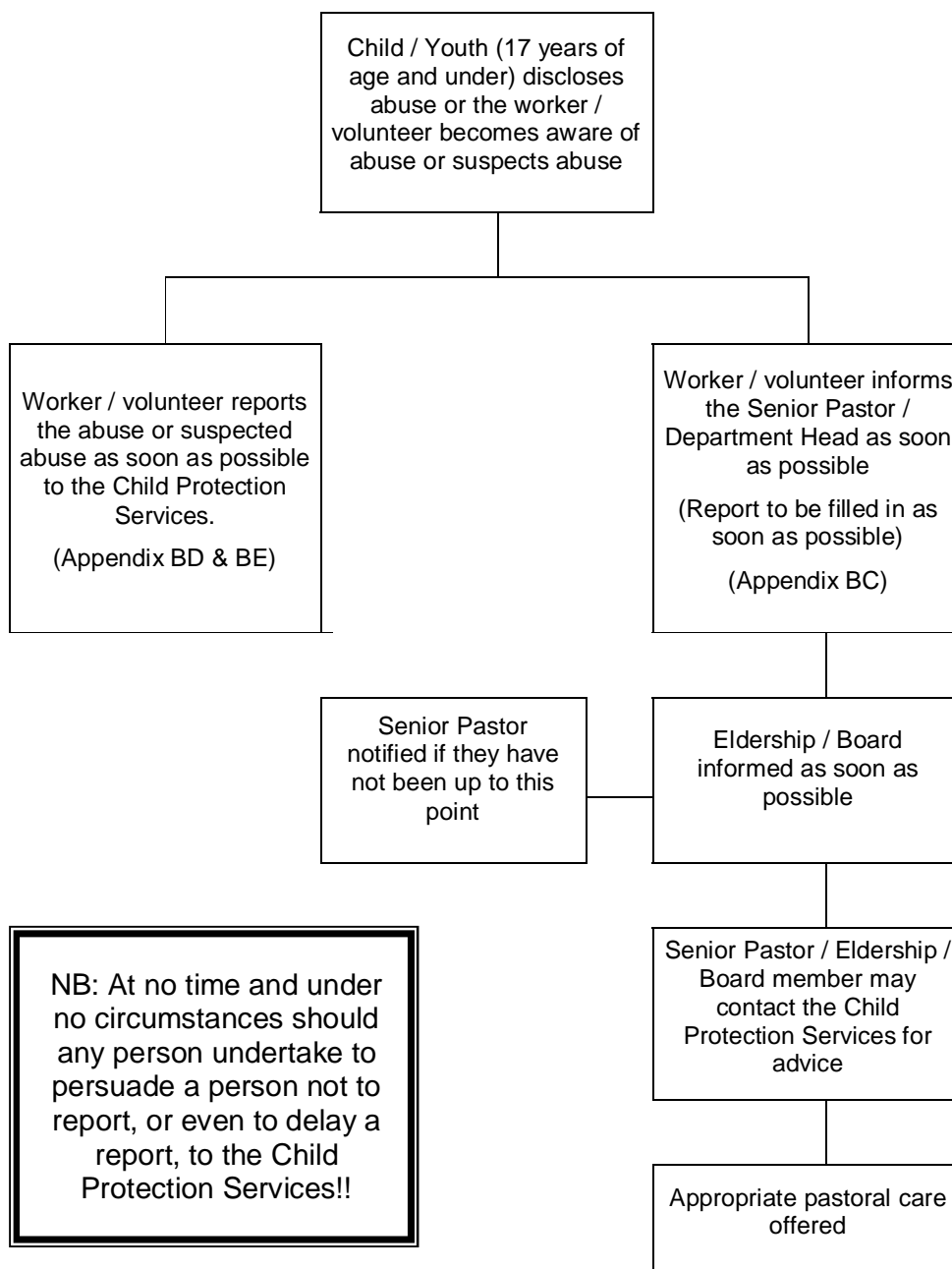
Please see **sub-section B3.4.2** for a detailed outline of the notification procedures where the alleged abuser **IS in a place of ministry** within the church.



B3.4.1 The alleged abuser is NOT in ministry in the church

The following diagram outlines the procedure to be followed when someone in the church becomes aware of abuse or suspects abuse involving a child or youth 17 years of age or under and the alleged perpetrator is not in a position of ministry within the church.

Please note: If the alleged perpetrator is a church worker / volunteer / Pastor please go to **sub-section B3.4.2** for the appropriate reporting protocol.



B3.4.2 The alleged abuser IS in ministry in the church

In outlining the procedures for dealing with allegations of child abuse made against church workers, volunteers or pastors, it requires that the principles stated earlier apply as they would in any other circumstance.

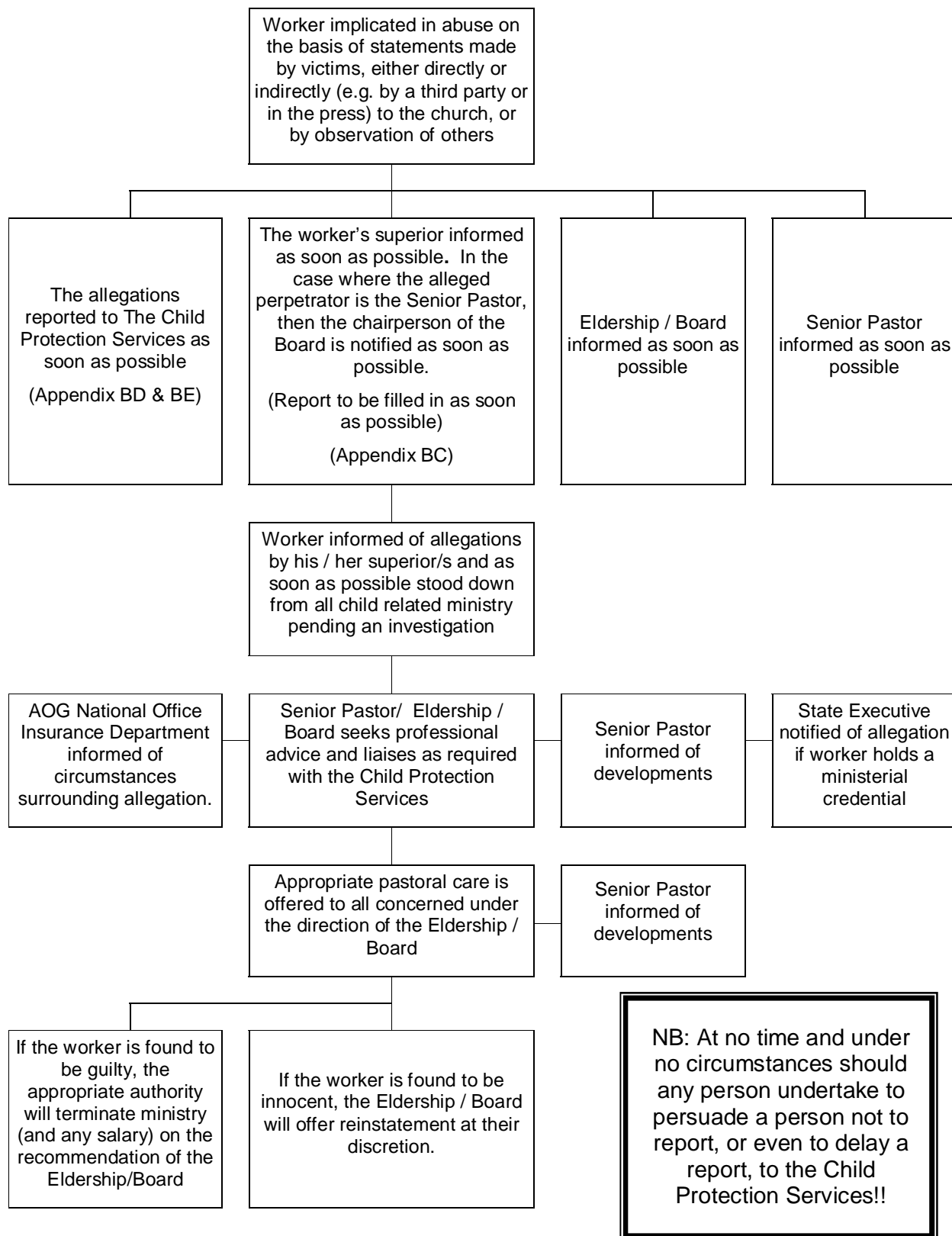
In addition, although any accused person is essentially innocent until proven guilty, it is a requirement of the church that the worker / volunteer / Pastor (**designated by the term “worker” in the following diagram**) should be stood down as soon as possible from all child related ministries pending 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 the following table should be adopted.

If the alleged perpetrator is a pastor or a person holding any Assemblies of God credential (or credentials from an equivalent body), then the State Executive must also be informed of the allegations.

Please see the diagram on the following page for an outline of the procedure to be followed when the abuser IS in a place of ministry in the church.



Notification Procedures where the alleged abuser is a church Worker / Volunteer / Pastor:



B3.5 How to notify Child Protection Services (CPS)

To make a notification of child abuse, contact your regional Child Protection office as soon as possible. The regional offices and contact details are provided in **Appendix BE**. There is also an outreach crisis response Child Protection Service that operates 24 hours, and is toll-free (131 278) if there is an emergency after hours or at the weekend. However, this service is only a *crisis* service, and if the matter is assessed as not warranting immediate action, it will be referred to the region in which the child lives.

The following chart outlines details to supply the Child Protection Services when making a notification. (Duplicated in **Appendix BD**)

Details to Supply when Making a Notification

The Child Protection intake worker at the regional office will ask the notifier for certain information, including:

Details	The child or young person's name, age and address
Indicators of harm	The reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse or neglect
Reason for reporting	The reason the call is being made at this point in time
Safety assessment	Assessment of immediate danger to the child or children (information may be sought on the whereabouts of the alleged abuser/s)
Description	Description of the injury or behaviour observed
Child's whereabouts	The current whereabouts of the child or young person
Other services	Knowledge of other services involved with the family
Family information	Any other information about the family
Cultural characteristics	Any specific cultural or other details, which will help the child, for example, Aboriginality, interpreter or disability needs

A notification should still be made, *even if the notifier does not have all the necessary information.*



Making a notification is often stressful for notifiers, as they have a genuine concern for the child and worry if they are doing the right thing. They will be concerned about how the immediate and future events will unfold.

Professionals need to understand that their involvement does not end with a call to Child Protection. They may be called on to play a significant role in the ongoing protection of the child, or in providing support to the family. There may be formal duties, such as participation in case conferences or providing a written report, or a less formal but equally important pastoral and caring role. Ongoing responsibilities may also involve looking after themselves, or providing support to other colleagues at such a stressful time.

B3.5.1 Function of the Child Protection Service

The function of the Child Protection Service is to:

- Receive notifications from people who believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.
- Provide advice to people who report such concerns.
- Investigate matters where it is believed that a child is at risk of significant harm.
- Refer children and families to services that assist in providing the ongoing safety and wellbeing of the children.
- Take matters before the Children's Court if the child's safety cannot be assured within the family.
- Supervise children on legal orders granted by the Children's Court.

Role of the Victorian Child Protection Service

The Child Protection Service is responsible for protecting children from sexual abuse when their parents or caregivers are unwilling or unable to do so.

Child Protection workers will provide advice to any person concerned about the welfare of a child.

Child Protection workers are authorised to accept notifications of child sexual abuse based on a reasonable belief and:

- Carry out protective investigations.
- Take action where necessary in the Children's Court in relation to protective concerns for children up to the age of seventeen years.
- Be responsible for the care of children who are under the guardianship and custody of the Secretary.



- Supervise children on other statutory orders.

As child sexual abuse constitutes a criminal offence, whenever the Child Protection Service receives a report of this nature the Police are immediately informed and a decision is made about whether to undertake a joint investigation. During this investigation Child Protection workers determine what action is required to protect the child and the Police will determine whether criminal charges should be laid against the perpetrator.

B3.5.2 Role of the Police

The Police have prime responsibility for investigating criminal offences relating to child sexual abuse. A criminal investigation can be activated by either a Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit (SOCA Unit) or the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) whenever reasonable grounds exist for believing that a child has been sexually abused. Their response will be undertaken in the best interests of the child and will take account of the need for medical, counseling and treatment referrals. SOCA Units offer support for victims and their families through the investigation and court process and will refer to counseling services as required.

B4. Seven Basic Safety Principles, Q & A

1. TEACH CHILDREN ABOUT TOUCH

Most sexual abuse involves inappropriate touching or fondling of the child by the adult. Children need to know how to identify when and how people can touch them, and when and how they can touch others.

2. TEACH CHILDREN TO TRUST THEIR FEELINGS

Children have a keen natural sense when something is amiss. They must learn to trust all their feelings, whether good, bad or confusing.

3. TEACH CHILDREN WHEN TO SAY NO TO ADULTS

Children are taught to be polite and obey adults. However, they must also have permission to say no to an adult if they need to protect themselves from an unpleasant situation.

4. TEACH CHILDREN THAT THEY OWN THEIR BODIES

Children quickly learn the meaning of “mine” as it implies to toys, bikes, etc. The right to make the same claim about their bodies and to decide when they want to be touched and by whom, should be established early.



5. TEACH CHILDREN TO LEAVE AN UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION

Children need to feel safe and they should be taught to remove themselves as quickly as possible from any person who makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.

6. TEACH CHILDREN ABOUT INAPPROPRIATE SECRETS

Much sexual abuse depends on the child being persuaded, threatened or coerced into not telling about the abuse. Children need to learn that secrets which frighten or hurt them should not be kept.

7. TEACH CHILDREN ABOUT SUPPORT PERSONS

Children should be helped to identify a number of people to whom they can turn to if they are touched inappropriately. They should be taught to expect that adults will act to protect them and to keep on telling until they find someone who does.

Some Questions & Answers

Q. If I suspect a child has been abused, why can't I interview or ask some basic questions to confirm or dissolve my suspicions?

A. Courts will dismiss information they regard as 'corrupted'. There have been cases where counsellors have put words into children's mouths. It is for this reason that you don't question the child but report your observations to the Children's Ministry Director.

Q. I understand visitation has to occur in two's, but what if an abuser contacted another abuser and arranged a visitation under the guise of being a Children's Church visit to a new family in the church?

A. OK, you might be saying this question goes too far, but people with this desire are desperate and we need to close all the holes in the net. An identification card is an excellent idea. You can even place a photo on the card and laminate it. Parents in the church are always impressed when the level of care given to their child exceeds average standards. New families to the church will receive a detailed information sheet outlining visitation policy in their Welcome Packs.

Q. Doesn't the proposed policy (visiting in two's) reduce the Children's Ministry Teams' ability to visit and bless the children?

A. Yes it does. The policy reduces the amount of children visited by at least 50%, however it also stops anyone abusing a child on a church visit and provides cover for the good people in your team who have been asked to



visit. It has the added benefit of ensuring visits happen, shy people feel more comfortable visiting with a partner.

Q. We want to take the kids off the church property for a treat, can we?

A. Any gift given out for a birthday or a form of encouragement must be done through the Children's Pastor/Director. There are to be no 'secret club' meetings. Any church activity seeking to take children off the property must have the correct reasonable ratio of leaders per children and a signed indemnity form for each child.

Q. Should a church hire someone who has been guilty of child abuse but has since come to Christ?

A. It is advisable not to allow such an individual to work in this area of the church. By all means include in some other area of the church where children are not involved. A church that permits such an individual to work with children on the basis of conversion will have a virtually indefensible position should further abuse occur.

Q. What do I do if a member of my team shares with me that they have been abused? Are they a threat to the team?

A. With 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 7 boys abused, you will definitely come across these people in your team. The fact that they have been abused does not necessarily mean they will offend. It is similar to a young boy watching his mother being beaten. He will either be tainted by this example or repulsed by it. The situation is the same with the abused team member. Once they have divulged this information, discuss the matter in depth with them. Questions will need to be asked... do you have tendencies towards children? Usually these suggestions are met with disgust and the team member needs your assurance that they are not considered a threat to the children. Follow up with counseling for that person, linking them with someone experienced in the field, either in your church or outside. In the situation where a member informs you they have been abused and do sometimes have paedophilic tendencies, you must strongly advise them that they will have to leave the Children's Ministry Team. Discuss other possibilities for them to work in other areas of the church. Inform the Senior Pastor and again follow up with good experienced counsel for the victim.

Q. Is child abuse a one-off occurrence?

A. No. Child abuse is usually not a single physical attack or a single act of deprivation or molestation. Child abuse is more often a pattern of behaviour occurring over time.



Q. What if I have no proof, have not witnessed any unusual behaviour, but still have an uneasy feeling in my spirit about someone. What do I do?

A. Inform the Children's Pastor/Director of your concerns so that person can be observed.

Q. Can legal action be taken against me if a suspicion is unproved?

A. No, you are covered from any legal action when you report information based on a reasonable suspicion.

B5. Children's Ministry Policy Summary

The summary contains what has already been covered in Part A, **A3**, as well as aspects covered in Part B & C, of this manual. It is designed to be a summary only, for full understanding, all of Part A & B must be read.

1. In response to our Biblical responsibility we will endeavour to provide a quality ministry to all our children.
2. Workers are responsible for the health and safety of the children under their care. We will do all in our power to protect the children in our care from abuse or molestation.
3. All children's workers must have references from people within the assembly or past assemblies testifying to their trustworthiness to work with children.
4. Children's workers must complete an application form that identifies prior experience with children's work and why they want to work with children. These forms and references must be submitted to the Senior Pastor and/or Children's Pastor for approval and he/she may then take them to the church board for ratification.
5. All workers must have endorsement of the Senior Pastor and the eldership before being appointed or used in children's ministry.
6. All workers must have attended our church regularly for at least twelve months, or prove to have attended another church for twelve months before commencing work with the children's ministry.



7. There will be no unauthorised activities with the children. Children's workers should not arrange activities with the children or any child off the church property except when there are two workers present.

These two workers should not be related to each other and not of the same household. The department leaders must be notified and his or her agreement obtained before any activity is arranged. Parents should be notified of the arrangements and the names and the names of the workers who will care for the children.

8. Workers should not visit children alone at home or any other place. Workers should ensure that their time with the children is in public view. There will be no secretive or unauthorised clubs.
9. Workers must not give children gifts without the department leader's knowledge.
10. Workers should be careful of their conduct with children at all times. Behaviour that may be wrongly perceived should be eliminated. Workers should not show excessive affection for children. They should not touch them frequently nor should they express inappropriate feelings towards the children.
11. Parents are permitted to visit activities as official observers on the proviso that official permission has been granted by the Children's Pastor. Elders, leaders and pastors are also encouraged to attend activities at the invitation and discretion of the Children's Pastor.
12. Leaders should ensure that children that wish to use toilets are adequately supervised by adult leaders or parents.
13. Staff should wear appropriate kids church shirts, badges, or some form of identification. Persons without official shirts or badges may not be permitted to minister to children.
14. If you have any problems, difficulties or suspicions concerning a worker's relationship with a child you must follow procedures as set out in this manual, see **A4 & B3**. The matter must be kept confidential to protect the child and his/her family.
15. Any leader or children's worker who is suspected of child abuse shall be relieved of his/her position in Children's Ministry until any



investigation by the senior minister and the elders has been completed, or in the event where an appropriate body has been notified, the completion of its investigation.

B6. Standard of Conduct & Application Form explained

The “Standard of Conduct” contract is in **Appendix BG**. It is a signed agreement by a new worker/volunteer stating that they will agree to abide by the basic regulations set within. The contents of the contract are as set out in **Appendix BG**, or as set out by the church/organisation you are commencing a new position with. The standard of conduct contract only needs to be signed however, once an application for involvement in children’s ministry has been accepted.

The “Children’s Ministry Application Form” is in **Appendix BF**, or as set out by the church/organisation you are applying with. It must be filled out by anyone who wants to join the children’s ministry of the church/organisation. The form should be handed to the Children’s Pastor, Senior Pastor, or other person as directed.

Conclusion

All children are vulnerable to abuse - even those in church families. Church leaders and children’s workers have a responsibility to be aware of the seriousness of child abuse and have some basic understanding of the subject. Parents have the right to expect that safe procedures have been established for the conduct of church workers. These include avoiding all activities that could be perceived as being of a sexual nature and rules about where and when workers can be with children.

We have a moral duty to report to the authorities known cases of abuse. The church will often be included in first aid counselling for abused children and is needed in a supportive role after the professional counsellors are finished.

Basic understanding of sexual abuse and its effects is essential.

What has been covered in Parts A & B of this manual is designed to equip you with what you need to know to look after the children in your care, and how to respond appropriately to cases of abuse. However pastors and senior children’s leaders need to have a deeper understanding of what they can do to prevent child abuse or suspicions of child abuse occurring. The last section



of this manual, Part C, covers statutory & common law issues in more detail, as well as staff training, selection, screening, and more.

It is strongly recommended that all pastors and senior children's workers obtain and read Part C of this manual.



Appendix to Part B

Appendix BA. Behavioural & Physical Indicators of Abuse

The following lists include common behavioural and physical indicators of abuse. It should be noted that in most instances the appearance of one or more of these indicators do not necessarily indicate that abuse is taking place and that caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions based on only a few indicators.

1. Sexual Abuse

Some behavioural indicators associated with sexual abuse include:³

The sexually abused younger child may:

- 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
- Have a detailed understanding of sexual behaviour beyond what would be expected at their age
- Display regressive behaviour (bedwetting, speech loss, infantile or immature behaviour)
- Suffer sleep disturbance and night terrors
- Inhibition to play
- Serious difficulty relating to peers and/or adults
- Constant complaints of headaches or abdominal pains
- Sudden appearance of material goods (given as gifts)
- Sexually inappropriate language
- Outside interests may wane
- Onset of fears and phobias
- Lack of concentration or significant change in school performance.

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

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

Some physical indicators associated with sexual abuse:

³ Adapted from South Australian Child Protection Council, 1994, pp. 6 ff. and *Protect the Child*, pp. 7-8

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.⁴

2. Physical Abuse

Some behavioural indicators associated with physical abuse include:

- Unduly wary of physical contact with others
- Unduly frightened by a parent or caregiver
- Express little or no emotion when hurt
- Unduly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative
- Offer unlikely explanation of injuries
- Unusually nervous or hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive and destructive (both to self and others)

3. Emotional Abuse

Some behavioural indicators associated with emotional abuse include:

- Withdrawal or pleaser
- Unduly compliant, passive and undemanding
- Have a low self esteem
- Extremely demanding, aggressive and angry
- Antisocial and destructive
- Depressed and suicidal
- Attention seeking

4. Neglect

Some behavioural/physical indicators associated with neglect include:

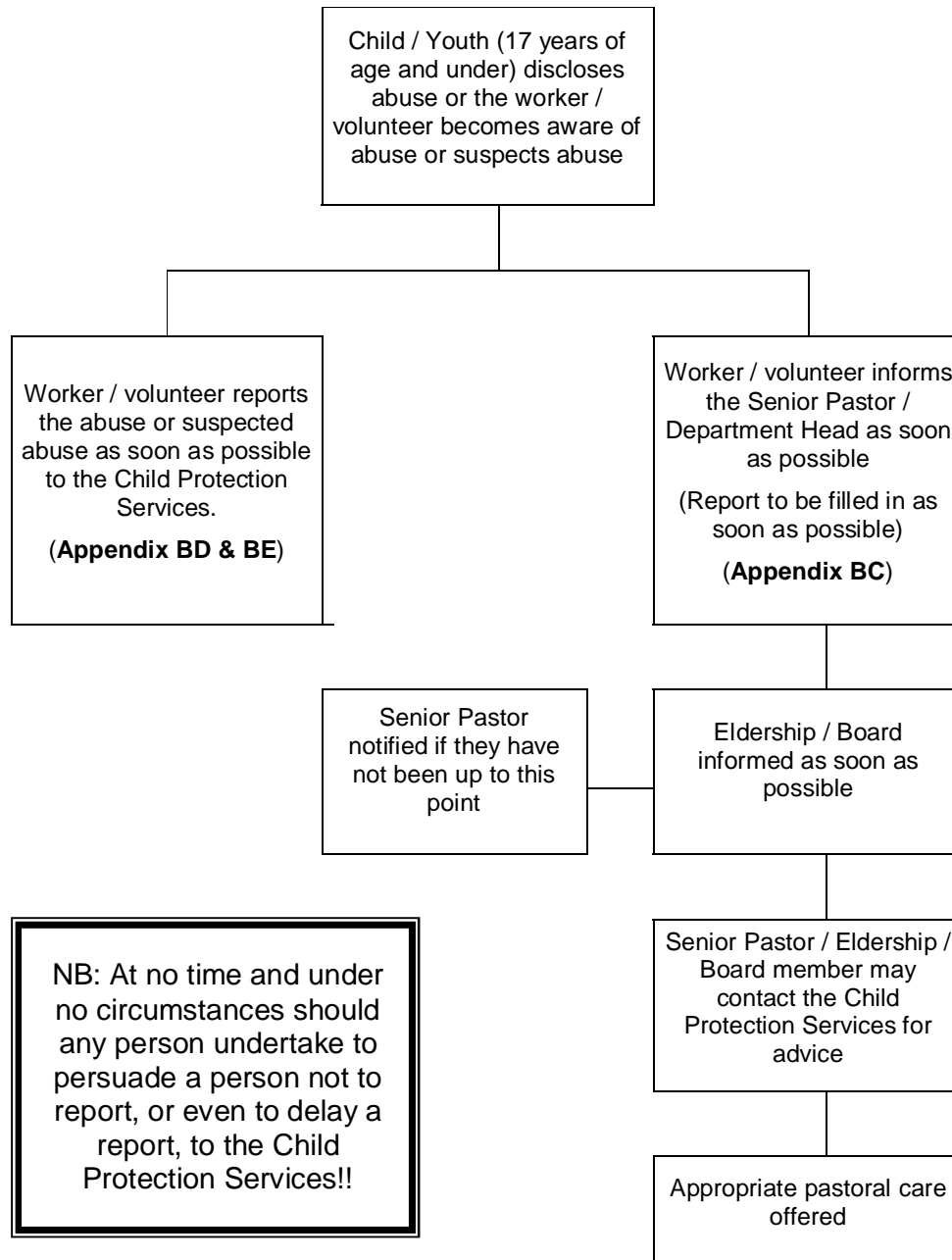
- Dirty
- Constantly sick/tired
- Indiscriminate use of affection
- Constantly miserable and irritable
- Alienated from peers, withdrawn, pale listless, beg or steal food
- Engage in delinquent acts, vandalism, and drug and alcohol abuse
- Poor social skills
- Skin problems
- Careless dress
- Sadness/grief

⁴ Adapted from *Protect the Child* pp. 7-8



Appendix BB. Child Abuse Notification Procedures

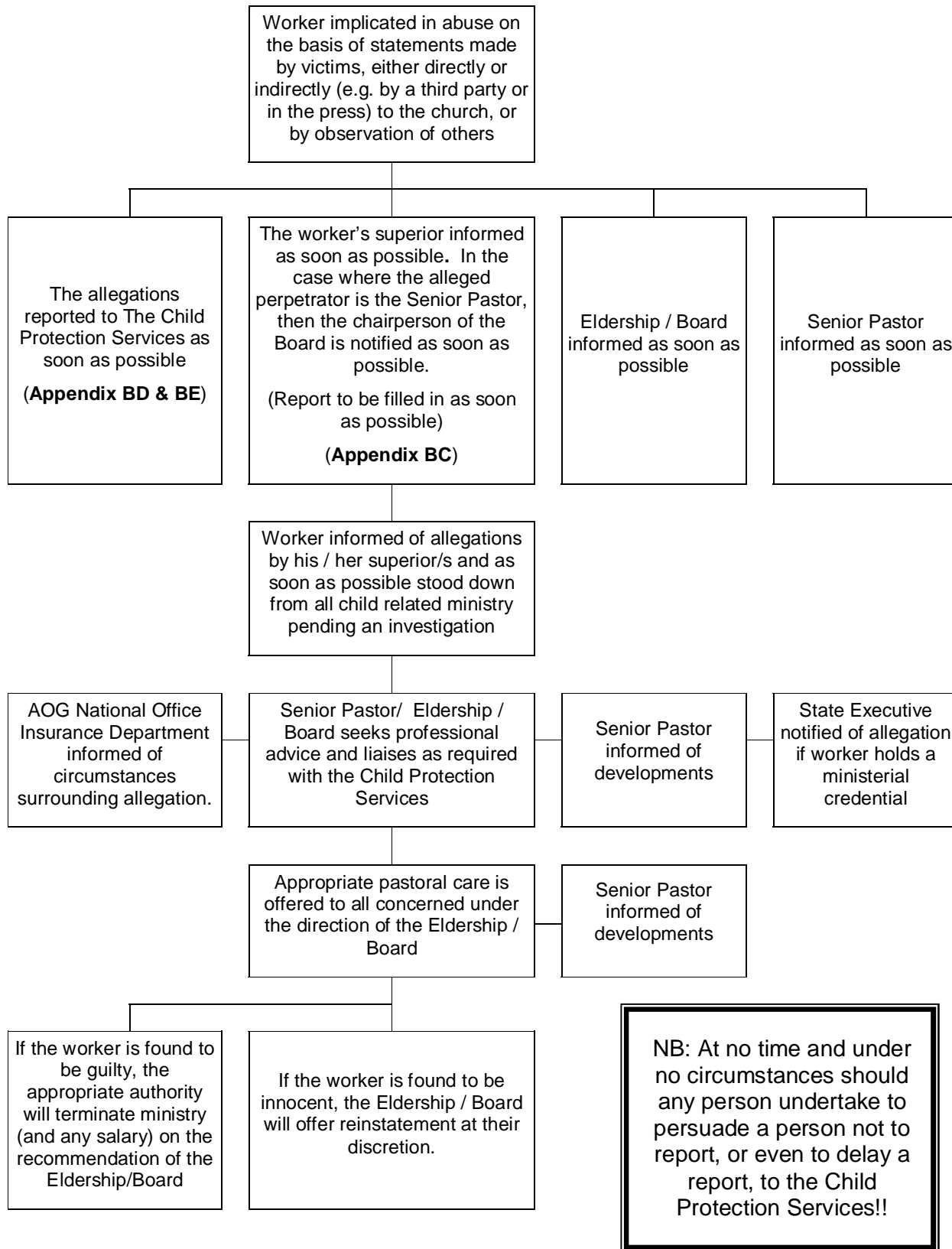
Notification Procedures where the alleged abuser **is NOT in a place of ministry** within the church. (Duplicated in **sub-section B3.4.1**)



Please see next page for **Notification Procedures** where the alleged abuser **IS in a place of ministry** within the church. (Duplicated in **sub-section B3.4.2**)



Notification Procedures where the alleged abuser **IS in a place of ministry** within the church. (Duplicated in **sub-section B3.4.2**)



Appendix BC. Child Abuse Report Form

In accordance with this church's policy, all incidences of child abuse or suspected child abuse (including those involving staff/workers/volunteers/pastors associated with the church) are to be reported to CPS and 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, CPS in the case of child abuse or suspected child abuse.

If the person making the report is nervous about reporting to CPS the Department Head can assist, or even make a joint notification.

Date: _____

Has CPS 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?

To the best of my knowledge these details are correct and true.

Signature _____ Date _____

Department Head / Pastor _____ Signature: _____

Date referred to Senior Pastor / Eldership / Board _____

Action taken _____



Appendix BD. Details to Supply the Child Protection Services (CPS)

Details to Supply when Making a Notification

The Child Protection intake worker at the regional office will ask the notifier for certain information, including:

Item	Details	Your Notes
Details	The child or young person's name, age and address	
Indicators of harm	The reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse or neglect	
Reason for reporting	The reason the call is being made at this point in time	
Safety assessment	Assessment of immediate danger to the child or children (information may be sought on the whereabouts of the alleged abuser/s)	
Description	Description of the injury or behaviour observed	
Child's whereabouts	The current whereabouts of the child or young person	
Other services	Knowledge of other services involved with the family	
Family information	Any other information about the family	
Cultural characteristics	Any specific cultural or other details, which will help the child, for example, Aboriginality, interpreter or disability needs	

A notification should still be made, *even if the notifier does not have all the necessary information.*



Appendix BE. Contact Details of the Child Protection Services (CPS)

Regional Offices

If you are making a **notification** to Child Protection, please use the ***Intake Unit*** numbers.

For **all other enquires** please contact the appropriate **regional office**.

Metropolitan Regions

Eastern

Intake Unit 1300 360 391

Box Hill (03) 9843 6000

Northern

Intake Unit (03) 9471 1644

Fitzroy (03) 9412 5333

Glenroy (03) 9304 0799

Preston (03) 9479 6222

Southern

Intake Unit 1300 655 795

Cheltenham (03) 9581 2222

Dandenong (03) 9213 2111

Frankston (03) 9784 3100

Western

Intake Unit 1300 369 536

Footscray (03) 9275 7000

Child Protection Crisis Line

Phone 131 278 for emergency child protection matters outside of normal business hours.



Rural Regions

Gippsland

Intake Unit 1800 020 202

Bairnsdale (03) 5152 6244 or (03) 5150 4500

Leongatha (03) 5662 4311

Morwell (03) 5128 9400

Sale (03) 5144 4166

Warragul (03) 5624 0600

Grampians

Intake Unit 1800 000 551

Ballarat (03) 5333 6669

Horsham (03) 5381 9777

Stawell (03) 5358 4374

Hume

Intake Unit 1800 650 227

Benalla (03) 5761 1222

Seymour (03) 5793 6400

Shepparton (03) 5832 1500

Wangaratta (03) 5722 0555

Wodonga (02) 6055 7777

Loddon Mallee

Intake Unit 1800 675 598

Bendigo (03) 5430 2333

Mildura (03) 5022 3111

Swan Hill (03) 5032 0100

Barwon-South West

Intake Unit 1800 075 599

Geelong (03) 5226 4540

Portland (03) 5523 1600

Warrnambool (03) 5561 9444



Child Protection Crisis Line

Phone 131 278 for emergency child protection matters outside of normal business hours.

Other Resources

Victoria Police

Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit (SOCA) (03) 9247 6936

Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASAs)

These centres offer a specialist support, advice and counseling service for all victims of sexual assault, male and female, adults and children.

Statewide CASA Crisis Line

After business hours weekdays, weekends and public holidays
(03) 9344 2210 or Rural Free Call: 1800 806 292

Metropolitan CASAs

Gatehouse Centre

Royal Children's Hospital
Flemington Road, Parkville
Tel: (03) 9345 6391
Crisis: (03) 9345 5522

CASA House

Royal Women's Hospital
270 Cardigan Street, Carlton
Tel: (03) 9347 3066
Crisis: (03) 9344 2210



Northern CASA

Ground Floor,
Leslie Jenner Building
Austin Hospital
Studley Road, Heidelberg
Tel: (03) 9459 3190
After Hours: (03) 9349 1766
Crisis: (03) 9496 5770

South East CASA

P O Box 72
East Bentleigh
Tel: (03) 9575 7741
Crisis: (03) 9594 2289

Western Region CASA

53 Ballarat Road, Footscray
Crisis & Counselling: (03) 9687 5811

Eastern CASA

17 Ware Crescent
Ringwood East
Tel: (03) 9870 7310
Counselling: (03) 9870 7330

Rural CASAs**Ballarat CASA**

Ballarat Base Hospital
P O Box 577
Ballarat
Tel: (03) 5320 3933
Duty worker operates weekdays between 1pm–5pm



Bendigo CASA

Bendigo Base Hospital

P O Box 126

Bendigo

Tel: (03) 5441 0430

Child Assault Management Program

P O Box 63, Moe

Tel: (03) 5127 5555

Part-time service only

Davey House Family Resource Centre CASA

Wonthaggi and District Hospital

P O Box 120, Wonthaggi

Tel: (03) 5671 3278

Geelong Rape Crisis Centre

291 Latrobe Terrace, Geelong

Tel: (03) 5222 4318

Crisis: (03) 5222 4802

Gippsland CASA

6 Victor Street, Morwell

Tel: (03) 5134 3922

Horsham–Wimmera CASA

9 Robinson Street, Horsham

Tel: (03) 5381 9272

Crisis: (03) 5381 9111

LaTrobe Community Health CASA

Morwell Centre

P O Box 960, Morwell

Tel: (03) 5134 2011



Mallee Sexual Assault Centre

1 Jenner Court, Mildura

Tel: (03) 5022 3444

Shepparton-Goulburn Valley CASA

130 Nixon Street, Shepparton

Tel: 1800 112343

South Western CASA

Koroit Street, Warrnambool

Tel: (03) 5563 1277

Upper Murray CASA

Cnr Ely and Chisholm Streets, Wangaratta

Tel: (03) 5722 2203

Crisis: 1800 622 016 (Business)

Crisis: 1800 806 292 (After Hours)

Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre

Tel: (03) 9380 4343

Workers at this centre can refer you to local community based organisations and self help groups, and advise on specialist counsellors in your area.



Appendix BF. Children's Ministry Application Form – *Sample Form Only*

CONFIDENTIAL

Application for Involvement in Children's Ministries.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Bus. _____ Fax. _____

Age: ___ Marital Status: _____

Do you have your own transport? YES / NO

What area of children's work are you interested in?

Have you ever been involved in Children's Ministry before? YES / NO

If yes, in what other areas / churches? _____

*Please list the names of any other churches you may have regularly attended over the last five years.
Please list 2 referees from these churches & phone Numbers.*

How many years do you expect to be available? _____

Are you willing to attend training courses, planning meetings and seminars relevant to the Children's Ministries team? YES / NO

Reason for wishing to be involved in Children's Ministries?

List any talents you may have that would help in your work with children (e.g. singing, drama, puppetry, musical)



How many years have you attended this church? _____

Each worker is required to have a Victorian Police check.

Have you been baptised in water? YES / NO
Baptised in the Holy Spirit? YES / NO
Have you been born again? YES / NO

Which church meetings at this church do you regularly attend?
Please also list current involvement in this church.

Do you have any special health problems or disabilities that would affect your work with children?

Have you at any time been accused or convicted of any offence involving children or young people? YES / NO *If YES please supply details:*

Do you have any criminal records? YES / NO *If YES please supply details:*

Did you suffer abuse as a child or adolescent? YES / NO

Are you willing to abide by the attached policies and work under the supervision of the church leadership? YES / NO

Are you prepared to undergo a short period on a trial basis with no guarantee of further involvement? YES / NO

Give names of two referees, not related to yourself, who can confirm your moral suitability to be involved in children's ministries.

1. Name _____ Address _____
 _____ Phone _____

2. Name _____ Address _____
 _____ Phone _____



DECLARATION

I _____ declare that I have not been charged or convicted of any criminal offences relating to the physical or sexual abuse of children. I agree that my pastor may make enquiries to confirm police records, and he may contact referees to establish my suitability for involvement in children's ministry.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

PASTOR'S ENDORSEMENT

I _____ as pastor of _____ have known _____ for _____ years and having checked with the referees I am satisfied of his/her suitability to work in the ministry to children.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

SENIOR PASTOR'S / ELDERS' ENDORSEMENT

The leadership team of _____ is satisfied with the above applicant and release them to service in the Children's Ministry Team.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Name _____ Postion _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Name _____ Postion _____



Appendix BG. Standard of Conduct Contract – *Sample Only*

STANDARD OF CONDUCT

Standard of Conduct for Children’s Workers at

I will agree to abide by the following regulations:

- All children in my care will be looked after in a responsible way.
- I am not permitted:
 - ◆ To be alone with a child at any time
 - ◆ To take children alone in a solitary or dark place
 - ◆ To visit or counsel alone
 - ◆ To be involved in their toileting or ablutions
 - ◆ To kiss, cuddle or do anything that is potentially sexual
- If it is necessary to speak to a child alone, it will be done in the sight of other people.
- The standards as set out in sections **A3, B2, B4 & B5** of the Kids R Us – Victoria “Protect the Child” Manual.

My first priority is to ensure the well-being and safety of all young people in my care and to protect and guard them from any danger or abuse.

Signed:

Minister/Director: _____

Date: _____

Leader/Worker: _____

Date: _____



PART C – for the Children’s Pastor, Church Pastors & Elders

Introduction

The information contained in Part C of this manual is extra information that is deemed by Kids R Us – Victoria as not necessary for every child’s worker to know, but is important for senior child’s workers, pastors and elders. The information in Part C builds upon what is already covered in Parts A and B of the manual.

Part C covers of the objectives & policy statement of this manual, relevant statutory and common law, screening, training, use of identification and dealing with people with histories as child sexual abusers. The information contained is only a brief introduction to the issues mentioned, and is designed to merely make you aware of them. You are encouraged to read and research further, and develop policies, procedures and training as appropriate to your church or ministry.

C1. Objectives & Policy Statement

The policy and procedures concerning child abuse contained throughout this manual (Parts A, B & C) have the following goals:

- To provide a way in which the church can minimise the risk of abuse to children and youth within the ministries of the church.
- To ensure that all cases of abuse or suspected abuse are handled in a consistent and thorough manner.

As a church, a general policy statement for child protection, similar to that below should be adopted. This manual (Parts A, B & C) will help your church adhere to that policy.

AOG Churches Policy Statement

As a group of churches we abhor any kind of abuse and take very seriously any incidence of abuse within the church. Children and youth are trusting and vulnerable and therefore the church has a particular responsibility to ensure that it takes every reasonable step to ensure that all children and youth who are within the ministries of the church are safe and free from the risk of abuse and that suspected or known instances of abuse are dealt with consistently and appropriately.

The scope of the policy should cover:

All pastors, staff members and volunteer workers associated with ministry to children within the ministry of the church. These people should be expected to comply with the policy and the associated procedures, as outlined by the church, which may be, or include, all or part of this manual.



C2. Relevant Statutory & Common Law

As pastors and elders of your church, it is important that you are aware of statutory and common law concerning child protect and abuse. Various publications can be obtained from the Department of Human Services (www.dhs.vic.gov.au/commcare) that can help you to better understand the law and requirements with regard to child protection and abuse. Following, and throughout this manual, are some of the important points that you should know.

Organisations, including churches, are morally and legally responsible for the wellbeing of children in their programs. The act of child abuse can lead to actions in two different courts, criminal and civil. The victim of a sexual assault may sue the perpetrator, as well as the church for negligence in civil law (Common Law).

Criminal laws are enacted in parliament (Statute), however cases of negligence are decided at common law – that is law made by judges when deciding cases.

The common law has always required people to report serious criminal activity to enforcement authorities. Failure to report serious criminal activity is itself a common law offence called misprision of felony. A person is guilty of the offence if, knowing that a felony has been committed, he or she fails to disclose his or her knowledge to those responsible for the administration of justice. (ECPAT Australia, Choose With Care p136)

C2.1 Legal Definition of a Child in Need of Protection

The legal definition of a child in need of protection is provided by the *Children and Young Person's Act 1989, Section 63*.

For the purpose of this Act a child is in need of protection if any of the following grounds exist:

- (a) The child has been abandoned by his or her parent and after reasonable inquiries:
 - i) the parents cannot be found; and
 - ii) no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child;
- (b) The child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person willing or able to care for the child;
- (c) The child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;
- (d) The child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;



- (e) The child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child's emotional and intellectual development is, or is likely to be, significantly damaged and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;
- (f) The child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be, significantly harmed and the child's parents have not provided, arranged or allowed the provision of, or are unlikely to provide, arrange or allow the provision of, basic care or effective medical, surgical or other remedial care.

It is important to note that it is the dual focus on harm, and the inability or unwillingness to protect, which enables the Child Protection Service to be involved. Interpretation of the parent's capacity and willingness to protect is made with regard to the degree of community support and services available to assist the parent in this responsibility.

C2.2 Mandatory Reporting Legislation

Notifications of a child in need of protection are made under *Section 64* of the *Children and Young Persons Act 1989*. Under Victorian law, a child is regarded as *being under 17 years of age*.

C2.2.1 Voluntary (non-Mandated) Notification

Section 64 (1) of the *Children and Young Persons Act 1989* allows that any person who believes, on reasonable grounds (see **B3.2**), that a child is in need of protection may notify a protective intervener of that belief and of the reasonable grounds for it.

This means that any person is voluntarily able to make a notification to the Child Protection Service when they believe a child is in need of protection and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. Under this part of the Act, notifications are made out of moral reasons, rather than because the law has compelled someone to do so.

C2.2.2 Legally Mandated Notification

Please read part **B3.3** of this manual.

C2.2.3 Reasonable Grounds

Please read part **B3.2** of this manual, and also the following.

If you are concerned you must take action as inaction leaves the child unprotected. It is the responsibility of every professional to report possible abuse when necessary.



Legal protection is provided to those who report sexual abuse to the authorities on the basis of reasonable concern. A professional who makes a notification with the best interests of the child in mind, is protected from any legal action for defamation. A notification of suspected child abuse does not constitute a breach of professional ethics. In accordance with the legislation, the identity of the notifier will remain confidential unless:

- a) The notifier chooses to inform the child and/or the family of the notification themselves.
 - b) The notifier consents in writing to their identity as the notifier being disclosed.
 - c) The court decides it needs this information in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- or
- d) The court decides that it is satisfied that the interests of justice require that evidence be given.

However, it is not general practice for the Children's Court to seek information regarding identification of the notifier.

C2.3 Common Law

Common law is Judge-made law and precedent, as opposed to statutory law (www.lawyerlocator.co.uk/glossary.php3)

Under the doctrine of respondent superior, also known as vicarious liability, a master can be held liable for their servants, that is, an employer can be held liable for the actions of his/her employees, be them paid or unpaid.

Intentional acts or criminal acts are generally an exception to this rule. An organisation can be held liable for the actions of its employees if they have the right to control staff, and the act or acts that caused the harm must have been in the scope of the individual's position. In most cases however, child abuse is usually considered to be outside of the scope of an individual's position, and organisations are rarely found guilty of child abuse.

However, while a church may be unlikely to be held "vicariously liable" for incidences of child abuse that may be caused or perpetrated by their staff, they may be held liable for negligence for failure to prevent "foreseeable" abuse. A church's failure to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent abuse may be construed as a contributing factor to the abuse. The church could be held to be negligent if its acts or omission contributed to the abuse.

Some ways in which churches may be able to take "reasonable steps" to avoid "foreseeable abuse" are to adequately screen, select, train, inform staff about conduct policies, and to monitor staff. In doing so, they are able to reduce the



chance that they may be found liable for negligence in selection, retention and supervision.

However, given the mechanisms available to churches, the important point for churches in regard to their actions in preventing “foreseeable” child abuse is, what is “reasonable” rather than what is the “standard”. For some churches, this may require being above the normal standard of screening, selection, training, and supervision to be seen as “reasonable”.

C2.3.1 Negligence defined.

To succeed in a case of negligence the plaintiff must prove all of the following elements:

- A duty to take reasonable care was owed by the defendant to the plaintiff
 - A breach of that duty of care by the defendant, or a breach of standard of care reasonable expected
 - Damage resulted at the plaintiff which was caused by the breach
- (ECPAT Australia, Choose With Care p127-128)

C2.3.2 Duty of Care

What is meant by the duty of care is that a person, in a given set of circumstances, is required to fulfil a standard of conduct to ensure that harm is not caused to others.

You must take reasonable care to avoid acts and omissions which you can reasonably foresee would be likely to injure persons who are so closely and directly affected by (your) act that (you) ought reasonably have them in contemplation when (you) are directing (your) mind to the acts or omissions which are called into question.

The important aspect of this principle is the notion of ‘reasonable foreseeability’.

C2.3.3 Reasonable Foreseeability

When considering whether there is a duty to take care owed to a plaintiff the question is a general one – that is, whether the defendant ought to have foreseen injury to a class of persons of which the plaintiff happens to be one. In the case of physical injuries there is no need to foresee the precise plaintiff, it is only necessary to foresee the general class of person likely to be affected by the conduct in question.

What is foreseeable with ‘vary according to all the circumstances of the case’ (Chapman v Hearse). It will also vary according to whom the judge is, since judgements of what is foreseeable are moral judgements about how much care you should have for other people.



C2.3.4 The Reasonable Foresight test

The notion of reasonable foreseeability applies to all three elements of negligence. Thus:

1. Where the plaintiff is 'within the range of reasonable foresight' then this creates a relationship of neighbourhood or sufficient proximity to give rise to a duty of care owed by the defendant not to injure the plaintiff.
2. Reasonable foreseeability is also relevant with respect to reasonable foresight of the risk of damage to the plaintiff and the failure to reach the requisite standard of care to avoid that risk.
3. Reasonable foreseeability is also pertinent when examining issues of remoteness, that is, whether the actual damage suffered by the plaintiff was reasonably foreseeable.

Foreseeability is important with respect to 1) duty, 2) breach of that duty, 3) remoteness of damage.

C2.3.5 Fiduciary Obligation

In certain circumstances, an individual may be considered to have a fiduciary obligation to a child. This obligation arises when one person is obliged, or has undertaken, to act in relation to a particular matter in the interests of another. Traditionally a fiduciary obligation arises in doctor-patient, priest-parishioner, and attorney-client relationships.

A fiduciary obligation possesses three general characteristics:

1. The fiduciary has the scope for the exercise of some discretionary power
2. The fiduciary can unilaterally exercise that power or discretion so as to affect the beneficiary's legal or practical interests
3. The beneficiary is peculiarly vulnerable to or at the mercy of the fiduciary holding the discretion of power.

If you have a fiduciary relationship to a child you may be sued both in a breach of duty of care and a breach of fiduciary obligation.



Definition of *fiduciary*:**fi-du-ci-ar-y** (*adj.*)

- a. Of or relating to a holding of something in trust for another: *a fiduciary heir; a fiduciary contract.*
- b. Of or being a trustee or trusteeship.
- c. Held in trust.

fi-du-ci-ar-ies (*n. pl*)

One, such as an agent of a principal or a company director, that stands in a special relation of trust, confidence, or responsibility in certain obligations to others

(The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language)

C3. Screening

The most effective strategy against abuse within the ministry of the church is prevention. Every worker must be screened and approved before being appointed to the children's ministry team.

The following screening guidelines are for the screening of workers and volunteers for children's ministry. However, it is also recommended that the church implement a variation of the below or develop their own screening policies for other regular workers / volunteers within the church who may come in contact with children, such as stewards, ushers, home group leaders, etc..., as the church feels necessary.

In screening each applicant, at least the following should take place before the applicant is appointed to children's ministry:

1. Internal pastor check
2. Applicant completed Children's Ministry Application Form (**Appendix BF**)
3. Applicant completed an interview with a relevant pastor
4. References checked
5. Current Victorian Police check received (no more than 3 months old)
6. Standard of Conduct Contract signed. (**Appendix BG**)
7. Internal clearance form completed (**Appendix CA**)

Some other important points on the screening process:

- All files on application and screening must be kept confidential and be locked due to the personal details contained.
- The sample application form provide in **Appendix BF** should be checked with your church's legal covering and amended as you feel necessary, before being used.



- Some churches view the kind of screening process stipulated above as “more paperwork” but this paperwork can stop a pedophile joining your team. (They don’t return the form after seeing the amount of detail required and the obvious lack of ability to offend a child with such tight security. Further, should a case ever be brought against your church you have something to stand on.)
- It is advised that a 6-month waiting period be introduced where new members to the church are involved. This gains the church 6 months to observe the candidate and assess if they are a person of good standing in the church.
- It is an important moment for the parents when the pastor can announce from the pulpit, “We are committed to providing your children with the best care possible- every person on team has been police checked and trained in the church’s child abuse policy.”

The names of the Children’s Ministry Team should be run through the screening process on a yearly basis. Existing team members use a Team Renewal Form (**Appendix CC**) and are not required to fill out another application form or list referees. This covers the possibility of people offending once a police check has been done.

C3.1 Internal Pastoral Check

All people who desire to work in a child or youth related area must have the recommendation of their pastor or regional pastor. Where a pastor is unable to provide an adequate recommendation a character reference will be required.

All applicants should be discussed with the pastors and elders to check that they are happy for the application to proceed.

C3.2 Application Form

The applicant must have fully completed and signed the Children’s Ministry Application Form (**Appendix BF**), prior to, or by the end of the interview.

C3.3 Interview

The applicant must attend a formal interview with the Children’s Pastor, Senior Pastor, or relevant Department Head (or Pastor). During the interview ask questions based on the information provided in the application form.

Eg. When checking application forms be on the lookout for time gaps i.e. where were you in 1990-91?

During the interview be sure to ask questions such as why they want to be involved, and questions to ascertain how close they are walking with Jesus.

In the interview make sure that the applicant has provided or will provide:

- References contact details
- Police Check – you may need to provide them with the form



From the feedback received so far, if the applicant seems like a positive outcome, give them copies of relevant sections of this manual to read, and a Standard of Conduct Contract (**Appendix BG**) to sign.

If it is appropriate, it is good to give the applicant a second interview some where in the screening process, perhaps by the “Second in Charge” or the Senior Pastor. They may remember questions you forget. It’s also good to have a second opinion.

C3.4 References Check

Whoever the candidate lists as a referee must be contacted. A written record of each contact, the person spoken to and the date should be stored in a locked, confidential file. You may want to use the appropriate (Internal or External) Referee Letter & Questionnaire (**Appendix CB**), so as to assist you in keeping written records of all correspondence.

If the candidate has had experience in another church, contact that church and discuss their suitability - again record who was spoken to, date, conversation, and store in the locked file.

C3.5 Police Check

All applicants must provide a current Victorian Police Check (less than 3 months old). The church may assist the applicant in submitting the police check and / or obtaining the relevant forms or ask the applicants to provide it themselves. It is recommended that the church assist the applicants in submitting the forms, so that the church has more control over the process. Churches may also apply for a CVF number that halves the cost of the police check. For more information go the Victoria Police website (www.police.vic.gov.au) and browse to “Forms & Permits”. For information about applying for a CVF number, click on “Application for the Volunteer Fee for National Police Check Records”. Other information about police checks can also be found under the “Forms & Permits” section. To contact the Victoria Police by phone, general enquires is 03 9247 6666, or to contact the “police and fingerprints records search” section directly ring 03 9247 5907.

Sometimes churches need to use underage and occasional workers in their children’s and youth programs. Therefore in these cases, and subject to the Senior Pastor / Department Head’s discretion, it is possible to have volunteers who have not had a police check on roster provided they are supervised by a senior worker who has been police checked.

An occasional worker is defined as a person who is not on a regular roster but is called upon to assist only where unforeseen circumstances have arisen.



An underage worker is not exempt from making a report to the Child Protection Services. Therefore it is recommended that they read at least Part A of this manual, and Part B if they are involved on a regular basis.

C3.6 Standard of Conduct

It is important that all prospective workers understand the appropriate standard of conduct. The relevant section of this manual, and any other documentation and training that must be understood before they can commence work in the ministry, should be outlined to them in the interview.

Only once the applicant fully understands the appropriate standard of conduct, should they sign the Standard of Conduct Contract. (**Appendix BG**) This sample contract provided in **Appendix BG** should be amended as necessary.

C3.7 Internal Clearance Form

The Child and Youth Related Ministries Clearance Form provided in **Appendix CA** is designed as a check-sheet to ensure that all the screening elements have been completed. To be consistent, this check-sheet should be completed for every applicant before they are appointed to a position.

C3.8 Use of Databases

Some churches may be able to maintain (or may already have) a database listing all the people in the church. If so, the database can be used to assist in checking and screening church members, depending on what kind of information is stored.

The database can be used to indicate for each member:

Whether police checks have been submitted and passed, and what date.

Other ministry information

The amount of information stored on in the database on each member should depend upon the security of the database, and the confidentiality of the information.

Databases however, are only an additional tool to assist in the screen process, and should not be relied upon.

C4. Staff / Worker Induction & Training

In order to properly equip and inform staff/workers who work with children, all churches should have some form of induction and training program. At the very least all churches should make sure that all their workers are familiar with Part A of this manual, and those who work with children, Part B as well.



Your church may be able to set-up a Child Protection Training Program for church workers. For an example of the kind of things you may want to include in such a program, an outline of the Assemblies of God in South Australia (AOGSA) Child Protection Training Program is included below:

AOGSA Child Protection Training Program consists of 2 modules:

Module 1 - Child Protection Orientation Training, which will provide a basic understanding of child abuse and reporting from a Christian perspective and develop skills in the following areas:

- Be aware of the underlying principles of church child protection policies
- Be aware of the fundamental biblical teaching of human dignity and the care of children
- Be able to appropriately respond to the issue of child abuse in a church setting
- Be aware of the importance and legal responsibilities in confidentiality
- Be aware of and able to use church protocols
- Be able to develop skills that foster a prevention model in child protection

Most of the topics covered AOGSA's Module 1 are covered briefly in Part's A & B of this manual, and could be used to assist in constructed a similar kind of training program.

Module 2 - Child Abuse Notification Training, will include the current Government approved training module for mandated notifiers.

The Family and Youth Services (FAYS) (Equivalent to Child Protection Services in Victoria) seven hour module aims to provide participants with the following knowledge and skills:

- Be aware of how their own values, attitudes and experiences will impact on their understanding of child abuse and neglect and their responses to children and young people who may have been abused and neglected
- Be aware of the importance of maintaining a child/young person focus and perspective when considering the possibility of child abuse and neglect
- Be aware of and understand their legal responsibility to notify suspected child abuse and neglect
- Be able to recognise suspected child abuse and neglect

Again, many of the topics covered AOGSA's Module 1 are covered briefly throughout this manual, and could be used to assist in constructed a similar kind of training program. However, the kind of material and training you decided to provide your staff and workers should be appropriate to your environment, church, and the age of the workers. Materials, booklets and information from the Child Protection Services may be found through the Department of Human Services website (www.dhs.vic.gov.au/commcare) or through contacting them using the contact details provided in **Appendix BE**. Another good provider of training materials and information on child protection is ECPAT Australia. Their contact details are: 1800 991 099 or www.ecpat.org



In addition to initial training and induction, all staff and workers should have regular training and refreshing courses in ministry and the Child Protection Policy.

C5. Using name tags, for workers & visitors

Being able to identify everyone who works with or mingles with the children in your programs is important. This helps keep track of those involved with the children, and also deters those who do not wish to be identified from being involved or visiting children's programs.

All regular workers in the children's programs should wear prominent, unique name tags that display their name, the kids church / program logo, and if possible, a photo. All visitors and casual workers should wear unique tags also. In this way, it is very easy for any of your workers to know who is allowed to visit or work with the kids, and who is not.

If possible, wearing hats and/or t-shirts for regular leaders will also help you and your workers more easily identify the workers in the crowd.

C6. Dealing with People with Histories as Child Sexual Abusers

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.

There is concern 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 church should recognize 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 church that all people who attend the church will come to healing and that includes past abusers. Nevertheless, the church should do everything in their power to protect the children of the church during this process.

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.



It is recommended that the church should require that all people with child sexual abuse histories as perpetrators, who wish to attend the church or church related activities, to sign a contract with the church and keep to its conditions (**Appendix CD**).

It is recommended that contract should cover the following:

1. 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 church Database in line with this policy.
2. 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.
3. 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. 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 babysit her kids when he has been greeting her warmly at the church door for three years and she has no idea of his history?
4. The offender must agree to not become involved in any church activity (other than Sunday Services), church small group, or church sporting event where children participate.
5. 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.
6. The offender must agree to never become involved in counselling ministry.
7. 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.
8. The offender must agree to regular meetings with a designated church leader for accountability and pastoral care purposes.
9. The offender must contact that leader or the Senior Pastor, or if both are not available, another pastor, the moment that he or 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.

10. 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.
11. The offender must agree never to approach, initiate conversation with, or continue conversation with a child on church property or at any church function.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. Similarly, the offender must agree not to visit any church family with children in their home – whether or not others are present.

Conclusion

The enemy is committed to ruining our children's lives. Often when he attempts to stop God's plans and people he does so in the infant years. Moses (Exodus 1:16) and Jesus himself (Matthew 2:16) are classic examples. Sexual abuse can destroy a child. It is like someone pouring a glass of black ink onto a spotless rug. It leaves a stain. It has never been easier to obtain explicit pornographic material, where once a trip to a dark, seedy alley was necessary now it only requires a drive to the service station or a milk bar. The Internet has increased perversion possibilities. It seems that with every major technological breakthrough comes a price. Adults, perhaps offended themselves as children, fuel their desires on material or an abnormal imagination and seek to have sexual relations with children.

The Church must react to the reality of the day. Sadly many children have been hurt and broken by church volunteers and staff on church premises or programs. Ezekiel 3:4 makes it clear to us that we are the shepherds sent to protect the flock and that God holds us accountable.



Too many times the church at large has been negligent in its care for the children. We often hear of a Priest being charged 20 years later of abuse after having being moved from church to church where they could re-offend and begin again. Ezekiel 22:27 talks of 'wolves' tearing the prey, destroying lives for their own gain, a picture that translates well into our subject matter verse 28 speaks of 'smeared whitewash'. There can be no corruption in the church- the children must be protected, what is done in the secret place shall be shouted from the rooftops. 2 Samuel 13 tells the story of Amnon who abused his sister. After raping her most translations say he said "Get this woman out of here." However, in the Hebrew the word woman does not appear; she is referred to as "this", soiled and then thrown away. David did nothing about the abuse. His other son Absalom did, taking Amnon's life, the end result being David losing both his sons and nearly his kingdom.

These stories' sad endings would never have happened if the matter were dealt with properly.

Ezekiel 2:29 continues talking of oppression, robbery and wrongdoing of the poor. Again parallels can be made with abuse, the innocent being wronged in the most horrific of ways, being robbed of their innocence and stealing something precious from their life in latter days.

"And I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it-but I found no-one"

When God looks for someone to stand in the gap and protect the lambs from wolves we pray he finds you standing on a wall of prayer, policy and protection.

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

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!



**IT'S THE ONE IN A MILLION
IT MATTERS TO THE ONE
AND THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
AND IT MATTERS TO JESUS
THE GOOD SHEPHERD CARES FOR THE INDIVIDUALS**



Appendix to Part C

Appendix CA. Child & Youth Related Ministry Clearance Form – *Sample Form Only*

This form is to be completed by the Children's Pastor, Youth Director or relevant Department Head and no person can be involved in any child related ministries until clearance has been gained for all sections below.

Name of recommended worker _____

Area of child related ministry _____

Pastoral Clearance

Pastor's approval gained: yes no date _____

(Character reference if required – please attach)

Comments: _____

Leaders initial _____

References Checked

References contacted yes no date _____

Comments: _____

Leaders initial _____

Police Clearance

Police clearance received & passed: yes no date _____

Comments: _____

Leaders initial _____

Child Protection Training Requirements

Have training requirements been met: yes no date _____

Forms completed & submitted

Application Form yes no date _____

Standard of Conduct Contract yes no date _____

Name of Leader _____ Signature _____

Name of Worker _____ Signature _____



Appendix CB. Referee Letters & Questionnaire – Sample Only

INTERNAL REFEREE LETTER

Dear

John Citizen has expressed interest in joining the Children's Ministry Team.

This would involve them obviously being in direct contact with children, teaching lessons, home visitations etc.

They have listed you as a referee and we would appreciate your honest opinion and comments.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the attached form as it assists us in providing quality ministry to children.

If you would like to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me during office hours on

Yours sincerely

CHILDREN'S MINISTER



EXTERNAL REFEREE LETTER

Dear

I am the Children's Pastor at Church in

John Citizen has expressed an interest in joining the Children's Ministry Team, and has named you as a referee.

It is necessary in our Church for all people wishing to join the team to undergo a screening process. Part of this process is securing referees who would comment on the suitability of this proposal. I would appreciate your honest opinion and remarks.

Their involvement with the team would obviously bring them in close contact with children, i.e. teaching lessons, home visitations etc.

If you would like to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me during office hours on

Thank you for taking the time to complete the attached form as it assists us in providing quality ministry to children.

Yours sincerely

CHILDREN'S MINISTER

REFEREE QUESTIONNAIRE

How long have you known the candidate? _____

How would you best describe their contribution to your assembly? _____

Do you consider them to be a suitable candidate for children's ministry?

Yes [] No [] If No, Why? _____

Would you have this person back in a ministry capacity in your church? _____

Any further comments you may wish to add _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.



Appendix CC. Team Renewal Form – *Sample Form Only*

TEAM RENEWAL FORM

CONFIDENTIAL

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (home) _____ Mobile _____

I, _____, declare that I have not been convicted or accused of any criminal offences in relation to the physical or sexual abuse of children. I agree that my Pastor may make inquiries to confirm police records.

I pledge to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of (church name)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Department: _____

Check Date: ____/____/____

Pastor's signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____



Appendix CD. Contract between Church and Person with a History as a Sexual Abuser – *Sample Only*

1. I _____ declare that I am willing to have my name and such details as the Senior Pastor/Eldership/Board 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 Senior Pastor/Eldership/Board might nominate. I also agree to have my name recorded on the Church 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.

I understand that failure to comply with the above mentioned requirements will forfeit my right to attend _____ or any of its activities.

FULL NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

WITNESS (1) FULL NAME: _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE: _____

WITNESS (2) FULL NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____



Appendix CE. Useful Contacts

- See **Appendix BE** for contact details of: Child Protection Services, Child Protection Crisis Line, Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASAs), Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre.

- **Victoria Police** (www.police.vic.gov.au)
 - Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit (SOCA) (03) 9247 6936
 - For general enquiries phone: (61 3) 9247 6666
 - Postal Address:**
 - Victoria Police Centre
 - 637 Flinders Street
 - Melbourne VIC 3005
 - AUSTRALIA

- **Department of Human Services** (www.dhs.vic.gov.au/commcare)
 - For phone numbers of Child Protection services, please see **Appendix BE**

- **ECPAT Australia** - Good provider of training materials and information on child protection. (www.ecpat.org) or 1800 991 099

- **Kids Help Line** – 1800 551 800

- **Lifeline** – 13 11 14

- **National Children’s and Youth Law Centre** – 02 9398 7488

- **Australians Against Child Abuse** – 03 9874 3922

- **Children’s Protection Society** – 03 9458 3566

- **Children’s Welfare Association of Victoria** – 03 9614 1577

- **Parent Line** – 13 22 89



Further Reading

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