

# Safety in Children's Ministry



 Presbyterian Church  
of Aotearoa New Zealand

*This document is intended as a resource for the Church. The information it contains is not prescriptive. The Book of Order and its subordinate standards contain the Church's official rules and directions. Any perceived conflict between the information contained in this resource and the Church's Book of Order and subordinate standards is entirely unintentional.*

## INTRODUCTION:

It is both a legal requirement (General Assembly 2004) and our responsibility as **Kids Friendly Churches** to ensure the safety of *OUR CHILDREN and OURSELVES, AS EMPLOYED LEADERS OR VOLUNTEERS*, in children's ministry. This booklet contains guidelines, strategies and sample policies to keep your children and leaders safe physically, psychologically and sexually including:

## CONTENTS:

1. Legislation and Procedure Chart
2. Keys to Safe Practice:
  - Appointment process
  - Safety and Protection Policy
  - Education
3. Developing Policy:
  - Physical Safety
  - Psychological Safety
  - Sexual Safety
4. Sample Policies, Procedures and Forms
5. Sample Policies Table

Safety guidelines and policies should be **clear and consistent and revised and communicated regularly.**

If you are unclear about a situation or procedure, ask your minister, supervisor, or contact us at Kids Friendly.

## CONTACT:



Jill Kayser  
Kids Friendly Coach  
Tel: 09-5245379, 027-2103784  
Email: [jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz](mailto:jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz)



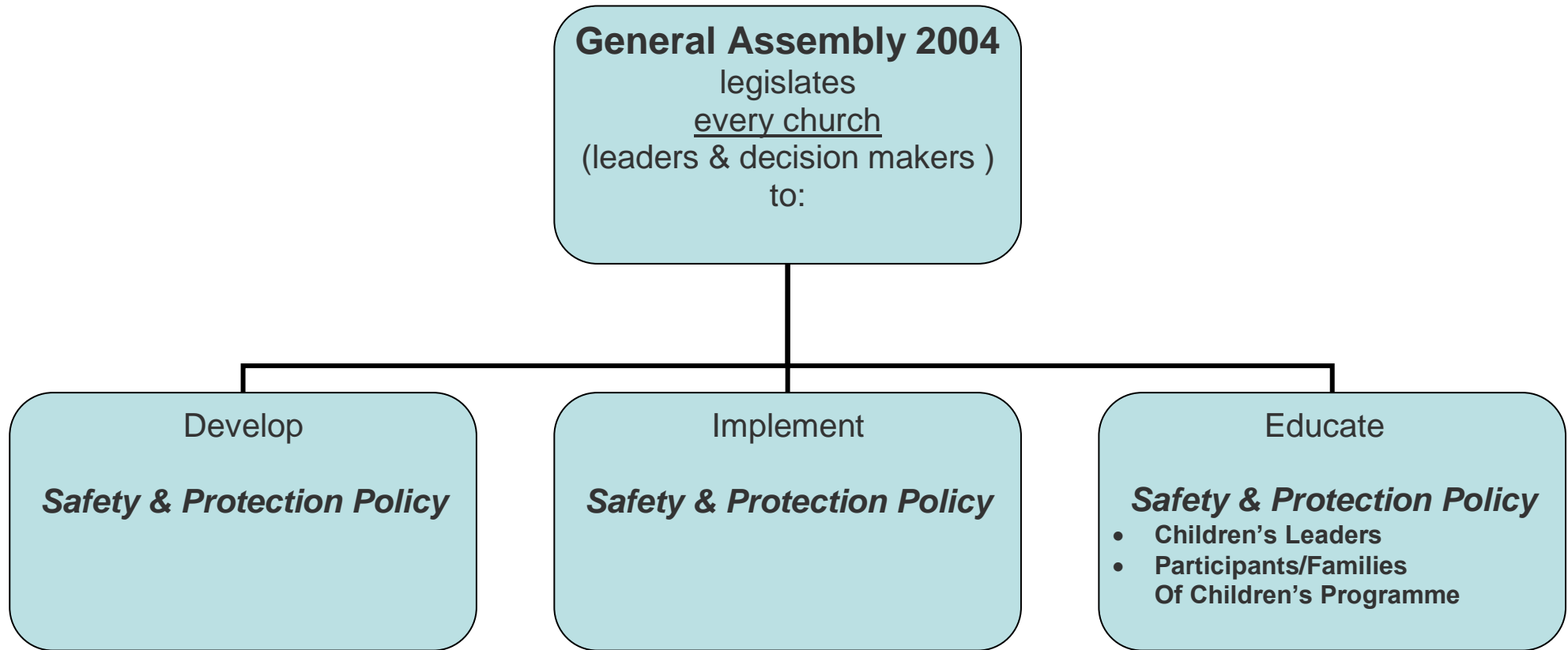
Cheryl Harray,  
Kids Friendly Advisor  
Tel: 03-4763932, 027-4896153  
Email: [cheryl@kidsfriendly.org.nz](mailto:cheryl@kidsfriendly.org.nz)



Presbyterian Church  
of Aotearoa New Zealand



# SAFETY AND PROTECTION LEGISLATION AND PROCEDURE



# Three keys to safe practice:

## 1. Appointment process

All workers should be:

- reference checked
- interviewed
- police checked\*<sup>1</sup>
- trained in safety policy and procedures\*<sup>2</sup>

\*<sup>1</sup>From 1 July 2015 it is compulsory to police check paid children's and youth workers **and** volunteers of government-funded programmes for children and youth e.g. OSCAR, playgroups receiving funding from the ministry of education etc. With the passing of the amended Vulnerable Children's Act 2014, the **PCANZ strongly recommends that all volunteers working with children and young people are:**

**\*<sup>1</sup>police checked and \*<sup>2</sup>understand the nature of abuse and neglect and the procedures for responding to it, recording it and reporting it.**

All workers should have a:

- job description
- contract (if paid) - See <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-parishes/employing-and-managing-staff> for staff contract templates
- signed criminal declaration and staff/volunteers details form

For volunteers see the Kids Friendly "Children's ministry volunteer leaders pack"

## 2. Safety and Protection Policy outlining:

- Safety and Protection Mission Statement
- Recruitment and Appointment Policy
- Protective Boundaries Policy
- Policies to ensure Physical, Psychological and Sexual Safety
- Policies for identifying abuse, dealing with disclosures of abuse and recording, responding and reporting child abuse (new requirement under the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014)

## 3. Education:

### • For leaders:

Those working with children and families should have a clear understanding of policy involving their programmes and be accountable for implementing it.

### • For children, parents, church members:

Children and families participating in church programmes should be assured and informed of policies in place to protect them.

# **Vulnerable Children's Act 2014**

The amended act which comes into force on 1 July 2015 requires organisations to ensure that those working with children and youth (paid and unpaid workers) understand the nature of abuse and neglect in children.

In addition to developing a **Safety and Protection policy** (a legislation passed by General Assembly in 2004), Churches must now also develop policy for:

**Defining and Identifying Abuse and Neglect**

**Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse**

**Recording, Reporting and Responding to Suspected Child Abuse**

**Sample policies for the above can be found under the section:**

**[SAMPLE POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS](#)**

The overarching purpose of all child protection policies is to provide information and processes to improve the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.

All staff (paid and unpaid) working with young people must have a thorough understanding of this policy and be seen to be practising this policy.

# Developing Policy to ensure Physical, Psychological and Sexual Safety

There are three main areas of safety to be considered in children's ministry:

## **1. Physical Safety**

*Anything that causes physical pain or injury, whether accidental or intentional, cause by people or the environment.*

## **2. Psychological Safety**

*Anything that causes mental anguish, including feelings of fear, shame, humiliation, indignity, powerlessness e.g. verbal intimidation and humiliation, shouting or screaming, threats of physical harm, favouritism and belittling another's culture (including racism) or appearance, silent abuse (allowing the misuse of power by other people, by doing nothing).*

## **3. Sexual Safety**

*Any sexual behaviour, whether implied or actual, which is inappropriate or offensive. e.g. deliberate and unwelcome physical or sexual touching, suggestively sexual comments, requests for sexual favours, obscene exposure and the display of pornographic material.*



# **PHYSICAL SAFETY**

---

## **Definition:**

*Anything that causes physical pain or injury, whether accidental or intentional, by people or the environment.*

## **Prevention Guidelines:**

There are two important areas that need managing to prevent physical injury in your children's ministry:

### **1. Keep your buildings/environment/equipment safe**

- Identify and remove obvious physical hazards on church property on a regular basis – e.g. broken fittings, rubbish, broken glass, poisonous or spiky vegetation.
- Repair damaged electrical cords or appliances.
- Fire and smoke alarms installed.
- Adequate lighting both interior and exterior.
- Lights secure – guarded if in an area where balls are going to be flying.
- Regularly check sports and other equipment. Discard any that are worn.
- Keep a log of when/where/by whom equipment was bought.
- Keep equipment in secure storage to prevent misuse.

### **Sample Policies/Risk Management Strategies to prevent physical accidents:**

- Health and Safety Policy
- Hazard checklist

# **PHYSICAL SAFETY**

---

## **2. Keep your activities safe**

- Evacuation drill practised regularly.
- First Aid kit available and checked/replenished regularly.
- Adequate supervision of activities.
- Training leaders – first aid courses, risk management courses.
- Transport children safely.
- Registration forms (with pertinent information) and rolls used for all children participating in our programmes.
- Procedures are in place for responding to incidents and accidents.
- Incidents and accidents are recorded and reviewed to prevent future occurrence.

### **Sample Policies/Risk Management Strategies to prevent physical accidents:**

- Emergency Response Plan
- First Aid Procedures Policy
- First Aid Checklist
- Medication Consent Form and Administering of Medication Policy
- Leader to Children Ratio Policy
- Staff Training Policy and Training Record
- Risk Assessment and Management Strategy (RAMS)
- RAMS forms
- Transporting Children Policy
- Permission forms
- Programme Enrolment Forms
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Accident and Incident Procedure
- Accident and Incident Forms

# **PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY**

---

## **Definition:**

*Anything that causes mental anguish, including feelings or fear, shame, humiliation, indignity, powerlessness.*

*e.g. verbal intimidation and humiliation, shouting or screaming, threats of physical harm, favouritism and belittling another's culture (including racism) or appearance, silent abuse (allowing the misuse of power by other people, by doing nothing).*

## **Prevention Guidelines:**

To prevent or minimise any of the above from happening, behaviour guidelines for both our CHILDREN'S LEADERS and our CHILDREN need to be set up.

- Our leaders should sign, own and understand a code of conduct for working with children.
- We should have appropriate behaviour management guidelines in place for our leaders.
- We should have boundaries and consequences in place for our children regarding unacceptable behaviour.
- Children are clear about behaviour expectations at our programmes.
- We should train and encourage professional development in behaviour management procedures.
- Children and parents are encouraged to voice their concerns.

## **Sample Policies/Risk Management Strategies to promote psychological safety:**

- Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Protecting Children from Other Children Policy
- Professional Development Policy
- Complaints Procedure Policy

# **SEXUAL SAFETY**

---

## **Definition:**

*Any sexual behaviour, whether implied or actual, which is inappropriate or offensive. e.g. Deliberate and unwelcome physical or sexual touching, suggestively sexual comments, requests for sexual favours, obscene exposure and the display of pornographic material.*

## **Prevention Guidelines:**

- We set clear boundaries for people working with children regarding appropriate and inappropriate touching.
- Our children's leaders are reference checked
- Our children's leaders are police checked
- Our children's leaders sign a declaration of criminal conviction
- Our children's leaders are trained in recognising the symptoms of child abuse
- Our children's leaders are aware of the importance of reporting suspected child abuse

## **Sample Policies/Risk Management Strategies to promote psychological safety:**

- Protecting Children from Inappropriate Adult Behaviour
- Protecting Adults working with Children
- Recruitment
- Police Check Form
- Staff Details and Declaration Form
- Complaints Procedure Policy
- Defining and Identifying Abuse and Neglect
- Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse
- Responding to, Recording and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

## SAMPLE POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS

Draft

# **SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY** **of \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church**

This policy exists to ensure the safety and well being of all the children and youth in our care.

The policy is also designed to protect leaders, of activities and programmes involving children and youth, from allegations that can arise from careless and unwise behaviour.

In accordance with the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 (amended) we also have policies to provide information and processes to improve the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect namely:

- **DEFINING AND IDENTIFYING ABUSE AND NEGLECT**
- **DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE**
- **RESPONDING TO, RECORDING, REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

We strive to ensure that all staff (paid and unpaid) working with young people have a thorough understanding of these policies and are practising them.

### **Safety and Protection Mission Statement:**

***"We will seek to ensure that children and youth in our care are nurtured and cared for in a safe environment and are protected from any potential harm."***

This church is committed to keeping the law and will therefore operate in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health requirements, the Human Rights Act, the Privacy Act, the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 and other relevant legislation. This church is also committed to being an agent of healing and justice and to prevention of abuse: spiritual, emotional (psychological), physical and sexual abuse.

### **Recruitment and appointment process:**

*This applies equally to "volunteers" as to any paid worker:*

- All those who want to work with children through this church will undergo a suitable screening process including an interview process and reference checks.
- A condition of appointment will be that applicants must respond to questions about whether they have ever committed or been accused of any acts of child molestation or abuse.
- No-one who has sexually abused a child will ever be appointed.
- Appointees must sign a declaration of commitment that divulges any criminal conviction (or pending) and acknowledges willingness to adhere to the Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct for those working with children and young people.
- Appointees must provide personal contact details.
- Appointees will be given a job description.
- It is compulsory for paid employees to be police checked every three years.
- It is strongly recommended that volunteers working with children be police checked.

**Protective boundaries for leaders, children, parents and the church, endorsed and implemented by this church:**

- Leaders will abide by the requirements of the leadership of this church including acceptance of the principles of the **Code of Ethics for Pastoral Care** and the **Code of Conduct for those working with children and young people**
- Protective strategies are in place to protect children and young people including:
  - *"Teaching" in an open environment to which parents and other teachers have free access.*
  - *Preventing visitors from accessing children without the supervision of an approved leader.*
  - *Supervising children at all times and preventing them from playing in dangerous places.*
  - *Avoiding being alone with one child unless they are within sight of others.*
  - *Not touching children on any part of their body that would normally be covered by swimming togs.*
  - *Not kissing or tickling a child or doing anything that is potentially sexual.*
  - *Keeping parents fully informed about church programmes including starting and finishing times.*
  - *Being aware of and following the church process and procedures for reporting any suspected abuse to the appropriate legal authority [ i.e. Child, Youth and Family or Police ]*
  - *Maintaining sensitivity and confidentiality in disclosing sexual abuse.*
- ✓ **Strategies, policies and procedures are in place to ensure physical, psychological, sexual and spiritual safety of children and youth. Staff and volunteers are aware of these and receive training in ensuring safety.**

## **DEFINING AND IDENTIFYING ABUSE AND NEGLECT (sample)**

The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989, defines child abuse as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person".

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes seeing or hearing about the ill treatment of others.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative, for example, rape, kissing, touching, masturbation) as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours.

Staff should be aware of their 'duty of care' which precludes developing a sexual relationship with or grooming of a child. A sexual relationship between an adult and a child will always be wrong, unequal and unacceptable.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack of action, emotion or basic needs.

### **Indicators of Abuse**

There may be **physical indicators** that a child is being emotionally abused. Some examples of this are:

- Bed-wetting or bed soiling that has no medical cause
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (eg. Headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)
- Prolonged vomiting or diarrhoea
- Has not attained significant developmental milestones
- Dressed differently from other children in the family
- Has deprived physical living conditions compared with other children in the family

There may also be **indicators in a child's behaviour** that could indicate emotional abuse. Some examples of this are:

- Suffers from severe developmental gaps
- Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
- Severe symptoms of self-destructive behaviour – self harming, suicide attempts, engaging in drug or alcohol abuse
- Overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean
- Displays attention seeking behaviours or displays extreme inhibition in play
- When at play, behaviour may model or copy negative behaviour and language used at home

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate emotional abuse. Some examples of this are:

- Constantly calls the child names, labels the child or publicly humiliates the child
- Continually threatens the child with physical harm or forces the child to witness physical harm inflicted on a loved one
- Has unrealistic expectations of the child
- Involves the child in "adult issues", such as separation or access issues
- Keeps the child at home in a role of subservient or surrogate parent

There may be **physical indicators** that a child is being physically abused. Some examples of this are:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions
- Unexplained burns
- Unexplained fractures or disclosures

There may also be **indicators in a child's behaviour** that could indicate physical abuse. Some examples of this are:

- Is wary of adults or of a particular individual
- Is violent to animals or other children
- Is dressed inappropriately to hide bruises or other injuries
- May be extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn
- Cannot recall how the injuries occurred or gives inconsistent explanations

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate physical abuse. Some examples of this are:

- May be vague about the details of the cause of injury and the account of the injury may change from time to time
- May blame the accident on a sibling, friend, relative or the injured child
- Shakes an infant
- Threats or attempts to injure a child
- Is aggressive towards a child in front of others
- May delay in seeking medical attention for a child



There may be **physical indicators** that a child is being sexually abused. Some examples of this are:

- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area
- Blood in urine or faeces
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area

There may also be **indicators in a child's behaviour** that could indicate sexual abuse.

Some examples of this in young children are:

- Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others
- Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
- Comments such as "I've got a secret", or "I don't like Uncle"
- Fire lighting by boys
- Fear of certain places e.g. bedroom or bathroom

Some examples of this in older children are:

- Eating disorders
- Promiscuity or prostitution
- Uses younger children in sexual acts
- Tries to make self as unattractive as possible

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate sexual abuse. Some examples of this are:

- May be unusually over-protective of a child
- Is jealous of a child's relationships with peers or other adults or is controlling of the child
- May favour the victim over other children
- Demonstrates physical contact or affection to a child which appears sexual in nature or has sexual overtones

There may be **physical indicators** that a child is being neglected. Some examples of this are:

- Inappropriate dress for the weather
- Extremely dirty or unbathed
- Inadequately supervised or left alone for unacceptable periods of time
- Malnourished
- May have severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders or rashes resulting from improper care or lack of hygiene

There may also be **indicators in a child's behaviour** that could indicate neglect. Some examples of this are:

- Demonstrates severe lack of attachment to other adults
- Poor school attendance or school performance
- Poor social skills
- May steal food
- Is very demanding of affection or attention
- Has no understanding of basic hygiene

There may be **indicators in adult behaviour** that could indicate neglect. Some examples of this are:

- Fails to provide for the child's basic needs, such as housing, nutrition, medical and psychological care
- Fails to enrol a child in school or permits truancy
- Leaves the child home alone
- Is overwhelmed with own problems and puts own needs ahead of the child's needs

More details and examples of indicators of neglect are available in the book 'How Can I Tell?'. You can [view 'How Can I Tell?' online](#) or you can [order copies of 'How Can I Tell?'](#) through our shop.

[www.childmatters.org.nz](http://www.childmatters.org.nz)

## **DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE** (sample)

Only a minority of children actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed accidentally or through observation by an adult of a child's behaviour, words and physical appearance.

When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child and also to ensure that your actions do not jeopardise and legal action against the abuser.

There are a number of basic 'rules' that should be followed to ensure the safe handling of any disclosures of abuse from a child:

- Don't panic.
- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person.
- Listen to the child and accept what the child says.
  
- Look at the child directly, but do not appear shocked.
- Don't seek help while the child is talking to you.
- Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone.
- Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help.
- Let them know that you need to tell someone else.
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
  
- Write down what the child says in their own words – record what you have seen and heard also.
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage of the procedure.
- Tell your manager or supervisor as soon as possible and the Recording Reporting Abuse procedure will be followed
- After making the referral to Child, Youth and Family or the Police, look after yourself. Discuss the matter with your manager, supervisor or relevant person.

### **Important Notes:**

The same action should be taken if the allegation is about abuse that has taken place in the past, as it will be important to find out if the person is still working with or has access to the children

Dealing with an allegation that a professional, staff member, foster carer or volunteer has abused a child is difficult but must be taken seriously and dealt with carefully and fairly.

([www.childmatters.org.nz](http://www.childmatters.org.nz))

## **RESPONDING TO, RECORDING, REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE** (sample)

---

Under the amended Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 (applicable from 1 July 2015) every church is responsible for developing a policy for **Responding to, recording and reporting suspected child abuse.**

Below is a sample policy for this.

### **Recording, Responding and Reporting Suspected Abuse**

Any issues of suspected child abuse must be taken seriously and handled in an appropriate manner that ensures the child's safety.

Only a minority of children actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed accidentally or through observation by an adult of a child's behaviour, words and physical appearance

Any staff, parent, caregiver, volunteer (or any other persons that may spend time with the children) who suspects abuse or has any concerns must discuss this with the .....(e.g. the supervisor of the programme and/or the minister of the church.)

In the case of a leader, staff member, supervisor or volunteer being involved in the action or suspicion, then any parent, caregiver, volunteer, other staff person (or other persons that may spend time with the children should contact ..... (e.g. the supervisor and/or minister of the church).

It is the responsibility of the..... (e.g. the supervisor and/or the minister of the church) to take any action and to ensure that the correct procedure for recording and responding to concerns is followed.

It is always preferable that the parent/caregiver is involved and or informed of any concerns but the .....(supervisor's and/or minister's) first priority will always be ensuring the safety of the child, and this may require the..... (e.g. supervisor and/or minister) to immediately contact CYF or Police if they have concerns about the child's immediate safety.

# **PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE** (sample)

Abuse suspected or disclosed

**CONSULT** in confidence  
(manager, minister, co-workers as appropriate and outside agencies)

and

**RECORD**  
(give details of what you saw and heard or suspect with dates)

If your suspicions are not confirmed as significant, continue to:

**MONITOR** the situation closely in consultation with others.

If your concerns are confirmed:

**REPORT** the suspected abuse to CYF (Children, Youth and Families), Police or another appropriate agency and

**INFORM** the church management of your actions so that you gain **SUPPORT**

# CODE OF ETHICS FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN

A Code of Ethics is not about practical guidelines for behaviour. It's a set of values, principles, important standards that can not be taken for granted.

## Ethical guidelines for Children's workers

### A. How we conduct ourselves towards those in our care

1. I will deal truthfully with others. I will encourage open discussion and respect others.
2. I will refrain from using 'bad' language (swearing) when associating with children.
3. I will respect other people's privacy. Anything shared in confidence will remain confidential unless there is a clear danger to someone. I will let people know about these limits.
4. I will recognise that all people are made in God's image. Everyone is special to God and I will not discriminate between them for any reason.
5. I will not take advantage of people, either for my own benefit or for the benefit of others.
6. I will not become emotionally dependent or intimately involved with anyone that is in my care. I will not abuse, harass or exploit anyone.
7. I see that I can't do everything. I won't try to do things such as formal counselling until I have proven competence in that area. I will refer people to those who do.

### B. Accountability to our employer

1. I will take a professional approach to my job, always seeking to do the best I can do.
2. I will be responsible about the time I spend in ministry, spending neither too much nor too little.

### C. Responsibilities to our colleagues

1. I will be helpful to other church workers. I will treat them with respect, courtesy and good faith.
2. I will appreciate what other people are doing in ministry by remembering them in prayer and encouraging them. I will respect the fact they are busy too and have commitments in other areas.
3. If conflicts do occur, I will deal with them sensibly and do something about them. I will ask the appropriate people to help sort things out and seek reconciliation.
4. I will do something about colleagues who are not doing their jobs or who are behaving in an unethical way. I will use the appropriate channels to do this.

### D. How we take care of ourselves

1. I will make sure I eat properly, get enough sleep and stay reasonably fit.
2. I will make sure I am always accountable to someone in ministry.
3. I will make sure I have a support network in place.
4. I will make sure I participate in opportunities for spiritual growth.
5. I will make sure I participate in opportunities for in-service training.
6. I will make sure I have times of recreation, refreshment and renewal.

# **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

A code of conduct gives practical guidelines for those working with children.

## **Leader's responsibilities towards children**

1. Ensure the safety and well being of all children in your care.
2. Make certain that all activities are undertaken with sufficient suitably qualified staff and approved resources.
3. Treat all children as individuals, with dignity and sensitivity, avoiding favouritism, respecting their culture, their home background, their age and their physical and mental abilities.
4. Neglect, harassment, bullying, sarcasm, and bad language are unacceptable, as is any degree of physical, emotional, mental or spiritual abuse,
5. Respect children's privacy at all times, particularly where activities include sleeping, changing of clothing, bathing and ablutions.
6. Remain in sight of others, even if out of hearing, when dealing with an individual child. Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities and inappropriate physical contact.

## **Leader's responsibilities towards parents/guardians**

1. Take the time to know all parents/guardians.
2. Keep parents/guardians informed, inviting them to participate in or observe the programmes being provided.
3. Find out if children have any special needs or medical requirements.
4. Obtain written consent from parents/guardians prior to undertaking activities off centre premises.

## **Leader's responsibilities to the Church**

1. Conduct yourself in a manner in keeping with Christian principles and ethics.
2. Be a healthy role model.
3. Be educated in the recognition of the warning signs and symptoms of abuse.

## **Leader's responsibilities to self**

1. Keep contact with the Minister or person in charge for support and advice
2. Avoid placing yourself and your co-workers in compromising situations and protect yourself from actions that may be misconstrued.
3. Support your colleagues, and develop good relationships with them.
4. Report to the Minister or person in charge any anxieties you have regarding questionable behaviour of any person participating in children's programmes. This is to safeguard the integrity of leaders from potential accusations of abuse.



# Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

## POLICE CHECK POLICY

**Download up-to-date application and consent forms from:**

**<http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-parishes/employing-and-managing-staff/police-checks>**

1. Anyone who is paid to work with children, youth and families must undergo a police check prior to their appointment. The Presbyterian Church also strongly encourages police checks for volunteers working with vulnerable people.
2. The mandate for this comes from the minutes of General Assembly 2006 section 06.047 h
3. The rationale for this mandatory requirement for a police check for lay workers in positions with pastoral responsibilities is that it is one way in which the Church can minimise, though not necessarily eliminate, the likelihood of more vulnerable members of society being put at risk by individuals whose behaviour may be detrimental to others' safety and wellbeing.
4. The requirement for police checks to be done does not exempt Sessions/Parish Councils and Presbyteries/UDCs from working through thorough recruitment and appointment processes.
5. Sessions/Parish Councils and Presbyteries/UDCs should, as part of the application process, obtain appropriate consents and declarations from all prospective appointees. (See "*Sample declaration form for prospective lay workers*"). If applicants are not willing to sign this form then they should not be interviewed or appointed.
6. Applicants should be asked to supply the names and contact details of 2-3 people who may be approached as confidential referees. Sample questions for referees and further information is available from the Presbyterian website: [www.presbyterian.org.nz](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz) under employment.
7. Following an interview, the successful applicant should be asked to fill in an official consent form for police check, photocopied onto your church letterhead. The consent form (See "*Consent to disclosure of information*") should be sent to the Assembly Office, with the application form (See "*Police check application form*".) from the Session/Parish Council Clerk or Presbytery/UDC Clerk.
8. Care must be taken to explain to the applicant the reasons for the police check and to outline the process.
9. The police check process takes time: a month needs to be allowed from the date of mailing the application and consent forms. It may be done more quickly but your time frame must allow the month.
10. If an offer of appointment is made prior to the results of the police check being known the offer can only be conditional and is subject to the result of the police check.
11. If the police check does reveal that a person has criminal convictions that need not automatically preclude the person being appointed.
12. The operative regulations in the Book of Order are 86A and 86B, as amended by the 2002 General Assembly.





# Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

## POLICE CHECK PROCEDURE

1. Make sure that you are familiar with all the details of the requirements so that the process works smoothly.
2. The person designated to manage the police check process on behalf of the congregation or presbytery should complete an application form (*See "Police check application form".*)
3. This would normally be the Session or Parish Clerk or Minister in the case of a parish, or the Presbytery Clerk in the case of a presbytery. The application form can be used for more than one police check request.
4. Ask the prospective lay worker(s) to complete an official consent form (*See "Consent to disclosure of information"*) This should be photocopied onto your church letterhead before they complete it. This must be filled in by hand and signed by the person concerned. You should use one form per person. The **original** must be forwarded to the Assembly Office for passing on to the NZ Police Vetting Service. **Only originals NOT copies will be processed.**
5. Before you send a consent form, please check:
  - The date and place of birth have been entered
  - The Person is over 17 years of age
  - The form has been signed within 3 months
  - That you are using the new form with the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Code (P30173) on it.
6. Fill in a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of the completed police check.  
Mail to: Margaret Fawcett ([Margaret@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:Margaret@presbyterian.org.nz))  
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ  
PO Box 9049, Wellington, 6141  
  
Include:
  - the application form
  - the consent form(s)
  - the stamped, self-addressed envelope
7. The NZ Police require up to 20 working days to process requests for police checks. Please allow 30 working days to elapse from the date you mailed the police check request to the Assembly Office. You may get a response more quickly but allow the full time quota in your planning.
8. If you have not had a response after 30 days you can contact the Assembly Office to enquire as to progress. Do not contact the NZ Police directly as they have asked that all communication between the police and the Presbyterian Church be through the Assembly Office.
9. In order to meet the obligations of the Privacy Act and to safeguard the integrity of the process police check information will be dealt with by mail not email or fax. Email and fax may be used for general enquiries about process but not for specific information about people.
10. Police checks for prospective paid lay workers can be sent individually. Applications for police checks will be sent, once a week, to the NZ Police vetting service. If you require police checks for volunteers please arrange to do all the checks in one batch.
11. For further information contact Margaret Fawcett at PCANZ: Ph (04) 801 6000  
Email: [Margaret@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:Margaret@presbyterian.org.nz)



# Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

**Current**

✓ **APPLICATION FORM FOR A POLICE CHECK**

**and**

✓ **POLICE CONSENT FORM**

**can be downloaded from**

**<http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-parishes/employing-and-managing-staff/police-checks>**



# Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

## DECLARATION FORM FOR PROSPECTIVE LAY WORKERS

### Affirmations and acknowledgements

*Working for the Christian church places a person in a position of trust. As part of your application you are required to make the following affirmations and give consents.*

1. If appointed I will accept the authority and discipline of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, as exercised through the Presbytery within whose bounds I work, and will uphold the polity, teaching and doctrine of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand while I hold the position.
2. I have/have not been convicted of any criminal offence involving violence or sexual abuse.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. I have/have not been disciplined by any church for any unethical or unprofessional behaviour.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. *I consent to the Presbyterian Church seeking verbal or written information about me from the referees whose names I have supplied and from representatives of employing bodies with whom I have worked and authorise the information sought to be released. (The applicant will be advised of any approaches made to any such referees/representatives who have not been named in this application form before any approach is made.)*
5. *I consent to the Presbyterian Church undertaking a police check here in New Zealand and in any country where I have lived/worked.*

To the best of my knowledge the statements given are correct and I understand that if any false or misleading information is given or material fact suppressed my application will not be processed or if appointment my appointment may be terminated.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>SAMPLE SAFETY POLICIES</b>	<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>To view any of these SAMPLE policies that can be adapted for your church's context contact <a href="mailto:jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz">jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz</a></b>		
<b>SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY</b>	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
<b>PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENT SAFETY</b>		
Health & Safety Management Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and safety environment policy</li> <li>• On-site risk assessment and management policy</li> <li>• Off-site risk assessment and management policy</li> </ul>	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	COMPULSORY
Hazard Identification Form	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
Venue Check Form	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
RAMS (risk assessment and management strategy) Form	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
Emergency Response Plan	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
Emergency Drill Procedures	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
First Aid Procedures Policy First Aid Checklist	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Administering Medication Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medication Consent Form</li> <li>• Record of Medication Administered Form</li> </ul>	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Accident and Incident Procedure Accident and Incident Report Form	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Permission Form	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Outing Backpack Checklist	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
Cleaning Checklist	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
Leader to Children Ratio Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Animal Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
No Smoking Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
Excursion Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Transporting Children Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Use of Church Van Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
Use of Private Vehicle Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
Use of Rental Vehicle Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
Vehicle Check List	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED

<b>INFORMATION POLICIES</b>		
Complaints Procedure	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Information Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
<b>STAFF</b>	KIDS FRIENDLY	
Code of Conduct Code of Ethics	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
Staff Training Policy Training Record	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Staff Recruitment Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
Staff Reference Check	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	COMPULSORY
Use of Volunteer Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
Staff/volunteer declaration and information form	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
Police Check Policy Police Check Procedure and Application Form	PCANZ	COMPULSORY
Professional Development Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Job Description and Responsibilities	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	COMPULSORY
Defining and identifying abuse and neglect	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
Dealing with disclosures of abuse	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
Responding to, recording, reporting suspected child abuse	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
<b>PROGRAMME OPERATION</b>		
Enrolment Policy Enrolment Form	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
Attendance Register	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	COMPULSORY
Registration brochure Registration form	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
<b>CHILD MANAGEMENT POLICIES</b>		
Child Behaviour Management Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Protecting children from inappropriate adult behaviour	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Protecting children from other children	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Protecting adults working with children	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Reporting suspected child abuse	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
Supervision Plan	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
Child Management Plan	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED
Children with Special Needs Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY (St James)	RECOMMENDED

To receive copies of specific sample policies or for any safety policy advice, please contact:

Jill Kayser, Kids Friendly Coach  
Tel: 09-5245379, 027-2103784  
Email: [jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz](mailto:jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz)



Presbyterian Church  
of Aotearoa New Zealand

# Kids Friendly Resource Feedback Form

Please return completed form to:

Kids Friendly, 497 Remuera Rd, Remuera, Auckland, 1050 or email your comments to [jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz](mailto:jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz)

The name of your church:

The Kids Friendly Resource you are responding to:

Who made use of this resource:

Name	Designation

What did you find helpful about this resource?

Is there any information you require that this resource did not provide?

For further information contact:

Jill Kayser, Kids Friendly, 09-5245379; 027-2103784, [jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz](mailto:jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz)  
Cheryl Harray, Kids Friendly, 03-4763932, 027-4896153, [cheryl@kidsfriendly.org.nz](mailto:cheryl@kidsfriendly.org.nz)