



Engage International

South Australia

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

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Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of contents	(page 2)
1. Introduction	(page 3)
2. Objectives	(page 3)
3. Policy Statement	(page 3)
4. Scope of Policy	(page 3)
5. What is Child Abuse?	(pages 4 and 5)
6. Infants at Risk	(page 6)
7. Children with a Disability	(page 6)
8. Responding to Suspected Child Abuse	(pages 7 – 15)
9. Screening of Workers in Child/Youth Related Ministries	(pages 16 – 20)
10. Staff/Worker Induction and Training	(pages 21 and 22)
11. Dealing with People with Histories as Child Abusers	(pages 23 and 24)
12. Evaluation and Concluding Statement	(page 25)
Appendix A: Legal Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect	(page 26)
Appendix B: Mandatory Reporting	(page 27)
Appendix C: Child and Youth Related Ministry Clearance Form	(page 28)
Appendix D: Notifying Families SA	(page 29)
Appendix E: Confidential Internal Written Report	(page 30)
Appendix F: Definitions and Indicators of Abuse or Neglect	(pages 31 and 32)
Appendix G: ACCSA Child Protection Training Strategy	(pages 33 – 37)
Appendix H: Contract between Church and Person with a History as an Abuser	(pages 38 and 39)
Bibliography	(page 40)

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DFC Trainer 10250 and commissioned by Engage International
and completed January 2015.**

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

1. INTRODUCTION:

Children and young people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe at all times. These policy and procedures have been developed for the protection of children and youth who are within the ministries of Australian Christian Churches South Australia being the Assemblies of God in Australia South Australian Conference Inc (referred to in this document as ACCSA) churches and more specifically Engage Church Kadina.

2. OBJECTIVES:

These policy and procedures concerning child abuse have the following goals:

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

3. POLICY STATEMENT:

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

4. SCOPE OF POLICY:

All pastors, staff members, leaders and volunteer workers associated with any ministry within any church aligned with ACCSA are expected to comply with this policy and the associated procedures. (These persons will be designated by the term 'worker' throughout this policy.)

This policy covers the following areas:

- Understanding what child abuse is.
- Identifying child abuse.
- Responding to situations of suspected or known child abuse.
- The screening and training of staff and volunteer workers associated with ministry to or care of children or youth within the ministry of the church.
- Protocols for protecting children and young people within the church from persons with a history of abusing children.

The terms 'youth' and 'young person' in this policy refers to anyone under the age of 18.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

5. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

According to the Children's Protection Act 1993, child abuse is categorised in four ways:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect

These forms of abuse can be described as:

(Department for Education and Child Development, Families SA www.families.sa.gov.au/childsafes)

1. **Physical abuse** is when the child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering serious physical trauma or inflicted injury. Physical Abuse is commonly characterised by physical injury resulting from the practices such as:
 - Hitting, punching, kicking (eg with open hands, fists, belts, wooden spoons etc and the frequency and force was significant enough that an injury was likely);
 - Shaking (particularly of young babies);
 - Burning (immersion in scalding water, cigarette burns, irons, etc), biting, pulling out hair;
 - Alcohol or other drug administration/misuse (prescribed or illicit drugs);
2. **Sexual abuse** is any sexual activity or behaviour that is imposed on a child by another person. Sexual abuse occurs when someone in a position of power over children uses that power to involve the child/ren in sexual activity. Such behaviour may include:
 - Sexual suggestion;
 - Inappropriate touching;
 - Exhibitionism, mutual masturbation, oral sex;
 - Showing pornographic material eg. DVDs, internet, mobile phones, any form of social media;
 - Using children in the production of pornographic material;
 - Penile or other penetration of the genital or anal region;
 - Child prostitution.
3. **Emotional abuse** is serious or chronic abuse directed at children whereby the children's self esteem and social competence are undermined or eroded over time. The child's social, emotional, or cognitive development is impaired or seriously at risk as a direct result of persistent behavior or attitude.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

Such behaviour may include:

- Devaluing (eg. “you’re hopeless, useless, stupid”);
- Ignoring (eg. Parent or carer is psychologically unavailable to the child);
- Rejecting (telling a child in varying ways he/she is unwanted);
- Corrupting (to allow children to participate in immoral or criminal acts);
- Isolating (limits normal social experience);
- Terrorising (may single out or threaten with punishment or death);
- Witnessing domestic/family violence.

4. Chronic or serious **neglect** is characterised by serious, ongoing failure to provide for children’s basic needs to the extent that the child is not receiving the care and supervision necessary to protect him/her from harm, has suffered serious physical injury or illness, or there is risk of serious harm to the child’s wellbeing and development.

Such behaviour may include:

- Inadequate supervision of young children for long periods of time;
- Failure to provide adequate nutrition, clothing or personal hygiene;
- Failure to provide needed or appropriate healthcare and/or medical treatment;
- Disregard for potential hazards in the home;
- Forcing children to leave home at an early age.
- Allowing children to engage in chronic truancy.

It is accepted that physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect may occur to varying degrees of severity and therefore warrant differing responses according to the degree of severity. The Children’s Protection Act 1993 defines the extent of physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect that the state authority has authority to intervene in. (Appendix A: *Legal Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect* p26 provides further clarification of what constitutes child abuse or neglect.)

Sexual behaviour however, involving a child is always abuse since the child is considered to be unable to alter and/or understand the perpetrator’s behaviour due to that child’s early stage of development and/or powerlessness in the situation. Therefore all forms of sexual abuse regardless of the degree or severity warrant the same level of response.

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6. INFANTS AT RISK (IAR/HRI)

Infants at risk concerns children of less than one year of age.

Concern may arise from an incident of abuse or neglect, OR it may come from situations where **no actual harm** has yet occurred, however, **caregiver or parental behavior and characteristics may place the infant at risk of harm.**

NB: A notification can be made PRIOR to baby being born.

Carer behaviours or characteristics:

- Significant alcohol/substance abuse;
- Interpersonal/domestic violence;
- Mental Health issues including post natal depression;
- Attachment relationships;
- Abuse of previous children;
- Intellectual capacity;
- Experience of childhood abuse;
- Parenting abilities;
- Housing and physical environment;
- Income and financial management;
- Age/maturity;
- Low number/level of social supports.

7. CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY

A child with a disability may be especially vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons.

- An increased likelihood that the child is socially isolated with fewer outside contacts with other children.
- Often children with a disability are involved with multiple carers. This potentially increases exposure to abusive behaviour and a lack of continuity in care may mean that behavioural changes go unnoticed.
- Communication difficulties preventing disclosure or making disclosure more difficult.
- The child/carers being inhibited about complaining for fear of losing services.
- Children with disabilities may be the targets of those that misuse power I the belief that they are less likely to be detected.

The behaviour of a child with disabilities can dramatically alter the dynamics and collective stress of families and carers.

Adapted from Govt SA DECD; Department for Communities and Social Inclusion, 2012

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

8. RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Foundational Principles

Everything must be done to ensure the ongoing safety of the child or youth concerned along with any other child in the alleged perpetrator's circle. Indeed, the child is the primary concern and ALL other concerns (including the guilt or innocence of the alleged offender) must be secondary. This does not mean that the alleged offender is to be considered guilty without due investigation, but that the child's concerns and safety come first.

Mandatory Reporting/Duty of Care

The Children's Protection Act 1993 identifies certain people who are required by law to report suspected incidences of abuse. These people are called *mandated notifiers* and are legally bound to report suspected cases of abuse to Families SA.

Other members of society not included in the above categories however have responsibilities to provide a duty of care to children. This duty of care is a moral responsibility to provide a safe and protective environment for children and includes a responsibility to ensure that suspected abuse is adequately investigated and that children are protected from ongoing abuse. Any workers in Engage Church who become aware of, or who suspect, abuse within the church or its ministry must take action as soon as possible to report that abuse or suspected abuse to Families SA and to the leadership of the church.

Notification Procedures

In line with this policy it is a requirement of Engage Church that where a worker becomes aware of or suspects an incidence of child abuse that the following actions are carried out within a 24hr period after he or she forms the suspicion:

- The alleged abuse and its alleged perpetrator also needs to be reported to Families SA as soon as possible.
- The alleged abuse and its alleged perpetrator also needs to be reported to the Senior Pastor/Department Head/Eldership/Board of Directors of the church as soon as possible.
- In the case of a person with denominational credentials, a report must also be made to the State Headquarters of ACCSA as soon as possible.

Read p 8 – for a detailed outline of the notification procedures where the alleged abuser is not in a place of ministry within the church.

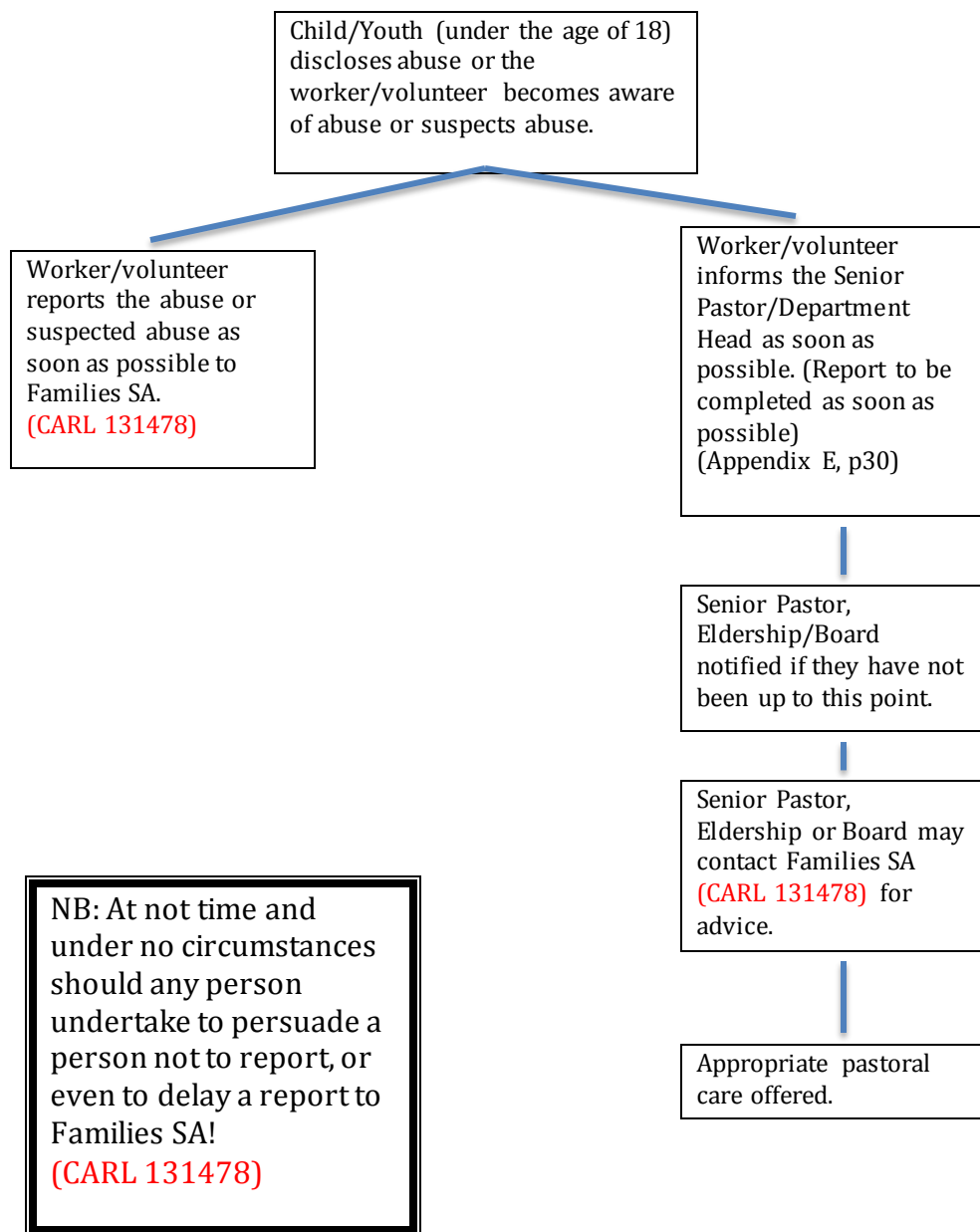
Read p 10 – for a detailed outline of the notification procedures where the alleged abuser is in a place of ministry within the church.

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1. Notification procedures where the alleged abuser is not in a position of ministry within an ACCSA Church:

The following diagram outlines the procedure to be followed when someone in an ACCSA Church becomes aware of abuse or suspects abuse involving a child or youth under the age of 18 years and the perpetrator is not in a position of ministry within the church.

Please note: If the alleged perpetrator is a church worker/volunteer/Pastor please go to p 10 for the appropriate reporting protocol.



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2. Notification procedures where the alleged abuser is an ACCSA Church Pastor/ Staff Member/Leader or Volunteer Worker:

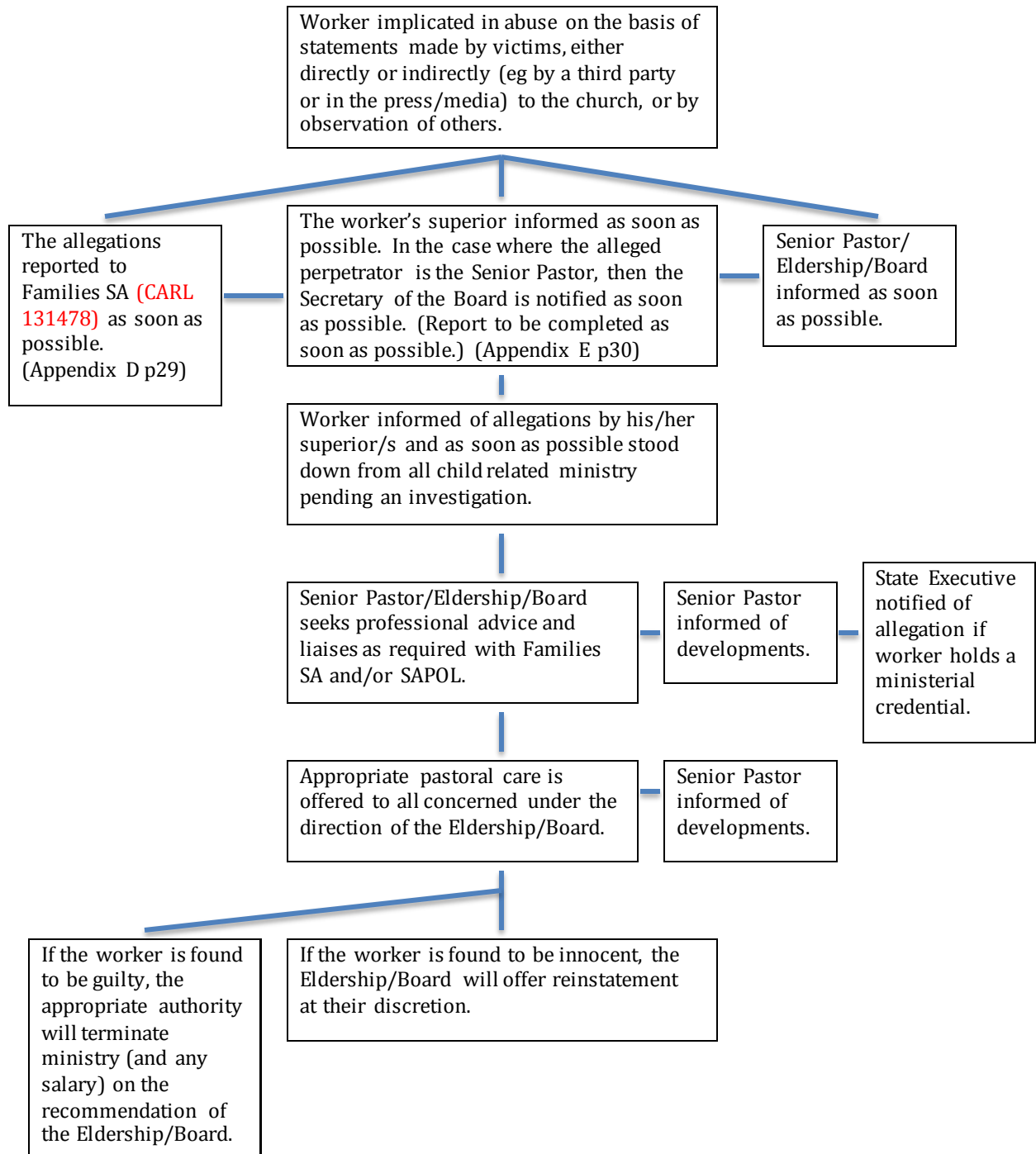
In outlining the procedures for dealing with allegations of child abuse made against an ACCSA worker the principle stated above apply as they would in any other circumstances.

In addition, although any accused person is essentially innocent until proven guilty, it is a requirement of the ACCSA that the worker should be stood down as soon as possible from any child related ministries pending an investigation. To expedite proceedings the process outlined in the following diagram on p10 should be adopted.

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

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Notification Procedures where the alleged abuser is an ACCSA Pastor/Staff Member/Leader/Volunteer Worker:



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Forming a reasonable suspicion that abuse or neglect has occurred.

You have suspicion on reasonable grounds to report child abuse and/or neglect when:

- A child tells you that they have been abused;
The report procedure must be followed as soon as possible after a child or young person discloses the abuse to the worker. Rarely, if ever, do children lie about abuse. Every disclosure must be taken very seriously indeed.
- Your own observations of the behaviour of abuse, then reasonable suspicion has arisen and a report should be made. (A list of definitions and indicators of abuse or neglect appears in Appendix F p31-33.) It is important to recognise that one or two indicators alone do not necessarily mean that abuse is occurring. The worker should try to see if there are any patterns of indicators emerging. If there is any doubt, Families SA and your leader should be contacted for advice.
- When your own observations about the behaviour of the child, or their adult caregiver/s, gives you cause to suspect that a child is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.
- A child tells you that they know someone who has been abused (the child may actually be referring to themselves.)
- Someone reliable such as a relative, friend, neighbour or sibling of the child tells you of the abuse.

The law does not require proof that abuse or neglect has occurred for a notification to be made. It is not your responsibility to provide proof, however the law requires that you report reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

Forming a reasonable suspicion that a person is a perpetrator

In addition to the abovementioned grounds for suspecting possible abuse it is important that all workers within the church exercise appropriate vigilance against those who would perpetrate abuse upon children.

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

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

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

If there is a victim or suspected victim, then the reporting process outlined in this document must apply. That is, **a report must be made as soon as possible to Families SA and to the church leadership.**

General Indicators:

- Majority of an abuser's relationships are with children. (Abusers don't relate well to people of their own age.)
- Is overly friendly with children.
- Has low self-esteem, poor self image (possible due to emotional deprivation as a child.)
- Can be seen to be in church for only a short time period of time and seeks to join the children's ministry. They can be obsessive when they say that they 'love' children.
- Can be found wandering around children's church areas etc.
- May remove themselves mid-way through a church service to have time with children who may be in the toilets.
- Gives articles of their clothing to a child as gifts, eg a cap, a jacket, footy shirt. This is an attempt to demonstrate ownership of the child. This is also called 'grooming.'
- May contact or attempt to contact children in the church by means of social media.
- Carries (actual or on mobile phone) photos of children other than their own, often indicating that these children love him/her.
- Gives extreme affection to children, eg front-on close hugging, always touching or flirting.

The following list of characteristics is adapted from Kids R US, *Protect the Child*, p 12

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

- Withdrawn, placid.
- Can be single or married. In fact some figures show that 47% of child abusers are married. May be experiencing marital problems, but not necessarily.
- Over-emphasis upon morality – are legalistic and inflexible. Could well be a reflection of their own inappropriate actions.
- Strong denial of offence or any intention to offend.
- Convincing in protests of innocence – has developed this as a defence mechanism.
- Avoids screening processes, or attempts to do so.
- Attempts to engineer opportunities to be alone with a child, eg babysitting (may target single parent families or those at risk,) child minders at conferences.
- Offers to take or takes child shopping or on an outing. Offers to pick up from school.
- Dislikes submission to authority, prefers to work alone, and is negative (or dismissive) when sexual abuse topics are raised.
- Spends considerable time with children.
- Voices opinion on sex education, suggesting that children are not taught properly.
- Can be of any personal or social background, eg extrovert, introvert, married, single, old, young, rich, poor. While the majority of abusers are male, they are not limited to that particular gender.

Domestic indicators:

- Shows improper behaviour towards developing daughter/son.
- Showers with children at an inappropriate age.
- Expects an open door policy in the bathroom.
- Attempts to get children on lap, even when child or adolescent resists.
- Exhibits inappropriate hugging and/or kissing.
- Attempts to shut down other parent/adults communication with daughter/son.
- Children don't want to be home with father/mother or male/female member of the family alone.
- Is jealous of son/daughter's girlfriend/boyfriend.
- Children are treated like an adult partner in conversation or decisions.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

Responding to a child who discloses abuse

One way in which a worker may become aware of abuse is through disclosure by the victim. When a child under the age of 18 begins to share with the worker an experience of abuse the following guidelines should be followed. It is important to be aware of the fact that 96% of abusers are known to the child and only 4% fall into the stranger category as well as 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused by the age of 18.

The worker should:

- Listen carefully to the child.
- Allow the child to talk.
- Reassure the child that the worker believes the child. It is essential to understand that rarely do children fabricate allegations of abuse and therefore all disclosures of abuse should always be believed.
- Reassure the child that the abuse is not the child's fault. The child is not responsible for the abuse.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling someone, and that the worker is pleased that the child has share this with the worker (perpetrators often threaten a victim in an attempt to ensure silence.)
- Acknowledge that it is hard to talk about these things.
- Not press the child for details. It is not the worker's role to conduct an investigation, and asking leading questions may in fact prejudice any subsequent investigations.
- Not make promises that the worker cannot keep (eg confidentiality.)
- As soon as possible after the conversation contact Families SA and submit a report. (See Appendix D: Notifying Families SA p29)
- Concurrently or as soon as possible after contacting Families SA submit a verbal and then a written report to the Senior Pastor or relevant Department Head. (See Appendix E: Confidential Internal Written Report p30)
- Make notes of the conversation held while the facts are still fresh in the mind of the worker.

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

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

If the victim is now 18 years of age or over

Victims who were abused below the age of 18 but disclose the abuse after they have reached the age of 18 years are no longer the province of Families SA.

In the case of a person 18 years of age or over who has disclosed their own childhood abuse, it may be appropriate to discuss with them the option of reporting their situation to the police. This has a two-fold result. It may give the opportunity to begin the process of closure for the victim. It will also alert the authorities to the identity of the alleged perpetrator, possibly leading to action being taken to protect other children, or even to solve cases where abuse has occurred.

It is recommended that Families SA be consulted as the perpetrator may have ongoing involvement in child-related activities. The worker who has become aware of the situation may well have cause to believe that the other children under the age of 18 could be at continued risk from the alleged perpetrator.

If that is the case, then the procedure above for reporting such suspicions to Families SA and the leadership of the church must be followed as soon as possible.

Ongoing care and support

- If the alleged abuse has occurred within the realm of the ministry of an ACCSA church, appropriate actions must be taken so that the alleged perpetrator can no longer be in a position to abuse.
- Support and counseling should be offered to the abuse victim and the family.
- If the alleged abuse is confirmed by investigation, the perpetrator should face the full legal implications of his/her actions and that any pastoral care offered should be in line with that policy.
- The family of the perpetrator should be offered appropriate pastoral care.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

9. SCREENING OF WORKERS IN CHILD/YOUTH RELATED MINISTRIES

The most effective strategy against abuse within the ministry of the church is prevention. With that in mind ACCSA requires that the following procedures be adhered to in the screening of prospective workers in child related ministries, or in ministries that deal with young people. Every worker must be screened and approved before being appointed. The Senior Pastor, Children's Pastor, Youth Director or relevant Department Head is to use a form similar to the *Child and Youth Related Ministry Clearance Form* (A sample of this form is found in Appendix C p28) and record that the clearance checks outlined below have been conducted before any appointment I made.

Pastoral Check

Before any person is appointed to children's or youth ministry they must undergo a pastoral clearance. The following procedures are advised:

- If the church has a medium-to-large congregation and a person is involved in a department of the church and wishes to transfer to the children's or youth department, the Children's Pastor or Youth Pastor will contact the Oversight Leader of the person's current department and ask if they have any concerns with the person working directly with children or young people. If there are no concerns the screening process can continue.
- If the church has a smaller congregation, the Senior Pastor should be consulted before any person is appointed to the children's or youth ministry.
- If a person has transferred from another church and wishes to become involved in children's or youth ministry either the Senior Pastor or their nominated representative will contact the Senior Pastor or the person's previous church and ask if they have any concerns with the person working directly with children or young people. If there are no concerns the screening process can continue.
- If a person comes to the church and makes a commitment to Christ and then after a short period of time indicates their desire to become involved in children's or youth ministry, appointment should always be made at the discretion of and under the direction of Senior Leadership. It is recommended that new Christians be given a period of time (where fruits of Christian life are clearly evident) to establish their relationship with God as well as become familiar and comfortable with their new spiritual family before becoming involved in children's or youth ministry.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

Database Clearance

ACCSA churches are required to maintain a central database, listing all the people in the church. For the sake of security, the governing body of the church will designate persons who will be authorised to add, or change, information in the database.

As part of the screening process the Senior Pastor/Department Head will check the database before any appointment of workers or staff.

It is recommended that beside the name on the database there will be two boxes. The first will be an indication of whether or not the person has acquired a police check. If they have not acquired a police check the box will be left blank. If the police check has already been acquired the date in the relevant box will indicate the date the results of the check became known to the church. **No worker or staff member in child or youth related ministries should be appointed without this box being completed.**

It is suggested that the words **“Additional ministry information to be accessed”** be adjacent to the second box. If this box is checked then the Pastor/Department Head should first contact the Senior Pastor/Eldership/Board before proceeding with any appointment.

The appearance of a tick in the second box may not necessarily indicate a negative result on the police check. There could be a variety of reasons why additional information is advised and if this box is checked a person should not be appointed to a ministry position without consultation with the Senior Pastor/Eldership/Board.

It is also recommended that the completion dates obtained from the Child and Youth Related Ministry Clearance form be transferred to the database for future reference.

No confidential information or personal history records should appear in the database.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

National Police Certificate

As part of its risk management and screening process, ACCSA requires all paid or unpaid staff members and volunteer workers, including workers under 18 years of age, whose ministry causes them to relate to children and youth in any way, to submit to a National Police Certificate (NPC) before being appointed.

As a non-government organisation, ACCSA is eligible to have the Government meet the cost of a NPC for a **volunteer** who works with 'vulnerable groups' such as children, youth, the aged and frail, or people with a disability. To receive this benefit ACCSA has received a Volunteer Organisation Authorisation Number (VOAN) from SAPOL. This is available to be used by all churches within the ACCSA conference when applying for a NPC for a volunteer who fulfills the above criteria. The senior leadership of a church will need to nominate an Organisation Representative to the State Office.

The role of the Organisation Representative is to process all the police checks within their church; authorize the NPC applications using a VOAN; manage the information received in each NPC in a strictly confidential and secure manner.

In the cases where the NPC applicant is a volunteer who does not work with 'vulnerable groups' or a staff member (including those who work with vulnerable groups) the SAPOL fee schedule will apply.

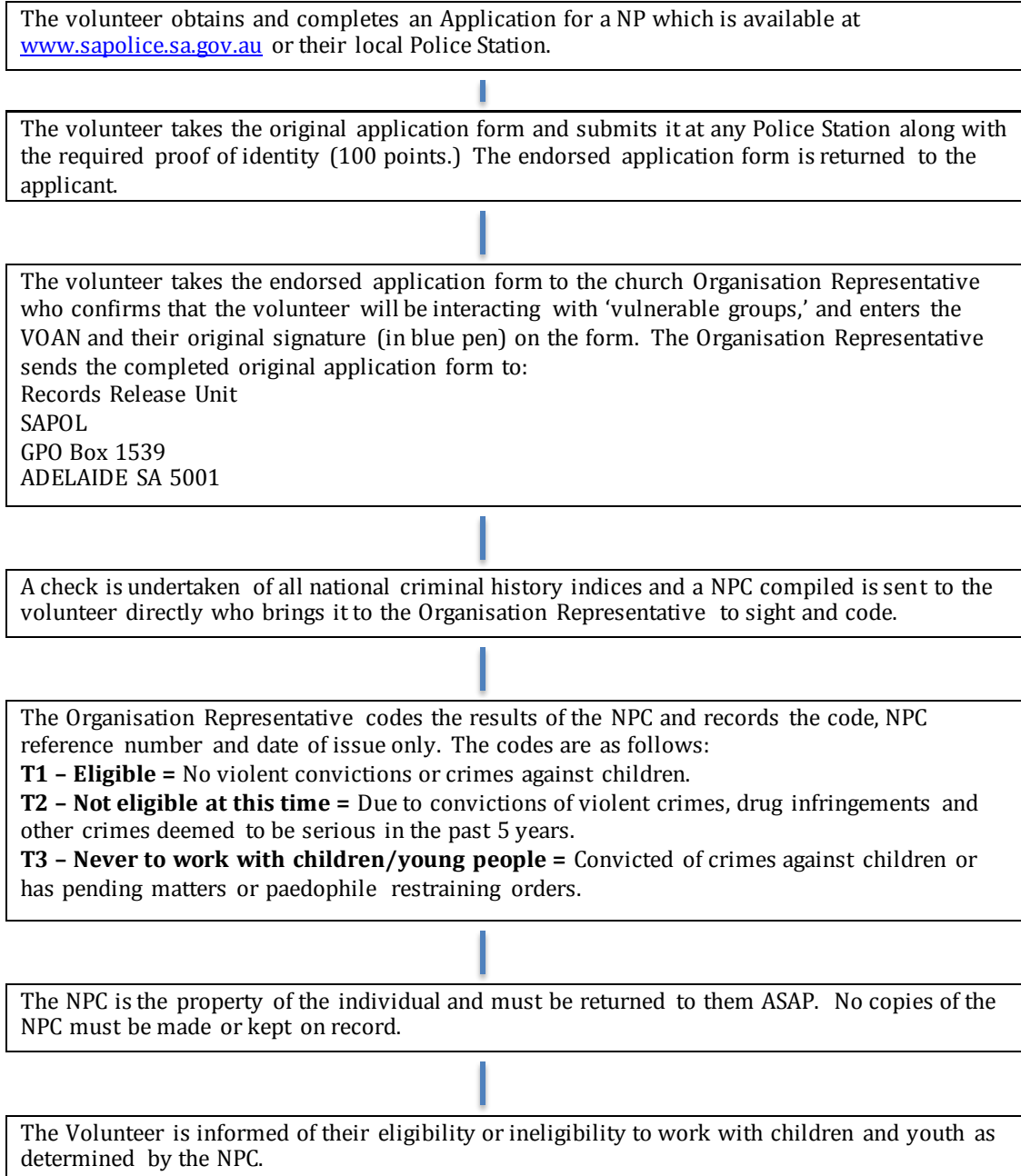
All staff members of a church are required to submit to a police check before appointment, regardless of whether or not their ministry directly involves children.

It is recommended that churches pay the above fee for staff members.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

Applying for a National Police Certificate

The following flow chart outlines the procedure to be followed when applying for a National Police Certificate (NPC) using a VOAN (the volunteer works with 'vulnerable groups' and the fee is met by the Government):



The same process would be followed for a staff member or volunteer not working with 'vulnerable groups,' except a VOAN would not be quoted and a fee would be incurred according to the SAPOL fee schedule. **It is recommended that all staff/volunteers working with 'vulnerable groups' apply for a NPC every 3 years.**

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

Underage and Occasional Workers

ACCSA recognises the need in churches to use underage and occasional workers in their children and youth programs.

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

An underage worker is defined as a worker who is under the age of 18. He or she is not exempt from making a report to Families SA. Therefore it is recommended that underage workers attend Module 1: a 3 hour information session on Child Safe Environments – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect (formerly known as Mandated Notification Training) which includes an explanation of the churches Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Module 2: the full 7 hour program (Child Safe Environments – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect including assessments) is not recommended as it contains material suitable only for adults. All CSE training must be presented by a qualified DFC Trainer and is authorised by ACCSA. The underage worker should also complete the appropriate Department Training and should always be supervised by a fully trained and police checked senior worker. All underage workers are also required to apply for a National Police Certificate.

Subject to the discretion of the Senior Pastor or Department Head, it is possible to have underage and occasional workers on roster who have not had a police check provided they are supervised at all times by a worker who has been police checked, completed all ACCSA Child Protection Training and department training.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

10. STAFF/WORKER INDUCTION AND TRAINING

As part of its commitment to the minimisation of the risk of abuse within its churches ACCSA requires all workers to attend the ACCSA approved Child Protection Training Program. A full outline of the training is in Appendix G p34-37)

All CSE (Child Safe Environments) training must be presented by a qualified DFC Trainer and is authorised by ACCSA.

ACCSA Child Protection Training Program consists of 2 modules:

Module 1 – Child Protection Orientation Training, provides an overview of child abuse from a Christian perspective and outlines the reporting process in line with SA Government requirements. Module 1 is a 3 hour information session on Child Safe Environments – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect (formerly known as Mandated Notification Training) which includes an explanation of the churches Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

This module is a requirement for all pastors, staff members, leaders and volunteer workers attend this training every three years.

Upon completion of this module participants will:

- Understand the underlying principles of church child protection policies.
- Understand the fundamental biblical teaching of human dignity and the care of children.
- Be able to appropriately respond to the issue of child abuse in a church setting.
- Understand legal responsibilities and issues of confidentiality.
- Understand and follow church protocols
- Be able to understand and work with a child protection model.

Module 2 – Child Abuse Notification Training, is the current Families SA approved training module for mandated notifiers. Module 2 is the full 7 hour program (Child Safe Environments – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect including assessments.)

This module is a requirement for all pastors, senior leadership and volunteers working directly with children/young people and/or in welfare. It is recommended that these workers attend this training every three years.

Upon completion of this module participants will:

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

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

- Be able to identify a range of indicators concerning child abuse and neglect.
- Be able to discuss the concept of child-safe environments and shared responsibility for the protection of children.
- Fully understand their legal responsibility to notify suspected child abuse and neglect on reasonable grounds.
- Be competent in the process and procedure of reporting to the Child Abuse Report Line (ph: 131478).
- Be able to discuss ethical responsibilities in regard to children and young people at risk.

Other Training Requirements

Other ministry specific departmental training will also be required by individual departments following the completion of ACCSA Child Protection Training eg children's church training.

Once the prospective worker has successfully completed the induction process (As outlined in Appendix C p28) the department head must appoint them for a probationary period, or according to individual church policy.

Churches will be notified of any changes and developments to the Child Protection Policy by the ACCSA State Office.

Departmental Manuals

All departments dealing with people under the age of 18 are required to develop a departmental manual to be used in the induction and training of staff and workers. The manual must include:

1. ACCSA Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
2. Specific instructions regarding the safe conduct of the ministry.
3. Identify strategies to address possible abuse risk areas relevant to the Department's ministry.

For example the Children's Ministry Manual must cover areas such as:

- Screening of workers (specific instructions.)
- Registration of children.
- Child drop off and collection protocols.
- Teacher identification protocols.
- Adult visitor protocols.
- Toileting procedures.
- Nappy changing protocol.
- Child contact guidelines.
- On Campsite and Outings Protocols.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

11. DEALING WITH PEOPLE WITH HISTORIES AS CHILD ABUSERS

As in all situations the primary concern of the church lies with the victims and potential victims of those with histories as child abusers (whether it is classified as sexual, physical, emotional or neglect.)

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

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

The following controls must be read in that light.

Certainly, it is the hope of the ACCSA that all people who attend the church will come to healing, including past abusers. Nevertheless, the ACCSA churches will do everything in their power to protect the children of the church during this process. The ACCSA believes further that child abuse thrives in an atmosphere of secrecy. Therefore it requires all offenders to be open, transparent and accountable in an effort to defeat the secrecy and darkness that breeds child abuse.

The ACCSA requires all people with child abuse histories as perpetrators, who wish to attend an AOG Church or AOG Church related activities, to sign a contract with the AOG Church and keep to its conditions (See Appendix H p38-39.)

That contract must cover the following:

1. A willingness on the part of the offender to have his/her name and appropriate details to be made known to all Pastors, elders and key leaders in all children's, youth and sporting ministries in the church, and to any other person that the Senior Pastor/Eldership/Board deems appropriate. The offender must also be willing to have his/her name recorded on the church Database in line with this policy.
2. The offender must agree to never be alone with a child on church property or at any church function, or function attended by church personnel including home fellowship groups and private parties.
3. The offender must agree to not become involved in any church activity or small group without the PRIOR permission of the Senior Pastor or his/her nominee. The ACCSA is aware that even so-called 'harmless' areas of ministry such as 'welcoming people at the door' is fraught with difficulty, since it results in a 'normalising' of the offender. What parent would not agree to have the offender baby-sit their child when this person has been greeting them warmly at the church door for three years and they have no idea of this person's history?

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

4. The offender must agree to not become involved in any church activity (other than Sunday Services), church small group, or church sporting event where children participate.
5. The offender must agree to never attend any church hikes, trips, church camps or overnight stay or conference where children are present. If children arrive unexpectedly, then the offender agrees to make immediate arrangements for his/her departure.
6. The offender must agree to never become involved in counseling ministry.
7. The offender must agree to not have any contact at the church or at home or at any other place with any other people known to have histories of child abuse.
8. The offender must agree to regular meetings with a designated church leader for accountability and pastoral care purposes.
9. The offender must contact the leader or the Senior Pastor, or if both are not available, another pastor, the moment that he or she is having difficulty with his/her history or with temptation in this area. The offender must agree to immediate open and frank acknowledgement of such difficulties so that referral to professional help can be arranged and checks and balances protecting the children of the church and the offender will be put into place.
10. The offender must be prepared to obey the direction of pastoral staff or of eldership in all matters dealing with their personal conduct at church, or at church functions, whether or not children are present.
11. The offender must agree never to approach, initiate conversation with, or continue conversation with a child on church property or at any church function.
12. The offender must agree to NEVER accept invitations or offer to baby-sit, hold or care for a child or baby, even for a moment, and even if others are in the room.
13. The offender must agree to never allow any family from the church with children to visit him/her in their home. If the family insists then BEFORE the visit the offender must contact the Senior Pastor or his/her nominee, who will appraise the family of the possible risk factors from the point of view of the church's duty of care.
14. Similarly, the offender must agree not to visit any church family with children in their home – whether or not others are present.

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12. EVALUATION AND CONCLUDING STATEMENT

In adopting this policy the concern of ACCSA and its churches is primarily for the protection of the children who are such an important part of the church's ministry. With this in mind this policy will be reviewed bi-annually, and will include consultation with key stakeholders such as the ACCSA Executive, ACCSA churches, pastors, workers and training providers, as well as independent advice from Families SA and appropriate professionals in the Child Protection field.

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

That is also our commitment!

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APPENDIX A: LEGAL DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Section 6 of the Children’s Protection Act 1993 defines the extent of abuse and neglect that the state has authority to intervene in.

- 6 (1) “abuse or neglect,” in relation to a child, means –
- (a) sexual abuse of the child; or
 - (b) physical or emotional abuse of the child, or neglect of the child, to the extent that –
 - (i) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological injury detrimental to her/his wellbeing; or
 - (ii) the child’s physical or psychological development is in jeopardy; And ‘abused’ or ‘neglected’ has a corresponding meaning

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APPENDIX B: MANDATORY REPORTING

Under section 11 (1) and (2) of the Children's Protection Act 1993, the following people are obliged by law to notify Families SA if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child/young person has been or is being abused or neglected and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person's work (whether paid or voluntary) or in carrying out official duties.

The person must notify the Department of that suspicion as soon as possible after he or she forms the suspicion.

(2) This section applies to the following persons:

- (a) a medical practitioner;
- (ab) a pharmacist;
- (b) a registered or enrolled nurse;
- (c) a dentist;
- (d) a psychologist;
- (e) police officer;
- (f) a community corrections officer (an officer or employee of an administrative unit of the Public Service whose duties include the supervision of young or adult offenders in the community;)
- (g) a social worker;
- (ga) a minister of religion;
- (gb) a person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, an organisation formed for religious or spiritual purposes;
- (h) a teacher in an educational institution (including a kindergarten;)
- (i) any other person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, a Government department, agency or instrumentality, or local government or non-government organisation that provides health, welfare education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children, being a person who –
 - (i) is engaged in the actual delivery of those services to children; or
 - (ii) holds a management position in the relevant organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children.

(3) A notification under this section must be accompanied by a statement of the observations, information and opinions on which the suspicion is based.

(4) This section does not require a Priest or other Minister of Religion to divulge information communicated in the course of a confession made in accordance with the rules and usages of the relevant religion.

(5) A duty of care to a child is not necessarily exhausted by giving a notification under this section.

(6) A person must not threaten or intimidate, or cause damage, loss or disadvantage to, a person to whom this section applies because the person has discharged, or proposes to discharge, his or her duty under subsection (1). Minimum penalty: \$10000.

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APPENDIX C: CHILD AND YOUTH RELATED MINISTRY CLEARANCE FORM
(Sample Form Only)

Engage International

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

Name of recommended worker _____

Area of child related ministry _____

Pastoral check

Pastor’s approval gained: YES/NO date _____

(Character reference if required – please attach)

Comments: _____

Leader’s initial _____

Database clearance

Authority clearance checked on database: YES/NO date _____

Comments: _____

Leader’s initial _____

Police clearance

Police clearance checked on database: YES/NO date _____

Comments: _____

Leader’s initial _____

ACCSA Child Protection Training Requirements

Have training requirements been met: YES/NO date _____

ACCSA Child Protection Orientation Training: date _____ initial _____

ACCSA Child Abuse Notification Training: date _____ initial _____

Department Manual and Induction Training: date _____ initial _____

Name of Leader _____ Signature: _____

Name of Worker _____ Signature: _____

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APPENDIX D: NOTIFYING FAMILIES SA

The Children's Protection Act 1993 requires that when a mandated notifier reports to Families SA that the report must be accompanied by a statement of the observations, information and opinions upon which the report is based. It follows then that when reports are made to Families SA in accordance with the Child Protection Policy of this church the same information should be furnished. In the process of notifying Families SA with respect to child abuse or suspected child abuse:

- You do not have to be able to prove that the abuse has occurred.
- You may request a consultation with a departmental worker before formally notifying abuse or neglect.
- Your identity as a notifier will remain confidential in accordance with Section 13 of the Child Protection Act.
- You are immune from civil liability for reporting your suspicion in good faith (Section 12 (b) Child Protection Act.)
- You are not breaching any code of professional etiquette or ethics, nor are you departing from any accepted form of professional conduct when you report in good faith.
- You are entitled to feedback on a need to know basis about the way that your notification is being dealt with by Families SA.
- Any ongoing feedback will need to be negotiated between yourself and the departmental worker involved.

Under Section 13 of the Child Protection Act, your identity will be kept confidential unless it is necessary to disclose your name in the course of 'official duties' to another person acting in the course of 'official duties' eg a police officer, or where the court deems that the identity of the notifier is evidence of critical importance to the proceedings and that failure to admit it would prejudice the proper administration of justice, or where you have consented to the release of your name.

Pastors/staff members/leaders/volunteer workers/church members and attendees ought to understand that confidentiality in the counseling room is NOT to be held to be of higher value than a child's right to protection and safety. Consequently, the church requires child abuse and suspicion of abuse to be reported to Families SA no matter what the source of the information.

To make a notification contact the 24 hour Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 131478 listen to the recording and follow the instructions. You need to have your details, details of the child or children concerned, details of the concerns and other details that may be helpful.

Adapted from CSE Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect; 2012 Participant Workbook p37

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APPENDIX E: CONFIDENTIAL INTERNAL WRITTEN REPORT

(Sample form only)

Engage International

In accordance with this church’s policy, all incidences of child abuse or suspected child abuse (including those involving staff/workers/volunteers/pastors associated with the church) are to be reported to Families SA and reported to the Department Head who will as soon as possible pass the information to the Senior Pastor/Eldership/Board. This form is to be filled out by the one making the report to the Department Head, preferably in the presence of the Department Head, will facilitate that process.

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

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

Date: _____	Has Families SA been notified? YES/NO
Date of notification: _____	Name of CARL worker: _____
Child’s name(s): _____	
Name of person making report: _____	
Name of person suspected: _____	
<p>Please record what has been observed or what information has been received by whom, when, where and who else may have been affected.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>How did the person making the report become aware of this situation?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
Name of Department Head: _____	Signature: _____
Date referred to Senior Pastor/Eldership/Board: _____	

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APPENDIX F: DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Infants at risk:

Infants at risk are defined as children of less than one year of age, for whom there is serious concern for their immediate and ongoing safety.

Alternatively and unlike other forms of abuse, it may come from situations where no actual harm has yet occurred, however carer behaviours and/or characteristics may place the infant at risk or serious harm.

The infant at risk factors include:

- Significant alcohol or other substance abuse by carers
- Interpersonal/domestic violence
- Mental health of carers
- Poor attachment relationships
- Abuse of previous children by carers
- Intellectual capacity of carers
- Experience of childhood abuse by carer
- Parenting abilities
- Housing and physical environment
- Age/maturity of carers
- Limited social support networks

Each of these characteristics on their own does not necessarily place an infant at risk, however when many of these are present (combined with the vulnerability of an infant) the potential for harm to a child increases.

Physical Abuse:

The child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering serious physical trauma or inflicted injury due to the action of his/her caregiver.

Such actions may include:

- Kicking, punching, hitting (eg with open hands, fists, belts, wooden spoons etc and the frequency and force used was significant enough that an injury was likely)
- Shaking (particularly of young babies)
- Burning (immersion in scalding water, cigarette burns, irons etc)
- Biting, pulling out hair
- Alcohol or other drug administration/misuse (prescribed and illicit drugs)

An injury is considered 'inflicted' if it was alleged to be caused willfully or as a result of punishment.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

Sexual Abuse

Any sexual activity or behaviour that is imposed on a child by another person.

Sexual abuse occurs when someone in a position of power over children uses that power to involve the children in sexual activity.

Such behaviour may include:

- Sexual suggestion
- Inappropriate touching
- Exhibitionism, mutual masturbation, oral sex
- Showing pornographic material, eg DVD's, internet, mobile phones, any form of social media
- Using children in the production of pornographic material
- Penetration of genital or anal region
- Child prostitution

Chronic or Serious Neglect

Neglect is characterised by serious, ongoing failure to provide for children's basic needs to the extent that the child is not receiving the care and supervision necessary to protect him/her from harm, has suffered serious physical injury or illness, or there is risk of serious harm to the child's well-being and development.

Such behaviours may include:

- Inadequate supervision of young children for long periods of time
- Failure to provide adequate nutrition, clothing or personal hygiene
- Failure to provide needed or appropriate healthcare and/or medical treatment
- Disregard for potential hazards in the home
- Forcing children to leave home at an early age

It is important to note that statutory intervention following reports of neglect is generally not justified unless there is a clear pattern of behaviour over time which now leads to reasonable grounds to suspect that it is detrimental to the child's well-being or their development is in jeopardy.

Serious or Chronic Emotional Abuse

The child's social, emotional, or cognitive development is impaired or seriously at risk as a direct result of persistent caregiver behaviour or attitude towards the child, whereby the child's self esteem and social competence are undermined or eroded over time.

As with neglect, emotional abuse also has a level of discernable harm attached before statutory intervention is justified.

One-off incidents would generally not be assessed as emotional abuse unless the behaviours were so severe as to raise reasonable grounds to suspect that significant emotional harm – detrimental to the child's well-being has occurred.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

Such behaviour may include:

- Devaluing (eg “you’re hopeless, useless, stupid”)
- Ignoring (eg parent or carer is psychologically unavailable to the child)
- Rejecting (tell the child in varying ways he/she is unwanted)
- Corrupting (to allow children to participate in immoral or criminal acts)
- Isolating (limits normal social experiences)
- Terrorising (may single out or threaten with punishment or death)
- Witnessing Domestic/Family violence

It is important to note that the effects of these behaviours on children often span more than one area of abuse. Behaviours directed towards a child may also not occur in one form of abuse only.

Disabled Children

A child with a disability may be especially vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons:

- An increased likelihood that the child is socially isolated with fewer outside contacts with other children.
- Often children with a disability are involved with multiple carers. This potentially increases exposure to abusive behaviour and a lack of continuity in care may mean that behavioural changes go unnoticed.
- Communication difficulties preventing disclosure or making disclosure more difficult.
- The child/carers being inhibited about complaining for fear of losing services.
- Children with disabilities may be the targets of those that misuse power in the belief that they are less likely to be detected.

The behaviour of a child with disabilities can dramatically alter the dynamics and collective stress of families and carers.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

APPENDIX G: ACCSA CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING STRATEGY

ACCSA Child Protection Training Strategy Aims:

- Decrease the risk of children becoming vulnerable to exploitation and victimisation.
- Encourage the provision of a secure and safe environment for children where the best interest of the child is paramount.
- Provide a pathway of training that equips church staff and volunteers with the knowledge and skills to ensure principles of care, protection and safety are implemented.
- Actively work towards the development of training, policies and guidelines that embraces child protection principles.
- Provide a standard of care that encompasses industry and community standards; legislation; and community expectations.
- Ensure that disclosure and reporting process avoid re-victimisation of the abused person.
- Implement a Child Protection Training Program which requires participation by Assemblies of God Churches in South Australia (but not limited to.)
- Consult with, network and cooperate with Government Departments and human service agencies in the provision of training.
- For Karen Brown / _____ to be the Child Protection Training Provider for ACCSA.

The Need for A Training Strategy

In 2003 the South Australian Child Protection Review released a report, *Our Best Investment: A State Plan to Protect and Advance the Interest of Children*. The report outlined the following:

All Government and non-government organisations that are either directly working with children or are involved in child protection services have a responsibility for ensuring targeted child protection education and training for all staff and volunteers to improve their:

- Understanding of responsibilities for mandatory reporting and the quality of information reported.
- Understanding of cultural issues and their implications for appropriate interventions.
- Capacity to identify child abuse, especially in its more subtle forms.
- Responses to suspected abuse.
- Understanding of the different levels of abuse, the kind of intervention required and by whom.
- Understandings of codes of practice protocols.
- Skills for effective intervention work with families and communities.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

Therefore ACCSA has a legal and moral responsibility to provide current and effective skills training to protect, intervene and support those affected or at risk of being affected by child abuse.

In addition to this, training is a risk management tool. Duty of Care requires us to be actively considering the people whom we seek to care for, and what is required of us in order to avoid acts of omission or commission, which may detrimentally affect those people. The omission to provide effective training for those that are responsible for the care of children is a risk management issue, which could lead to a breach of Duty of Care.

Training Providers

All Training Providers need to have completed the required training provided by the Department for Education and Child Development SA (Families SA); Department for Communities and Social Inclusion College for Learning and Development in Child Safe Environments: Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect (formally known as Mandated Notification Training.)

Training Structure

As outlined on pages 21, 22 of the ACCSA Child Protection Policy and Procedures the training program will be available in the following two modules:

Module 1: Child Safe Environments: Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Orientation Training; (3hours.)

Introduction: This session aims to provide participants with an overview of the training and an understanding of why this training program has been developed. (It will also include the setting of group norms and establishing of a safe place atmosphere.)

Child Abuse; A Christian Perspective: This session aims to provide participants with an understanding of positive and responsible caring attitudes towards child abuse using underlying Christian principles. Definitions and indicators of abuse or neglect will be covered in this session.

ACCSA Church Policy and Procedures: This session aims to provide participants with an overview of the ACCSA Child Protection Policy and Procedures. This session will also include information on how to respond to a disclosure of abuse by a child and how to report a case of abuse or neglect while following the appropriate protocols.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

Module 2: Child Safe Environments: Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Training with assessments; (7 hours.)

Introduction:

This session aims to provide an overview of the Families SA training program rationale for the program and an introduction to the Children’s Protection Act 1993.

Values and Attitudes:

Learning Outcome 1 – An ability to analyse how values and attitudes can impact on the identification of child abuse and/or neglect.

Learning Outcome 2 – Recognition of the difference between a child-focus and an adult-focus.

Discounting Child Abuse:

Learning Outcome 3 – An ability to identify resistance to acknowledging and appropriately responding to child abuse and/or neglect at an individual, agency and societal level.

Child Safe Environments:

Learning Outcome 4 – An understanding of the essence of child safe environments and the importance of collaborative practice.

Learning Outcome 5 – An ability to describe Mandated Notifiers’ responsibilities and ethical obligations in providing child-safe environments.

Definitions and Indicators:

Learning Outcome 6 – Ability to outline the differences between the general and state definitions of abuse and neglect.

Learning Outcome 7 – Knowledge of what constitutes ‘suspicion on reasonable grounds’ and the effect that abuse and neglect can have on children.

Responding to the Child:

Learning Outcome 8 – Identify indicators for potential ethical concerns when working with children and young people, promote ethical practice and seek support to address concerns.

Learning Outcome 9 – Knowledge of the key principles of responding to children who are at risk of harm.

Deciding to Report:

Learning Outcome 10 – Knowledge of the legal and ethical responsibility to notify any suspicion on reasonable grounds and the Child Abuse Report Line processes of recording and assessment.

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Certification

Each participant who successfully completes the training course will receive:

- Statement of completion (upon full attendance to course and completion of CSE assessments.)
- OR
- Statement of attendance (upon full attendance to course.)

The certificates will list both the Families SA approved units and the orientation units and the certificate of attainment is government recognised.

Evaluation

The Training Program will undergo a review and evaluation process using the following methods:

- Participant feedback evaluation forms at each course
- Facilitator self-evaluations
- Observation by supervisors
- Skills/knowledge assessments
- Feedback from individual AOG Churches

Administration

Engage International will undertake the following administrative responsibilities:

- Develop and deliver all training courses
- Provide course materials and workbooks
- Maintain accurate course records and a participant register
- Facilitate course invoicing and payments

Course Fee and Training Schedule

Engage International will undertake the following administrative responsibilities:

- Module 1: Course schedule and costings are subject to change.
- Module 2: Course schedule and costings are subject to change.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015**APPENDIX H: CONTRACT BETWEEN CHURCH AND PERSON WITH A HISTORY AS AN ABUSER
(Sample form only)****Engage International**

1. I _____
declare that I am willing to have my name and such details as the Senior Pastor/Eldership/Board see fit, communicated to all Pastors, Elders and key leaders in all children's, youth, and sporting ministries in the church, and to any other leader that the Senior Pastor/Eldership/Board might nominate. I also agree to have my name recorded on the Church database in accordance with the Child Protection Policy of this Church.
2. I agree NEVER to be alone with a child on church property, or at any church function, or function attended by church personnel including home fellowship groups and private parties.
3. I also agree NOT to become involved in any church activity or small group without the prior permission of the Senior Pastor or his/her nominee.
4. I also agree NOT to become involved in any church activity (other than Sunday services,) church small group, or church sporting event where children participate.
5. I also agree NEVER to attend any church hikes, trips, church camps, overnight stays or conferences where children are present. If children arrive unexpectedly, then I agree to make immediate arrangements for my departure without fuss and at my own cost.
6. I also agree NEVER to become involved in the counseling ministry or to be involved in counseling others in any way.
7. I also agree NEVER to have contact at church or at home or at any other place with other people known to have a history of child sexual abuse.
8. I also agree to regular meetings with a designated church leader for accountability and pastoral care purposes.
9. I also agree to contact the Senior Pastor or that leader, or if both are not available, another pastor, **the moment** I experience difficulty or temptation in this area of sexual interest in children. I also agree to open and frank acknowledgement of such difficulties so that professional referral and checks can be made.
10. I also agree to commit myself to obey the direction of pastoral staff or the eldership in all matters dealing with my personal conduct at church, or at church functions, whether or not children are present.
11. I also agree NEVER to approach, initiate conversation with, or continue conversation with a child on church property or at a church function.
12. I also agree NEVER to accept invitations to, or offer to, baby-sit, hold or care for a child or a baby, **even for moment**, and even if others are in the room.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

13. I also agree NEVER to allow any family from the church with children to visit me in my home. If they insist, then BEFORE the visit I agree to contact the Senior Pastor or his/her nominee, who will appraise the family of the possible risk factors from the point of view of the church's duty of care.
14. I also agree NEVER to visit any church family with children in their home – whether or not others are present.

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

FULL NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

WITNESS (1) FULL NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

WITNESS (2) FULL NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2015

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Kids R Us, *Protect the Child*

Layton, Robyn A (2003) *Our Best Investment: A State Plan To Protect and Advance the Interests of Children.*

Please cut along line

Please sign and return to Lisa Brookeshaw a.s.a.p.



I (full name) _____ have completely read through Engage Church's Child Protection Policy (Update Jan 2015) and understand and agree to comply with its requirements as a leader / volunteer.

Signature _____

Date _____

