



Love God, Love One Another, Love Our Community

Child Protection Procedures

Guideline 1 Safe Church Strategy implementation

One Another Church shall regularly review, evaluate and improve child safe procedures and practices, and ensure that policy and procedural documentation is up-to-date and readily available.

The One Another Church Board shall implement relevant ACC Safer Churches procedures and practices and will train and supervise workers in meeting their obligations in accordance with the ACC Child Protection Policy and Safer Churches Guidelines. The One Another Church Board shall also include a standing agenda item to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability in relation to the ACC Safer Churches Strategy.

Guideline 2 Culture of safety and wellbeing

One Another Church workers (paid and volunteer) shall minister out of the love God has for everyone by:

- 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. acting in the best interests of all people they serve in ministry;
- d. ministering in transparent and accountable teams; and
- e. providing opportunities for formal debriefing and/or counselling for families of children who have experienced abuse and any other family in the community who may indirectly be affected by an incident.

It is recommended that One Another Church people support healthy development and wellbeing through:

- a. providing regular opportunities for workers to clarify and confirm the procedures to apply when acting in relation to children's welfare and safety; and
- b. accessing local resources when children are experiencing distress or crisis.

Some families find it difficult to engage in a local church because their child's additional needs can't be supported. For children with additional needs, it is recommended that ministry coordinators provide the family with a Special Needs Registration Form. The purpose of this form is to allow the ministry coordinator to get to know the child, their needs, and to collaborate with the family on how they can be supported in church life, within the capacity of the team that is available.

Guideline 3 Promoting support networks

Ministry coordinators should, in recognising the family as the primary means of providing for the nurture, care and protection of children, provide practical information and support to families to carry out their responsibilities to children.

Ministry coordinators should prioritise building appropriate and supportive relationships with children and parents/caregivers and encourage volunteers to do the same.

Ministry coordinators should assist children and parents/caregivers to recognise and access support networks within the church and in the local community.

Guideline 4 Promoting empowerment and participation

One Another Church workers (paid and volunteer) shall:

- a. listen to the views of, and respond appropriately to, concerns of all people; and
- a. encourage all church attendees to speak to the One Another Church Safer Churches person/team if they are concerned about harmful behaviours or harmful situations.

One Another Church people shall actively promote the empowerment and participation of all people at their church in the protection of children, including:

- a. making information about the Child Protection Policy available to children and parents/caregivers;
- b. ensuring that children and parents/caregivers have access to adequate and age-appropriate information about child safety and how to protect themselves;
- c. providing opportunities for children to tell us their views and feedback about the services we provide to them;
- d. listening to children and appropriately addressing any concerns that they raise with us, in the least intrusive way possible, that is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the child from harm and promote the child's development; and
- e. ensuring that children have access to adequate support to promote safety and intervene early in concerns that they raise.

Guideline 5 Appointment of workers (paid and volunteer)

One Another Church shall:

- a. screen, appoint, and induct all workers (paid and volunteer) with a direct role using a formal accountable/transparent process, including:
 - i. compliance with State legislation with regard to Working with Children/Vulnerable People Checks;
 - ii. self-declarations;
 - iii. referee checking (at least two referees);
 - iv. police background checking for paid employees; and
 - v. ensuring anyone referred to as a Pastor has an ACC Credential.
- b. require that all Credential holder's submit periodic self-declarations to ensure fitness for ministry;
- c. keep all successful applicant worker appointment documentation;

- d. not allow an individual to work or continue their work if they are ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance; and
- e. notify the One Another Church Board if they become aware of an individual who has been charged or convicted of a crime that makes them ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance. The One Another Church Board will then complete a full risk assessment to ascertain the current risks and then implement a risk mitigation strategy to protect children. This risk assessment must include seeking advice from the ACC Safer Churches Helpline and the church insurance company.

Individuals who have been charged or convicted of a crime that would make them ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance, have an ongoing obligation to inform One Another Church of this matter.

Guideline 6 Safer Churches training

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

One Another Church shall provide workers (paid and volunteer) with a direct role with adequate training in the concepts of Child Protection at a minimum of every 3 years. This shall include indicators of child risk of harm (abuse and neglect), and the reporting procedures for when they have risk of harm concerns about a child who is involved in the church.

It is recommended that all One Another Church ministry coordinators 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)

One Another Church shall provide all workers (paid and volunteer) with a direct role with:

- a. ensure all workers (paid and volunteer) have been provided with a Code of Conduct appropriate for their role and have agreed to uphold the requirements of it;
- b. adequately and appropriately supervise all workers; and
- c. make adequate provision for developing workers.

Guideline 8 Responding to concerns

One Another Church shall know and follow its state or territory legislation and have response processes that are child-focused and uphold the rights of children in line with Child Safe Standards.

It is recommended that One Another Church appoint a Safer Churches person (or team), whose roles include receiving reports, assisting in the process of reporting Child Protection concerns, and keeping accurate records permanently and securely in accordance with privacy legislation.

One Another Church people shall:

- a. report concerns when:
 - i. a child discloses they have been, or are at risk of being harmed;

- ii. someone else (regardless of age) discloses that they know of a child who has been/is at risk of being harmed; or
- iii. there are concerns that the child may have been, or is at risk of being harmed, based on their physical appearance or behaviour;
- b. put the rights of a child to the protection of harm ahead of any cultural and religious practices of families in their ministry programs;
- c. follow reporting procedures without hesitation in response to concerns no matter who is involved; and
- d. co-operate with police and/or other formal investigation procedure.

One Another Church 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 One Another Church Safer Churches person/team.

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

Process for reporting

- a. Report concerns to a One Another Church Safer Churches person, except when a disclosure occurs at a program or event where a One Another Church Safer Churches person is not available. **If a child's immediate safety is at risk, 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.
- b. If the allegation involves the One Another Church 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.
- c. Complete applicable form/s and/or online reporting. The One Another Church Safer Churches person/team will keep permanent and secure records for One Another Church, upholding privacy principles.
- d. Take appropriate action with a One Another 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;
- e. Provide ongoing support, pastoral care, and risk management processes.

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

One Another Church leaders shall report to police and/or government agencies all concerns involving adults as required by state or territory legislation.

One Another Church leaders should follow good pastoral practice in relation to concerns of harm or risk of harm in adults.

Guideline 9 Responding to conflict

One Another Church shall:

- a. consider the pastoral, legal, and insurance implications of the conflict or allegation, and respond with transparency and accountability;
- b. refer to the State Executive for implementation of the ACC Grievance Procedure for Certificate Holders when responding to any 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.

Guideline 10 Safe environments

Safe online and digital practices

One Another Church 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 as far as is practical, that is as a team, not as individuals, and that it is informational not personal;
- b. upholding all legislation regarding the age of persons able to hold a social media account;
- c. **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;
- d. reporting any communication to the One Another Church Safer Churches person/team that breaches the requirements outlined above; and
- e. **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 and/or caregiver/s of the child.

It is recommended that photos or videos of children under 16 not be shared without the consent of the parent/s and/or caregiver/s of the child.

Annual program approval

It is recommended that all Children's programs be approved by the appropriate leadership prior to commencing and are regularly reviewed.

Managing event and/or program risks

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

Safe physical environments

Ministry coordinators shall consider the following recommendations when planning programs and events.

First Aid

- 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 always be available and in all locations.

Transportation

- a. workers should never be alone in a car with a child unless they are related to you;
- 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 is travelling in a vehicle driven by a worker, prior written consent should, wherever possible, be given by a parent and/or caregiver, except in the case of emergencies.

Food safety

Workers should have access to a food preparation and storage practices guide. Food handling practices are to be compliant with local council requirements.

Supervision

- a. ministry coordinators should ensure that adequate numbers of leaders are present to supervise the program; with consideration of the size of the group, their age, the level of physical and/or emotional risk inherent to the activity, additional needs, and the risk level.
- b. ministry coordinators should consider how supervision would be affected by an accident or emergency;
- c. 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;
- d. do not allow leaders or helpers to be alone, one-on-one, with a Child unrelated to them. Where possible, have both male and female leaders to provide support for both boys and girls; and
- e. in relation to camps or overnight settings, it is not advisable that leaders sleep in the same room as children.

Management of high-risk activities

- a. for high-risk and off-site activities (e.g. water sports, swimming excursions, white water rafting/caving/bungy jumping, inflatable sumo suit wrestling, skating, etc) an leader with appropriate training or experience for the event should be running the activity;
- b. active supervision is always required. 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 permission form from their parent/guardian.
- 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

One Another Church workers (paid and volunteer) shall:

- a. respond to incidents appropriately and promptly and take adequate follow up action;

- b. use appropriate report forms for all injuries or accidents; and
- c. report incidents of a serious nature to your local church insurer; and

Related Documents

General	ACC Child Protection Policy ACC Safer Churches Guidelines Local Safer Churches Person/Team (Position Description)
Guideline 2 Culture of safety and wellbeing	Special Needs Registration Form
Guideline 5 Appointment of workers	Volunteer Recruitment Flow Chart ACC Workers Declaration and Code of Conduct Kids & Youth Ministry Volunteer Application Form Driver Application Form Sample Referee Form Volunteer Induction Form Leader Selection Checklist
Guideline 6 Safer Churches training	Guideline to Indicators
Guideline 8 Responding to concerns	Child Protection Report Form
Guideline 9 Responding to conflict	Conflicts and Resolutions Procedure Workplace Investigation Process
Guideline 10 Safe environments	Site Safety Checklist Ministry Review Hazard Identification and Control Form Enrolment Form (Friends Form) Accompanying Parent/Carer Form Transport Checklist (when using private cars)
Guideline 11	Critical Incident Response Plan Incident Review Form

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Revisions/Modifications			
Version	Date	Summary of changes	Reviewed by
1	February 2025	Creation of Child Protection Procedures	Julian Young
2	July 2025	Updates resulting from updated ACC Child Protection Policy and Safer Churches Guidelines	Julian Young