

Dandenong Ranges Christadelphian Ecclesia

Child Protection Policy

ABN: 89253204275

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Note: Refer to last page for a reporting process summary flowchart.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Children are a heritage from the Lord and should be cherished and nurtured by families and the ecclesia.
- 2.2. The ecclesial environment should be a place of safety and spiritual development. In all matters relating to children, including addressing allegations of abuse, it is recognised that their welfare is of paramount importance. Relevant Bible teachings that provide a basis for the ecclesia's child protection policy and procedures appear in Appendix A: Relevant Bible Teachings.
- 2.3. Child abuse can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, grooming with the intent of abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and risk of harm. Relevant definitions appear in Appendix B. Possible indicators of child abuse appear in Appendix D: Recognising Child Abuse.
- 2.4. This policy is designed to assist ecclesial members by providing practical procedures that satisfy Scriptural and legal requirements in respect of the protection of children. The legal requirements relate to the Working with Children Act 2005 Vic, and the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 Vic and Child Safe Standards 2017.
- 2.5. Through the implementation of this policy the ecclesia aims to:
 - 2.5.1. protect children and young people against harm
 - 2.5.2. provide guidance for ecclesial members and others authorised by the ecclesia when engaged in any activity either at or away from the ecclesia's premises where children and young people are involved
 - 2.5.3. provide annual training on policy and related procedural matters for those who work with children
 - 2.5.4. ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and misconduct are handled thoroughly and fairly
 - 2.5.5. ensure that leaders and activities are safe
 - 2.5.6. outline the responsibilities of the Child Protection Committee and ecclesial members when dealing with such issues
 - 2.5.7. abide by the law

3. Principles

- 3.1. The Dandenong Ranges Christadelphian Ecclesia, previously known as the Dandenong Christadelphians, has adopted the following principles, which will underpin its child protection policy and procedures:
 - 3.1.1. Child abuse violates the teachings of Scripture.
 - 3.1.2. The Ecclesia does not support or condone criminal behaviour. We recognize that child abuse, along with grooming behaviour and non-contact offences are criminal behaviour and are harmful to children's physical, social, emotional and spiritual development and well-being.
 - 3.1.3. The Ecclesia has a duty of care for the safety, welfare and well-being of children and should organise its affairs and activities to protect children against physical, emotional or sexual abuse and improper or inappropriate behaviour.
 - 3.1.4. The Ecclesia recognizes that children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds or children with a disability may be at greater risk of abuse.

- 3.1.5. The Ecclesia will, as far as it is in its power and expertise, assist and support ecclesial members who are victims of abuse.
- 3.1.6. Perpetrators require professional and spiritual assistance and need to recognise their behaviour is abhorrent and unacceptable to the Lord and even to the world. They must be willing to face the consequences of their behaviour.
- 3.1.7. In dealing with an allegation or suspicion of child abuse, the ecclesia will respond with Godliness, sensitivity, objectivity, confidentiality, fairness, truthfulness and in accordance with the Laws of Victoria.

4. Implementation

4.1. Responsibilities of the Ecclesial Secretary

Section 16K of the Children Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 requires the head of an organisation to:

- 4.1.1. take a preventative approach to keeping children safe
- 4.1.2. have systems in place to enable anyone to notify their concern or allegation that conduct in line with reportable conduct may have occurred
- 4.1.3. have systems in place to allow other people to report to the Commission if the reportable allegation concerns the head of the organisation
- 4.1.4. have investigation processes clearly defined and developed
- 4.1.5. within 3 days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and advise the Commission who is undertaking the investigation
- 4.1.6. within 30 calendar days provide the Commission with detailed information about the reportable allegation
- 4.1.7. notify the Commission of the Ecclesia's findings and any disciplinary action that has been taken
- 4.1.8. may appoint and delegate some of these responsibilities to the Child Protection Officer and/or Child Protection Committee as appropriate

Further information can be found:

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/RCSInfoSheetUpdates/Information-Sheet-3-Responsibilities-of-the-head-of-an-organisation-30.05.17.pdf>

A summary timeline is included in section "6. Reporting".

4.2. Responsibilities of the Child Protection Committee and Officer

- 4.2.1. The Child Protection Committee is responsible for ensuring to the best of their ability that persons involved with the care and supervision of children and young people satisfy the following requirements:
 - 4.2.1.1. meet relevant State requirements relating to employment screening
 - 4.2.1.2. meet relevant insurance policy requirements
 - 4.2.1.3. are aware of and agree with this policy statement including responsibilities of notification upon disclosure or discovery of harm, and procedures that ensure fair and just handling of complaints and allegations; and,
 - 4.2.1.4. assess the potential risk to children engaged in activities for which they are responsible.
 - 4.2.1.5. maintaining records (as per section 5. Record Keeping)

- 4.2.2. If an allegation is made against the Ecclesial Secretary, then the Child Protection Officer or other member of the Committee must assume the reporting obligations of the Head of the organisation as per section 6.10.
- 4.3. The Child Protection Committee will:
- 4.3.1. ensure a register of members holding current declarations of suitability for employment is kept in accordance with Working with Children Act 2005 Vic.
 - 4.3.2. review nominations for elected roles, Sunday School teachers, including relief teachers, supervisors, hosts and youth leaders and supervisors of outings.
 - 4.3.3. ensure that risk management assessments are completed and approve guidelines for child safety developed by persons conducting activities.
 - 4.3.4. ensure that new Ecclesial Secretaries are aware of their responsibilities under the Children Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.
 - 4.3.5. provide training in the ecclesia's child protection policy for ecclesial members.
 - 4.3.6. ensure all new Ecclesial members are made aware of the Child Protection Policy during the formal induction process.
 - 4.3.7. ensure that all ecclesial members will be permitted to work with children only after they have a valid Working with Children's Check (if over 18) or be exempted under relevant legislation, read the Code of Conduct and signed and returned the Children's and Youth Workers Pledge (see Appendix F: Code of Conduct) and complete regular policy training.
 - 4.3.8. ensure that two Ecclesial members will be present at all children's activities.
 - 4.3.9. ensure appropriate oversight of persons responsible for activities involving children and young people to minimise the risk of harm; and
 - 4.3.10. conduct biennial reviews of this policy to ensure it meets current legislative requirements and the developing needs of the ecclesia.
- 4.4. Persons Conducting Activities involving Children and Youth
- 4.4.1. Persons commissioned by the ecclesia to conduct children and youth activities are responsible to the Child Protection Committee and their appointees for the implementation of ecclesial policy relating to child protection. This will include:
 - 4.4.1.1. submitting necessary declarations of suitability for working with children as required by relevant state legislation (Working with Children Act 2005, Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and Child Safe Standards 2017), and as required by insurance arrangements, including but not limited to: a valid Working with Children's Check and submitting the Children and Youth Worker's Pledge.
 - 4.4.1.2. undergoing training on the content, purpose and implementation of this policy preferably annually but at least every two years.
 - 4.4.1.3. endeavouring to create a child-safe culture within our organisation.
 - 4.4.1.4. undertaking risk management assessments for which they are responsible. These must be approved by the Child Protection Committee prior to the conduct of activities.
 - 4.4.1.5. signing and submission of the Children's and Youth Worker's Pledge indicating that they understand and agree to abide by the Ecclesia's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct. Young people aged 16 or 17 years of age may also complete the pledge if they are assistants or helpers. Young people who complete the pledge do not need to complete the pledge again once they turn 18-years of age.

- 4.4.1.6. ensuring that our children have been consulted about how safe they feel and what ideas they might have to promote safety in the Ecclesia.
- 4.4.1.7. ensuring the children are aware of their rights and who they can talk to if they feel unsafe or have a concern (See section Appendix E: Further Information and References).
- 4.4.2. Any person who has been convicted of child abuse, violence or sexually related offences would be excluded from any activity involving care of children.
- 4.4.3. A person against whom an allegation of child abuse has been made or a person who is subject to a Safety Agreement, or whom has received a WWCC Interim Negative Notice, is barred from all activities conducted by the Ecclesia where he or she may have private access to children or young people until a satisfactory resolution is attained by either the ecclesia or the appropriate authorities.
- 4.4.4. As of 1 July 2015, it is a criminal offence for a person in authority in an ecclesia, if they know of the risk of sexual abuse and have the power to reduce the risk, but negligently fail to do so. A person in authority can include, but is not limited to the: Child Protection Committee, Sunday school superintendent, teachers and youth committee members. The offence applies to persons over the age of 18.
- 4.4.5. A new ecclesial member will be permitted to work with children only after a six-month period of membership and the relevant State requirements relating to employment screening are completed, and as required by insurance arrangements. The Child Protection Committee, at their discretion, may choose to make an exception to this when a member of another ecclesia, who is in good standing, has been regularly attending the ecclesia.
- 4.4.6. A new Ecclesial member will be interviewed before they are permitted to work with children. Suggestions for the interview questions are listed in "Appendix H: Interview Questions".
- 4.4.7. Details of risk management are in the risk management assessments (see Appendix K: Risk Assessments), however as a matter of policy two ecclesial members whom are permitted to work with children will be present at all children's activities.
- 4.5. Responsibility of the Sunday School Superintendent
 - 4.5.1. In addition to working closely with the Child Protection Committee (to assist in meeting items 4.2 and 4.2.2) the Sunday School Superintendent will:
 - 4.5.1.1. organise an annual (or more frequently if deemed necessary) reminder and demonstration to the children of the boundaries in which they are allowed at Belgrave South Primary School.
 - 4.5.1.2. ensure that our children have been consulted about how safe they feel and what ideas they might have to promote safety in the Ecclesia.
 - 4.5.1.3. ensure the children know their rights and who they can talk to if they feel unsafe or have a concern.
- 4.6. Parental responsibility and the supervision of children
 - 4.6.1. At all events organised by the ecclesia, parents are required at all times to be responsible for their own children. At least one parent of a child is to be present at any activity at which the child is also present. If no parent can be present a child can only attend if given into the direct responsibility of another adult acting as the child's guardian. A child cannot attend an ecclesial event if these arrangements are not followed.

- 4.6.2. Where children are attending an ecclesial Zoom meeting (including youth group and Sunday School) it is the responsibility of parents to provide supervision and ensure their children are safe online.
- 4.6.3. The exceptions to paragraph 4.6.1 above are:
 - 4.6.3.1. Parents can be absent while Sunday School is being conducted (unless online), if children are enrolled. It is expected that parents/guardian will be present immediately at the conclusion of Sunday School to resume the supervision and care for their children.
 - 4.6.3.2. Parents can be absent from youth group and children's activities that are organised or endorsed by the Ecclesia. The children will be supervised by at least one brother or sister for every 10 children, but with a minimum of two brothers or sisters present.
 - 4.6.3.3. At camps (or any event involving overnight accommodation) that are organised or endorsed by the Ecclesia and being primarily for children, no child under the age of five years will attend a camp unless one parent or adult guardian acting in place of parents also attends. The children at camps will be supervised on the basis that there will be at least one brother or sister for every 10 children, but with a minimum of two brothers or sisters present with consideration of the genders of children attending.

4.7. Responsibility of Ecclesial Members

- 4.7.1. All members of the ecclesia over the age of 18 are required to have a current Working with Children's Check (WWCC). Exemptions may be granted by the Child Protection Committee or Ecclesia for elderly members of long standing, who are unlikely to be actively involved in supervising children within the ecclesia. Where a member or applicant would not pass a WWCC, or has a WWCC Interim Negative Notice, the member must enter into a Safety Agreement with the Ecclesia, developed in consultation with the Child Protection Committee. The Safety Agreement is intended to:
 - 4.7.1.1. make it clear what is expected of the Applicant within the Ecclesia's environments
 - 4.7.1.2. provide the basis for the applicant to be held accountable in a transparent manner
 - 4.7.1.3. reduce risks to all parties including the likelihood of the applicant's presence and conduct at worship services, events and activities attracting unnecessary unease or false allegation.
- 4.7.2. Brothers or Sisters seeking ecclesial membership must have a letter of recommendation, the validity of which is confirmed by a referee (usually the recorder of the previous ecclesia); if this is not available two alternate referees must be contacted.
- 4.7.3. All new ecclesial members need to be made aware of the Child Protection Policy during the formal induction process.
- 4.7.4. All brothers and sisters should be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect.
 - 4.7.4.1. A number of possible indicators of physical harm, sexual abuse and emotional harm in children are listed and discussed in the Victorian Department of Human Services publication "Responding to Child Abuse". In recognising these indicators, it is not necessary to prove that harm has occurred or who is responsible for it. These pages have been reproduced in Appendix D: Recognising Child Abuse.
- 4.7.5. All brothers and sisters are legally required to report suspected abuse against, with or in the presence of a child if they consider there are reasonable grounds for suspicion (see Section 6.4).

- 4.7.6. Ecclesial members are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have with the Child Protection Officer or Committee.
- 4.7.7. Ecclesial members are to notify the Secretary and/or Child Protection Officer if a report has been made.
- 4.8. Managing Breaches of this Strategy
 - 4.8.1. Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:
 - 4.8.1.1. Providing closer supervision
 - 4.8.1.2. Further education and training
 - 4.8.1.3. Mediating between those involved in the incident
 - 4.8.1.4. Disciplinary procedures, if necessary
 - 4.8.1.5. Reviewing current policies and procedures

5. Record Keeping

Records will be kept as per our privacy policy.

5.1. Records to keep:

Records of ecclesial membership, roles that involve dealing with children, attendance rolls, checks and reports must be kept and maintained by the child protection officer, including all revisions, iterations and history of all records:

- Child Protection Policy
- Risk Assessments
- Ecclesial Membership
- Attendance records
- Serving positions
- Sunday School teachers and student lists for each year
- Working with children checks
- Incident reports
- Disclosure or allegation reports
- Children's and Youth Worker Pledges
- Children's activities (including Sunday school) enrolment forms
- Training attendance records
- Induction records

5.2. Retention Duration

Records must be kept for a minimum of 50 years, or the longer of current or past legislation. As this may extend past the lifetime of any one person, the implementation must take this into account.

5.3. Record Repository

These official records must be kept in a secure, safe and private repository.

Paper copies of confidential material, like Working with children checks, should be stored where they are not easily accessible by others.

Using a cloud based electronic storage may meet some of these requirements.

5.4. Record Access

The following persons may have access to the confidential records:

- Child Protection Officer
- Ecclesial Secretary
- Members of the Child Protection Committee, as required

General records, like attendance records, ecclesial positions, and teacher lists will be accessed by other ecclesial members, as required.

6. Reporting

- 6.1. The law relating to “Failure to disclose” came into effect on 27 October 2014. Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.
- 6.2. The Reportable Conduct Scheme came into effect on 1 January 2018. Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual or physical offence, sexual misconduct, neglect or psychological harm committed by a child, young person or adult against, with or in the presence of a child under the age of 18 must report to the CCYP and notify the Secretary and/or Child Protection Officer. Failure to disclose the information is a criminal offence.
- 6.3. Recognising indicators of child abuse and neglect is a process of forming a reasonable concern or well-founded suspicion that abuse or neglect has occurred or may occur in the future. (See Appendix D: Recognising Child Abuse)
- 6.4. Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect a child is at risk of harm or has been or is being abused must report the matter to the appropriate State authority and request direction from them concerning the child’s immediate welfare:
 - for concerns that are life threatening, ring Victoria Police 000 or a local Police Station
 - to Department of Human Services
50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000
Phone: 1300 360 391 (East Division, includes Belgrave South)
URL: <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/>
Search for “reporting child abuse”
 - for concerns about the immediate safety of a child after hours, call After Hours Child Protection Emergency
Phone: 13 12 78
- 6.4.1. The child’s safety is paramount. The DHS child protection officer will recommend the appropriate course of action after discussing the details of the alleged abuse. Only at their recommendation should the allegations be reported to the child's family in case it is a parent who is abusing the child.
- 6.5. Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect a child is at risk of harm or has been or is being abused must also report the matter to the Child Protection Committee who has no conflict of interest (eg. family connections). However, this may not fulfil the reporting requirement detailed in 6.4 above. It remains the responsibility of the person who has reasonable grounds to suspect a child has been abused, to ensure that the matter is reported.

- 6.6. In the case of a child disclosing that he or she claims to be the victim of abuse, the appropriate authorities must be contacted as the allegation may be evidence of a criminal offence, that a child’s welfare is possibly under threat, and that other children may also be at risk. (to record appropriate details, use form “Record of Child Abuse Disclosure” in “Appendix L: Supporting Forms”).
- 6.7. An ecclesial member who has an allegation of abuse made against them by a person not a member of the ecclesia must inform the Child Protection Committee of that allegation (see section 10.2).
- 6.8. The ecclesia will offer appropriate support to an adult who alleges they were abused when a child. This could include assisting them to find appropriate professional counselling and reporting their allegation to appropriate authorities.
- 6.9. The ecclesia will offer appropriate support to anyone implementing any aspect of this Child Protection Policy while acting on behalf of the ecclesia. This may include counselling services following an incident involving a disclosure by a child.
- 6.10. The Ecclesial Secretary or Child Protection Committee must report to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) as per table below:

What the head of an organisation must report to the Commission:

Three business day notification	30 calendar day update	Advice on investigation	Outcomes of investigation	Additional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of the worker or volunteer • Date of birth • Police report • Organisation contact details • Head of organisation's name • Initial advice on the nature of the allegation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the allegation • Details of your response to the allegation • Details about any disciplinary or other action proposed • Any written response from the worker or volunteer about the allegation and the proposed disciplinary or other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of investigator • Contact details • As soon as practicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of findings and reasons for the findings • Details about any disciplinary or other action proposed • Reasons for taking or not taking action • As soon as practicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission may request further documents from the head of the organisation

(from <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/RCSInfoSheetUpdates/Information-Sheet-3-Responsibilities-of-the-head-of-an-organisation-30.05.17.pdf>)

- Commission for Children and Young People
Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme
Phone: (03) 8601 5281
Email: childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au
Web: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

Direct submission online reporting via:

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/notify-and-update/>

7. Managing Allegations of Abuse

- 7.1. Reports of harm brought to the Child Protection Committee by a child or young person or another person disclosing an alleged incident of abuse to a child or young person will be treated with respect and will be responded to professionally to ensure that the best interests of the child remains paramount. The Ecclesia is committed to being an environment where a child feels safe and able to report abuse. It must always be assumed in the first instance that the child is telling the truth.

7.2. The Child Protection Committee will not, except as required in the case of Reportable Conduct allegations, hold a hearing nor conduct their own investigation into any allegations of child abuse or alleged criminal behaviour. Where possible this must be left to those with the statutory responsibility for such matters. State authorities have personnel with specialised expertise in probing the validity of allegations and the minimising of the possible detrimental effect detailed questioning may have on alleged victims of abuse.

For Reportable Conduct allegations, unless directed not to by relevant authorities, the Child Protection Committee will need to conduct an internal investigation into the reported offence and keep the CCYP notified of that investigation and its outcome.

7.3. Reports must be documented and filed in a secure place. The ecclesia recognises that reporting of allegations of child abuse is a lawful requirement in Victoria.

7.4. If a disclosure is made by a child or a young person, the Child Protection Committee must:

7.4.1. Document the nature of the disclosure (form in Appendix L: Supporting Forms) made by the child or young person including:

7.4.1.1. When the disclosure was made;

7.4.1.2. To whom it was made;

7.4.1.3. Details of the actual disclosure made. A child or young person should not be questioned further about the disclosure. Further questioning can harm the evidence and possibly lead to an acquittal of a guilty person. This is a matter for the appropriate authorities;

7.4.1.4. Who the child or young person alleges was the perpetrator regardless of whether the person is a member of the ecclesia or a person external to the ecclesia.

7.4.2. Inform the appropriate authorities and provide them with the details and or documents relating to the disclosure as per section 6. Reporting.

7.5. If a person making an allegation of abuse declines to report the matter to the appropriate authorities then the Child Protection Committee should, as a general rule, do so.

7.6. If the Child Protection Committee decide not to report the allegation because the information available does not provide reasonable grounds for suspicion that abuse may have occurred, the decision and the reasons for that decision must be documented.

7.7. A decision by the Child Protection Committee not to report an allegation of abuse does not preclude any other person from reporting the allegation to the appropriate authorities.

7.8. It is essential that allegations of abuse reported to the Child Protection Committee be kept strictly confidential except when reporting to the appropriate authorities. Records should be kept of such reports and include:

7.8.1. the time and date when the report was made;

7.8.2. the name and position of the authority to whom the report was made;

7.8.3. a written statement of what was reported.

7.9. The documentation indicated in section 5 above should be stored securely as it may be required in a future investigation conducted by State authorities.

7.10. If the Child Protection Committee become aware of an allegation of abuse or they form a reasonable suspicion of abuse being perpetrated by a member or young person, that member or young person shall be suspended from ecclesial activities at the discretion of the Child Protection Committee. The member or young person will be expected to cooperate with the Child Protection Committee to find the most suitable way forward regarding any future participation in ecclesial activities. In considering what activities, the

member or young person may attend, the Child Protection Committee must consider the welfare of children as paramount. The Child Protection Committee may choose to put a temporary Safety Agreement in place until matters are resolved or an ordinary one is put in place.

- 7.11. The Ecclesial Secretary or Child Protection Committee members must not be involved in any matter related to an allegation of child abuse where there may be a real or perceived conflict of interest.
- 7.12. Under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 members of the ecclesia must cooperate with a departmental officer or police officer in the exercise of any power under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 Vic.
- 7.13. The ecclesia must comply with the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and other criminal legislation, which allows departmental or police officers to have contact with a child under ecclesial care before the child's parents are aware of the investigation. This contact may be for as long as the officer reasonably considers is necessary.
- 7.14. In this event the departmental or police officer should notify either the Child Protection Committee or other relevant persons in charge of an activity about the intended contact. It is reasonable to expect departmental or police officers to inform those responsible for the activity that they are investigating an allegation of harm, or risk of harm, to a child; and that they reasonably believe that:
 - 7.14.1. it is in the child's best interests that the officer has contact with the child before the child's parents are told about the investigation; and,
 - 7.14.2. the child's parents, knowing about the proposed contact in advance, are likely to adversely affect or otherwise prevent the proper and effective conduct of the investigation.
- 7.15. In the case of an allegation being made; the insurance company needs to be informed.

8. Informing Other Ecclesias of Known and Allegations of Child Abuse

- 8.1. If the Child Protection Committee are aware that an alleged or convicted child abuser is involved in organising or attending youth activities at another ecclesia or has regular contact with children in other ecclesias, the recorders of those ecclesias must be notified of the allegations. The Child Protection Committee will, at their discretion, inform additional ecclesias of an allegation of abuse made against a member. If the Child Protection Committee decide not to provide such information in writing then a record should be kept and securely stored: of the date, time, person to whom the information was passed and a transcript of the information.
- 8.2. If the person against whom is convicted or an allegation has been made seeks transfer to another ecclesia, the recorder of that ecclesia will be informed in writing of the allegation. If the Child Protection Committee decide not to provide such information in writing then a record should be kept and securely stored: of the date, time, person to whom the information was passed and a transcript of the information.

9. Non-Compliance with Practice Standards, Ethical Statements, or Codes of Conduct for Professionals who are Registered/Accredited Practitioners

- 9.1. In addition to reporting apparent (and likely) conduct of a criminal nature to Police, and reportable conduct to relevant authorities, the Ecclesia will also ensure that apparent (or likely) conduct that breaches practice standards, ethical statements, or Codes of Conduct

for individuals who are members of applicable professional associations, to the relevant body.

This includes professionals in the medical, health, and teaching/education professions and similar occupations.

10. Support for Victims and Alleged or Known Abusers

- 10.1. The Ecclesia will assist children and young people who are victims of abuse to access appropriate pastoral care.
- 10.2. Abusers or alleged abusers will be assisted to access appropriate counselling. The ecclesia believes professional counselling is essential if a child abuser is to be rehabilitated.

11. Unproven and Disproved Allegations

- 11.1. If an allegation of abuse is disproved, the Child Protection Committee will endeavour to ensure that the reputation of the person affected is reinstated.
- 11.2. Where an allegation of abuse has been unproven due to lack of evidence, this does not mean that the abuse did not occur. In some cases, and at the discretion of the Child Protection Committee, a person against whom an unproven allegation has been made may not be given responsibilities for children in activities organised by the ecclesia.
- 11.3. The Child Protection Committee may consider taking action against a member, child or young person where their allegation proves to have been vexatious, malicious, frivolous or mischievous.

12. Confidentiality

- 12.1. Except where expressly allowed under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 or other relevant legislation, all matters regarding allegations of harm to a child are confidential. The ecclesia expressly recognises that:
 - 12.1.1. the identity of the person who notifies the Authorities about suspected harm, or risk of harm to a child must not be disclosed;
 - 12.1.2. the identity of children who are the subject of an investigation into suspected harm or any order under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) must not be disclosed unless written approval is granted under the Act;
- 12.2. As a general rule, information or documents given by people involved in performing duties under Child Protection Legislation are confidential and must not be disclosed; and,
- 12.3. Disclosure will be permitted if it is for purposes directly related to a child's protection or welfare or if it is otherwise required or permitted by law.

13. Compliance with Court Orders

- 13.1. All members of the ecclesia must comply with any orders made by a court under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 Vic.

14. Applications for Ecclesial Membership from an Alleged, Known or Convicted Child Abuser

- 14.1. An application for ecclesial membership by a person who has been convicted of any child related offence or is a person of interest in any investigation must be treated in the manner

set out in the Unity Basis fellowship clauses if that person has been disfellowshipped by another ecclesia.

- 14.2. Whether the person has been disfellowshipped or not, the Child Protection Committee and the Ecclesia, in considering an application for membership, must take into account the spiritual welfare of any victims of child abuse who are ecclesial members. This must occur whether or not such ecclesial members are victims of the person seeking membership. Concern for the spiritual, emotional or physical welfare of victims of child abuse is sufficient reason to refuse membership.
- 14.3. Applications should be in writing and acknowledge the wrong the person has done. Applications should clearly state what steps the person has taken to attempt to rehabilitate. Steps should include treatment by a recognised expert in the area of child abuse and then documentary evidence may be sought by the ecclesia that such treatment has been undertaken.
- 14.4. Any such person granted membership to the ecclesia could not expect to have any formal position in the ecclesia and could be excluded from any activity at the discretion of the Child Protection Committee.
- 14.5. A condition of membership would involve the member entering into a Safety Agreement with the Ecclesia, developed in consultation with the Child Protection Committee. The purpose of which is to facilitate the safe attendance and participation of the applicant in the worship services, events and activities of the ecclesia and inter-ecclesial events. The Safety Agreement is intended to:
 - 14.5.1. make it clear what is expected of the Applicant within the Ecclesia's environments
 - 14.5.2. provide the basis for the applicant to be held accountable in a transparent manner
 - 14.5.3. reduce risks to all parties including the likelihood of the applicant's presence and conduct at worship services, events and activities attracting unnecessary unease or false allegation.
- 14.6. Any such person who has been convicted of child abuse, violence or sexually related offences who is granted membership to the ecclesia could not expect to have any position of responsibility within the ecclesia as this could signal that the ecclesia supports this individual as a trustworthy leader. This would include but is not limited to being excluded from: holding any elected office, any activity involving the care of children, youth activities, and any task that is imbued with moral or spiritual authority or leadership such as public speaking and exhorting or praying.
- 14.7. The statutory requirements that regulate the employment of people in child-related employment are applicable in this context. Such a person will not be permitted to work with children.
- 14.8. If an application for baptism is received from a known child abuser, the baptism will not go ahead until the points 14.2 and 14.3 have been resolved and a Safety Agreement has been entered into.
- 14.9. In any situation that falls outside the scope of 14.1 to 14.8 above, the Child Protection Committee and at their discretion, in conjunction with the elected roles and/or the Ecclesia may determine the action to be taken.

15. Policy Review

15.1. This Child Protection Policy:

- will be reviewed and updated when the Child Protection Committee become aware of any legislative changes that have significant impact on the manner in which child protection issues are to be dealt with
- when directed or amended by an Ecclesial planning meeting
- will be reviewed at least every two years

16. Document Change Management

Date	Revision	Description
Aug-2004	1.0	Dandenong Christadelphian's "Duty of Care"
Nov-2015	2.0	Dandenong Christadelphian's "Duty of Care" revision 2
13-Jan-2018	3.0	Merged Ringwood Christadelphian Ecclesia's "Child protection Policy" (Revision 2.04), the Association of Australian Christadelphian Ecclesias' Inc's "Suggested Guidelines for a Child Protection Policy" (Revision 3), Clayton Christadelphian Ecclesia's Child Protection Policy (Revision 2), and updated with Dandenong Christadelphian's structure and normal operation modes.
25-Jan-2023	3.1	Few minor typographical edits. Inserted new Appendix C: Implementation of CCYP's Child-Safe Standards . Removed Draft watermark (as already approved). Minor pledge update to match Operoo pledge form. Update to Dandenong Ranges Christadelphians. Change Heritage College to Belgrave South Primary School.
2-Mar-2025	3.2	Updated broken hyperlinks

17. Appendix A: Relevant Bible Teachings

- 17.1. The following Bible tenets underpin this ecclesia's child protection policy and procedures.
- 17.2. The Bible teaches that children are God's heritage. "...Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:14; Psalm 127:3).
- 17.3. The Bible teaches that in all things we should "do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). This provides the over-arching goal and guide for planning, managing and deciding all matters within the ecclesia.
- 17.4. The Bible teaches that we should practice the commandments of Christ and the fruit of the spirit (John 14:15, 15:14, Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 4:17-20; Philippians 4:8).
- 17.5. The Bible teaches that we are to be holy and to abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).
- 17.6. The Bible teaches that all forms of abuse, including child abuse, violate the commandments of Christ and are contrary to the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).
- 17.7. The Bible teaches that we are to love God with all our heart, strength, soul and mind, and to love our neighbour as our selves. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19; 22:37-39; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8).
- 17.8. The Bible teaches that we should obey the laws of the land in which we live, except where they directly contravene the teachings of the Bible (Romans 13:1-5; Matthew 22:21; Acts 5:29).
- 17.9. The Bible teaches that we have a particular duty of care for those within the ecclesia who may be vulnerable or have special needs (Psalm 82:3-4; Proverbs 31:9; Acts 20:35; James 1:27).
- 17.10. The Bible provides a guide as to the process to be followed where major transgressions occur (Matthew 18:15-17). The principles of this process should be applied in action taken by individuals and the ecclesia in responding to any such transgressions.
- 17.11. The Bible teaches that the ecclesia should seek to recover those who are "overtaken in a fault" and err from the truth (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20).
- 17.12. The Bible teaches that those who have oversight of the ecclesia have a responsibility to tend the ecclesia and protect it from "wolves" (Acts 20:28-32).

18. Appendix B: Definition of Terms

Adult – an individual at or over the age of 18 years.

Appropriate Authorities – State police, or relevant State child agencies authorised under child protection legislation.

Betrayal of Trust – is a term used to describe additions to the Working with Children Act and the Children and Families Act in Victoria that introduced three new offences: The ‘grooming offence’, a ‘failure to disclose’ offence and the ‘failure to protect’ offence.

Breach – A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the ecclesia, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of this child protection policy.

CCYP – Commission for Children and Young People.

Child Protection Committee – a group appointed by the ecclesia to have the oversight and management of its affairs related to child protection.

Child(ren) and young person – an individual under the age of 16 or 18 years depending on the relevant legislation.

Ecclesial Activity – an activity that is officially organised and/or advertised by the ecclesia for members, family, friends and invited guests, held in the ecclesial hall or at other specified locations. The activity may not necessarily be conducted by ecclesial members and could include a person contracted by the ecclesia for a specific purpose.

Ecclesial Member – any person appearing on the ecclesial roll or other person approved by the Ecclesia or Child Protection Committee, for the purpose of this policy.

Elected Roles – Secretary, Plan coordinator, Sunday school superintendent and Treasurer roles within the Ecclesia.

Emotional Abuse – behaviour by a parent, caregiver or other person that can destroy the confidence of a child resulting in significant emotional deprivation and trauma. It encompasses a range of behaviours that harm a child and involves impairment of a child’s spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive and intellectual development, and negative disturbance of a child’s behaviour.

Employee (employed) – Any volunteer or paid person or persons appointed or contracted by the ecclesia to perform a function. They may or may not be baptised members of a Christadelphian Ecclesia.

Failure to Disclose – It is an offence for an adult to have a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16, and does not report the offence to Victoria Police unless there is a ‘reasonable excuse’ or an exemption applies. Maximum penalty is 3 years imprisonment.

Failure to Protect – It is an offence that applies to people who hold a position of authority within a relevant organisation that works with children, if they know of a substantial risk that another adult associated with the organisation may commit a sex offence against a child under 16 within the organisation’s care and they have the power or responsibility to remove or reduce that risk BUT they negligently **fail to do so**. Maximum penalty is 5 years imprisonment.

Grooming offence – this criminal offence targets communication, including online

communication, with a child under the age of 16 or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual abuse at a later time with the groomer (aged 18 years old or over) or another adult. It does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity – for example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time. Maximum penalty is 10 years imprisonment.

Harm – any detrimental effect of a significant nature to a child’s physical, spiritual, psychological or emotional well-being.

Neglect – where a child is harmed by failure to provide the basic physical and emotional necessities of life such as adequate and proper food, clothing, medical aid, lodging and care.

Non-contact offence – such as the use, possession, editing, exchange, or manufacture of illegal or indecent images or recordings of children or young people in sexualized, explicit, or offensive material.

Parent and caregiver – the child’s mother, father or someone else having or exercising parental responsibility for the child. A parent of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child includes a person who under Aboriginal or Islander custom, respectively, is regarded as a parent of the child.

Person in authority – includes Child Protection Committee, Sunday school teachers, youth workers and committee members.

Physical Abuse – non-accidental injury to a child by a parent, caregiver or other person. It includes injuries caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, bruising, lacerations, welts, burns, fractures and dislocation. Physical abuse may result in permanent physical and/or psychological damage or death.

Reasonable Excuse – Includes:

- A fear for safety, either to the victim or another person as a result of the disclosure
- The information has already been disclosed to police (for example, because a mandatory report has been made to child protection)
- It does **not** include a concern for ‘perceived interests’, such as reputation, legal liability or financial status.

Other **exemptions** include:

- the victim requests confidentiality (exemption does not apply if the victim is under 16 at the time of disclosing the abuse, or has an intellectual disability and is unable to make an informed decision about the disclosure)
- the person is a child when they formed a reasonable belief
- the information would be privileged (for example, client legal privilege)
- the information is confidential communication
- the information is in the public domain
- where police officers are acting in the course of their duty

Reasonable suspicion – there is evidence to indicate there is a risk of harm to a child based upon indicators such as those outlined in Appendix D: Recognising Child Abuse.

Risk of harm – concern about the safety, welfare and well-being of a child for any of the following reasons:

- The child’s basic physical or psychological needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met;

- The parents/caregivers have not arranged necessary medical care;
- The child is at risk of being physically or sexually abused or ill-treated; and,
- The child is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, the child is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm.

Sexual Abuse – any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child including intercourse, assault, penetration, acts of indecency such as touch (including use of objects), exposure, harassment, and suggestive behaviour, in any form, and exposure of children to pornographic material. Coercion, which may be physical or psychological, is intrinsic to sexual abuse and differentiates such abuse from consensual peer sexual activity.

Statutory Responsibility – People or organisations that, under law, have duties and special rights in the area of child protection.

Sunday School Teachers, Youth Leaders & Youth Workers – adults who have volunteered or been appointed to teach, lead or work with young people.

Training – provision for those engaged with children in activities organised or conducted under the auspices of the ecclesia to understand their responsibilities under the terms of the ecclesial policy on child protection.

Unity Basis – the basis upon which ecclesias in the Central Fellowship in Australia agree to relate to each other and conduct some of their affairs.

Youth Groups – include groups such as the Christadelphian Youth Circle (CYC), Dandenong Rangers Youth Group, the Sunday School, creche and Play Group.

19. Appendix C: Implementation of CCYP's Child-Safe Standards

Standard 1 - Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

- The Dandenong Ranges Christadelphians have a value of zero tolerance to bullying and discrimination. Racism of any kind will not be tolerated. The Ecclesia recognises that children from Aboriginal backgrounds may be at greater risk of abuse.
- The Dandenong Ranges Christadelphians will take all instances of discrimination and bullying seriously and respond immediately on becoming aware of such instances.
- The Dandenong Ranges Christadelphians will always speak of First Nations peoples and culture with respect.

Standard 2 - Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

- The Dandenong Ranges Christadelphian's Child Protection Team is active, including:
 - training of adults and children
 - regular review of the Child-Safe Policy
 - regular risk assessments
 - screening of adults engaged in child-related work
 - understanding reporting requirements
 - casual reminders of child-safe responsibilities to attendees at ecclesial events
 - regular agenda-item at planning meetings

Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

- The dignity of the child is important
- A child-friendly child-safe poster is regularly on display
- Children are consulted as appropriate about plans impacting Sunday School, youth group and camps
- Children are consulted about perceived physical and emotional safety risks at ecclesial activities
- The Dandenong Ranges Christadelphians conduct regular training with children reminding them of their right to safety and encouraging them to speak up if they feel uncomfortable

Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

- The Dandenong Ranges Christadelphians conduct regular child-safe training for families
- Members of the ecclesia are regularly reminded that child safety is a priority and that we all have a responsibility to make our community safe for children and young people.
- Child safety is a regular agenda item for planning meetings
- Casual discussions by the child-safe team with other members of the ecclesia will reinforce the need for everyone to prioritise building a culture of child-safety. Child-safety is everyone's responsibility.

Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

- We accept that everyone, even though created in the image of God, is unique and will have differing abilities.

- Every child should be encouraged to use their talents to serve others and in so doing to grow themselves and thrive as part of the community.
- Discussion with carers will be prioritised with a view to enabling all children to participate fully in activities.

Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

- The Dandenong Ranges Christadelphians have established a screening process for people working with children and young people:
 - All new members will be interviewed in relation to child safety
 - All members will have a valid Working with Children Check or enter a Safety Agreement
 - All members engaged specifically in child-related work will be ratified by the child-safe team
 - All members engaged in child-related work will sign a Code of Conduct Pledge

Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused

- Any incidents or reports will focus on the wellbeing of the child
- We will follow the due process outlined in Scripture and in our child protection policy, following the relevant laws about reporting and privacy.
- We will endeavour to make the reporting process clear and accessible to adults and children
- Complaints will be taken seriously and responded to quickly

Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

- All members will be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy
- All members will have annual training
- All members will be regularly made aware of who the ecclesia's child-safe officer(s) is/are
- A child-safety PowerPoint slide will be periodically displayed at appropriate times eg: during morning tea

Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

- Risk assessments will be conducted regularly
- Children will be invited to input on perceived physical and emotional risks in their environment
- Parents are responsible for the safety of their children in ecclesial (including Sunday School and Youth Group) online meetings.

Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

- The Child-Safe Policy will be formally reviewed bi-annually
- Implementation of the policy will be formally reviewed annually prior to child-safe training
- The Dandenong Ranges Christadelphians hold child safety as a core value and implementation of the policy will be continually reviewed and improved

Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

- The ecclesia has a Child Protection Policy (Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy)
- The ecclesia has a plain English Statement of Commitment
- The ecclesia has a pledge (Code of Conduct) for youth workers to make that includes examples to help clearly illustrate behaviours that are and are not appropriate.
- These are reviewed regularly to take into account changes in legislation and best practices.

20. Appendix D: Recognising Child Abuse

Ecclesial members whose work brings them into contact with children and their families should be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect. Recognising indicators of child abuse is about forming a responsible concern or well-founded suspicion that there is a risk of harm from neglect or abuse, which is current or likely to occur in the future.

Adults or adolescents who perpetrate child sexual abuse exploit the dependency and immaturity of children. Offenders use a range of tactics including force, threats, manipulation and tricks to engage children in sexual contact and to try to silence them. They may also try to gain the trust and friendship of parents in order to obtain access to children. They may be family members or close family friends.

Physical Harm

Physical indicators include:

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts, welts
- Fractured bones, especially in an infant where a fracture is unlikely to occur accidentally
- Poisoning
- Internal injuries
- Shaking injuries
- Strangulation

Possible behavioural indicators include where the child or young person:

- Expresses little or no emotion when hurt
- Offers unlikely explanations for injuries
- Wears long-sleeved clothes on hot days (possibly to hide bruising or other injuries)
- Demonstrates a fear of parents, or a fear of going home
- Is fearful when other children cry or shout
- Is excessively friendly to strangers
- Is passive and compliant
- Is nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive
- Tells someone that physical harm has occurred

Sexual Harm

Sexual harm is not usually identified through physical indicators unless the professional works in a medical setting. Often the first sign is when a child tells a trusted person that they have been sexually abused. However, the presence of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge may indicate sexual abuse. Some of the indicators listed below are only identifiable through medical examinations.

Physical indicators include:

- Injury to the genital or rectal area, such as bruising or bleeding
- Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge
- Discomfort in urinating or defecating
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Inflammation and infection of the genital area
- Frequent urinary tract infections
- Pregnancy, especially in very young adolescents
- Bruising and other injuries to breasts, buttocks and thighs
- Anxiety related illnesses, such as anorexia or bulimia

Possible behavioural indicators include where the child or young person:

- Exhibits persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity

- Exhibits regressive behaviour, such as bedwetting and speech loss
- Exhibits delinquent and aggressive behaviour
- Participates in self-injurious behaviour, such as drug or alcohol abuse, prostitution, self-mutilation
- Exhibits behaviour such as frequent rocking, sucking and biting
- Exhibits signs of depression
- Complains of headaches or stomach pains
- Experiences difficulties in sleeping
- Produces drawings or descriptions in stories that are sexually explicit and age-inappropriate
- Experiences problems with school work
- Runs away from home
- Has difficulty relating to adults and peers
- Tells someone that abuse has occurred

Emotional Harm

Some of these indicators include:

- Speech disorders
- Delays in physical development
- Failure to thrive

Possible behavioural indicators include where the child or young person:

- Has low self-esteem
- Exhibits unexplained mood swings
- Exhibits age-inappropriate behaviours, for instance, overly adult (parenting other children) or overly infantile (thumb sucking, rocking, wetting or soiling)
- Is withdrawn, passive, tearful
- Exhibits aggressive or demanding behaviour
- Is highly anxious
- Has difficulty relating to adults and peers

Neglect

Physical indicators include:

- Frequent hunger
- Malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing, for example, summer clothes in winter
- Unsupervised for long periods
- Medical needs not attended to
- Abandonment by parents or guardians
- Failure to thrive

Possible behavioural indicators include where the child or young person:

- Steals food
- Stays at school outside school hours
- Is often tired, falls asleep in class
- Abuses alcohol or drugs
- Displays aggressive behaviour
- Is indiscriminate with affection
- Is not relating well to peers

Sourced from Victorian Department of Human Services publication "Responding to Child Abuse".

21. Appendix E: Further Information and References

- “ABUSE – A Christadelphian Guide” published by the Christadelphian Support Service of NSW
- <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au> provide detailed information including the document:
 - “Reporting Concerns about Children and Young People: a guide for professionals”
- <http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/>
- <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/betrayal-of-trust-implementation>
- <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets/#Responsibilities>
- <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/Speak-up-its-your-right-youth-poster-20.03.23.pdf>
 - You can expect to be safe and to feel safe, wherever you go and whatever you do.
 - You can expect that adults that work with you know how to keep you safe.
 - You can tell an adult if you don't feel safe and they have to help you.
- Eleven child safe standards:
 - <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/>
 - Standard 1: Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-1/>
 - Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-2/>
 - Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-3/>
 - Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-4/>
 - Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-5/>
 - Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-6/>
 - Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-7/>
 - Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and

awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-8/>

- Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-9/>
- Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-10/>
- Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-11/>
- Some definitions from the Seventh Day Adventist policies:
 - These documents establish that an applicant who has a criminal conviction for an offense of a violent or sexual nature against a child, young person, or an adult with an intellectual, physical, or other disability or vulnerability, be subject to a Safety Agreement based on an assessment of the individual's risk and the local environment (the people, the venue, the activity, and the capacity of personnel to supervise etc.). Types of convictions that trigger a Safety Agreement include non-contact offenses such as the use, possession, editing, exchange, or manufacture of illegal or indecent images or recordings of children or young people in sexualized, explicit, or offensive material.
 - Sometimes in situations where allegations are reported to Police, the case does not progress to a Court conviction due to a range of factors such as: (i) the private nature of child sexual assault; (ii) the rules of evidence that determine what material can and can't be used in Court; (iii) availability of witnesses; (iv) the passage of time; and (v) the Court's requirement to be satisfied "beyond reasonable doubt" that a person is guilty. As a result, several other outcomes are possible. In some instances where no conviction is made, Safe Place Services and/or the Conference Safe Place Committee may still implement safeguards where it is deemed a duty to do so exists
 - After a situation is reported to Police, usually no immediate visible action is taken by the local church towards the Person Subject Of Allegation (PSOA). This is so that local responses do not potentially interfere with and compromise a Police investigation. If a Police investigation proceeds, it is the role of Police to notify the PSOA of allegations at the time that the Police determine, for example when the person is interviewed and/or arrested and charged. It is not the role of the church or members/leaders to confront or advise the PSOA of allegations, and such actions are not endorsed. If/when Police give the 'all clear' (permission to proceed), either formally or informally, the Board/leadership will then have liberty to act in visible ways. Such actions may include: (i) informing the matter to certain leaders and program organizers; (ii) requiring the PSOA to 'stand down' from any local church position and/or roles; (iii) other responses that might be recommended in the circumstances, including the introduction of a temporary Safety Agreement.

Suggested counsellors:

name	location(s)	contact details
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22. Appendix F: Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct and Children & Youth Worker's Pledge

It is the intent of this Code of Conduct to both value the social, relational, and interpersonal safety and wellbeing of children and young people as well as valuing the role of leaders and mentors in the lives of children and young people by promoting transparent, accountable relationships that promote trust and confidence in the ecclesia and its programs.

Because our society is filled with pain, problems and litigation caused by improper conduct of people working with children and youth, it is imperative that those privileged to be working with children and youth have some practical guidelines for conduct.

The Code of Conduct makes it clear what practices (actions) are supported and what practices are NOT condoned. It is not exhaustive, and does not foresee every set of circumstances that may arise across the variety of events and activities run within the ecclesia or mission field. The Code should be viewed as an educative guide to the principles that help inform what is appropriate conduct with children and young people.

Code of Conduct acknowledgement

Please select all boxes that apply (a 'selected box' indicates an understanding of and an agreement with the statement); initial first 2 pages and sign the third page in the space provided.

- I am aware of the Code of Conduct for volunteers who work with children and young people in the ecclesia and its environments across Australia and in overseas mission fields as follows, and agree to abide by this code and uphold it to the best of my understanding and ability.

Conduct that is encouraged for Children & Youth Workers

DO...

- Reflect the ethos of the Dandenong Ranges Ecclesia.
- Behave as a positive role model to children and young people.
- Treat all children with respect without showing favouritism.
- Use positive and affirming language toward children and young people.
- Intervene if children or young people are engaging in inappropriate behaviour towards others or acting in a bullying, humiliating or derogatory way.
- Help provide an open, family-friendly environment for children to worship, interact, and socialise, where children have a voice in an age appropriate way.
- Always ask a child's permission before physically touching them, even when responding to an injury. This is especially true of any areas that would usually be covered by a t-shirt and/or shorts. If an injury is in this area, make sure another adult works with you when providing care.
- Always have at least one other adult assisting you with supervising children. Do your best to avoid being alone with any child (other than your own). Where possible move to where there are other people.
- Affirm children with appropriate touch by keeping hugs brief and side-by-side or shoulder-to-shoulder. Always keep hands at (not below) the shoulder level. A caregiver's kiss should be to the forehead or cheek only – not elsewhere. For small children who like to sit on laps, encourage them to sit next to you.
- Provide extra care when taking young children to the toilet. Where possible encourage parents to fulfil this responsibility, or take another adult with you, or if none of these are possible ensure the door is open.

- Alert someone if you observe an apparent breach of this code.
- Report suspicions of child abuse or neglect to a trusted leader or someone in authority, such as the Child Protection Officer, Child Protection Committee or Secretary.
- Seek advice about suspicions and disclosures of child abuse or neglect by contacting relevant State, Territory, and/or Country Child-protection Services in your region and report apparent alleged criminal conduct to Police.
- Cooperate with the screening process for Children & Youth Workers as required by the Ecclesia.
- Stay up to date with regular training provide by the ecclesia and be familiar with the Child Protection Policy and any updates.
- Endeavour to be loving, kind, firm and thoroughly professional as a volunteer, mindful of the deep responsibility and privilege of working with our children and young people.

Conduct that is not condoned for Children & Youth Workers:

DO NOT...

- Leave children you are responsible for unattended. Do endeavour to provide appropriate supervision at all times.
- Engage in inappropriately rough physical play with a child or young person (not your own).
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a child, other than reasonable restraint such as by holding a child to mitigate injury. “Time-outs” or “Sit-in-that-chair” might be helpful tools to use when disciplining a child.
- Hold, kiss, cuddle, or touch a child (not your own) in an age/culturally inappropriate manner OR in a manner considered inappropriate by reason of the nature of the program / activity / occasion / event, except for appropriate touch (for example to comfort distress).
- Assist children (not your own) to do things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- Spend time alone or remain in a confined or secluded space with a child or young person (not your own) at ecclesial events or other venues.
- Work with children or youth in rooms with no visibility from outside ie glass panels in door etc. If unavoidable, ensure that the door is left open to allow observation from outside.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person.
- Make offensive or inappropriate comments to a child/ren regarding their appearance, abilities, or sexuality.
- Give personal gifts or favours that target a particular child (not your own).
- Cultivate online and social media ‘friendships’ with children and young people (who are not your own) without parental/guardian permission for communication and parents / guardians / leaders being included on messaging lists. Any private messaging to a child or young person should be sent / returned during pre-approved times.
- Share or send sexually suggestive or explicit material to a child in any form such as e-mail, text, movie, sound, or picture file.
- Use profane language near or around children.
- Take a child or young person (not your own) to your home/ residence, or encourage private meetings outside of ecclesial activities, unless authorised to do so by their parents or with approval from the Child Protection Committee and suitable guidelines are in place.
- Take unauthorised photos, movies or recordings of a child at ecclesial activities, without ecclesial

authorization and the parental / guardian consent.

- Publish unauthorised photos, movies or recordings of a child or young person, including online, without parental/guardian consent, nor post online unauthorised private information about a child or young person that may identify them such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct and Lawful Directions

- It is everyone’s responsibility to monitor compliance with the Code of Conduct.
- A minor apparent breach of the Code of Conduct may be brought to a person’s attention for their awareness and learning.
- Minor breaches of the Code of Conduct may be done innocently or in ignorance, or exceptional circumstances or special activities may exist.
- Apparent breaches of the Code of Conduct may lead to informal or formal cautions and warnings, which may be issued in writing or given verbally.
- Persistent or serious apparent breaches of the Code of Conduct will be reported to the Child Protection Committee and if necessary the Ecclesia for their response.
- Persistent or serious breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in the privilege of working with children and young people being withdrawn, and may result in a person’s suspension or termination of holding a role working with children or young people.
- The above may apply to me if I am determined, on reasonable grounds, to have committed an apparent minor, persistent, or serious breach of the Code of Conduct.
- In determining any apparent breach of the Code of Conduct, a common-sense application and interpretation of the Code of Conduct (based on the consensus of right-thinking Ecclesial members) should prevail.
- Serious misconduct against Ecclesial policy and guidelines, legal standards, or the Code of Conduct, may also lead to a volunteer or staff member being suspended or terminated from holding any role in relation to working with children or young people in the Ecclesia and its environments including overseas mission work.
- I will abide by all lawful directions that may be issued by the Child Protection Committee, Child Protection Officer or the Ecclesia regarding my duties or appointment as a volunteer or worker whilst performing a child/youth-related role.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PLEDGE BY CHILDREN & YOUTH WORKERS

- I have read and understand the Code of Conduct and the Child Protection Policy of the Dandenong Ranges Ecclesia. My continuance in a child related role, or acceptance of the same, will indicate my agreement with the applicable Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy in force at the time.

If I do not agree with the Code of Conduct or Child Protection Policy in force at any time, I will stand down from any nominated position requiring support of these documents. I understand that this is a non-negotiable requirement of the Ecclesia for any person in a child-related position.

My full name (as on Government issued photo-ID such as a Driver’s License or Passport):

.....

Signature: Date: __ / __ / 20__

23. Appendix G: Safety Checklist

Dandenong Ranges Christadelphian's Children's Activities – Safety Checklist

Children's Workers

- Do all workers in child-related roles have a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) and has this been verified by the Child Protection Officer?
- Are all workers registered with and approved by the Child Protection Committee?
- Are accurate records of all adults and children participating being kept and supplied to the Child Protection Committee to meet our legal record-keeping requirements?
- Have workers been provided with any orientation or training for their role/area of ministry to children and young people?
- Are workers aware of who to contact with concerns they may have about children or other workers?
- Do workers know where to find emergency contact and medical information, if needed, or the person to contact to access this information?
- Is private information kept safe and secure, and accessed by appropriate/authorized personnel?
- If a Court Order is in place (e.g. Family Court access order or State Court AVO etc), are relevant staff and volunteers made aware of this and the requirements that need to be adhered to?

Venue & Facility

- Is the venue suitable for the intended purpose?
- Is all equipment that children may use/ have access to safe and in working order?
- Is the venue visible and transparent to passing observers, e.g. glass panels in doors; curtains open/windows not covered; doors open; no concealed spaces used?
- Are children under 10-years required to be signed in/out by a parent or guardian?
- Is there a protocol in place for children going to/from toilets and for volunteers to check the facilities are safe?
- Are small and hazardous items out of reach of children and stored suitably?

Off-site Activities

- For inherently 'higher risk' activities, such as some sporting and recreational activities, including all off-site and overnight activities, has a risk assessment been conducted and approved by the Child Protection Committee?
- Where necessary, are parental consents / permission slips completed?
- Are there at least two adults (persons over 18-years of age) present at all times, and an adequate ratio of staff/children appointed for the designated activity?
- If transporting children, have (a) parental permissions been obtained and (b) drivers been assessed as suitable and (c) the vehicle [e.g. private car or buses etc] compliant with any registration and safety requirements?
- Where necessary, is there a first aid officer; adequate shade, shelter and sun protection; and emergency supplies of food and safe water?

This checklist is a guide.

24. Appendix H: Interview Questions

Questions for new members as part of their induction, adapted as appropriate to the situation:

- 24.1. Are you aware that Dandenong Ranges Ecclesia is a child-safe organisation? What does that mean to you?
- 24.2. Please describe any positive experiences you have had with children or young people
- 24.3. Have you ever been in a situation where you have disciplined a child or young person, if so how did you handle this situation?
- 24.4. Have you ever been investigated for violent or sexually related offences, if so, what were the circumstances?
- 24.5. Is there any other information relating to child safety which we should be aware of?
- 24.6. Do you have any further questions regarding the Child Protection Policy or the associated procedures of our ecclesia?

25. Appendix J: Insurance Requirements

Ansvar “Risk Management Guide - Preventing Abuse” in the “Client Protection Policy Checklist”:

Two employees and/or volunteers will be present whenever an individual child or vulnerable person is being supervised or cared for. Where this is not possible rooms, it should be done in a room which can be observed easily by others. In circumstances where one-on-one care is provided, there must be measures in place to identify if abuse is occurring such as regular rotation of staff, client feedback framework and independent case managers.

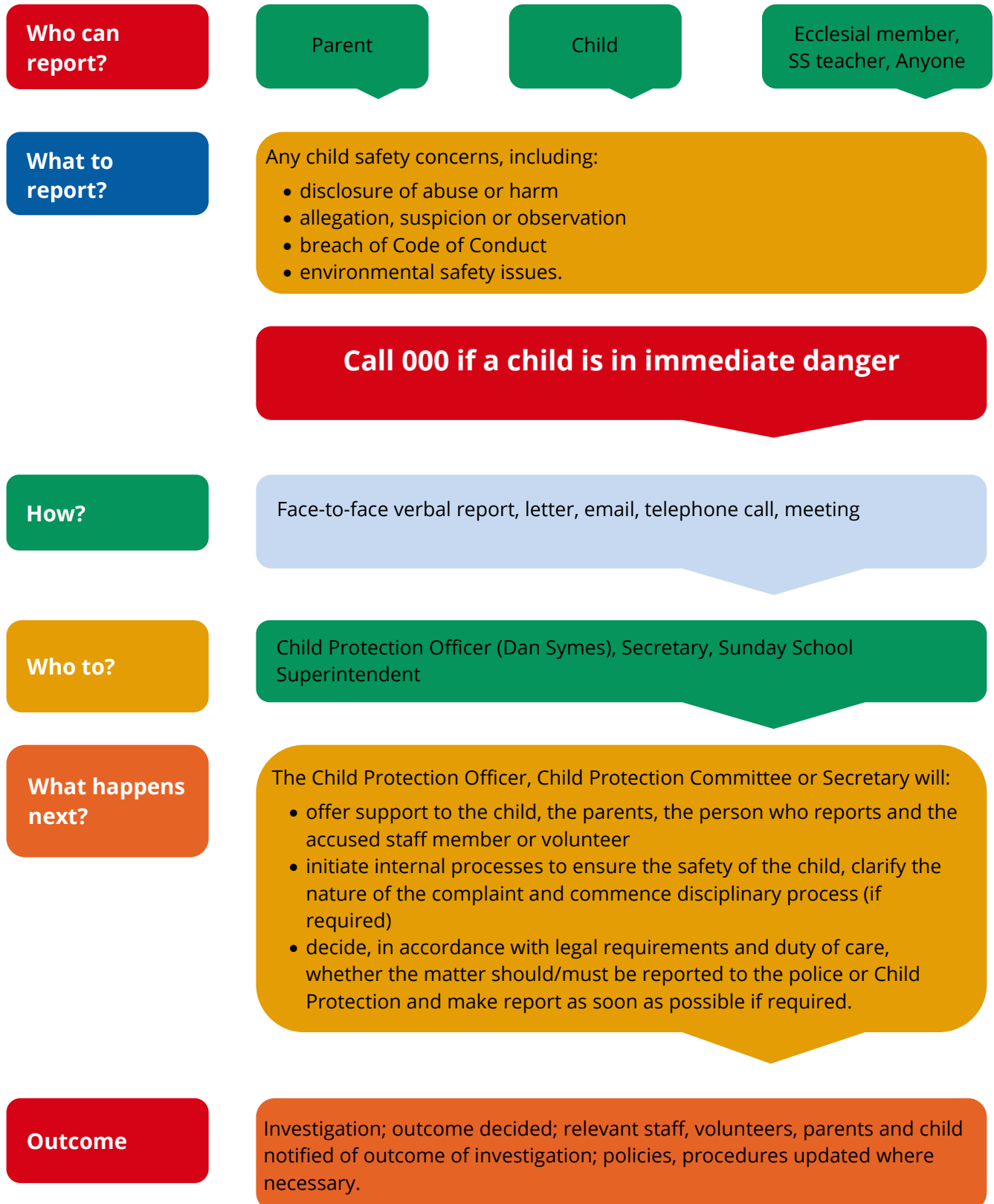
26. Appendix K: Risk Assessments

Areas that risk assessments need, at least, to be developed for:

- Sunday School
- Camps
- Bible Class in homes and at Heritage
- At Belgrave South Primary School



Flowchart: CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCESS



For more information on the Child Safe Standards visit <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/> or to contact the Child Protection Committee at Dandenong Ranges Christadelphians, email: ChildSafe@DandenongBEC.org.au