



SAFE PROCEDURE MANUAL

Protecting & Supporting Children and Young People

Responding to a child / young person who discloses abuse

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1. Policy Statement

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Hillsong Church is strongly committed to the protection and wellbeing of all children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect. Hillsong Church ensures that any allegations or disclosures of abuse are handled promptly and with care.

This policy applies when:

- a child (0 to under 16 years old) or young person (16 to 17 years old) may be at risk of harm, or may have been assaulted.
- someone else who tells you that a child or young person is at risk of harm or has been assaulted.

This disclosure could occur for example in the children's ministry, youth ministry, SAFE presentation, connect group.

It is the responsibility of staff and volunteers to:

1. be familiar with Hillsong Church's Child Protection Policy;
2. know the generally accepted indicators of abuse;
3. know the expectations of the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) in reporting alleged or expected abuse.

2. Relevant to

All pastors, staff, students and volunteers.

3. Procedure

It is the responsibility of all pastors, staff and volunteers to:

3.1 Listen to the person and take it seriously

- Regardless of your own opinions about the likely accuracy of the information or seriousness of the situation, take it seriously and let the person see that you are taking it seriously.
- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the child/young person that they have done the best thing in informing you.

3.2 Don't probe or investigate

Avoid asking too many questions. Listen to the person's story and take notes. It's not your role to investigate the complaint. (Legal cases can be weakened due to inappropriate questioning). Do not investigate the matter yourself.

3.3 Report internally and / or externally

- Where an allegation of abuse has been made to a pastor / staff member / volunteer / student, or they have reason to suspect that a young person has been abused, and/or is in immediate danger, the staff member must contact their Supervisor / Department Head immediately.
- Fill out the Allegation of Child Abuse Notification form (F-003) form to the best of your ability.



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3.4 Support the person

- Help the person to feel safe and comfortable.
- Explain what will happen next (see 3.6).
- Ensure that the church and/or other agencies offer to address the welfare and legal needs of the person.

3.5 Recent sexual assault

If a sexual assault may have occurred less than 72 hours ago, advise the person not to shower or wash themselves or change clothes as a medical examination may be required. Make notes of what they tell you and of any visible injuries, and record the date and time.

Immediately contact your supervisor (by phone or in person) and discuss with DoCS / Police and your nearest hospital or sexual assault service.

Children's Hospital (Westmead) – 9845 2400

Royal North Shore Hospital
 Building 30, Block 1A
 Pacific Highway, St Leonards 2065
 Ph: (02) 9926 7580
 Ph: (02) 9926 7111 (24 hrs)
 Fax: (02) 9906 5495

Liverpool Hospital
 Level 3, Health Services Building
 Campbell & Goulburn Streets
 Liverpool 2170
 Ph: (02) 9828 4844
 Ph: (02) 9828 3000 (24 hrs)
 Fax: (02) 9828 4800

Westmead Hospital
 Hawkesbury Road
 (PO Box 533)
 Westmead 2145
 Ph: (02) 9845 7940
 Ph: (02) 9845 5555 (24 hrs)
 Fax: (02) 9845 8328

Rosemeadow Sexual Assault Service
 5 Thomas Rose Drive
 Rosemeadow 2560
 Tel: (02) 4633 4100
 Tel: (02) 9828 3000 (24 hrs)
 Fax: (02) 4633 4111

Blacktown/Mt Druitt Sexual Assault
 Service
 Blacktown Community Health Centre
 Unit 1, Marcel Crescent
 Blacktown 2148
 Ph: (02) 9881 8700
 Ph: (02) 9845 5555 (24 hrs)
 Fax: (02) 9671 6360

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
 Missenden Road, Camperdown 2050
 Ph: (02) 9515 9040
 Ph: (02) 9515 6111 (24 hrs)
 Fax: (02) 9515 9041

Bankstown Community Health Centre
 36 - 38 Raymond Street
 Bankstown 2200
 Ph: (02) 9780 2777
 Ph: (02) 9828 3000 (after hours)
 Fax: (02) 9780 2899

NSW Rape Crisis Centre 9819 6565,
 1800 424 017
 St George Hospital
 Social Work Department
 Gray Street, Kogarah 2217
 Ph: (02) 9350 2494
 Ph: (02) 9350 2495
 Ph: (02) 9350 1111 (24 hrs)
 Fax: 9350 2206



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3.6 Privacy and communication

Explain to the person as soon as possible, preferably before they disclose to you, that the law requires paid staff to report to DoCS if a child under 16 (them or someone else) is at risk of harm.

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Let the person know exactly who will be told about the matter:

- you will tell your Supervisor (or Department Head), and Senior Representative within the church
- you will tell DoCS and/or police if appropriate
- DoCS will contact the person's family.

Under no circumstances try to contact the alleged perpetrator. This could endanger the person and complicate police investigations. If the alleged perpetrator comes to, or is at the church / agency, ask them to leave immediately.

Do not contact a non-offending parent or a supportive family member. (Leave this to DoCS).

Do not disclose to any person (including team members who don't need to know), the name of (or identifying information about):

- the child or young person
- the alleged perpetrator
- the person who reported the case to the agency.

4. Documentation relevant to this procedure

Notification of Incident Form F-001
Allegation of Child Abuse Notification Form F-003

5. Revision record

Date Issued	Description of Change
November 2005	Issue 1 – Draft
March 2006	Issue 1 - Approved