



Connect Groups: Safer Churches Guidelines



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Safer Churches Guidelines for Connect Groups

During connect group it is important that safer churches best practice is implemented in order to minimise the possibility of harm or abuse happening to children.

- Connect Group leaders and anyone caring for children should have completed Safer Churches training and know how to report any safer churches or pastoral concerns.
- Ensure that those attending are aware of the safer churches procedures you have in place.
- Anyone caring for children, must have a current WWCC# that has been verified by INC
- Parents are primarily responsible for the safety of their own children
- Know where the children are at all times, who they are with and what any planned activities are.
- Clearly communicate expectations around what areas of the home can be accessed during a meeting.
- If children are cared for out of sight of the adult meeting, there should be two people supervising. At least one of these must be an adult. Ideally, the two people should not be related. Do not have a one-on-one situation, i.e. one adult/teenager with one child (Unless it is a parent/sibling relationship)
- Parents should take their own children to the toilet, and change their own children's nappies.

PHYSICALLY

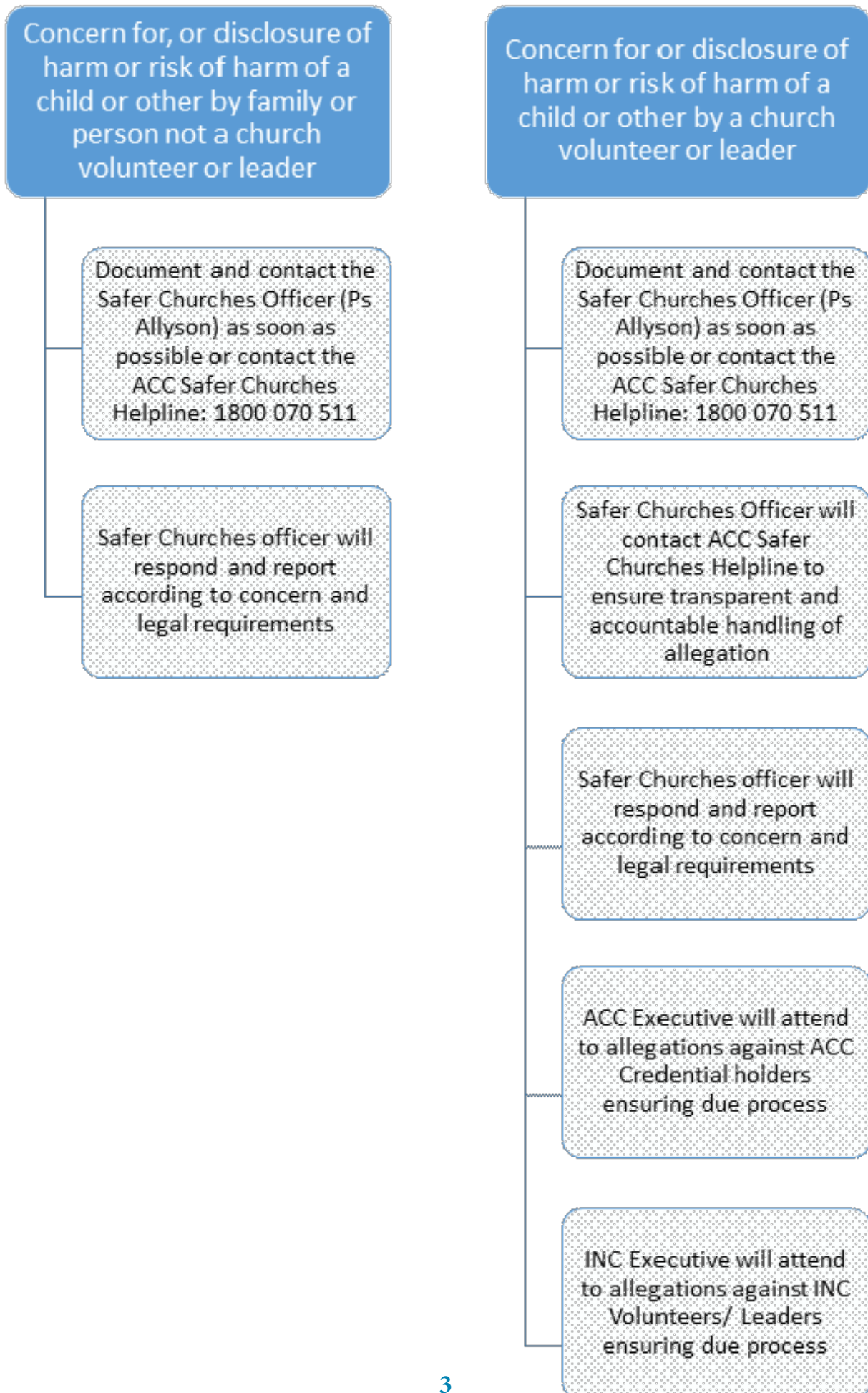
Conduct a risk assessment of the host home environment:

- Check the building and surrounds for danger. Things like building site hazards, swimming pool access, damaged fences, no gates, access to driveways, roads and car parks, unlocked sheds, unsafe balconies and steps should all be considered.
- In the setting of the meeting, consider access to hot drinks, broken toys, small objects with a potential choking hazard or sharp edges.
- Access to poisons and medications- bathroom/ bedrooms/ kitchen/ garden must be mitigated
- Allergies and safe food handling procedures must be considered
- Have a fire/evacuation plan for the home
- Have a COVID safe cleaning plan for high touch surfaces and toys

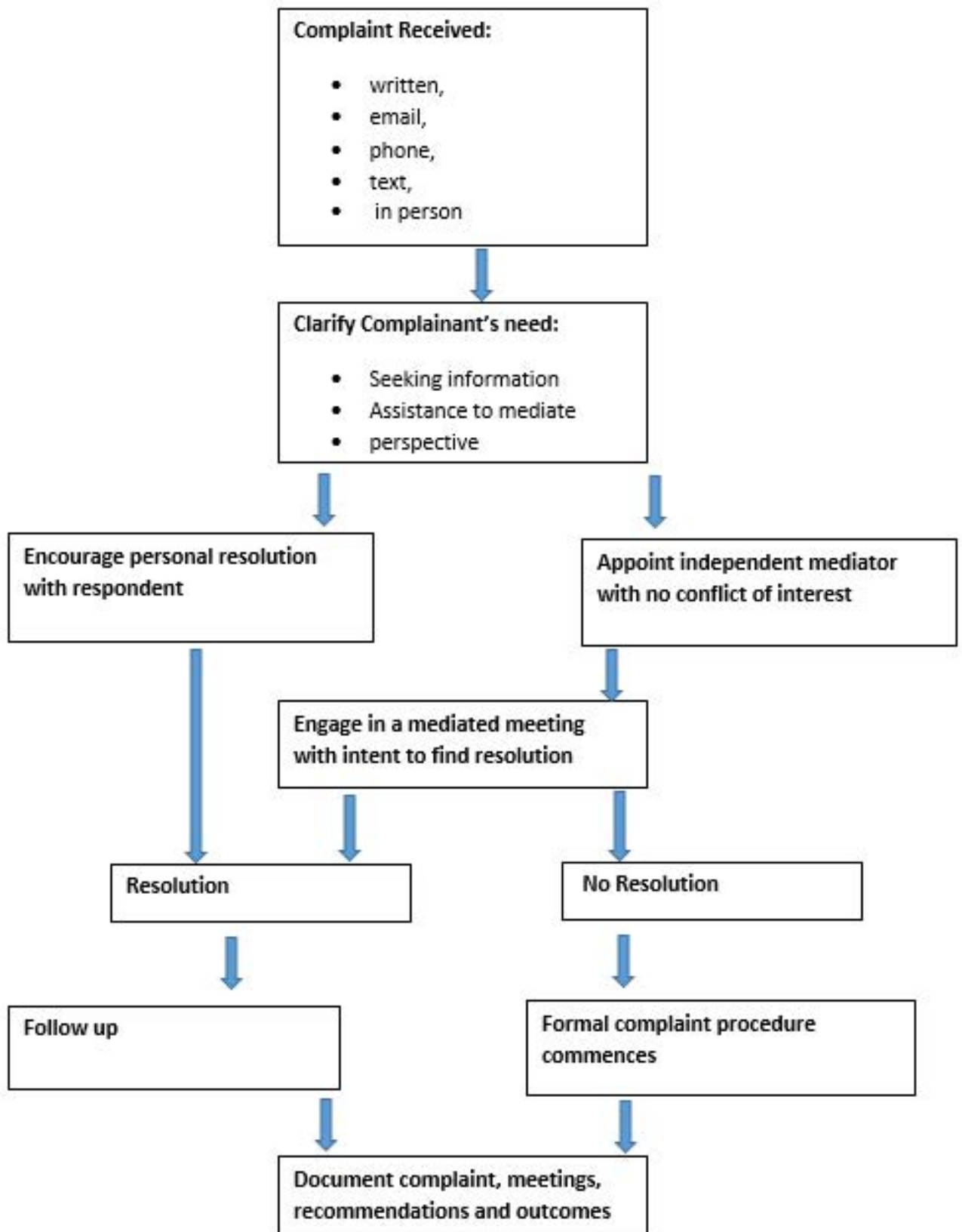
EMOTIONALLY/ SPIRITUALLY

- Conversation. Is what is being discussed appropriate for the children to hear?
- What is available for kids to watch?
- Are there inappropriate pictures/ posters in the home?
- Include the children when possible. Help them to not feel excluded.

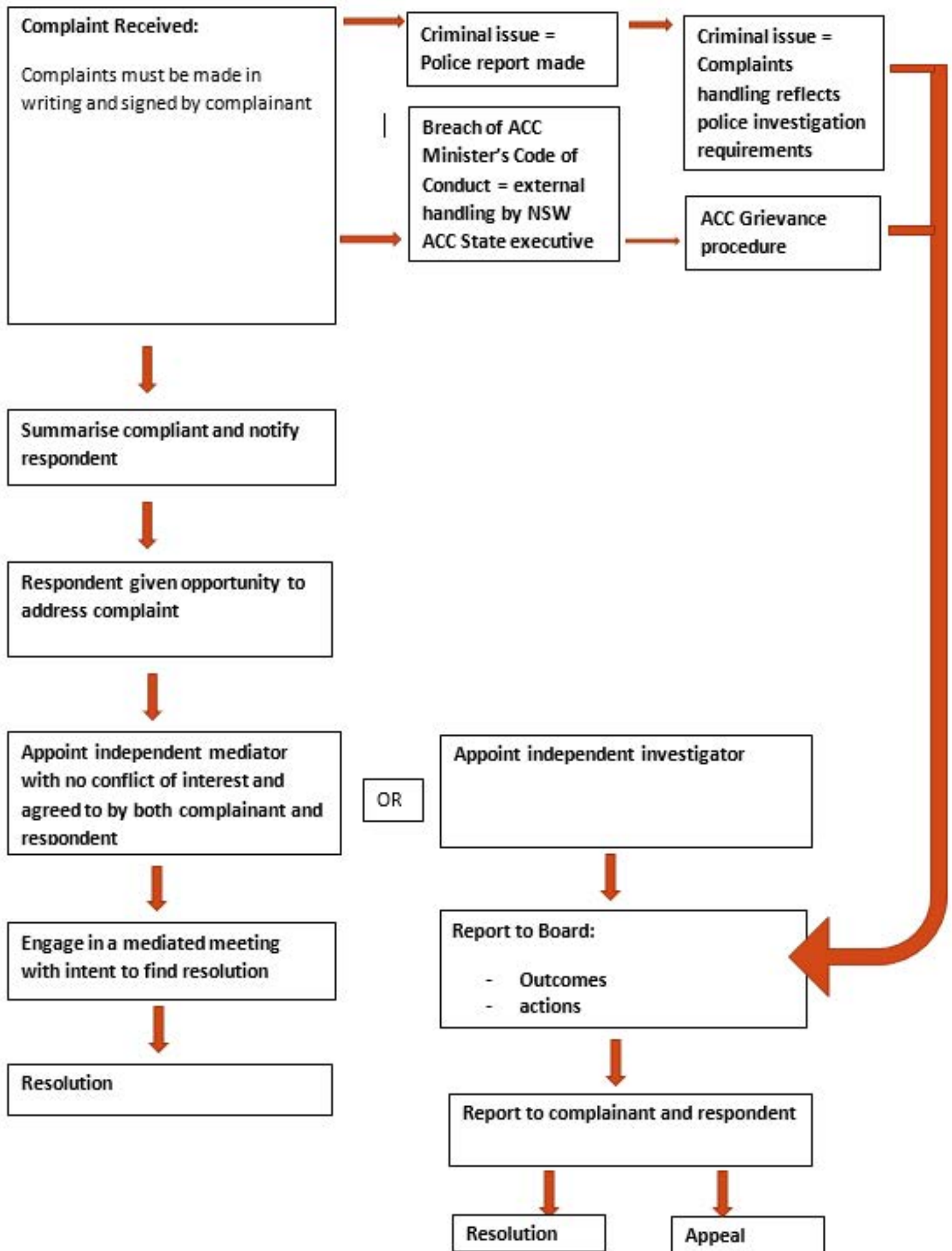
Disclosure



Complaints Handling Procedure Informal



INC Formal Complaints Process



INC Confidentiality Agreement

As part of the ACC Volunteer Code of Conduct you have agreed to uphold integrity with how you treat confidential and copyright information. Additionally, Imagine Nations Church has a privacy policy which expects all staff and volunteers to adhere to.

Imagine Nations Church specifically requires you to adhere to the following whilst in your ministry role:

As a volunteer engaged by AG A SC C, I understand that I may from time to time have access to information concerning the business and affairs of those individuals or organisations conducting business with AG A SC C or associated therewith in order to fulfil my role. Therefore, during and after my period of engagement, I will treat such information obtained by me regarding AG A SC C and those individuals and organisations in the strictest confidence:

- I will not disclose the personal private information of anyone
 - o unless such a disclosure is required or authorised by law and
 - o I have consulted with my Pastoral supervisor and
 - o I have the express permission of the person to share their information.

I will uphold all required security measures to protect any personal information I have access to in order to fulfil my role while engaged with AG A SC C. I will not share or disclose any security measures (e.g. passwords) with any other person unless I have consulted with my Pastoral supervisor.

I will take care when communicating in a group format to not disclose personal information (e.g. email address or contact number).

I understand that all copyright and other intellectual property rights in the material generated by AG A SC C in the conduct of its business shall remain vested in AG A SC C.

I understand that intellectual property or material obtained and/or developed during my period of engagement with AG A SC C remains the property of AG A SC C and I will not use or reproduce it without the express written permission of the directors/senior pastors.

I have read and understood the AG A SC C Confidentiality Agreement.



OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

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ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINES

The **Safer Churches Guidelines** ("Guidelines") have been developed by the ACC National Executive as part of the implementation of the **ACC Safer Churches Strategy** and outworking of the **ACC Child Protection Policy** ('Policy').

The ACC Safer Churches Guidelines, Training and Implementation Kit assist ACC Churches and their workers in upholding Child Protection legislation and other relevant 'people protection' legislation – e.g. Health and Safety. That is to say, the ACC Safer Churches Strategy is aimed at the protection of all people in ACC Churches.

The Guidelines are good practice procedures for the implementation of the Policy and people protection.

The Guidelines aim to ensure that all workers (paid and volunteer) in ACC Churches, are safe people who act in a protective manner with the people they serve.

The Guidelines are divided into two categories:

- those considered to be legal, Biblical and/or moral imperatives, denoted by the word "**shall**", must be implemented; and
- those considered as good practice, denoted by the word "**recommended**", are strongly recommended.

It is an expectation that all workers (paid and volunteer) in ACC Constituent Churches will follow the Guidelines.

The ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit is located in the Safer Churches section of the ACC Pastor's Login on the ACC website.

GUIDELINE 1 – Safe Church Strategy implementation

As an outworking of the Policy statement:

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5),

- *upholding this policy, the nationally recognised 10 Child Safe Principles and applicable child protection laws and regulations, as relevant in their office and jurisdiction (see document SC003), and implementing the related ACC Safer Churches Guidelines as appropriate,*

National Executive, State Executives and Local Church Boards **shall:**

- a. endorse and implement the ACC Child Protection Policy and ACC Safer Churches Guidelines (or alternative guideline/s that is/are at least consistent with the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines);
- b. ensure all ACC workers within their respective Constituent Church understand and adhere to their obligations in accordance with the ACC Child Protection Policy, including the implementation of the Safer Churches Guidelines as minimum standards for the protection of children and vulnerable people (or alternative guideline/s that is/are at least consistent with the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines);
- c. develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability in relation to the ACC Safer Churches Strategy. This would include making this a standing item of regular meetings of the ACC National Executive and Constituent Churches and providing opportunities for ACC People to clarify and confirm the procedures to apply when taking action in relation to Children or Young People's welfare and safety; and
- d. implement relevant ACC Safer Churches procedures and practices (consistent with the samples found in the ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit at www.acc.org.au).

GUIDELINE 2 – Culture of safety & wellbeing

As an outworking of the Policy statements:

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5),

- *providing for and promoting the care, protection and wellbeing of Children and Young People in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment and the right to be protected from harm, and to maximise opportunities for Children and Young People to realise their full potential; and*
- *recognising and responding to the diverse needs of all Children and Young People, with special reference to Aboriginal Children and Young People and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds as well as the safety of Children and Young People with a disability as relevant in the local church setting,*

ACC Church workers (paid and volunteer) **shall** minister out of the love God has for everyone, by acting in the best interests of all people they serve in ministry, through:

- a. practising servant leadership (Matthew 20:25-28);
- b. respecting and valuing all people, with special care for those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island or diverse cultural backgrounds, and/or those with a disability;
- c. ministry in transparent and accountable teams e.g. avoiding unsupervised contact

- with Children or Young People;
- d. upholding National Privacy Principles; and
- e. providing opportunities for formal debriefing and/or counselling for families of Children or Young People who have experienced abuse and any other family in the community who may indirectly be affected by an incident.

In relation to Children and Young People, it is **recommended** that ACC People support healthy development and wellbeing through:

- a. understanding and upholding the rights of Children and Young People according to their age and stage of development;
- b. providing regular opportunities for workers to clarify and confirm the procedures to apply when taking action in relation to Children or Young People's welfare and safety; and
- c. good practice in accessing local resources when Children or Young People are experiencing distress or crisis.

GUIDELINE 3 – Promoting support networks

As an outworking of the Policy statements:

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5),

- *recognising the family as the primary means of providing for the nurture, care and protection of Children and Young People and to accord high priority to supporting and assisting the family to carry out its responsibilities to Children and Young People; and*
- *promoting and recognising the need to strengthen, preserve and promote positive relationships between the Child and the Child's parent, family members, leaders, mentors, spiritual advisors and significant others,*

it is **recommended** that ACC Constituent Churches:

- a. provide practical pastoral care. For example, providing information and support in practical parenting, marriage enrichment, caring for those with special needs or in times of crisis; and
- b. assist church attendees to recognise and access their support networks within the church and also in the local community.

GUIDELINE 4 – Promoting empowerment and participation

As an outworking of the Policy statement:

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5),

- *empowering Children and Young People by engaging with Children and Young People and Caregivers in relation to decisions that impact them, including inviting feedback as part of our services,*

ACC Church workers (paid and volunteer) **shall**:

- a. listen to the views of, and respond appropriately to, concerns of all people they serve; and
- b. encourage all church attendees to speak to their local church Safer Churches Officer if they

are concerned about harmful behaviours or harmful situations.

In relation to Children and Young People, ACC People **shall**:

- c. actively promote the empowerment and participation of all people at their church in the protection of Children and Young People, including:
 - i. providing opportunities for Children or Young People to tell us their views and feedback about the services we provide to them;
 - ii. making information about the Child Protection Policy available to Children, Young People and Parents/Carers;
 - iii. ensuring that Children, Young People and Parents/Carers have access to adequate and age-appropriate information about child safety and how to protect themselves;
 - iv. ensuring that Children and Young People have access to adequate support to promote safety and intervene early in concerns that they raise; and
 - v. listening to Children or Young People and appropriately address any concerns that they raise with us, in the least intrusive way possible, that is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the Child or Young Person from harm and promote the Child or Young Person's development.

GUIDELINE 5 – Appointment of workers (paid and volunteer)

As an outworking of the Policy statement:

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5),

- *providing for and promoting the provision of services that foster the health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity of Children and Young People including by ensuring that persons who have a Direct Role with Children and Young People within the movement are appropriately selected, screened, trained, supervised and performing their responsibilities, including ongoing education and equipping,*

ACC Constituent Churches **shall**:

- a. screen, appoint, and induct all workers (paid and volunteer) using a formal accountable/transparent process, including:
 - i. compliance with State and Territory legislation with regard to Working with Children/Vulnerable Persons Checks (refer to SC003);
 - ii. self-declarations (refer to SC014);
 - iii. referee checking (at least two referees); and
 - iv. police background checking for paid employees.
- b. provide adequate and role-relevant induction training as required by Health and Safety legislation;
- c. store securely and permanently all successful applicant worker appointment documentation; and
- d. **not** allow an individual to work or continue his/her work if he/she has been charged or convicted of a crime that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance. It is illegal in all States and Territories for a person who does not, or cannot, hold a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) to engage in any child related work. The church board will need to complete a full risk

assessment to ascertain the current risks, and then implement a risk mitigation strategy to protect children and young people. This risk assessment must include seeking advice from the ACC Safer Churches Helpline and the church insurance company. ACC People who have been charged or convicted of a crime that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance have an ongoing obligation to inform the Constituent Church of this matter.

- e. It is **recommended** that ACC Churches conduct annual ministry role reviews for workers. This process should be made clear to applicants at the time of appointment, as part of the induction process. This provides an opportunity for workers to say they will or will not be available next year/time, which is important for the health of committed teams.

GUIDELINE 6 – Safer Churches training

As an outworking of the Policy statement:

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5),

- *providing for and promoting the provision of services that foster the health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity of Children and Young People including by ensuring that persons who have a Direct Role with Children and Young People within the movement are appropriately selected, screened, trained, supervised and performing their responsibilities, including ongoing education and equipping,*

ACC Credential and Certificate holders **shall** complete ACC Safer Churches training every three years at a minimum in order for Credentials or Certificates to be renewed.

This training develops the Credential Holder's awareness of their responsibilities under the ACC Child Protection Policy and ACC Safer Churches Guidelines. ACC Safer Churches training includes understanding the concepts of child protection including knowledge of indicators of Child or Young Person at risk of harm (e.g. abuse and neglect), and reporting procedures for when there are risk of harm concerns about a Child and/or Young Person.

ACC Constituent Churches **shall** provide people who have a Direct Role (as defined in SC001) with adequate training in the concepts of Child Protection at a minimum of every 3 years.

This shall include indicators of Child or Young Person risk of harm (abuse and neglect), and the reporting procedures for when they have risk of harm concerns about a Child and/or Young Person who is involved in the church.

It is **recommended** that ACC Constituent Churches provide all workers with adequate, appropriate, and ongoing training in Safer Churches related policy, procedures and practices.

GUIDELINE 7 – Supervision of workers (paid and volunteer)

As an outworking of the Policy statement:

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5),

- *providing for and promoting the provision of services that foster the health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity of Children and Young People including by ensuring that persons who have a Direct Role with Children and Young People within the movement are appropriately selected, screened, trained, supervised and performing their responsibilities, including ongoing*

education and equipping,

ACC Constituent Churches **shall**:

- a. adequately and appropriately supervise all workers, including provision of a Code of Conduct (see Ministerial Code of Conduct [SC013] and sample Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct [SC014]). Additional requirements may be required of employed workers);
- b. provide adequate support for workers in line with Health and Safety legislation; and
- c. make adequate provision for developing workers. This may include things such as regular team meetings, praying together, eating together and planning together. It is also advisable to invest in leadership development, both through in-house and external training events.

GUIDELINE 8 – Responding to concerns

As an outworking of the Policy statement:

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5),

- *promoting caring attitudes and responses towards Children or Young People, so that the need for appropriate nurture, care and protection is understood, risks to a Child's wellbeing are quickly identified, and any necessary support, protection or care is promptly provided including child focused responses to allegations of risk of harm or harm in line with Safer Churches Guideline 8,*

ACC Constituent Churches **shall** know and follow their State and Territory Legislation (SC003).

Response processes **shall** be child focused and uphold the rights of Children and Young People in line with Child Safe Standards (SC068).

Children

It is **recommended** that Constituent Churches appoint a Safer Churches Person/Team, whose roles include: receiving reports, assisting in the process of reporting of Child Protection concerns, and keeping accurate records permanently and securely in accordance with privacy legislation.

ACC People **shall** report concerns when:

- a. a Child or Young Person discloses they have been, or are at risk of being harmed;
- b. someone else (regardless of age) discloses that they know of a Child or Young Person who has been/is at risk of being harmed; or
- c. there are concerns that the Child or Young Person may have been, or is at risk of being harmed based on their physical appearance or behaviour.

ACC People **shall**

- a. put the rights of a Child or Young Person to the protection of harm ahead of any cultural and religious practices of families in their ministry programs;
- b. follow reporting procedures without hesitation in response to concerns no matter who is involved; and
- c. co-operate with police and/or other formal investigation procedure.

ACC People are not required, as an initial response, to establish or investigate if harm has occurred, but rather report reasonable suspicions or concerns of harm, including the grounds for concerns, to the Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team (or equivalent).

NOTE: In South Australia, individuals must report directly to CARL (Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78).

If a Local Church Safer Churches Person is not available, and the harm is currently occurring, or there are reasons to believe that a Child or Young Person is at risk, a report should be made immediately to the police and appropriate authorities.

Process for reporting:

- a. Report to the Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team (**note SA reporting to CARL*).

Report concerns to one of the appointed Local Safer Churches People, except when a disclosure occurs at a program or event where the Local Safer Churches Person/Team is not available, or a Child's/Young Person's immediate safety is at risk (sexual and physical abuse). In this case, immediately phone the police and organise appropriate support for the Child/ren. This can be done with the help of the most senior on-site leader, who will also need to assist with managing the immediate situation.

If the allegation involves the Local Safer Churches Person, then this should be reported to the most senior person available, who will take the role of the Safer Churches person in this instance.

- b. Complete applicable form/s and/or online reporting.

The Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team will keep permanent and secure records for the Constituent Church, upholding privacy principles.

- c. Take the appropriate action with your Local Church Safer Churches Person including:

- i. police/government child protection agency reporting;
- ii. contact the **National Safer Churches Helpline (1800 070 511)** for advice and assistance and/ or to ensure ACC is aware of all child-related matters of concern; and
- iii. initiate the correct complaints handling processes if the allegations are about ACC Workers/Credential Holders.

- d. Provide ongoing support, pastoral care and risk management processes.

It is the role of the Local Church Board to implement pastoral care and support for all parties involved, including the Child or Young Person and family, as much as is practical. There may also be Local Church risk management action plans that need to be implemented, e.g. stepping aside a leader/Credential Holder who has been accused of harming a Child or Young Person whilst the investigation occurs.

Adults

ACC Church leaders **shall** report to police and/or government agencies all concerns involving adults as required by their State or Territory Legislation.

It is **recommended** that ACC Church leaders follow good pastoral practice in relation to concerns of harm or risk of harm in adults.

(Refer to SC026 in the Implementation Kit at the ACC Pastor's login on the ACC website for more information.)

GUIDELINE 9 – Responding to conflict

As an outworking of the Policy statements:

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5),

- *providing for and promoting the care, protection and wellbeing of Children and Young People in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment and the right to be protected from harm, and to maximise opportunities for Children and Young People to realise their full potential; and*
- *promoting and recognising the need to strengthen, preserve and promote positive relationships between the Child and the Child's parent, family members, leaders, mentors, spiritual advisors and significant others,*

ACC Constituent Churches **shall**

- a. consider the pastoral, legal, and insurance implications of the conflict or allegation, and respond with transparency and accountability;
- b. use the ACC Grievance Procedure for Certificate Holders (Refer to SC033) when responding to allegations of misconduct and/or abuse by ACC Credential or Certificate holders; and
- c. work through an appropriate process that affords natural justice to all parties when responding to allegations of misconduct and/or harm by those who are not ACC Credential or Certificate holders. (Refer to SC034 and SC035 in the Implementation Kit.) Your ACC State Safer Churches Officer can provide assistance working through such a process if required.

GUIDELINE 10 – Safe environments

As an outworking of the Policy statement:

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5),

- *providing for and promoting a Child safe culture in both physical and online settings that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access an ACC program, service or managed facility,*

1. Safe online and digital practices

ACC People **shall** be mindful of the position of trust they hold by:

- a. actively being safe in all online and digital interactions, including maintaining transparency and accountability in the use of electronic communications with Children or Young People as far as is practical, that is as a team, not as individuals, e.g. group emails/text messages/Facebook.
- b. **not** transmitting, downloading or storing any communication that is:
 - i. discriminatory or harassing;
 - ii. derogatory;
 - iii. obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic;
 - iv. defamatory;
 - v. threatening;
 - vi. for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to the Code of Conduct relevant to their position;
- c. reporting any communication to their Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team that

breaches the requirements outlined above; and

- d. **not** sending any electronic communication that attempts to hide their identity or represent the sender as someone else.

It is **recommended** that communications with Children under 16 occur with the full knowledge of the Parent/s or Carer/s of the Child or Young Person.

It is **recommended** that photos or videos of Children under 16 not be shared without the consent of the Parent/s or Carer/s of the Child or Young Person.

2. Compliance with WHS legislation

It is **recommended** that each ACC Church:

- a. elect a **Health & Safety Team**, including at least one Board member, to oversee implementation of WHS compliance;
- b. write and implement Health and Safety policies, including privacy policy and evacuations procedures;
- c. keep Health and Safety on the agenda at every Local Church Board and team meetings;
- d. notify incidents such as serious events and dangerous incidents within a prescribed period to the Health & Safety Team;
- e. address health and safety concerns within a timely manner of the concern being communicated to the Health & Safety Team;
- f. use incident report documentation to report serious incidents to your insurer and your ACC State Safer Churches Officer;
- g. ensure all workers know and follow the church's abuse reporting and grievance procedures; and
- h. have the Health & Safety Team undertake a safe environment audit of all church facilities at least twice a year.

3. Annual program approval

It is **recommended** that all Children or Young People's programs be approved by the Local Church Board through a formal, annual written approval process.

4. Managing event and/or program risks

It is **recommended** that ministry coordinators manage individual program risk according to risk management good practice, including annual risk management as part of the annual program approval process.

5. Safe physical environments

It is **recommended** for the safe running of programs and events that the following matters are considered:

FIRST AID including:

- a. at least one on-site leader should have current first aid training; and
- b. a suitable, up-to-date and accessible first aid kit is to be available at all times and in all locations;

TRANSPORTATION including:

- a. never be alone in a car with a Child or Young Person;
- b. at no time should there be more passengers in a car than the number of seat belts that are in working order and available for use;
- c. all cars will be registered, in good working order and driven by licensed drivers abiding by any licence restrictions (e.g. Provisional licence passenger conditions); and
- d. if a Child/Young Person is travelling in a vehicle driven by a worker, prior written consent should, wherever possible, be given by a Parent/Carer, except in the case of emergencies.

FOOD SAFETY including:

- a. prepare a food preparation & storage practices guide;
- b. display food preparation and storage practices guide in the kitchen or food preparation area; and
- c. checking with relevant council to ensure compliance with local requirements in relation to food handling.

SUPERVISION NUMBERS including:

- a. ACC People should ensure that adequate numbers of leaders are present to supervise the program;
- b. precise numbers of leaders are hard to determine and will depend greatly on the size of the group, their age, and the level of physical and/or emotional risk inherent to the activity. Programs aimed at younger children and those with an additional need require more supervision due to the increased level of risk involved;
- c. when considering supervision numbers, risk assessment should include how supervision would be affected by an accident or emergency. Adjustment to required leader numbers should then be made to reduce any reasonably foreseeable risk; and
- d. an example may be requiring a minimum of two adult leaders on site for all programs in addition to the leader-to-participant ratio of 1:10. This will allow for safe supervision if and when accidents or critical incidents occur. Of course, many more leaders will be needed for high-risk activities such as taking Children or Young People off-site, swimming, bushwalks, games nights or the like, or if the group is large.

It is **recommended** that ACC People running Children's or Young People's programs:

- i. make the distinction between those adults who are part of the team, and who are junior leaders (under 18 years). Junior leaders are not to be counted in the supervision ratios;
- ii. use adult helpers age 18 or over who are not leaders of the group, but rather are present on-site for supervision purposes. Such adult helpers, though still Volunteer Workers, would not actually run activities, whereas junior ministry leaders may run many. Adult helpers are important to help ensure the safety of the Children or Young People;
- iii. do not allow leaders or helpers to be alone, one-on-one, with a Child or Young Person. One adult with a small group may be fine as long as there are other adults on site. Where possible, have both male and female leaders to provide support for both boys and girls; and

- iv. in relation to camps or overnight settings, it is not advisable that leaders sleep in the same room as Children or Young People. Leaders should be sleeping in a designated leaders' space (cabin) nearby.

MANAGEMENT OF HIGH-RISK ACTIVITIES including:

- a. for high-risk and off-site activities: e.g. water sports, swimming excursions, white water rafting/caving/bungy jumping, inflatable sumo suit wrestling, gladiator games, horse-riding, high ropes activities, roller blading/skating, skateboarding or activities involving live animals, an employee/leader with appropriate (certified) training for the event should be running the activity;
- b. active supervision is required at all times. Supervisors must not be involved in any additional activities that will distract from their role as a supervisor;
- c. all participants involved in high-risk activities should have a signed liability release from each Parent/Guardian. However, it is important to note that a liability release form does not actually indemnify against an accident. Individual leaders may be protected where all due care has been taken, but a church may still be deemed liable, where duty of care failures are proven; and
- d. contact the church's insurance broker/company for advice before running high-risk activities as some high-risk injuries may be excluded from the Church's liability cover.

GUIDELINE 11 – Responding to incidents

As an outworking of the Policy statement:

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5),

- *providing for and promoting a Child safe culture in both physical and online settings that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access an ACC program, service or managed facility,*

ACC Church workers **shall**

- a. respond to incidents appropriately and promptly and take adequate follow up action;
- b. use appropriate report forms. Injuries or accidents requiring secondary medical attention, e.g. visit to a doctor or medical centre, are to be written up on an incident report;
- c. report incidents of a serious nature to your local church insurer; and
- d. report all incidents to parents and/or caregivers of Children or Young People, and in instances where the impact has been felt by a wider group, report, with the permission of those involved in the incident, to the wider concerned group.

GUIDELINE	Implementation Kit supporting documents
1	SC001-9, SC011, SC024, SC048, SC075, SC077
2	SC020, SC044
3	
4	SC006, SC016, SC017, SC019, CPP INFOGRAPHIC POSTERS
5	SC003, SC012, SC014, SC015, SC027-29, SC031-32, SC053, SC056-60, SC076
6	SC021
7	SC013-14
8	SC021, SC023-26, SC036, SC068
9	SC033-35
10	SC037-43, SC049-56, SC061-66, SC070, SC074
11	SC046-47



OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

Title:	ACC Child Protection Policy
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Version:	2021:1
Date:	April 2021
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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy reflects the moral and ethical standards of the Movement pursuant to Article 16.1 of the United Constitution and forms part of the ACC Safer Churches Strategy for the protection of all people in our churches and is outworked through the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines, Structure, Training, and Implementation Kit.

It is a requirement of the ACC National and State Executives to adopt the ACC Child Protection Policy. ACC Constituent Churches are required to adopt this Policy and the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines (found in document SC011) or use these as a minimum standard.

The structure of the ACC Safer Churches Strategy is found in the Implementation Kit (document SC002).

All ACC Safer Churches documentation, including definitions of relevant terminology used in this Policy and applicable legislation can be accessed via the ACC website www.acc.org.au

2. PURPOSE OF OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy:

- 2.1 Guides our work in establishing and maintaining safe environments for Children and Young People;
- 2.2 Underpins our biblical mandate to: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and to love your neighbour as yourself;
- 2.3 Ensures that all workers (paid and volunteer) associated with our church fulfil their pastoral, and organisational responsibilities with regard to child protection; and
- 2.4 Ensures compliance with legislation, and also with the intention of the legislation (including but not limited to the 10 National Child Safe Principles, child protection, work health and safety and the governance standards of the ACNC), as it relates to protecting Children and Young people (see document SC003).

3. SCOPE

The ACC Child Protection Policy covers all ACC People with a role that includes, or is likely to include, providing services that are directed towards a Child or Young Person (whether in whole or in part), or conducting activities that may involve a Child or Young Person (whether in whole or in part), and includes the supervision of persons in Direct Roles (for example, a board member of a church in a Direct Role, irrespective of whether they actually work with Children or Young People, because of their overarching supervisory duties).

4. POLICY STATEMENTS

ACC People commit to, according to their role or position (as described in section 5):

- 4.1 Upholding this policy, the nationally recognised 10 Child Safe Principles and applicable child protection laws and regulations, as relevant in their office and jurisdiction (see document SC003), and implementing the related ACC Safer Churches Guidelines as appropriate;
- 4.2 Providing for and promoting the care, protection and wellbeing of Children and Young People in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment and the right to be protected from harm, and to maximise opportunities for Children and Young People to realise their full potential;
- 4.3 Recognizing and responding to the diverse needs of all Children and Young People, with special reference to Aboriginal Children and Young People and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and also the safety of Children and Young People with a disability as relevant in the local church setting;
- 4.4 Providing for and promoting the provision of services that foster the health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity of Children and Young People including by ensuring that persons who have a Direct Role with Children and Young People within the movement are appropriately selected, screened, trained, supervised and performing their responsibilities, including ongoing education and equipping;
- 4.5 Promoting caring attitudes and responses towards Children or Young People, so that the need for appropriate nurture, care and protection is understood, risks to a Child's wellbeing are quickly identified, and any necessary support, protection or care is promptly provided including child focused responses to allegations of risk of harm or harm in line with Safer Churches Guideline 8;
- 4.6 Recognising the family as the primary means of providing for the nurture, care and protection of Children and Young People and to accord high priority to supporting and assisting the family to carry out its responsibilities to Children and Young People;
- 4.7 Empowering Children and Young People by engaging with Children and Young People and Caregivers in relation to decisions that impact them, including inviting feedback as part of our services;
- 4.8 Promoting and recognising the need to strengthen, preserve and promote positive relationships between the Child and the Child's parent, family members, leaders, mentors, spiritual advisors and significant others; and
- 4.9 Providing for and promoting a Child safe culture in both physical and online settings that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access an ACC program, service or managed facility;

It is a serious breach of this policy for any ACC Person in our Movement to contravene this Policy, the related Safer Churches Guidelines (SC011), or any regulation in law, in relation to the safety and protection of Children and Young People.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The ACC National Conference is responsible for the development and endorsement of the ACC Child Protection Policy. It delegates the implementation of the ACC Child Protection Policy to the ACC National and State Executives and Constituent Churches. The role of each entity in relation to the implementation and enforcement of the ACC Child Protection Policy is detailed in the table below.

In accordance with article 9.7 of the ACC United Constitution, in circumstances where the National Executive considers the interests of the Movement within a State are in serious jeopardy it may intervene so as to replace the role of the State Executive in all respects for such period as it determines.

Entity	Role/Responsibility
ACC National Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the ACC commitment to the ACC Child Protection Policy; • Review on a biennial cycle as a minimum, the ACC Child Protection Policy. The National Executive may also review the policy at any time as required by legislation, regulations or organisational learnings that requires a change to the ACC Child Protection Policy; • Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to Child protection; • Advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children and Young People in support of this Policy. • ACC National Executive (or its delegate). Shall develop and implement corresponding Child Protection Practice Guidelines (known as the 'ACC Safer Churches Guidelines' - SC011) in accordance with the relevant State/Territory legal obligation.
ACC State Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the ACC Child Protection Policy is implemented and adhered to by the State Executive and Constituent Churches and ACC Credential Holders; • Advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children and Young People in support of this Policy; • Adopt the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines (SC011); • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation, including the appointment and resourcing of a State Safer Churches Officer/s; • Ensure all ACC People understand their obligations in accordance with the ACC Child Protection Policy; • Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of Child protection; and • Proactively share resources and experience in the development of Child safe initiatives as they are identified.

<p>Constituent Churches and Credential Holders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt the ACC Child Protection Policy (or one that uses the ACC Child Protection Policy as a minimum standard) • Adopt the 'ACC Safer Churches Guidelines' (SC011) (or alternative guideline that is at least consistent with the 'ACC Safer Churches Guidelines'); • Advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children and Young People in support of this Policy; • Ensure all ACC People within the respective Constituent Church understand, and adhere to, their obligations in accordance with the ACC Child Protection Policy including the implementation of the Safer Churches Guidelines (SC011) as minimum standards; • Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of Child protection. • ACC People will support Children or Young People and their families in accordance with this Policy and the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines (SC011) in the event that a Child or Young Person is harmed by any ACC People. We recognise that the impact of any form of harm on Children or Young People and their families is traumatic. It is even more complex when the perpetrator of the harm is within ACC. In these situations, we will provide opportunities for appropriate debriefing and/or counselling to the Children or Young People and their families who have experienced the harm and any other Child or Young Person and family in the community who may indirectly be affected by the incident(s). • It is acknowledged that not all Credential Holders will have sufficient influence to achieve these objectives with a Constituent Church, but it is expected, as a minimum, that a Senior Minister and/or their appointee/s will have such influence.
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6. POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW

- 6.1 This Policy was revised and updated to reflect current legislative requirements in Australia in January 2021 (edition 1: 2015).
- 6.2 It was approved by the National Conference for adoption and implementation in April 2021.
- 6.3 The Policy and Guidelines will be reviewed, as a minimum, by the National Executive at minimum every 2 years and as often as necessary, in order to remain compliant with new legislation.

7. SAFER CHURCHES TERMINOLOGY (AS USED IN THIS POLICY) are found in ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit document SC001.

is committed to implementing the Child Safe Standards.



STANDARD 1

Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture



STANDARD 3

Families and communities are informed and involved



STANDARD 4

Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account

STANDARD 2

Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously



STANDARD 6

Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused

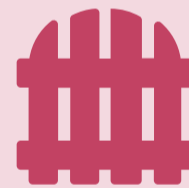
STANDARD 5

People working with children are suitable and supported



STANDARD 7

Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training



STANDARD 8

Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur



STANDARD 9

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved



STANDARD 10

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

For more information on the Child Safe Standards visit www.ocg.nsw.gov.au



Office of the Children's Guardian

Reportable Conduct Key Reminders

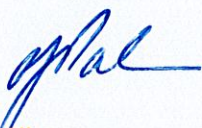
Dear Teams

As we begin 2024, there are some key points about the Reportable Conduct Scheme we need you to remember:

1. The Reportable Conduct Scheme captures all workers (paid and volunteer) who hold a **WWCC# for INChurch.**
2. It applies to reportable conduct allegations or convictions that are historical, current, church related, or that have occurred/ are occurring in a person's private life, or whilst working at another organization.
3. Failure to report knowledge of reportable conduct, or concerns of reportable conduct is an offense, and may be deemed reportable conduct if you hold a WWCC# for INChurch.
4. Reportable Conduct includes-
 - a. Sexual Offense eg, production, dissemination or possession of child abuse material
 - b. Sexual Misconduct eg. sexual comments, conversations or communication with, towards or in the presence of a child. This would include sexting or sexual joking in the presence of someone under 18 years.
 - c. Assault, including threatening to physically harm a child.
 - d. Ill-treatment- conduct that is unreasonable and seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel. Eg a pattern or degrading comments or inappropriate behaviour management.
 - e. Neglect.
 - f. Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
 - g. Failure to protect a child from abuse- you know someone is a risk and could do something to reduce the risk to children, but don't.
 - h. Failure to report child abuse- you know, believe, or reasonably ought to know that a child abuse offense has been committed, but fail to report this.

If you have any questions, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Warm regards,



Ps Allyson
INC Safer Churches Officer