

ACTS Churches New Zealand

**Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
(Child Protection Policy)**

July 2024

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About this Policy

We are all capable of causing harm whether through deliberate action, misunderstanding, accident, or oversight. The scope of this policy covers our commitment to the safety of young people and outlines standards that all staff and volunteers must abide by to ensure no harm is caused to those in our care.

This policy is not just for those overseeing or leading young people's programmes but is for all areas of church life, all staff, volunteers and members. This policy must be followed whether or not the church has an active young people's or youth programme.

The purpose of this policy is to provide strategies to embed an organisational culture of young person safety. Through effective leadership arrangements, Acts Churches New Zealand (NZ) will provide a safe environment for all its events and activities and that, in particular, young people and vulnerable people are safe at all times.

The policy seeks to ensure that young people are respected and valued irrespective of their gender, age, country of origin, cultural heritage, social economic background, or ability.

The policy seeks to ensure that the protection of young people takes precedence over the reputation of the church or any individual.

The policy covers all ACTs Churches NZ Churches, organisations, Trusts and ministries and is a requirement for all entities regardless of size, location or specific operations.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated in line with changes to legislation and best practice procedures.

This current version of the policy, Child Safety and Well Being Policy (Child Protection Policy) v2.0 supersedes the previous Child Protection Policy v1.1. The change of name is reflected in the broader scope of its intent to go beyond just protection, but greater wellbeing for young people in Acts Churches NZ care.

The New Zealand Government is currently considering the recommendation from the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care. ACTS Churches NZ will regularly review this policy and our practices to ensure they are consistent with the learnings from that inquiry and the recommendations resulting from the inquiry.

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that as an organisation we are placing the safety and wellbeing, of the children (Tamariki) and young people (rangatahi) who participate in our programmes, at the center of decisions we are making.

Statement of Commitment

Acts Churches NZ believes that all young people have the right to feel safe and be safe. Tamariki (children) and rangatahi (young people) who are involved in any of our activities should receive the highest possible standard of care and protection. In all our work, we seek to ensure the well-being and development of all young people.

We are committed to the protection of young people, and the vulnerable from all forms of abuse.

We are committed to being an agent of healing and justice. What we do, reflects our values that young people are important and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

Acts Churches NZ has a zero tolerance of abuse. We are working hard at developing a culture of safety that ensures young people are nurtured and protected when in our care. We have developed policies and implemented procedures for the safety and protection of young people.

All employees and volunteers of Acts Churches NZ are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing, and empowerment of young people.

We recognise that keeping young people safe is everyone's responsibility and therefore the safety and welfare of young people are primary considerations when any advice is given, or decision is made about suspected child abuse.

We are committed to supporting families, and empowering families and the community to act to keep young people safe.

Scope

The scope of this policy and procedures apply to:

- All churches registered as ACTS Churches NZ.
- All ministries within churches registered as ACTS Churches NZ, including those ministries undertaken at the church's premises or away from the church's premises.
- All pastors and leaders within ACTS Churches NZ.
- This policy applies to all staff & volunteers, including any person with a leadership role within the church.
- Of particular importance to all ministries involving young people: children's church, youth.

Associated legislation

At all times we will ensure we comply with the requirements and expectations of New Zealand legislation. This policy has been informed by the following Acts:

- Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (Children's and Young People's Well Being Act 1989)
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Privacy Act 2020
- Family Violence Act 2018
- Employment Relations Act 2000
- Care of Children Act 2004
- Childrens Act 2014
- Childrens (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015

This Policy and Procedures document does not overrule legislation related to young people and their safety provided for by New Zealand statutes. ACTS Churches New Zealand recognises that some ministries in the church may have external affiliations with other organisations. These organisations may have their own policies and procedures related to the safety and protection of young people in their care. The church's policy and procedures are not intended to replace or conflict with other policies, but instead to operate in conjunction with them.

Definitions

Young Person / Young People

For the purposes of this Policy a 'young person' is a person under 18 years of age. This is inclusive of all children, Tamariki, youth and rangatahi regardless of the role they may have in a programme, leadership or volunteering team.

Adult

For the purposes of this Policy an 'adult' is a person aged 18 years or older.

Employee

For the purpose of this Policy 'employee' is defined as those staff who are employed in an employment relationship by any Trust affiliated with ACTs Churches New Zealand.

Volunteer

For the purpose of this Policy 'volunteer' is defined as any person serving as a volunteer in any Trust affiliated with ACTs Churches New Zealand.

Contractor

For the purpose of this Policy 'contractor' is defined as any person or organisation engaged by a Trust affiliated with ACTs Churches New Zealand to provide a service for reward.

ACTS Churches New Zealand (NZ)

Includes ACTS Churches NZ Trust and for the purpose of this policy is inclusive of any other Trust affiliated to the ACTS Churches NZ movement.

National Leader

The National Leader is the recognised leader of the movement as elected by Council (ACTS Churches NZ Council).

National Leadership Team

The team, as appointed by Council (ACTS Churches NZ Council), to lead the movement and chaired by the National Leader.

Overseeing Minister

The Overseeing Minister is the person appointed by the National Leader to oversee a specific location.

Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is the recognised leader of that specific location. For clarity this definition includes the following – Senior Minister, Campus Pastor, Local Pastor, Lead Pastor, Senior Leader.

Leader

Any adult who is responsible for the control and safety of members placed in their care, while holding a formal position in a recognised ministry of the church. A leader could include, but is not limited to:

- Senior or associate pastor.
- Trustee / Elder
- Small group leader.
- Community pastor.
- Team Leader
- Counsellors.
- Youth pastors and youth leaders.
- Young people's ministry leaders.
- Event organisers/production and operation managers.

Members

Any person, including young people, who attends or participates in church ministries.

Child Protection Specialist

Includes people who have the knowledge, skills and experience to provide child protection advice. For the purpose of this policy that includes: School Principals (and Deputy Principals), Social Workers, Paediatricians, Paediatric Nurses, Oranga Tamariki staff, school counsellors and any other person recognised by the National Leadership Team as having the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to provide such advice.

Childrens Programme Worker

Means anyone who has regular contact with young people in a child or youth related program.

Event / Programme

Means an event or a programme, be it regular or occasional, organised or authorised by the church/trust.

Ministry

Any organised activity or group that is authorised by the church/trust.

Child Abuse

The Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (Children's and Young People's Well Being Act 1989), defines child abuse as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person". **The definitions set out below provide some indicators of abuse and these should not be seen as an exhaustive list nor as a check list.**

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any behaviour which results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

Emotional Abuse

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

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any act or acts that result in the sexual exploitation of a child or young person. An act where an adult or person in power uses a child for a sexual reason.

Neglect

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

Cumulative Harm

Cumulative harm is the existence of compounded experiences of multiple episodes of abuse or 'layers' of neglect. The unremitting daily impact on the child can be profound and exponential, covering multiple dimensions of the child's life.

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate Partner Violence is physical, emotional, sexual and other abuse by someone (usually but not always a man) of a person (usually but not always a woman) with whom they have or have had some form of relationship with, such as but not limited to marriage or cohabitation, in order to maintain power and control over a person. These relationships could also be with other family, flatmates or siblings.

Disclosure

Occurs when someone informs a person that they have been subject to abuse, have been witness to abuse or have abused.

Allegation

A complaint, incident or notification of any matter that may be dealt with through the relevant reporting procedures.

Safety Check

A check to assess the potential leader or current leaders' suitability to work with young people – including confirmation of their identity, assessment of character and verification of education and/or membership of regulatory bodies.

Responsibilities

- Nationally: At a movement / national level, the National Leadership Team is responsible for the content of this policy.
- Locally: At a church / trust level, the local church trust is responsible for adopting, implementing and complying with the expectations of the policy.
- Advice: To outwork their respective responsibilities the movement will identify key people who the National Leadership Team and local Trusts can contact for advice.

Leaders and Team

Safety Checks

ACTS Churches NZ requires that all volunteers and employees in a church are suitably screened prior to serving in any area. Different screening processes will be required depending on the capacity and area in which they are serving.

All components of this process must be documented and information stored securely so as to protect the individuals privacy.

Any paid pastoral staff member, elder, or trustee must complete the screening process as if they are working with young people, given the senior nature of their role and position as decision makers in an organisation working with young people.

Screening Process for working with Children

- Police vetting – the individual must be police vetted for working with Young people, and this repeated at least every two years.
- Agreement with this Policy – the individual must be provided a copy of this policy and will be required to sign a document acknowledging their understanding and agreement to all requirements of this policy.
- Senior Pastor endorsement – an endorsement is required by the Senior Pastor attesting to the fact they know the person and that they are unaware of any character concerns which would prevent the individual working with young people **OR** an interview with the Leader and Senior Pastor or Elder / Trustee.

Screening Process for all other areas:

- Senior Pastors will agree with their Trustees what (if any) safety checks are required of other teams where there is no direct contact with young people.

In the case a Police Vet is returned with a result, the Senior Pastor will discuss this with their Overseeing Minister/ Trustees and agree an outcome which may include, this will be documented in Trust minutes:

- The person can serve in any team; or
- The person can serve with agreed boundaries set; or
- The person can serve in any team with the exception of Kids of Youth; or
- The person is unable to serve.

Factors to consider in determining whether a person can serve:

- Honesty and openness around offending prior to notification of result.
- Nature of offending (in the case of any offending against a young person or of a sexual nature – the person may not serve in kids or youth).
- Age at time of offence and period of time since the offence was committed.

Orientation

Prior to serving in a Programme working with young people, an employee or volunteer must meet with either the programme leader or their delegate to be orientated to the programme. This orientation needs to be documented and must include:

- An overview of the programme
- A tour of the facilities, including identification of any hazards and safety critical components (fire exits, fire alarms, first aid kits and any other features which form part of the buildings safety systems)
- An overview of this policy
- An overview of the health and safety needs of specific young people (i.e. allergies and medical conditions)
- An overview of the sign in / sign out processes
- An overview of any other relevant policies and procedures.

Training

All volunteers serving in any area must be reminded of this policy and the key responsibilities contained within the policy at least annually.

All adults working with young people must attend a Child Safety and Wellbeing course at least annually.

All paid pastoral staff, trustees and elders must attend a Child Safety and Wellbeing course at least annually.

A Child Safety and Wellbeing course must include:

- Viewing all four CPP videos OR In Person training by a suitably qualified person
- An opportunity to discuss scenarios related to the content of this policy.
- An opportunity for participants to ask and have questions answered.

A suitably qualified person includes:

- A social worker from Oranga Tamariki
- A school Principal
- A trainer from a recognised Child Protection consultancy / agency (such as Child Matters)
- A trainer recognised by the National Leadership Team as having the skills, experience and knowledge necessary to deliver child protection training.

ACTs Churches NZ recognises that within many of our congregations are people with the specialist knowledge to support the delivery of this policy and training. In such cases the Senior Pastor should discuss this with their Overseeing Minister as often training can be completed internally.

Young people and Youth Programmes

Leader Ratios

Safe supervision contributes to protecting young people from hazards that may emerge during programmes or activities that young people are participating in.

Employees and volunteers are to avoid being alone when working with a young person. In group settings young people must be supervised by a minimum of two adult leaders.

Under Two Years Onsite	1 adult : 5 Young people (minimum of 2 adults)
Over Two Years Onsite	1 adult : 10 young people (minimum of 2 adults)
Offsite	To be determined by the Senior Pastor, not to be less than onsite ratio's. In determining ratio consideration must be given to: - Location (including if there are hard or soft boundaries) - Leader capability - Age range involved - Activity (high or low risk activities)
Near Water	Under 10 years: Parent must accompany. Over 10 years: 1 adult : 4 young people (min 3) Over 13 years: 1 adult : 6 young people (min 3)
Over Night	To be determined by the Senior Pastor, not to be less than onsite ratio's. In determining ratio consideration must be given to: - Location (including if there are hard or soft boundaries) - Leader capability - Age range involved - Activity (high or low risk activities) - Accommodation set up.

The ratio's stated are absolute minimum numbers. Prior to any event a detailed RAM's form must be completed which includes consideration of a safe ratio in respect of the circumstances of that event. Specific consideration should be given to:

- Access to help – accessibility to emergency services, parents, and other forms of help should it be required.
- Group Visibility – how easy it is going to be to monitor a group of young people.
- Likelihood or potential for the group to need to split at some point.

A person under the age of 18 may lead a Kids programme provided the adult ratio is maintained.

Vehicles and Transport

When performing tasks or activities for any ACTS Churches NZ programme that requires driving the safety of the driver and all passengers must be a consideration. When transporting young people beyond the town or city boundary a parent/ caregiver consent must be sought and a RAM's form completed.

Vehicles used for transporting young people:

- Must have a current WOF or COF and be free of known defects at the time of travel.
- Must be registered.
- Must have an over the shoulder safety belt for every passenger (lap belts regardless of vehicle age are not adequate).
- If transporting anyone under the age of seven – an approved child restraint appropriate for their age and size must be used.
- For safety reasons, only adults are to travel in the front seats of vehicles.

Drivers who are involved in transporting young people:

- Must have a full driver license, with at least 2 years experience on a full license and be over the age of 18.
- In any 24 hour period a driver must ensure they have completed no more than 13 hours of work including driving – so if they started work at 9am they must not continue driving after 10pm at night.
- Must be familiar with the vehicle they are driving prior to travel.
- Must comply with all New Zealand Road rules and regulations.
- Must be stopped to use a mobile device.
- Apple Car Play or Android Auto may be used if it is unsafe to stop and only for the purposes of setting navigation, playing music or making an urgent but brief phone call.
- If a van is being used there must be an extra adult who whilst not driving is responsible for the behaviour of young people to ensure the driver is not distracted.

Meeting with Young People

Mentoring, pastoral care and discipleship are a regular component of church life and often involve meetings and discussions between leaders and young people. These discussions can take place in various environments and contexts. The following outlines specific guidelines that must be followed in relation to mentoring/pastoral care/discipleship.

- The meeting should be prearranged and parents/carer should be aware of the time and location
- Wisdom needs to be used in determining who will be involved in each mentoring / pastoral care relationship to ensure there is no confusion as to the nature of that relationship.

- It is preferred that meetings take place in a public setting with other people around eg. café, shopping center, church offices (with others present)
- Meeting in a young person's home is allowed but there must be a parent or caregiver at home at the time of the meeting and the meeting must take place in a common open room, not a bedroom or room with the door closed
- The transport section of this policy must be followed in relation to mentoring, transporting of young people in a 1:1 situation should be avoided. Wherever possible two leaders should meet and transport a young person together or if this is not possible then the young person should travel in the back seat.
- All meetings should be documented including details of location, date, time and stored. The contents of the discussion does not need to be noted, however should there be a disclosure requiring action, this must be followed through. Eg. Risk to safety, abuse, etc.

Photography

The following outlines requirements when dealing with photos of young people in a church programme or event.

- If photos (or video) are being taken then this must be communicated to anyone who may be included in that photo or video (and in the case of young people – this communication needs to be with parents also). At all times a Young person (or their parent / guardian) has the right to request that photos or video not be taken that include them and that request must be complied with.
- Prior to using photo or video that includes young people – consent must be obtained from both the young person and their parents / caregivers.
- Photography should focus on the activity and not a particular young person.
- Photos should focus on small groups rather than individuals.
- Do not identify in writing the people in the photograph – if the photo is shared on social media no young person is to be tagged or anything else done to the photo that could attach an individual's name.
- All children/young people must be appropriately dressed when photographed.
- Photos should be removed from personal devices after the event and stored on a church-based site. Photos may be saved on church approved devices.

Ensuring Activities are Safe

It is the responsibility of the Leader to ensure that our programmes and activities are safe. It is the responsibility of the Senior Pastor to ensure this is included in planning and execution of activities. Ultimately trustees will be held accountable by the courts for ensuring activities are safe.

Risk Assessments

It is expected that existing hazard identification and management processes will ensure our regular / standard programmes are safe.

It is important therefore when planning an event, activity or programme which is not consistent with the normal programme that a specific risk assessment is completed so that the risks associated with that activity are properly considered.

The risk assessment must include:

- A description of the activity or event
- Identification of potential hazards and risks
- How hazards and risks will be managed
- Any residual risks or hazards (i.e. what is unable to be controlled / managed)

A RAM's template is provided in the appendices to this policy.

Camps

Camps require a higher level of planning and risk management. The following provides some guidelines for requirements for them:

- Leaders need to exercise wisdom in respect of sleeping arrangements and how camps are supervised to ensure the safety of everyone involved.
- Young people are not to sleep in the same bed as each other or with a leader.
- Leaders must not be present when a young person is dressing/ undressing.
- Ideally leaders and young people will sleep in separate rooms, where this is not possible due to other safety concerns there must be at least two adults present at all times and consideration given to how to maintain physical distance between leaders and young people.

Online and Social Media Conduct

Electronic media and communication in its various forms is both an incredible tool to stay connected but also has the potential for inappropriate use that could result in accusations of abuse or grooming. For this reason, the principles listed in this document are recommended for all leaders and volunteers of Acts Churches NZ whilst working or volunteering with young people.

This policy applies to all online and mobile platforms for sharing content and information, whether hosted by your Church or hosted by others. "Social media" refers to social networking services, short-message services, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image/video sharing sites and other methods for sharing real time information among users. Due to the ever-changing speed of social media, this policy applies to all new social media and digital platforms, whether they are mentioned or not.

Clear guidelines and boundaries must be developed by local churches and communicated in accessible ways to employees, volunteers, parents/carers, and young people so that it is understood and implemented according to policy guidelines.

Online Friendships

- It is recognized that Social Media is a powerful tool for connecting with young people and it is not practical to avoid its use. Leaders should regularly discuss together and with their Senior Pastor the safe ways to use social media, with particular consideration to:
 - Abiding by the general rule of 'never be alone with a young person' – the online context is engaging in a private chat directly with a young person without others present in the chat.
 - Being mindful of the young persons boundaries.
 - Being mindful of what you post or comments you make if young people are connected to your social media profile.

Personal Content

- Content on personal posts should always be considered carefully, with the understanding that the content is public and a leader/ worker is in a position of influence and responsibility
- Do not criticise, or join in negative talk that demeans or defames team members, participants, on social networking sites.

Communication

- Leaders should only converse with young people via wall posts and in groups, not through personal chat systems
- If there is a need for a Leader to communicate directly with a young person then any messaging system that deletes the chat thread (i.e. SnapChat) should be avoided.
- Regularly review communication protocols with programme leaders to ensure precautions are followed.
- People over the age of 18 who are no longer actively involved in a leadership role within Youth must be removed from any group chats, groups or pages.

Organisational/Church - Digital Platforms & Apps

- Prior to use of any platform or app, Leaders must investigate the risks in using the platform and the risks must be addressed and mitigated.
- Leaders must document what communication platforms are safe for all users and team members and leaders must only use the listed platforms when communicating with team members.
- Chosen platforms must be communicated to parents/ carers on a regular basis.
- Programme Leaders or other senior leadership should be administrators of pages/sites and monitor them on a regular basis.

- For any private member only pages/sites the highest level of privacy should be selected and all content should only be visible to members. For clarity public facing social media pages do not require strict privacy settings, but settings to ensure content is appropriate must be used – i.e. there is a higher likelihood of bullying occurring by general public on youth social media pages – young people in our programmes must be protected from such bullying.
- Photos and videos of participants should not be posted to sites/ pages by team members without their authorised consent , as per the photographs section of this policy.

Turning 18

Youth programmes should have only young people and employees and volunteers who have been safety checked involved.

- Young people turning 18 years old, during the school year, can continue to attend youth as a participant, as they would continue to attend school.
- Once the year has ended, a person over 18 can no longer attend unless they return as a leader.

Accidents and Injuries

Incidents which result in any injury should be recorded. Injuries considered minor at the time, may prove later to be more serious. A record of what occurred will assist should a later injury claim ensue.

A record of incidents should be kept and stored in a secure file. The record should identify the date and time of the incident, the person(s) affected by the incident, what happened and what action, if any, followed. Incidents of all kinds should be reported to the Senior Pastor or their delegate, and the young persons parent/ caregiver.

Each programme should have clear procedures in place as to how an injury is handled within their context. It should be clear who should be informed and when.

If there is an injury and there is uncertainty to the medical response required, seek external medical assistance. Eg. Ambulance, Hospital or Doctor.

Remedial action may be necessary if actions of a similar kind recur or actions involving a particular location, person or activity recur.

Allegations and Abuse

Commitment to Report

ACTS Churches NZ will respond to concerns of child abuse (Refer: Definitions) in a manner which ensures the young person's safety is the first and paramount consideration. This means when there is a concern that a young person may be being abused this will be reported to Oranga Tamariki or in cases of immediate concern to New Zealand Police.

Child Protection Procedures must be followed whether the alleged perpetrator is a member of the public, a member, volunteer or staff for ACTS Churches NZ.

ACTS Churches NZ will maintain a Child Protection Register where all reports will be documented and recorded in such a manner that it protects the privacy of individual and the integrity of any investigation.

Relationship with specialist agencies

ACTS Churches NZ will maintain good working relationships with agencies who have the statutory powers and skills to intervene in cases of child abuse. This includes maintaining a good working relationship with Oranga Tamariki, and with Police, and be familiar with the laws that serve to protect young people from abuse. Staff will consult with Oranga Tamariki, Police, and with other appropriate agencies who have specialist knowledge to help protect young people from abuse.

ACTS Churches NZ will also maintain relationships with NGOs and agencies that provide services to young people and families throughout the country.

ACTS Churches NZ will always act on the recommendations of statutory agencies, including Oranga Tamariki and the Police for the purposes of protecting young people.

Handling Disclosures and Concerns

Reports of suspected child abuse can be made to either New Zealand Police or Oranga Tamariki. If a young person is in immediate danger the New Zealand Police should be contacted using **111**. If the young person is not in immediate danger, any member of staff who has concerns regarding the safety and protection of a young person may ring Oranga Tamariki on **0508 FAMILY**.

ACTS Churches NZ staff will not act alone about concerns of abuse, but will consult with either their national leader, movement supervisor, pastor or child protection specialist. Staff will not act in a way that is outside their knowledge, capacity or role. For clarity any instance of suspected abuse must be discussed with either the National Leader, Overseeing Minister or Senior Pastor.

When child abuse is suspected, Oranga Tamariki or the Police will be informed. The agency should be asked to confirm in writing they have received the report of suspected child abuse.

All concerns and information will be recorded factually and held confidentially. All documentation relating to concerns and information will be held in a Child Protection Register held at each local church.

It is important that staff take what a young person says seriously. This applies irrespective of the setting, or the member of staff's own opinion on what is being said. If there is information disclosed regarding actual or suspected child abuse staff must:

- Stay calm.
- Listen and hear.
- Give time to the young person to say what he/she wants.
- Reassure him/her it was right to tell.
- Tell the young person that they are being taken seriously and that they are not to blame.
- Explain that they have to pass on what the young person has told them as soon as they are aware that the young person/adult is making a disclosure.
- Give an age-appropriate explanation to the young person of what the young person can expect to happen next.
- Record in writing what was said as soon as possible, using the young person's own words where possible.
- Report the concern to the appropriate statutory agency, in consultation with the National Leader, Overseeing Minister, Senior Pastor or Child Protection Expert.
- Refer to Appendix Two for a process flow chart in managing suspected allegations of child abuse within the Church.

Staff must **NOT**:

- Interview the young person.
- Make the young person repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Promise to keep secrets.
- Enquire into the details of the alleged abuse.
- Ask leading questions.

If it is decided that concerns do not require a notification to statutory authorities, the young person will continue to be monitored, and records kept, including reasons why. This documentation will include confirmation that the Overseeing Minister and a Child Protection Specialist have agreed with the decision to not report.

Staff will not question extensively a young person who has disclosed abuse, or who is displaying signs of possible abuse. However, it is important that a young person is listened to and responded to appropriately.

In all cases of suspected abuse, the information and concerns will be made available only to those staff who have a need to know. All staff members involved will be kept informed as far as possible within the limits of confidentiality and the need to protect the best interest of the young person.

In a situation where the staff member or volunteer believes that a young person is in immediate danger, and that there is not a commitment to secure the young person's safety by calling a statutory service, the staff member in consultation with their Senior Pastor will inform the Police Child Protection Team or Oranga Tamariki Contact Centre of their concerns.

ACTS Churches NZ will not collude to protect an adult or an organisation.

Information sharing

Although the parent or caregiver of the young person will usually be informed of concerns, there may be times when those with parental responsibility may not be initially informed. This may happen when:

- the parent or caregiver is the alleged perpetrator.
- it is possible that the young person may be intimidated into silence.
- there is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed.
- the young person does not want their parent or caregiver involved and they are of an age when they are competent to make that decision.
- If the young person's safety will be at risk if the parents are informed.

Giving information to protect young people is not a breach in confidentiality. Principle 11 of the Privacy Act, 2020, allows sharing of personal information to prevent or lessen a serious threat.

ACTS Churches NZ will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before sharing information about an allegation with anyone, other than the Senior Pastor, Overseeing Minister or Child Protection Specialist. Staff should be aware of:

- Under sections 15 & 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 any person who believes that a young person has been or is likely to be harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.
- When collecting personal information about individuals, it is important to be aware of the requirements of the privacy principles - i.e. the need to collect the information directly from the individual concerned and when doing so to be transparent about: the purposes for collecting the information and how it will be used; who can see the information; where it is held; what is compulsory/voluntary information; and people have a right to request access to and correction of their information.
- Staff may, however, disclose information under the Privacy Act/Health Information Privacy Code where there is good reason to do so - such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety (see privacy principle 11/Code rule 11). Disclosure about ill-treatment or neglect of a young person may also be made to the Police or Oranga Tamariki under sections 15 & 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

Allegations against Staff

Concerns may be raised regarding members of staff. These may be as a result of behaviour within the workplace, outside the workplace or of behaviour within their home environment.

Any concern of abuse of a young person will follow the Reporting Procedures outlined in this policy. In the event of an allegation of abuse by a staff member a report of concern will be made to the Police and Oranga Tamariki.

If an allegation is made against a staff member, the Local Pastor or Trustees must engage with a member of the HR team, or a consultant or employment lawyer to ensure appropriate process is followed.

When there are suspicions of abuse by a staff member, both staff and young people's rights are to be attended to. This means that the safety of the young person is of first concern, and that the staff member must have access to legal and professional advice, in accordance with the Employment Relations Act.

If the police decide to undertake a criminal investigation, then the member of staff may be suspended in accordance with their employment agreement, without prejudice, as a precautionary measure. Staff will work in consultation with Police (or other involved agencies) to determine if and to what extent an internal investigation may take place.

If there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, then the staff member may be suspended (in accordance with their employment agreement) while an internal disciplinary investigation may still be undertaken if there is "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse, or a breach of policy may have occurred. The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff which needs to be considered under internal disciplinary procedures.

Appendix: Risk Analysis Form

Risk Assessment and Management Document

NAME OF EVENT / ACTIVITY

Distribution List:

Essential Background Information

Number of Participants (under the age of 18): _____

Number of leaders / volunteers (aged 18 and over): _____

Ratio: _____:_____ (confirm compliant YES / NO)

Leader responsible for Event / Activity:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Nominated First Aider:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Health and Safety:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Pre-Event Checklist:

☐ All volunteers / leaders Police vetted ☐ First Aid kits checked ☐ RAMs
documents signed off by HS and distributed

☐ Consent forms obtained ☐ CPP training complete ☐ Full
Drivers licence sighted for any drivers

Signed: _____ (Leader Responsible)

Signed: _____ (Health and Safety)

Activity		Leader	
Raw Risk	Severity:	Likelihood:	Risk category
Management Plan	Age Restriction in Place: Capacity Restriction: Other Restrictions: Monitoring and Supervision: Other Safety Considerations		
Residual Risk	Severity:	Likelihood:	Risk category
Notes State any conditions or circumstances which prevent this activity proceeding or continuing:			

Fire Safety

In case of smoke or fire:	In case of hearing fire alarm
1. Activate alarm at a trigger point or if not accessible call 111 2. Evacuate the building 3. Meet at the evacuation point	1. Evacuate the building 2. Meet at the evacuation point

Position	Responsibilities in a Fire

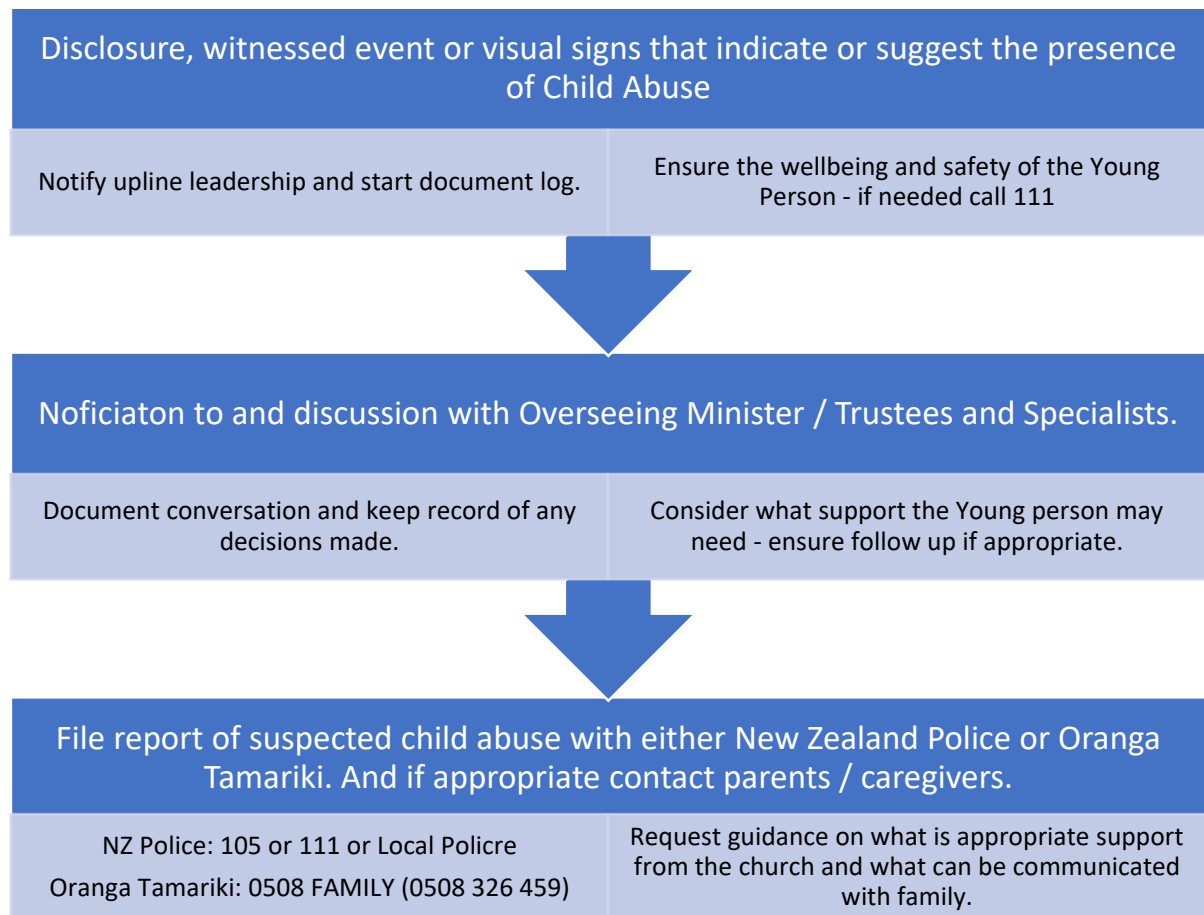
Risk Assessment Matrix

Likelihood of Injury / Harm	Severity of Injury / Harm				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Critical
	<i>No / only minor injury</i>	<i>Require First aid</i>	<i>Require Nurse / Doctor</i>	<i>Extensive Injuries</i>	<i>Fatalities</i>
Almost Certain (This will almost certainly happen (90%+))	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely (It is expected this will happen (36 – 90%))	Low	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Possible (It is possible this will happen 10 – 35%)	Low	Medium	High	High	High
Unlikely (Not expected to occur but could occur. 2- 10%)	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare (Not occurred before but not impossible; 0 – 2%)	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High

Risk Level

Extreme	STOP! Look for alternative options. This is an unacceptable level of risk.
High	STOP and PLAN! We need to put in place a plan to either eliminate or minimize the risk.
Medium	SLOW DOWN! We need to consider what can be done to eliminate or minimize the risk.
Low	CONTINUE Can retain the risk but we need to be vigilant no factors change that increase the risk.

Appendix Two: Flow Chart Responding to Concerns of Abuse



Follow Up Care and Further Considerations

- Check with the relevant authority (NZ Police or Oranga Tamariki) how the church can support the Young person and their family.
- Ensure (if appropriate) there is Pastoral care in place for those involved.
- Ensure all steps are recorded in written notes and these notes are forwarded to the Child Protection file held by ACTS Churches NZ: Jason.sargeant@equipperschurch.com