

The Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church
of South Africa

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

October 2014

**Introduction, Goal, Guidelines for Churches, Definitions, Policy,
Application Procedures, Application Form, Code of Ethics,
Guidelines for all Children's Workers, Indemnity Form**

Introduction

The Christian Church is one of the few places where vulnerable people and in particular children, can feel welcome and at home.

However it is also a place where unscrupulous people find victims for their evil ways.

The Church seeks to provide a safe nurturing environment to safeguard the physical and emotional well-being of all children participating in Church activities, such as **kids club, youth, Sunday school, crèche** as well as participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs.

However, ministers and Church councils all too often do not know how to handle difficult situations when they arise with the result that great damage is done to the witness of the Gospel.

It is therefore incumbent upon the Church to adopt and implement a **Policy** that clearly defines practices and procedures surrounding the protection of children in their care.

Goal

Since we are commanded by God to submit to the authorities that he has set over us (1 Peter 2:13), it shall be the goal of the Church to uphold the objects of the South African constitution with regards to child protection.

The objects of the Act that concern child protection are:

To give effect to the following constitutional rights of children, namely

- **protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation; and**
- **that the best interests of a child are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child;**

We have appointed _____ as our Member Responsible for Child Protection which includes responsibility for dealing with applications for posts and positions where disclosures are required.

This policy was implemented in _____ 2014

This policy shall be reviewed annually. Future revisions to this policy may be made with the authorization of both the Rector and Church council.

A copy of the Child Protection Policy 2014 is to be held in the church office.

Everyone working with children shall be required to read, complete and sign a copy.

Pastoral relationships

All people are created in the image of God and are of equal value. This is the foundation of all pastoral relationships.

Clergy have authority conferred upon them by their ordination, consecration and licensing.

Church workers have authority conferred upon them by their appointment.

The authority and training associated with their roles means that they have power in pastoral relationships which is always to be exercised in the service of others.

Trust is of primary importance in the creation and maintenance of an effective pastoral relationship.

Trust grows with the maintenance of physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries suitable to pastoral ministry.

Clergy, Church workers and volunteers are colleagues in pastoral ministry: the activity of one inevitably impacts upon the ministry of others.

When exercising pastoral ministry you are not inappropriately to discriminate between people.

You are not to disclose confidential information received in pastoral ministry to your spouse, family, friends, colleagues or any other person without the consent of the person providing the information, except where:

- the information is known publicly
- as required or allowed by law or
- it is in the public interest (such as to avoid the risk of serious injury or harm to any person including the person providing that information).

Boundaries

Make sure you are clear about the requirements of your role and the nature of your responsibilities.

Recognise the limits of your skills and experience.

Do not undertake any ministry (such as relationship counselling, counselling for abuse or addictions, or an exorcism) that is beyond your competence or the role for which you have been employed or trained.

If in doubt seek advice.

A person who requires specialised help should be referred to an appropriately qualified person or agency.

Where ministry responsibilities overlap, be aware of the activities, function and style of other clergy and Church workers. Consult with these colleagues and co-operate wherever possible.

Avoid behaviour that could give the impression of favouritism and inappropriate special relationships, particularly with individual children. Think carefully before providing pastoral ministry to a person with whom you already have a close personal relationship, such as a friend or member of your family.

Care is needed because confusion between close personal relationships and pastoral relationships can lead to a loss of objectivity, failure to act in the other's best interest and harm to both parties.

Pastoral relationships can legitimately develop into romantic relationships. If this begins to happen:

- acknowledge to yourself that your personal interest and the pastoral relationship are at risk of becoming confused
- tell the other person that your relationship is changing and becoming romantic
- disclose the nature of the relationship to a superior (e.g. Rector or Bishop) or colleague to ensure

- accountability and prevent misunderstanding
- where practicable, disclose to a superior or colleague any proposed alternative arrangements for ongoing individual pastoral ministry
- make alternative arrangements for ongoing individual pastoral ministry
- think carefully before continuing to provide individual pastoral ministry to the person.

If you are providing on-going individual pastoral ministry or counselling, engage someone to provide regular professional supervision. This will help protect you and those to whom you minister.

When you resign or retire, you should carefully consider terminating existing pastoral relationships. You should do this in a sensitive and timely manner to allow these responsibilities to be undertaken by your successors.

Personal and professional development

Look for, and take advantage of, opportunities to maintain and enhance ministry skills appropriate to the responsibilities of your role, through:

- regular ministry development
- professional supervision / consultation
- peer support.

Confidentiality and confessions

When you are seeking or providing professional supervision/consultation you should not identify any person and only disclose what is necessary to obtain the supervision or advice.

In most cases you should tell someone who is to give you confidential information of the limits to confidentiality and the arrangements for supervision or obtaining advice. This should be done before the disclosure of the confidential information, such as at the beginning of an interview.

You have a legal obligation to report criminal offences to the applicable authorities. You may be subpoenaed to produce documents or to attend court to give evidence, or both.

You should be aware of and, when appropriate, seek advice in regard to:

- your legal obligations with regard to confidential information received during an interview, particularly in relation to criminal offences and child abuse
- the pastoral consequences of breaching confidentiality and
- the risk of physical, financial or emotional harm or hardship to another person by disclosing or not disclosing such information, particularly in writings, sermons or other public media.

Exercise special care that any illustrative material you use from personal experience does not involve a breach of confidentiality.

Conversations in a ministry context

Formal interviews and informal conversations in a ministry context are pastoral encounters.

Consider the appropriateness and effect of your words and actions.

For example, innuendoes or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate.

When a person asks questions or seeks advice around topics of a sexual nature, be discerning about the motives and needs of the other person and your own ability to assist.

To minimise the risk of being accused of or engaging in misconduct, particularly when conducting interviews, think carefully in advance about:

- the place of the meeting, the arrangement of furniture and lighting, and your dress

- whether the physical location allows for privacy of conversation while maintaining the opportunity for supervision - for example, doors to interview rooms, if closed, should not be locked
- the physical distance between you and the other person to maintain both hospitality and respect
- whether the circumstances would suggest a social interaction
- the propriety and circumstances of the interview when you are visiting or being visited alone, especially at night
- the personal safety and comfort of all participants
- establishing at the outset the interview's purpose and the boundaries with respect to the subject matter, confidentiality and its duration
- the appropriateness of initiating or receiving any physical contact, such as gestures of comfort, that may be unwanted or misinterpreted and
- whether the presence of a child's parent, guardian or another person chosen by the child is appropriate.

Guidelines for all Churches

Vigilance

It is the duty and responsibility of the clergy, every Church worker, children's worker, volunteer as well as every member of a Church council and of the Church, and indeed every member of a congregation, to exercise ongoing and continuing vigilance for any signs of actual or potential child abuse, sexual assault, exploitation, harassment or grooming, irrespective of whether or not the adult concerned is involved in children's work or in any form of pre-school or school work, teaching or supervision.

The principle is that the entire Church community is to hold itself keenly responsible for the safety of children who come within the ambit of the Church. It is a space where the safety of children must be held to be of paramount importance, and that must be evident in our vigilance.

In the Church context especially, it is far too easy for people to take a "soft" approach to others, given the faith and doctrines to which we adhere. This approach must be guarded against when it comes to child protection.

It must not be assumed that an adult, whatever his or her position and whatever is known or not known about them, is above potential reproach.

**In exercising vigilance, one is not entitled to "turn a blind eye".
The opposite must be the case.**

At any sign of any danger or potential danger to a child or to a group of children, your first responsibility is to report to the children's worker or volunteer who is directly responsible for the child or group in question. If such worker or volunteer is not available, report to his or her superior or to a curate or to the Rector or a council member. If no-one is available, you have to take appropriate action yourself. Speed is always of the essence.

Never delay in taking appropriate action immediately, and never allow a problem or potential problem to incubate or fester.

There are a myriad of possibilities and the following are arbitrary examples:

1. ***As a group activity ends, X offers to drop one or two children off. X is not a parent or guardian of either child, nor did they bring either to the activity, nor are they a children's worker.***

ACTION: You should say: "Thank you X, but that is against policy. Can we arrange that I (or someone else) will go with you? It is better for two adults to accompany children".

2. ***On a church campus you notice that Y is chatting to a group of children. Y is an affable person who often attends church but is not a children's worker.***

ACTION: You should go to the children and ask what Y was talking to them about, or you could ask Y himself. If you are not satisfied with the answer, or in any event, report the incident to the Sunday school teacher or children's worker immediately. (Y may have offered to take the children out for an ice cream. This will be cause for concern and Y should be confronted).

3. ***A group of children are playing around a swimming pool at a church retreat. It is winter and there is no swimming. One of the boys is undoing the swimming pool safety net.***

ACTION: You should intervene immediately and restore the net fitting. (This is not a case of potential child abuse, but common sense safety).

No-one would wish to offend a fellow brother or sister in Christ. However, the protection of children trumps offence. Act courteously but firmly and use moderate language.

Distribution

This policy document will not be effective and may fail those it is intended to protect unless it is properly and widely disseminated and implemented. Every Church must ensure that it is read and signed by every staff member, including the Rector. The existence of this document must also be made known to the congregation of a Church at all services, and congregants must be urged to read it. A Church may require that it be made compulsory for every new member in the Church to read the document.

Copies should be made available in hard copy, on CD or other devices, and the document should be posted on a Church's website.

The whole congregation, and indeed the Church, must take ownership of the policy spelt out herein and must adhere to it and implement it, in the overriding interest of all children who come within our ambit.

Reporting

Apart from the legal requirements spelt out in this document on the reporting of each and every instance of child abuse to the authorities, it is also required of the Rector or leadership of every Church to notify the Administrative Officer.

This latter notification is for information purposes and is not required to be a comprehensive report. A short summary of the facts, circumstances and action taken will suffice. The Executive may however request a full report in appropriate circumstances.

The notification to the Administrative Officer is necessary to enable the Church to be and to remain well informed of all circumstances surrounding child safety in the denomination.

Definitions

It is essential that the meaning of terms used in this document in their fullest sense be made clear and therefore they are defined as follows:

applicant means a church member who has been approached or who wishes to be considered for involvement in children's ministry.

apprentice refers to an individual over the age of eighteen (18) who works for the Church either on a full-time or a part-time basis, may receive a stipend, and assists in ministries as set-out in their apprenticeship/training programme. They are responsible to a full-time paid member of the clergy.

bullying means the repeated seeking out or targeting of a person to cause them distress and humiliation or to exploit them.

It includes but is not limited to:

- exclusion from a peer group
- intimidation and
- extortion.

child means anyone under the age of 18.

child abuse means the following conduct in relation to a child:

- allowing children to be sexually abused
- sexual abuse
- bullying
- emotional abuse
- harassment
- neglect
- exploiting a child for labour
- exposing or subjecting a child to psychological abuse
- physical abuse or
- spiritual abuse.

child pornography means sexually explicit or suggestive material involving children.

children's worker means either a full-time paid member of staff or a volunteer responsible for an area of children's ministry, generally Primary and Pre-school children, at. The individual may also have oversight of the crèche ministry. They may or may not as yet have been ordained. They are responsible to a member of the clergy.

Church means **REACH South Africa** - The Reformed Evangelical Church of South Africa (Church of England in South Africa)

Church authority means the person or body having authority to ordain, license, appoint, dismiss or suspend a member of the clergy or Church worker.

Church body includes a local congregation, school, or any body-corporate, organisation or association that exercises ministry within, or on behalf of, or in the name of, the Church.

Church council means those persons nominated and duly elected by the members of _____ Church, to carry out the functions of the local church in accordance with the Constitution and guidelines of REACH South Africa.

Church worker means a lay person;

- who is employed by a Church body or who
- for payment or not, holds a position or performs a function with the actual or apparent authority of a Church authority or church body, including an office, position or function
 - of leadership in a congregation or General Synod
 - as a member of the General Synod
 - as a member of a body incorporated by the General Synod
 - as a churchwarden, member of any Church council or member of any committee constituted by or by the authority of the General Synod, or a Church council.

civil authorities mean the police and the relevant government child protection authority, where such a body has been constituted.

clergy means bishops, presbyters and deacons of the Church.

corporal punishment means any punishment inflicted on the body.

emotional abuse means acts or omissions that have caused, or could cause emotional harm or lead to serious behavioural or cognitive disorders.

Such acts include:

- name calling
- threats
- ridicule
- intimidation
- isolation
- ill treatment in the form of coldness, hostility or rejection and
- the use of social media as a medium through which to perpetrate the aforementioned acts.

grooming is a process that involves the manipulative cultivation of relationships with vulnerable adults or children, their parents or guardians and others in authority as the means of initiating or hiding abusive behaviour.

harassment means unwelcome conduct, whether intended or not, in relation to another person where the person feels with good reason in all the circumstances offended, belittled or threatened. Such behaviour may consist of a single incident or several incidents over a period of time.

It includes, but is not limited to:

- physical contact
- gestures or language (overt or implied) including continual and unwarranted shouting
- unjustified or unnecessary comments about a person's capacities or attributes
- openly displayed pictures, posters, graffiti or written materials
- communications in any form (for example, phone calls, email, text messages) and
- following or stalking.

individual pastoral ministry means pastoral ministry carried out on an individual basis. It includes spiritual direction, or pastoral counselling arising out of bereavement, divorce or other life crises.

Member Responsible for Child Protection (MRCP): the member of _____ Church congregation elected by the Church council to hold this position. The MRCP can be a member of the

Church council but cannot be a member of _____ Church's full-time paid staff. They have responsibility for dealing with all applications for posts and positions where disclosures are required.

neglect means the failure to provide the basic necessities of life where a child's health and development are placed at risk of harm.

It includes being deliberately deprived of:

- food
- clothing
- shelter
- hygiene
- education
- supervision and safety
- attachment to and affection from adults and
- medical care.

offensive language includes blasphemy, verbal harassment, racial and other forms of vilification, personal insult or comment and obscene words.

pastoral ministry means the work involved or the situation which exists when a member of the clergy or Church worker has responsibility as part of their role for the wellbeing of another. This includes the provision of spiritual advice and support, education, counselling, medical care, and assistance in times of need.

pastoral relationship means a relationship between clergy or Church workers and any person for the purposes of pastoral ministry.

“person unsuitable to work with children” means a person listed in **Part B** of the **National Child Protection Register**.

physical abuse means any intentional or reckless act, use of force or threat to use force causing injury to, or involving unwelcome physical contact with, another person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. An injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures. It does not include lawful discipline by a parent or guardian.

professional supervision/consultation is a formal, collaborative process which a more senior or experienced person uses to develop and support a person in their ministry. This relationship is confidential, evaluative, and extends over time. It is preferable if the supervisor has no other pastoral or personal relationship with the person being supervised.

prohibited material means publications, films and computer games that have been classified by the Publications Control Board as being unsuitable for a child to read, see or play any other images or sounds that are considered with good reason within the Church to be unsuitable for a child to see or hear, and any substance or product whose supply to or use by children is prohibited by law, such as alcohol, tobacco products, illegal drugs and gambling products.

prohibited substance means any substance banned or prohibited by law for use or consumption.

Rector means the minister in charge of _____ Church.

restricted material means; publications, films, and computer games that have been classified as by the Publications Control Board; and any other images or sounds (for example, internet material) that are

considered with good reason within the Church as being offensive on the grounds of violence, sex, language, drug abuse or nudity.

sexual abuse of a child means the use of a child by another person for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification or for that of others.

It includes:

- sexual touching and fondling
- being forced to touch or fondle another person
- kissing or holding in a sexual manner
- being forced to perform oral sex
- vaginal or anal intercourse
- vaginal or anal penetration with an object or any bodily part
- making any gesture or action of a sexual nature in a child's presence
- making sexual references or innuendo using any form of communication
- voyeurism
- exposure to any form of sexually explicit or suggestive material
- discussion of, or inquiry about, personal matters of a sexual nature
- being forced to masturbate self or others, or watch others masturbate and
- indecent exposure.

Sexual abuse of a child does not include sex education with the prior consent of a parent or guardian or age appropriate consensual sexual behaviour between peers i.e. the same or a similar age.

sexual assault means any intentional or reckless act, use of force or threat to use force involving some form of sexual activity against an adult without their consent.

It includes:

- sexual touching and fondling
- being forced to touch or fondle another person
- kissing or holding in a sexual manner
- being forced to perform oral sex
- vaginal or anal intercourse and
- vaginal or anal penetration with an object or any bodily part.

sexual exploitation refers to any form of sexual contact or invitation to sexual contact with an adult, with whom there is a pastoral or supervisory relationship, whether or not there is consent and regardless of who initiated the contact or invitation. It does not include such contact or invitation within a marriage.

sexual harassment means unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether intended or not, in relation to an adult where the person reasonably feels in all circumstances offended, belittled or threatened. Such behaviour may consist of a single incident or several incidents over a period of time.

It includes, but is not limited to:

- implicit or explicit demands or suggestions for sexual activities
- making any gesture, action or comment of a sexual nature to a person or about a person in their presence
- making jokes containing sexual references or innuendo using any form of communication
- exposure to any form of sexually explicit or suggestive material
- unwelcome physical contact such as touching, pinching, patting or aggressive physical conduct
- unwelcome or unnecessary discussion of, or inquiry about, personal matters of a sexual nature
- the promise of a reward for a sexual favour
- threatening action for refusing to comply with a sexual request
- unwelcome and inappropriate intrusion of personal space
- voyeurism and
- persistent following or stalking.

spiritual abuse means the mistreatment of a person by actions or threats when justified by appeal to God, faith or religion.

It includes:

- the use of a position of spiritual authority to dominate or manipulate another person or group

- isolation from friends and family members
- claims for inappropriate deference to a person with spiritual authority and
- the use of Christian terminology to justify abuse.

Sunday school teacher means a volunteer who performs a teaching or support role with either Pre-school or Primary school children, generally once a week. They are responsible to the Sunday school superintendent and/or the Children's worker. They may be under the age of eighteen (18).

Sunday school superintendent means a volunteer who has weekly oversight of all Sunday school classes and reports to either the Children's worker or a member of clergy. They need to be eighteen (18) or older

youth leader means a volunteer who works with a group of High school children at weekly or bi-weekly "youth group" meetings and who is responsible to the youth pastor. They need to be eighteen (18) or older.

youth pastor means a full-time paid member of staff responsible for any ministry involving High School children. They are responsible to a member of clergy and may or may not as yet have been ordained.

volunteer refers to persons who are not full-time or part-time paid staff members but who have an involvement in a ministry (either leadership or support). Anyone involved in volunteer capacity needs to be a member of the Church. They may or may not still be at High school. They are responsible to a member of the clergy.

Policy

All children under the supervision of _____ Church children's workers will be cared for in accordance with God's commands outlined in the Holy Bible.

All children's workers of _____ Church are subject to the following requirements taken from the Children's Act, 2005 and the Children's Amendment Act, 2007.

Extracts from Children's Act 38 of 2005:

123 Consequences of entry of name in Part B of Register

- (1) No person whose name appears in Part B of the [National Child Protection] Register may:
 - (a) manage or operate, or participate or assist in managing or operating, an institution providing welfare services to children, including a child and youth care centre, a partial care facility, a shelter or drop-in centre, a cluster foster care scheme, a school, club or association providing services to children;
 - (b) work with or have access to children at an institution providing welfare services to children, including a child and youth care centre, a partial care facility, a shelter or drop-in centre, a school, club or association providing services to children, or in implementing a cluster foster care scheme, either as an employee, volunteer or in any other capacity.
- (2) No person managing or operating or who participates or assists in managing or operating an institution providing welfare services to children, including a child and youth care centre, a partial care facility, a shelter or drop-in centre or a school may allow a person whose name appears in Part B of the Register to work with or have access to children at the centre, facility, shelter or school, either as an employee, volunteer or in any other capacity.
- (3) No designated child protection organisation may allow a person whose name appears in Part B of the Register to work with or have access to children on its behalf, either as an employee, volunteer or in any other capacity.

124 Disclosure of entry of name in Part B of Register

- (1) If the name of a person is entered in Part B of the Register and that person –
 - (a) works with or has access to children at an institution providing welfare services to children, including a child and youth care centre, a partial care facility, a shelter or drop-in centre or a school either as an employee, volunteer or in any other

capacity, that person must disclose that fact to the person who manages or operates the institution, centre, facility, shelter or school;

126 Establishment of information in Part B of Register

- (1) Before a person is allowed –
 - (a) to work with or have access to children at an institution providing welfare services to children, including a child and youth care centre, a partial care facility, a shelter or drop-in centre or school, the person managing or operating the institution, centre, facility, shelter or school must establish whether or not that person's name appears in Part B of the Register;

- (2) Within 12 months of commencement of this chapter –
 - (a) the person managing or operating an institution, centre, facility, shelter or school must establish whether the name of any person who works with or has access to children at the institution, centre, facility, shelter or school appears in Part B of the Register;

Extracts from Children's Amendment Act, 2007:

Reporting of abused or neglected child and child in need of care and protection

110.

- (1) Any correctional official, dentist, homeopath, immigration official, labour inspector, legal practitioner, medical practitioner, midwife, minister of religion, nurse, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, psychologist, religious leader, social service professional, social worker, speech therapist, teacher, traditional health practitioner, traditional leader or member of staff or volunteer worker at a partial care facility, drop-in centre or child and youth care centre who on reasonable grounds concludes that a child has been abused in a manner causing physical injury, sexually abused or deliberately neglected, must report that conclusion in the prescribed form to a designated child protection organisation, the provincial department of social development or a police official.
- (2) Any person who on reasonable grounds believes that a child is in need of care and protection may report that belief to the provincial department of social development, a designated child protection organisation or a police official.
- (3) A person referred to in subsection (1) or (2) –
 - (a) must substantiate that conclusion or belief to the provincial department of social development, a designated child protection organisation or police official; and
 - (b) who makes a report in good faith is not liable to civil action on the basis of the report.

Application Procedures for Involvement in Children's Ministries

An applicant may be approached by a member of the clergy to apply for involvement in Children ministries or they may volunteer.

In either case:

1. The applicant will complete the
 - **Application for all Children's workers**
2. The applicant will sign and agree to the
 - **Code of Ethics**
 - **Guidelines for all Children's workers**
3. The Member Responsible for Child Protection (MRCP) will process the application, follow up the applicant's references as necessary, establish whether or not the applicant's name appears in **Part B** of the **National Child Protection Register** and ensure Police clearance is applied for.
4. The MRCP will make a recommendation to the Rector and the leader of Children's ministries.
5. If accepted, all documentation will be filed under lock and key and kept strictly confidential. The applicant will be informed by the MRCP or the leader of Children ministries of the success of the application.
6. If rejected, all documentation will be filed under lock and key and kept strictly confidential. The Rector will inform the applicant. Opportunities for counseling will be offered or other help that the Church might be able to give to assist the applicant.

An application must be made before a person's involvement in a Children's ministry.

A successful application needs to be reviewed on an annual basis.

Selection and Screening Process

Pre-employment procedures for paid and volunteer workers

We undertake to take proper care in the selection, appointment and the support of those working with children, whether or not they are full-time paid staff or volunteers.

Volunteers must be members of the Church

All volunteers who work with children must first be members of the Church.

Under certain circumstances, the Pastor and Church council may authorise an exception to this rule for a specific planned event.

Classification of workers

In order to screen workers appropriately for their responsibilities, the ministerial staff person responsible for children's work, within the Church, will categorize workers into two categories: *primary* and *secondary*. These terms refer to the relative levels of responsibility and risk, not to the ages of the children being served.

- **primary workers:** includes all full-time paid staff members (e.g. children's worker or youth pastor) plus those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility or risk. Primary workers must be eighteen (18) years of age or older.
- **secondary workers:** persons who occasionally interact with children and/or do so in less risky circumstances, i.e. Sunday school teachers and volunteers who see children only in a group setting, on church premises, or who interact with children in the presence of an approved primary worker. This category may also include parents of participants who help supervise activities. All volunteer workers under the age of eighteen (18) will be considered secondary workers.

Minimum age

All primary volunteer workers must be eighteen (18) years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults, but may not take the place of adult workers. The church may employ responsible teens under the age of eighteen (18) only in positions with and under the direct supervision of an approved primary worker or member of the clergy.

Six month rule

No volunteer will be allowed to work with children in any capacity until they have been an active and participating member of the Church for a minimum of six (6) months. The applicant must have been a regular attendee and involved in church activities for that period of time. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

The six (6) month rule may be waived with the authorization of the Rector and the Church council, as in the case of a new staff member. If waived additional steps to screen the applicant should be taken.

Applications

Everyone wishing to be considered as a Children's worker must complete and sign the **Application for all Children's workers** form.

Applications will be submitted to the Church office or the person in charge of children's work at the Church. The person in charge of the area in which the individual will work will be responsible for the interview process (they may choose to have the MRCP present). The reference check will be conducted by the MRCP.

If there is no specific children's worker appointed, the Rector/an appointed council member will be required to do the interview and reference check, that are applicable to the Church. If an applicant needs additional confidentiality they may choose to submit their application directly to the Rector.

The Church keeps confidential all information received in the applicant selection process. Such information will be stored with access afforded only to the appropriate Church staff on a "need to know" basis.

If the Church learns of false, misleading or amended information on an application that could cause potential danger to children or liability to the Church, that person's position will be terminated and they may be subject to church discipline procedures.

No one who has been convicted of a crime involving sexual misconduct with children will be allowed to work with children.

Completing the **Application for all Children's workers** authorizes the Church to conduct these checks.

References

All prospective workers (both full-time paid and voluntary) in contact with children and young people will be asked to complete a declaration form providing two references. Referees should have known the applicant for more than four (4) years and should know the applicant well.

Applicants will be encouraged to provide any details of any criminal records at an early stage of the recruitment process.

All positions involving work with children will require clearance against **Part B** of the **National Child Protection Register** and Police clearance.

Any offer of a position will be subject to the receipt of a satisfactory clearance reports.

The designated MRCP will conduct criminal and other background checks notifying the Rector if a negative report is received.

Information gained in these checks must be noted directly on the application.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Church keeps confidential all information received in the applicant selection process.

Such information will be stored with access afforded only to the appropriate Church staff on a "need to know" basis.

Confidential interviews

All applicants desiring to work with children must be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to do. The person in charge of the program (e.g. youth pastor/children's worker/Sunday school superintendent) will conduct an interview with the applicant (the MRCP may be present). A team of interviewers may be used if necessary.

Church policy concerning prevention and response to child abuse and neglect must be discussed during the interview.

Application for all Children's Workers

Strictly Confidential

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

Email: _____

Cell phone: _____

Home phone: _____

ID Number: _____

Area of children's ministry you would like to be involved in

Circle the relevant option:

Teens	Fridays	Sundays	Leader	Helper
Kid's Club	Gr 1-3	Gr 4-7	Leader	Helper
Crèche	Pre-school	School grade:	Leader	Helper
Once off event	Camps	Holiday Club	Leader	Helper

This application must be completed by all volunteers seeking to serve in *any* children's ministry at _____ Church.

It must be completed by the applicant for review in accordance with this **Child Protection Policy** and **Applications Procedures** first before approval is granted for service with children.

This is not an employment application.

History of previous supervision of children

This includes Church/para-Church/community involvement either on a full-time or volunteer basis. Please detail involvement over the last ten years.

Name & location of organization	Person responsible at the time & contact details	Nature of involvement	Length of involvement & reason for discontinuing

Are you a member of _____ Church? Yes / No For how many years? _____

If not a member, have you previously attended other REACH Churches? Yes / No

Christian faith - please answer the following questions:

1. If you were to die tonight, do you know for certain that you would go to heaven? Why?
2. When / how did you become a Christian?
3. What do you understand by the term Gospel?
4. If you appeared before God and He were to ask you why He should let you into heaven, what would you say to Him?
5. Who is Jesus Christ?
6. Mention one thing that has influenced your Christian faith in the last 12 months?

7. How long have you been a Christian?

8. Why is children's/youth ministry important?

9. Why do you want to be involved?

10. What ministry-related training have you received?

References

Please list two or more character references who know you well and whom we can contact if necessary (neither may be a relative or employer, but one of them may be a Rector).

For each reference please provide the following information:

Reference 1	Reference 2
Name:	Name:
Phone (h):	Phone (h):
Phone (w)	Phone (w):
Length of association:	Length of association:
How do they know you?	How do they know you?

Please read the 39 Articles of Faith and indicate your agreement with them by signing below:

Applicant: _____

Guardian: _____

Reference checks

Applicant's name: _____

Position applied for: _____ Date: _____

	Reference 1	Reference 2
Reference's name		
Date contacted		
How long have you known the applicant? In what capacity?		
Would you trust them with your own children?		
What strengths does the applicant have?		
Any behavioural or historical aspects we should be aware of?		
Any other information you would like to share with us that might be helpful?		

Name of Ministry leader who considered this application: _____

This person has been approved for service: Yes / No

Date: _____

Code of Ethics

For all Children's workers

Strictly Confidential

I desire to model Christ-likeness in all my behaviour, especially as I serve in ministry / work with children at _____ Church.

I aim to demonstrate love for the Lord Jesus Christ, my gratitude for His grace and forgiveness, and testify to the power of the Holy Spirit working in me by:

1. Treating children of all races, religions and cultures with respect and consideration, without compromising my commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Reporting any form or knowledge of child abuse to the ministry head.
3. Not abusing children in any way, including but not limited to:
 - physical abuse - e.g. strike, spank, shake, slap
 - verbal / mental abuse - e.g. humiliate, degrade, threaten
 - sexual abuse - e.g. inappropriate touch or exposure
4. Not indulging in the consumption of alcohol, tobacco or illegal substances in the course of my interaction with children lest I tarnish the reputation of _____ Church and its founding precepts.

I understand that any violation of this Code may be grounds for termination of my paid or voluntary service and may result in discipline or other action by the Church.

Knowing that the Lord Jesus Christ changes people, it is nevertheless incumbent on us to ask the following in the spirit of the utmost prudence and care and mindful of the fact that you have voluntarily entered into this ministry, whether professionally or as an unpaid helper, which has in its care the most vulnerable, namely children.

Have you ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to or have charges pending concerning any crime?
If yes, please explain.

Yes / No

Are you in possession either in physical or electronic form of any material that can be classified as pornographic?

Yes / No

Do you undertake to abstain from looking at or disseminating any such material?

Yes / No

Have you ever been party to or the victim of any conduct that would be regarded under the current legislation as the abuse of a minor / child abuse?
If yes, please explain.

Yes / No

Have you ever been accused of any such conduct?
If yes, please give details and specify outcomes of any investigation that took place.

Yes / No

Do you have any contagious disease, health problem, or history of emotional illness that would currently place children, other workers or yourself at risk?
If yes please explain.

Yes / No

We may call for references from those who know you or refer to previous churches. Do you have any reason to believe that such a reference would disclose any negative information?
If yes please explain.

Yes / No

Is your name listed in **Part B** of the **National Child Protection Register**? **Yes / No**

I recognise that, as a condition to my paid or voluntary service, references may be contacted, a background check may be made and a criminal history check may be conducted, and I willingly consent to all such checks.

I further authorise my references to give you any information they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with children.

I release _____ Church and all such references from any and all liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such evaluations to you, and I waive any right that I may have to inspect references provided on my behalf.

By signing below, I affirm that I have carefully read and understand, and that I accept this **Code of Ethics** and the **Guidelines for all Children's Workers**.

I understand that if I have questions about these documents, any church policies, or any aspect of my service with _____ Church I will contact the Member Responsible for Child Protection for clarification and guidance.

I acknowledge that all of the information I have provided is true and complete and that I have not withheld information regarding my past.

As a Christian, I confirm that any unbiblical lifestyle, including inter alia homosexuality and adultery, will disqualify me from either paid or volunteer service and may result in dismissal from employment or volunteer service at _____ Church.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Guidelines for all Children's Workers

Thank you for agreeing to work with children and at _____ Church
As you know, we place a very high value on all our work among children within our Church.

In view of the constant danger of accusations of child abuse or molestation, matters which have been gaining so much attention in the media, it has been felt wise to set out certain guidelines for all who are working with children, so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the reputation of _____ Church and yourself, are not brought into disrepute in any way.

Child protection

The following guidelines are for the protection of the children and for the protection of those working with them.

Children are entitled to be safe and protected. They have the right to be respected, listened to and their particular needs addressed in all Church activities, whether mixed aged or child specific.

Ministry where children are involved requires absolute trustworthiness.

Clergy and Church workers with overall authority in a congregation have a responsibility that cannot be delegated for the implementation and maintenance of proper systems for the safety and welfare of children participating in its pastoral ministry.

When they are exercising a pastoral ministry involving children in a Church body, clergy and Church workers (e.g. Sunday school teachers, kids club leaders, youth group leaders) have responsibility for the safety and welfare of children in their care.

Clergy and Church workers have *authority* over children because of their position and *power* because of their greater age, maturity, physical size and life experience. Abuse arises from the misuse of authority or power. Any form of child abuse is always wrong. Due to the inherent imbalance of power, children are incapable of giving valid consent to abuse.

Standards for clergy and Church workers

If you have overall authority in a congregation, you are to ensure that:

- proper systems for the safety and welfare of children participating in the Church's pastoral ministry are implemented and maintained
- all applicable requirements of the civil authorities (e.g. Children's Act 38 of 2005 and the Children's Amendment Act, 2007), the Church authority and the Church body are complied with and
- all clergy and Church workers for whom you have responsibility and who work with children comply with all civil and Church screening and selection requirements;

If you are exercising a pastoral ministry involving children in a congregation you are to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of the children in your care.

You are to not abuse children.

You are not to make any prohibited material available to children.

Recognising the characteristics and effects of child abuse

You need to be aware of the signs, symptoms and characteristics of child abuse and its impact on children.

Characteristics and effects of child abuse

Abuse of a child can be categorised as emotional, physical, sexual, or spiritual. It can also arise from neglect, bullying or harassment.

The signs and symptoms can include:

emotional abuse - low self-esteem, apathy, an over readiness to relate to anyone even strangers, unduly aggressive behaviour, withdrawn behaviour;

physical abuse - bruises, bites, burns and scalds, fractures;

sexual abuse - a level of sexual knowledge or desire for either contact or distance inappropriate to the child's age, self-harm, social isolation, and a sudden onset of soiling, wetting or other behavioural changes;

spiritual abuse - low self-esteem, high levels of anxiety and fear, excessive deference to a leader and isolation from former friends and family members;

neglect - failure of a child to grow within the normally accepted pattern, parent or guardian deliberately failing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care and supervision.

bullying or harassment - low self-esteem, loss of trust in others, apathy, an over readiness to relate to anyone even strangers, unduly aggressive behaviour, withdrawn behaviour.

Abuse of a child is often preceded by **grooming**.

The sexual abuse of a child commonly has the following characteristics:

It usually starts with something minor and gradually builds up to more involved behaviours through a process of grooming.

It is secretive and generally known only to the abuser and victim making it extremely difficult to detect;

- it is perpetrated by someone known to the child and/or held in a position of trust by the child or their parents or guardians and
- it is rarely a self-contained or one-off incident but rather part of an ongoing relationship that is corrupting and distorting.

The abuse of a child commonly causes psychological and spiritual harm and is likely to lead to the impairment of their social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and intellectual development and/or disturbed behaviour.

The effects of child abuse extend well beyond the abuser and their primary victims. The families of the victim and abusers as well as their communities can also experience a high degree of distress when revelations of abuse emerge.

Often they can deny the disclosure and so reject the victim rather than face reality. Once the reality is confronted, the community will commonly experience profound shock, guilt about failing to protect the primary victim, deep hurt and disillusionment.

Recognising the characteristics of sexual offenders

You need to be aware of the characteristics of sexual offenders.

Sexual offenders generally:

- do not stop unless there is some intervening factor
- believe or assert that the victim is complicit or a willing participant
- attempt to deny, justify, minimise or excuse their behaviour by:
 - claiming their behaviour was an expression of love for the victim;
 - claiming their behaviour was a result of their childhood abuse;
 - claiming their behaviour was influenced by stress, the use of alcohol or other substances; and
 - blaming the victim;
- enjoy the activity, despite claims to the contrary and
- are repeat offenders.
- Sexual offenders who target vulnerable adults and children will often undertake a grooming process as a precursor to abusive behaviour.

Dealing with convicted or suspected child abusers

How does a church and a congregation deal with a convicted or suspected child offender?

This is a difficult question which could be the subject of a paper in itself and which will also be dictated by the circumstances of a particular case. The matter will in each case be addressed by the Rector in a Biblical manner in consultation with the Wardens and Church Council. The matter may be referred to the Area Bishop or Bishops who may in appropriate circumstances refer it to the Presiding Bishop for advice.

The following is a short guideline:

Suspected offenders also need to be safeguarded from premature judgment of child abuse and from the associated trauma of false accusations. If there emerges a level of certainty that any accusation is false or vexatious, restrictions placed on the individual concerned may be amended or lifted.

Prohibited persons, being those convicted of a serious sexual offence, are prevented from being in any child related position, i.e. any role which potentially involves unsupervised contact with children.

This is legislated for and not negotiable.

Until such time that an accused has been completely exonerated and endorsed by the Rector and council, interim measures must be adhered to. These interim measures are designed to protect the children and not to bespeak the guilt or otherwise of the accused.

Specifically, the following interim measures must be instituted:

- appropriate physical boundaries must be set i.e. no unsupervised contact with children whatsoever and

- any other appropriate controls as determined by the Rector.

Notwithstanding the aforesaid, the Rector at all times has the sole discretion to manage the accused and their role within his congregation in a manner which is both sensitive to the needs of the accused yet protective of the congregation and its relational proximity to the accused.

Identifying potential offenders

The sources of information as to who might pose a risk to children and therefore who might need to be supervised and held accountable can come from:

- the person themselves
- friends or relatives of the person
- a victim or a person who makes an allegation
- friends or relatives of a victim or person who makes an allegation
- public sources such as newspapers, other media or court reports
- Police, Parole Boards, or Department of Correctional Services
- private information from third parties
- previous congregations or employers of the offender or suspect
- former Rectors or other members of Church staff.

Assessing a potential risk

Having clarified the subject matter of the offences, allegations or suspicions it will be necessary to consider what risk the offender poses to children.

Risk assessment may take into consideration a number of factors:

- whether the concern arises from a conviction or finding, an accusation or a suspicion
- the nature of any position (including non-child related position) in which the offender might be employed or engaged
- the type of contact that any position has with children
- the supervision which will be available
- the nature and frequency of the event or events from which the report arose
- requirements and conditions laid down in bail or parole orders
- presence of victims/survivors in the congregation or parish and the effect that the presence of the offender may have on those victims including the possibility that the offender needs to be asked to attend a different congregation
- the level of understanding and willingness to co-operate of the offender of the requirement for the church to protect children
- the period of time since relevant offences were committed or allegations made; and
- any additional information which may be relevant in assessing risk.

Prohibited persons are **never** used in child-related positions.

Prudence also requires that a risk assessment also be undertaken in relation to an offender who is the subject of an allegation even if it is still unsubstantiated. Depending on the level of risk it may be prudent not to use such a person in a child-related position.

A common characteristic of offenders is their failure to understand why their movements or activities in a Church context should in any way be constrained. They will often minimize their past and be overly optimistic about their future. It is important to work with them pastorally to encourage them to see the mutual benefit in keeping them away from contact or potential contact with children.

Children must be kept safe. Parents and the congregation must have confidence that children are protected.

The person concerned will be protected from any opportunity to offend and the possibility of false allegations.

The setting of boundaries for the offender should include a clear written statement of:

- which services/activities he/she may/may not attend. In extreme cases of high risk, consideration should be given to complete exclusion from Church activities altogether
- the buildings and rooms the person may go into
- the times the person can be on Church premises
- who the person may associate with at Church
- the supervision and accountability which has been put in place.

If an offender or suspected offender transfers to a different Church or congregation then it is incumbent on the Rector or leaders of the Church they are leaving to warn the new congregation of the risk.

Ensuring the safety of children

It is the policy of the Church to provide adequate supervisory control of persons working with children participating in all Church programs, including daily or temporary childcare programs of the Church.

The following regulations shall be applicable to all primary and secondary workers having contact with children participating in all Church programs.

It is the responsibility of all persons having contact with children participating in Church programs to promote the emotional and physical safety of the participants giving regard to all factors and circumstances known to them.

If in their opinion, an unsafe condition exists, such persons shall immediately take appropriate precautions under the circumstances to protect all children.

Nothing contained in any other Church policy, procedure or instruction shall be construed to relieve persons having contact with children from this responsibility.

Selecting and Screening of Leaders – paid or volunteer

Potential leaders need to be identified by department leaders and/or the Rector of the congregation;

Before anyone can be appointed to a position of leadership (e.g. youth pastor, Sunday school teacher, youth leader etc.) they must complete an application form which will be considered by the relevant leaders and the Rector of the congregation.

Appointments should be for a limited time period and not open ended but may be renewed.

Before anyone is appointed to a leadership position they must read, accept and sign the Child Protection Policy document in full.

Supervision of children

To reduce the possibility of kidnapping, the Church will have in place an identification system so that the adults who drop off a small child are the same adults who pick the child up.

A child must never be allowed to leave with a stranger.

The ministry leader in charge shall maintain the system to identify persons authorized to pick up and take responsibility for Pre-school children leaving a church activity.

In the event of children arriving at a children's ministry meeting (unaccompanied by a parent/guardian), a register of all attending children should be kept.

No child may leave the group at any time without the leader's permission.

If a child walks home from the Church he/she must be accompanied by at least two adults. (In the case of girls, one must be a female).

Children are deemed to be under the care of the Church once they have been left there by their parents.

Parents are to be informed that it is their responsibility to ensure that their child/children are left under the care of a responsible adult before they leave their child/children.

Simply "dropping off" children must be avoided.

The starting and ending time of all meetings must be clearly advertised and adhered to.

Regularly stress to parents the need to collect their children promptly at the end of each meeting.

It shall be the goal of the Church that a minimum of two workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during a Church activity regardless of the number of participants, location or activity.

At least one of these must be age eighteen (18) or older.

Some Sunday school classes may have only one adult in attendance as the teacher while the class is in session. In these instances classes should be in voice contact of each other or in adjoining rooms, if possible doors should be left open.

Where possible the gender of the adults should reflect that of the group i.e. at least one man if boys are present, and always one woman if girls are present.

In need, only female workers should escort girls to the toilet, or males escort boys.

They should not enter the toilet area but remain at the door of the toilet with the door slightly ajar.

Never allow children to use the toilets as a playing area.

No group of children should be left unattended unless the safety of the group can be assured.

The staff member/s responsible for children/youth work will coordinate with the respective volunteer leaders and assistants to ensure on-going supervision of all involved in children's ministries.

This should include regular unannounced visits into classes and other program sites.

In the case of the Church being without a children's worker, the Rector and council are responsible for ensuring supervision of workers, or for allocating a person to do so.

Appropriate information must be kept of every child attending a meeting e.g. name, age, parent's contact details, allergies or disabilities. This must be updated annually.

Prior to any activity that is not on church premises an **Indemnity Form** will be necessary to be signed by the child's parent or legal guardian.

Without the form signed and in the possession of the church, the child **will not** be allowed to participate in the activity.

Leaders must recognize their own limitations and therefore not undertake any ministry or activity that is beyond their competence or that is not part of the role for which they have been trained.

Arrangements should rather be made to provide for an experienced person to undertake any such activity or ministry.

Any child who requires specialized help or ministry must be referred to the appropriate person. This particularly applies to outdoor activities.

While children should be able to confide in and trust leaders inappropriate dependence by the child on a leader must be avoided.

Church activities for children should be scheduled in areas visible from adjoining areas. Such visibility will be maintained by leaving curtains and blinds open and, wherever possible, by leaving the door to the room open.

Reasonable exceptions to this rule may be made by the Rector where seclusion is necessary, provided two workers are present in the room at all times.

At no time will an adult meet alone with a child in any room where the door is closed or in an area where they cannot be seen.

A clear glass window should be installed in the door of all rooms typically occupied by children and into the door of all relevant offices in the church.

No leader should be left alone with a child where others cannot see what is taking place.

Doors should always be left open.

On camps or similar outings never allow:

- boys and girls to share the same dormitories, tents or toilets
- adults to share the same sleeping accommodation with other people's/children of the opposite sex
- a leader to share the same sleeping accommodation with only one child present

Guideline ratio of workers to children

Age:	Ratio - leaders / children
0-2	1:3
3-4	1:4
5+	1:8

Physical Contact

It is important that, at all times, no action should be taken which might be misunderstood by the child or another adult.

It is important to stress that all activities involving children be done where anyone else may observe what is taking place.

Any physical contact must be appropriate to the child's age e.g. smaller children might need to be comforted from time to time.

Discourage indiscriminate hugging especially between leaders and children.

Never engage in unnecessarily rough or physical games or sexually provocative games, especially with children of the opposite sex (if in doubt, **do not** play them)

In the same way, do not allow children or young people to engage in games or horseplay which could be misconstrued by other children or young people.

Never make sexually suggestive or provocative comments about or to a child/teen, even if it is only in jest. In the same vein, never allow children or young people to use inappropriate language while they are under your care.

If it is necessary to have physical contact with a child (e.g. to administer first aid or to break up a fight) as far as possible make sure there is another adult present.

Relationships between leaders can be important role models of godly conduct and affection but must never distract them or the children from the goal of the group.

First Aid

A properly equipped first aid box must be kept on the premises and be available at all times.

A suitably qualified person (min Level 1 First Aid qualification) should check this box regularly to ensure that it contains the necessary items.

Staff should attend First Aid courses (min Level 1 qualification).

If an injury is more serious than the leaders are capable of handling they must call a doctor/nurse and the parent/s or guardian/s without any delay.

A full report on the incident that led up to the injury should be filed with Church records.

Transporting Children

Avoid transporting a child alone in a car, unless the parent/s/guardian/s gives their permission.

This is particularly the case when it is a child of the opposite sex.

If a child is transported on their own, (in exceptional circumstances), they should be in the back of the car whilst you drive.

Persons who drive Church owned or privately-owned vehicles for conducting Church business or transporting children on a regular basis must maintain a current valid South African license (or approved International license), provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by the Church and comply with all other Church transportation policies.

If you are transporting children, other leaders from the group must be made aware of this.

If a child has to be taken home (e.g. he/she becomes ill) contact the parents/guardians concerned to inform them of the reason.

It is the driver's responsibility to make sure that the vehicle concerned is roadworthy and safe.

Seat belt laws must be adhered to as well as the number of persons per vehicle.

No children will be transported in the back of an open bakkie.

The driver of the vehicle must obey all traffic laws.

Using Outside Specialists

When you engage or use an external service provider for an activity (e.g. a specialist in outdoor education or a speaker for a camp), you should:

- make reasonable enquiries as to whether they have been screened and selected in accordance with civil and any Church requirements
- ensure that they are only used in a supplemental capacity
- wherever practicable, ensure that they are not left alone with any child.

Reporting and responding to alleged child abuse and neglect

Reporting policy

It is the responsibility of the Church to report any incident of child abuse or neglect toward any child in the church. This would include participants in temporary childcare programs.

Watch out for the “hurting” child.

If *you suspect* that a child is being abused, do not ignore the issue. Try to investigate your suspicions with the aid of another leader. The Rector of the Church must be informed as soon as possible.

If a *child claims* to have been abused do not ignore the allegations. Try to investigate the claim with the aid of another leader. The Rector of the Church must be informed as soon as possible. In both cases, refer: “**What to do**” – bottom of page 33.

**Careful listening and positive responding to children is a vital way
of letting them know that we value and love them.
It is also a crucial way in which we can protect those in our care.**

**When we carefully listen to others we hear all that they are saying which may at
times include an indication of abuse or harm to a child or young person.**

Disclosure

Whilst confidentiality is an important aspect of relationships with children it is very important to make it clear that there are limitations.

When a child wishes to speak with you it is important to let them know that there are limitations to your confidentiality and that in some situations you are required to let someone else know.

Examples of these situations would be:

- when the child or another person is in danger
- when someone else threatens to harm the child or others
- if you also become aware of an offence that may be committed in the future.

A Church worker has a responsibility to respond to this information and this may include breaching their confidence.

What to do

What to do if a child or young person discloses something that causes you concern:

- stay calm and listen to what you are being told.
- do not be dismissive of what they have told you, even if it is someone you know (“That can’t be true!”).
- convey that you are hearing what they are saying (while avoiding strong reactions to what they are revealing).

- do not reflect back to a child what they are saying. A child's testimony can easily be discredited if it can be shown that another person has made suggestions to them, which could unintentionally happen when reflecting their story back to them.
- do not promise not to tell. Explain that you may be required to report the matter, but only to those who need to know. There can be no secrets with some serious issues.
- do not ask any more questions than necessary to be clear about what the child/young person is telling you. Any questions should be simple 'what, how', or 'where' questions and not questions that suggest an answer, e.g. "were you in the shed?"
- it is important that the number of times the child recounts the story is kept to a minimum
- remember you do not have to decide if the child is telling the truth, nor do you have to prove what has been disclosed.
- as soon as possible after the disclosure write a record of what the child said and what you said. Include such information as details of the individual, time and place.
- do not promise to resolve the situation. You cannot guarantee to do this.

Reporting obligation

Educators have a statutory responsibility to report child abuse and the failure to do so is a crime.

Reporting abuse

Step 1 - Note the following

- child's name, address and telephone number
- parent's or guardian's name and telephone numbers
- reasons for concern, any documentation of indicators (this would include any incident reports you may have made that are relevant) and any relevant statements made by the child

Step 2:

- follow the Church protocol and inform the designated person at the Church. However the reporting of abuse and neglect is mandated by law and this law supersedes Church policy.
- **NO** investigation should be carried out by the Church personnel at this stage or any other time.

Step 3:

The designated person should contact a social worker from a child protection organization such as a:

- **Child Welfare Society** or
- **The Department of Social Development** or
- **The Child Protection Officer of the South African Police Services (FCS).**

The following should be noted:

- the name of the person making the call
- the name of the intake worker receiving the call

- the date and time of the call and
- the action proposed by the person to whom the abuse has been reported

Step 4:

The social worker (and the police in some cases) will interview the child as soon as possible.

Step 5:

- a social worker and/or the police will interview the alleged abuser and sometimes family members as well
- a decision concerning the child's safety will be made by the social worker at this time
- if response is slow and particularly if the child remains at risk, the referring person should follow up until the child is safe

Step 6:

At the end of the investigation the church person, the family or the parents and the social worker should meet to discuss the steps the Church could take to assist the child.

Confidentiality

All reports of child abuse or neglect shall be held in absolute confidence.

No person shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event to any person except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation.

Any breach of this confidentiality by an employee of the Church shall be cause for immediate dismissal.

The Rector, in consultation with the official conducting the investigation may authorize limited additional disclosure if necessary to protect other children from harm in the near future, particularly where the person responsible for the abuse cannot be identified.

**In no case shall the identity of the victim or the accused person
be disclosed except as required by law.**

Investigation of alleged abuse or neglect

No person shall attempt to conduct a detailed investigation either through examination or interrogation of the child, the accused person or a witness.

It is acceptable to obtain a *reasonable* amount of information to have cause to believe a child has been abused or neglected.

Interviews shall be conducted only by authorized officials of the agency to whom the suspected crime has been reported or, when appropriate, by legal counsel or persons representing the Church in an official capacity.

All employees and volunteers of the Church shall cooperate with the official investigation as requested.

Suspension of Church related duties

A person accused of child abuse or neglect will be suspended from all Church related duties involving children. This would include all childcare, teaching, transportation, or sponsorship duties.

The Church council is **not** authorized to conduct an investigation of the incident but is allowed to monitor any such investigation and receive confidential information concerning the incident as may be necessary to determine issues concerning continuation of employment and compensation.

The person accused should be suspended on “paid leave” until the investigation is completed. This removal from duty should occur in such a way that an innocent person is not deemed immediately guilty.

There are false claims made each year. If the allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, the employee can be returned to their prior position.

Preservation of records

Copies of all documents relating to an event of abuse or neglect, including a list of all persons known to be present or in the vicinity shall be transferred to the Rector or his appointed agent.

They will review them to determine if the documents are complete in accordance with Church policy. If any documents are missing, they shall make a written notation and transfer the documents to the Church administrator who shall retain them until advised that all criminal and civil investigations and actions have been completed.

Ministerial care

All persons shall act towards the child, the parents and the accused in accordance with the principles of Christianity at all times.

The ministerial staff shall encourage and assist the child and the parents in securing appropriate counselling, care and support.

In the event the abuse or neglect involves a member or employee of the Church, the staff shall encourage and assist the individual in securing appropriate pastoral care and support, including third party counselling, being mindful of the potential for a conflict of interest.

Liaison with the community

The Rector, or his appointed agent, will serve as the Church’s sole access to the media.

The Church should emphasize to the public its position on child abuse, its concern for the victim and the extensive steps being taken to address the safety of all children.

Discipline

If you have overall authority for children’s ministry in a Church body you should ensure that a disciplinary strategy is developed, made known and implemented.

Disciplining children

When a child’s behaviour requires correction, either for the safety and welfare of themselves or the group, it is important that:

- a warning precedes any discipline, where the situation permits
- when a serious situation arises invite the parent/guardian to be present when the warning is issued
- the discipline is explained to the child
- the child is given an opportunity to explain
- the discipline is appropriate to the occasion and age of the child

- the form of discipline is not corporal punishment or otherwise abusive
 - very young children are not isolated as a form of discipline
 - only the necessary restraint under the circumstances should be used to protect children from harm or to avoid an accident
 - when physical restraint is used, a record is kept that identifies the restraint used, the member of the clergy or Church worker and child involved and any witnesses, and sets out the incident's circumstances; and
 - the child's parents or guardians are informed of the circumstances of the incident and discipline.
-

Indemnity Form

(Church address and contact details)

TO BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BY PARENT/S / LEGAL GUARDIAN/S

I/We _____

parent/s and legal guardian/s of _____ ("child")

date of birth: _____

hereby agree that my/our child attend _____ Church's _____
("the Event") and certify and state as follows:

1. That my/our child's participation in the Event and related activities is entirely voluntary and I/we accept all risk involved therein.

Accordingly _____ Church, its employees and/or volunteers (appointed by _____ Church for the purpose of assisting with the Event and/or transporting the child to and from the Event and related activities), shall not be liable for any loss, damage, injury or illness of whatsoever nature and howsoever caused to my / our child.

I/we waive and abandon any claims which may at any time arise as aforesaid, both in my/our personal capacity/ies and in my/our capacity/ies as parent/s/ legal guardian/s of my/our child, and I/we expressly indemnify _____ Church, its employees and/or volunteers against any claim which may arise or be instituted.

Dated at _____ on this _____ day of _____ 20...

Print name & sign (parent/legal guardian)

The abovementioned child does not suffer from any allergies/does suffer from the following allergies (specify):

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:

POSTAL ADDRESS:

Email address: _____

CONTACT DETAILS:

Mother: Home: _____ Work _____

Mobile: _____

Father: Home: _____ Work _____ Mobile: _____

OR

Guardian: Home: _____ Work _____ Mobile: _____

Any other person/s to call in case of emergency:

Name/s: _____

Mobile/phone: _____