



# Child Safety Policy

*Policy revision adopted at the NCC meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022*

The New South Wales Christadelphian Committee (NCC) is defined in Appendix A: Definitions.

The NCC conducts a range of activities that include children. This means that, from time to time, individuals, other than the parents of the children engaged in an activity, will have the responsibility for their supervision and welfare. During these activities, the New South Wales Christadelphian Committee has a duty to protect children against possible abuse and improper or inappropriate behaviour.

This document provides guidance for those engaged in any activity conducted by the NCC where children are involved. It also provides guidance for victims of abuse, those related to victims of abuse, and guidance for perpetrators of abuse.

The policy is based closely on the ACE Child Safety Policy 2019. It can be found at <https://ace.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ACE-Child-Safety-Policy-2019-website.pdf>

The register of members who have WWC approval is kept with the NCC Secretary.

This policy will be reviewed in 2025, as per requirement in 5.9.1.a below.

NCC

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1. Children are a heritage from the Lord (Psalm 127:3) and should be cherished and nurtured by families and the NCC. Table 1 lists Bible passages that provide a clear foundation for this policy.
- 1.2. The NCC acknowledges the responsibility for families, ecclesias, organising committees and the NCC to work together to provide a harmonious environment for children which respects their safety and well-being.
- 1.3. Everyone in the NCC is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.
- 1.4. In all matters relating to children – including management of complaints – the safety and well-being of children is of paramount importance.
- 1.5. Appendix A defines terms used in this policy.
- 1.6. If any person believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse, he or she should telephone 000.

**Table 1: Foundation Bible passages which form the basis of this policy**

Bible Teaching	References
The Bible teaches that children are God’s heritage.	Matthew 19:14; Psalm 127:3
The Bible teaches that we should “do all to the glory of God”. This provides the over-arching principle and guide for planning, managing and deciding all matters within the Ecclesia.	1 Corinthians 10:31
The Bible teaches that we should practise the commandments of Christ and strive to develop the fruit of the spirit.	John 14:15; 15:14; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 4:17-20; Philippians 4:8
The Bible teaches that we are to be holy and to abstain from all appearance of evil.	1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22
The Bible teaches that all forms of abuse, including child abuse, violate the commandments of Christ and are contrary to the fruit of the spirit.	Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
The Bible teaches that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbour as our selves.	Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19; 22:37-39; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8
The Bible teaches that those who oversee the Ecclesia are responsible to care for it and protect the ‘flock’ from ‘wolves’.	Acts 20:28-32

## 2 Aim

- 2.1. This policy aims to:
  - 2.1.1. Prevent child abuse occurring at activities under the auspices of the NCC (hereinafter called “NCC activities”);
  - 2.1.2. Work towards an organisational culture of child safety;
  - 2.1.3. Ensure that all attendees at NCC activities; are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse
  - 2.1.4. Establish controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs;
  - 2.1.5. Provide guidance on action that should be taken where people suspect any child abuse at NCC activities;
  - 2.1.6. Provide a clear statement to everyone forbidding any such abuse; and
  - 2.1.7. Provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.
  - 2.1.8. Provide clear requirements for:
    - (a) The safety and well-being of children at NCC activities; and
    - (a) The management of complaints;
  - 2.1.9. Provide a framework for:
    - (a) Supporting victims of child abuse and their families, and
    - (b) Appropriately managing alleged or convicted offenders and perpetrators; and
  - 2.1.10. Demonstrate compliance with the child safety legislation as relevant to the State or Territory of operation.

## 3 Principles

- 3.1. The NCC affirms these principles which are the basis of this policy:
  - 3.1.1. The NCC has zero tolerance for child abuse.
  - 3.1.2. The safety and well-being of children at NCC activities is of paramount importance.
  - 3.1.3. Child abuse violates Bible teaching (refer to Section 1) and is defined by law as criminal behaviour. The NCC does not tolerate or condone criminal behaviour.
  - 3.1.4. Child protection is a shared responsibility.
  - 3.1.5. All children have a right to feel safe and be safe, and every child has an equal right to protection from abuse;
  - 3.1.6. The NCC will be sensitive, compassionate, objective, confidential, fair, truthful and compliant in any matter related to child abuse, alleged or proven.
  - 3.1.7. The NCC will provide support and assistance to people affected by child abuse, alleged or proven.

- 3.1.8. The NCC supports the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (NP) which are based on the Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse<sup>1</sup>. The requirements in Section 5 are grouped under sub-headings which relate to each of the Child Safe Standards.

## 4 Responsibilities

### 4.1 The Committee

- 4.1.1. The NCC has the primary responsibility for the care and safety of children at NCC activities.
- 4.1.2. The NCC must:
- (a) Provide leadership in child safety (refer to Section 5.1);
  - (b) Communicate the requirements of this policy to people associated with the NCC (refer to Sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4);
  - (c) Ensure people involved with the care and supervision of children are suitable and supported (refer to Section 5.5);
  - (d) Ensure complaints are managed appropriately (refer to Section 5.6);
  - (e) Arrange regular review of this policy (refer to Section 5.9); and
  - (f) Ensure matters related to child safety are documented appropriately (refer to Section 5.10).
- 4.1.3. The NCC may appoint a person to be the NCC's Representative for Child Safety to coordinate administrative requirements of this policy under their direction. If the NCC does not appoint a person to have this function, they may also have the responsibilities in Section 4.2.

### 4.2 NCC's Representative for Child Safety

- 4.2.1. The NCC's Representative for Child Safety is a person appointed by the NCC to coordinate administrative requirements of this policy.
- 4.2.2. The NCC's Representative for Child Safety must:
- (a) Be familiar with the requirements of child safety law (refer to Appendix D);
  - (b) Be familiar with the requirements and processes for Working with Children Checks;
  - (c) Facilitate Working with Children Checks on behalf of the NCC;
  - (d) Maintain records of Working with Children Checks on behalf of the NCC.
  - (e) Coordinate training (refer to Section 5.7); and
  - (f) Advise the NCC if / when he or she becomes aware of changes in law or associated processes which may require a revision to this policy.

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<sup>1</sup> McClellan, Hon. Justice P. et al (2017). Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: Final Report. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia

## 4.3 Activity Coordinators

- 4.3.1. An Activity Coordinator is a person appointed by the NCC to coordinate an activity under the auspices of the NCC (NCC activities). These activities may include such events as Spring Bible Week, SCYP camps and associated events, Children's camps and associated events, conferences, combined meetings and other events.
- 4.3.2. Where it is reasonably expected that a child or children will attend the activity they have been requested to co-ordinate, Activity Coordinators must:
- (a) Obtain a clearance for Working with Children themselves, and arrange to have that clearance verified by the NCC;
  - (b) Ensure persons working with children have Working with Children Checks, that these checks have been verified by the home ecclesia or the employer of that person; and that they have the record of that verification;
  - (c) Develop and implement activity guidelines which include arrangements for child safety (refer to Section 5.8); and
  - (d) Report to the appropriate authorities (refer to Section 5.6 and Appendix D) if they have a reasonable belief that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused.
- 4.3.3. Activity Coordinators who are Youth Workers also have the responsibilities in Section 4.4.

## 4.4 Youth Workers

- 4.4.1. A Youth Worker is an adult person directly appointed by the NCC or NCC Activity Coordinators to work with children at NCC activities.

*Note: A Youth Worker may be a Member of an Ecclesia, an employee, contractor or volunteer. 'Work with children' is any role which involves contact with children, including care, supervision and teaching.*

- 4.4.2. Youth Workers must:
- (a) Comply with the standards of behaviour for interactions with children defined in the NCC's code of conduct;
  - (b) Maintain a current Working with Children Check; and ensure that their Working with Children Check has been verified by their home ecclesia or by their employer;
  - (c) Attend child safety training organised by the NCC or the youth worker's home ecclesia, at least every year;
  - (d) Follow protocols and procedures for child safety which have been established for the activity; and
  - (e) Report to the appropriate authorities (refer to Section 5.6 and Appendix D) if they have a reasonable belief that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused.
- 4.4.3. Youth Workers who are Activity Coordinators also have the responsibilities in Section 4.3.

## **4.5 NCC Members**

- 4.5.1. All NCC members, activities co-ordinators and all attendees at NCC activities, including those listed in Sections 4.1 to 4.4 above, must:
- (a) Comply with the standards of behaviour for interactions with children defined in the NCC's code of conduct;
  - (b) Comply with the requirements of this policy;
  - (c) Provide a safe environment for all children;
  - (d) Not spend time alone with a child;
  - (e) Report to the appropriate authorities (refer to Section 5.6 and Appendix D) if they have a reasonable belief that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused.
- 4.5.2. All NCC members and activities co-ordinators of NCC activities, including those listed in 4.1 to 4.4 above, must:
- (a) Always promote child safety;
  - (b) Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of responsibility and eradicate / minimize any risk to the extent possible; and
  - (c) Facilitate the reporting of any concerns regarding child safety.

## **4.6 Employees, Contractors and Volunteers (non-Members)**

- 4.6.1. Employees, contractors and volunteers who are not Members of the NCC, but are engaged by the NCC or any NCC activity co-ordinator, must:
- (a) Comply with the standards of behaviour for interactions with children defined in the NCC's code of conduct;
  - (b) Comply with the requirements of this policy;
  - (c) Not spend time alone with a child; and
  - (d) Report to the appropriate authorities (refer to Section 5.6 and Appendix D) if they have a reasonable belief that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused.

# **5 Requirements**

## **5.1 NP 1: Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture**

- 5.1.1. The NCC must have a code of conduct which includes expected standards of behaviour for interactions with children.
- 5.1.2. Each member of the NCC, NCC office-bearers, and activity co-ordinators must obtain a Working with Children Check clearance, and provide sufficient details of this clearance to the NCC's Representative for Child Safety to allow that clearance to be validated and recorded by the NCC acting in the role of Employer.

- 5.1.3. The NCC must review and approve nominations for any person whose role or function may involve working with children at NCC activities, including
- SCYP president, vice-president, secretary (and spouses, if relevant). These people in turn will review and approve the selection of hosts at overnight camps.
  - Conference chairman and secretary
  - Youth conference chairman and secretary
  - Children's/Kids club co-ordinator
  - Lighthouse hosts and secretary.
- 5.1.4. Where an ecclesia is conducting an activity on behalf of the NCC, that ecclesia shall take responsibility for ensuring that the NCC's child safety responsibilities are met.
- 5.1.5. The NCC must provide sufficient oversight of the activities under the auspices of the NCC, to ensure that child safety arrangements are effective.
- 5.1.6. The NCC must provide child safety training every year for members, office-bearers and NCC activity co-ordinators, if the home ecclesias have not already done so.

## **5.2 NP 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously**

- 5.2.1. Children should be engaged in processes designed to ensure their safety (particularly in relation to Sections 5.6 and 5.8).
- 5.2.2. The NCC must ensure children at activities of the NCC:
- (a) Are aware that the NCC has practices in place to ensure their safety and welfare;
  - (b) Understand how and to whom they can report concerns about their safety or well-being;
  - (c) Feel confident that any questions or concerns they have about their safety or well-being will be taken seriously and responded to immediately; and
- 5.2.3. The NCC will endeavour to put in place appropriate strategies to proactively:
- (d) Engage with children;
  - (e) Seek children's views;
  - (f) Consult with children about decisions that affect them;
  - (g) Educate and inform children on their rights to be safe from abuse and what is and isn't appropriate behaviour towards them from both peers and adults;
  - (h) Consult with children about what makes them feel safe and how this can be recognised and implemented by the NCC and its sub committees and employees;



- 5.2.4. The NCC will inform children of safe and respectful relationships and where they can go if they have any concerns or to further information and support services.

*Notes: The NCC should discuss with Youth Workers and other people with experience in working with children how best to convey this information. Information should be provided in a way which is age-appropriate.*

*Children should be encouraged to discuss and ask questions to confirm their understanding and be made to feel confident that their concerns about safety or wellbeing will be taken seriously and responded to immediately.*

### **5.3 NP 3: Families and communities are informed and involved**

- 5.3.1. The NCC must inform anyone with a responsibility under this policy:

- (a) About the policy;
- (b) About policy requirements which specifically apply to that person's role or function; and
- (c) Make the policy available to them.

*Note: The NCC may make the policy available to other parties at its discretion.*

- 5.3.2. The NCC must inform all NCC committees and member ecclesias about the policy and make it available to them.

- 5.3.3. The NCC must inform a new NCC committee member or Member Ecclesia of this policy and its requirements.

- 5.3.4. Any person may provide feedback about the policy for the NCC to consider changes for further improving child safety.

### **5.4 NP 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs are considered**

- 5.4.1. The NCC must offer appropriate support to anyone implementing any aspect of this policy while acting on behalf of the NCC. Note: This may include counselling services following the disclosure by a child.

### **5.5 NP 5: People working with children are suitable and supported**

- 5.5.1. To work with children, an adult must have met the legal requirements to do so prior to commencing this work.

- (a) A Working with Children Check must be obtained. The person must provide sufficient information on this Check to allow the NCC to verify it and to record the details of that verification.
- (b) If the person has a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) associated with another organisation, it must also be associated with the NCC.
- (c) A person who is exempt by law from a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) because of their profession or occupation may still require a Working with Children Check if their involvement with children at the activities of the NCC is unrelated to their profession or occupation.

- 5.5.2. An adult who works with children must advise the NCC:

- (a) If they have a complaint made against them (whether related to activities of the NCC or not); and/or

- (b) If their Working with Children Check (whether associated with the NCC or not) is withdrawn, suspended, cancelled or lapsed.

5.5.3. An adult must not work with children:

- (a) If they are the subject of an unresolved complaint;
- (b) If a member ecclesia indicates that their contact with children must be restricted at the NCC's activities; or
- (c) If they have been convicted of sexual offending.

*Notes: Paragraph a) does not apply to complaints which have been dismissed or disproved.*

*Paragraph c) applies even when the sentence for a conviction has been served.*

5.5.4. Where persons other than Members of NCC Ecclesias are to be employed to work with children, recruitment processes must emphasise the importance of child safety. Appendix C contains an interview guide with suggested questions.

5.5.5. The NCC maintains a register of the status of Working with Children Checks for committee members, office-bearers and activity co-ordinators associated with the NCC.

## **5.6 NP 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child-focused**

5.6.1. A complaint or disclosure must be treated seriously, respectfully and sensitively. The NCC must provide support to a person or child who makes a complaint or disclosure.

*Note: Support may include – without compromising the confidentiality and conflict of interest requirements of this section – assistance with the reporting process and pastoral and/or professional counselling.*

5.6.2. A person who has a reasonable belief that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused, or to whom a child has made a disclosure, must:

- (a) Report the matter to the appropriate authority and request direction from them concerning the child's immediate welfare within seven business days, and provide an update on the status of the investigation within 30 calendar days;
- (b) If the alleged abuse relates to an activity of the NCC, also advise a member of the NCC who has no conflict of interest; and
- (c) Take immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

*Note: Reasonable belief may be based on recognising indicators of child abuse (see Appendix B).*

5.6.3. If a child makes a disclosure, the NCC must:

- (a) Document the disclosure, including:
  - The date and time the disclosure was made;
  - To whom it was made;
  - The disclosure (as near as possible the actual words); and
  - Who the child alleges was/is the perpetrator (who may or may not be a member of the NCC or a member Ecclesia).

*Note: The child should not be questioned further about the disclosure. This is a matter for the appropriate authorities.*

- (b) Report the matter to the appropriate authority and provide them with the document relating to the disclosure.

5.6.4. A complaint or disclosure must remain strictly confidential to the extent permitted by law. The circumstances, the identities of the child, the person making the complaint and the subject of the complaint must remain confidential other than is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the child and for:

- (a) Communicating with the appropriate authorities;
- (b) Communicating with persons approved by the appropriate authorities (such as the child's parents or carers); and
- (c) Advising the NCC.

5.6.5. If the NCC is advised that a complaint or disclosure has been reported to the appropriate authorities, they must:

- (a) Document the advice, including:
  - The date and time the advice was made;
  - To whom it was made;
  - The advice (as near as possible the actual words); and
  - Who the child alleges was/is the perpetrator (who may or may not be a Member of the Ecclesia).

*Notes: The aim of advising the NCC is to enable them to act effectively in implementing risk mitigation measures to ensure the safety and well-being of the child or to appropriately restrict a person against whom an allegation has been made, for example removal from rostered duties or attendance at youth activities. Actions taken by the NCC and subsequent communication must not compromise legal confidentiality requirements.*

- (b) Provide the documented advice to the appropriate authorities.

5.6.6. If the NCC is informed of a complaint or disclosure that may be reportable conduct under the applicable Reportable Conduct Scheme and which has not yet been reported to the appropriate authorities, they must determine if the circumstances constitute a reasonable belief (see Appendix B) of child abuse and reportable conduct within the meaning of applicable legislation within the relevant State or Territory.

*Note: Police or other authorities may wish to speak to a child before other interviews occur. In determining reasonable belief – and save for asking a child open questions about vague allegations – the child should not be questioned further about the disclosure until relevant external authorities such as the police have been provided with the opportunity to speak with the child and have confirmed that further inquiries can be made.*

(a) If the NCC determines there is a reasonable belief that an individual has engaged in reportable conduct, the complaint or disclosure must be reported to the appropriate authorities.

(b) If the NCC determine that there is not a reasonable belief and/or the conduct is not reportable conduct within the meaning of the applicable legislation, they are not required to report the complaint or disclosure but the decision and the reasons for that decision must be clearly documented in writing.

(c) A decision by the NCC e not to report a complaint or disclosure to the appropriate authorities does not prevent any other person or Ecclesia from reporting it to the appropriate authorities.

5.6.7. Members of the NCC must fully cooperate with an appropriate authority exercising a lawful power.

5.6.8. A member of the NCC must not be involved in any matter related to a complaint or disclosure where there may be a real or perceived conflict of interest.

5.6.9. When the NCC become aware of a complaint or disclosure, they must conduct a risk assessment to identify, assess and minimise any risks to the child and secondary victims.

*Note: This risk assessment should be conducted in a manner that does not interfere with any investigation by external authorities. It is an assessment of risk, not an investigation of the veracity of a complaint or disclosure.*

5.6.10. If a member of the NCC is informed of a complaint or disclosure that has not been reported to the appropriate authorities, the NCC (collectively except as in 5.6.8) must determine if the circumstances constitute a reasonable belief (see Appendix B) of child abuse.

(a) If the NCC determines there is a reasonable belief, the complaint or disclosure must be reported to the appropriate authorities.

(b) If the NCC determines that there is not a reasonable belief, they are not required to report the complaint or disclosure but the decision and the reasons for that decision must be documented. That document is to be retained by the NCC with other records relating to child safety.

(c) A decision by the NCC not to report a complaint or disclosure to the appropriate authorities does not prevent any other person from reporting it to the appropriate authorities.

5.6.11. Where an investigation is required by law, the NCC must engage an external investigator to ensure the independence and integrity of the investigation.

5.6.12. The NCC must not hold a hearing or conduct their own investigation into a complaint.

5.6.13. The NCC must advise the NCC's insurer of any complaint or disclosure reported to the appropriate authorities.

5.6.14. A person who attends an activity of the NCC and who is the subject of a relevant complaint, whether related to NCC activities or not, must:

(a) Immediately inform the NCC;

- (b) Cooperate with the appropriate authorities in their investigation of the complaint;
- (c) Comply with the NCC directions regarding that person's participation in the NCC's activities and interactions with children; and
- (d) Keep the NCC informed of the status of the investigation into the complaint and its outcome.

## **5.7 NP 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training**

- 5.7.1. The NCC must arrange for any person whose role or function may involve working with children (refer to Section 5.1.3) to be trained in this policy:
- (a) Upon appointment; and
  - (b) At least every year thereafter during the period of their tenure.
- 5.7.2. Training required by Section 5.7.1 must provide persons with a clear understanding of policy requirements, including:
- (a) Expected standards of behaviour for interactions with children;
  - (b) Child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns;
  - (c) Recognising physical and behavioural indicators of child abuse (refer to Appendix B);
  - (d) Identifying inappropriate behaviour which may be a precursor to child abuse, including grooming;
  - (e) That all complaints relating to child abuse must be taken seriously, regardless of the perceived severity of the behaviour; and
  - (f) How complaints must be reported and to whom.
- 5.7.3. The NCC must provide activities co-ordinators involved in the care and supervision of children with appropriate opportunities to develop practical skills in protecting children and responding to disclosures.

## **5.8 NP 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur**

- 5.8.1. Activity Coordinators must develop and implement activity guidelines for the activity of the NCC for which they are responsible, consistent with the NCC's overarching Risk Management Strategy.
- 5.8.2. The Activity Co-ordinators must review and approve the activity guidelines before the activity starts.
- 5.8.3. Activity Coordinators must identify and assess risks to children and include in the activity guidelines protocols and procedures for child safety.
- (a) Risk assessments should focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children.
  - (b) Hazards in both physical and online (virtual) environments should be addressed (as relevant to the activity).

- (c) Regular risk assessments relating to the safety and wellbeing of children should also be conducted.

5.8.4. Wherever possible, the following safeguards must be implemented to support child safety at NCC activities are:

- (a) Persons who work with children must comply with Section 5.5;
- (b) Children must not have uncontrolled access to the online environment through a system provided by the activity co-ordinators (as relevant to the activity or the circumstances surrounding the activity of the NCC);
- (c) At least two adults permitted to work with children must be present at all activities involving children; and
- (d) Any discussion with a child in a private environment – including pre-baptismal instruction or an interview with a youth – must be conducted in the presence of two adult members of an Ecclesia, one male and one female, who have been approved to work with children.

*Notes: Where it is impractical to have at least two adults present in accordance with clause 5.8.4(c) the NCC should consider what other minimum safeguards it will adopt, such as:*

- *Individuals interacting with a child alone should keep a file note of the interaction and let the NCC know this is going to occur where possible (or immediately after the interaction);*
- *Obtain prior written permission from the parents / caregivers of the child;*
- *Encourage individuals to meet with the child in a public place where other people are present (even if not members of the NCC);*
- *The NCC to reach out to the child after the meeting or activity to check in with the child; and/or*
- *Individuals only meeting alone with the child if it is absolutely necessary to undertake the activity or interaction with the child.*

5.8.5. When developing activity guidelines, Activity Coordinators may consider:

- (a) Engaging with children and their families about child safety arrangements to improve their effectiveness.
- (b) The diverse needs of children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- (c) Encouraging friendships and support from peers to help children feel safe and be less isolated.
- (d) If relevant to the activity, including controls or requirements relating to access / use of the online environment (internet, social media) by children.

5.8.6. An activity co-ordinator or attendee must inform the NCC if they become aware that a person attending an activity of the NCC is the subject of a complaint or has been convicted of sexual offending.

## **5.9 NP 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved**

5.9.1. The NCC must review this policy to ensure it remains compliant with the law and relevant to the developing needs of the Ecclesia and its children:

- (a) At least every three years (or earlier if required due to changes in legislation); and
- (b) After every complaint of child abuse.

5.9.2. After every complaint of child abuse or breach of this policy, the NCC must act to prevent recurrence. Actions may include:

- (a) Seeking advice from the appropriate authorities or individuals with relevant professional expertise on child abuse and child safety;
- (b) Reviewing this policy;
- (c) Reviewing risk assessments and activity guidelines;
- (d) Providing closer supervision of persons or activities;
- (e) Further education and training;
- (f) Placing restrictions on a person's contact with children at activities of the Ecclesia;
- (g) Advising the appropriate authorities regarding a person's suitability to work with children; and/or
- (h) Disciplinary procedures.

## **5.10 NP 10: Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe**

5.10.1. The NCC may implement any additional procedures in furtherance of child wellbeing and safety, provided that they are consistent with this Policy and the law.

5.10.2. The NCC must maintain records of Child Safety policies, insurance policies, register of verified WWCC clearances, training records, activity guidelines and associated risk assessments and documents relating to the decision to report or not to report a complaint for a minimum of fifty years or as otherwise required by the NCC's Risk Management Strategy or insurance policy.

## **6 Breaches**

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

## **7 Related Policies and Procedures**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related document(s):

- Code of Conduct

## 8 Document Change History

Table: Document Change History

<b>Date</b>	<b>Approval / Endorsement</b>	<b>Details</b>
25 February 2020	NCC Endorsement	Original adoption of policy at the NCC Meeting on 25 February 2020
July 2021- February 2022	Review by NCC	Policy updated to meet NSW legislation changes
22 February 2022	NCC Endorsement	Policy revision adopted at the NCC Meeting on 22 February 2022



## Appendix A: Definitions

- A.1. Terms used in the policy have the meaning given in Table 2.
- A.2. Definitions which include '(Source: RCIRCSA)' are as given in the glossary in the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.<sup>2</sup>
- A.3. Definitions which include '(Source: NSW DFCS)' are as given by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services<sup>3</sup>.
- A.4. Sources for other definitions are as given.

**Table 2: Definitions**

Term	Definition (Source)
activity co-ordinator	A person appointed by the NCC to coordinate an NCC activity
adult	A person who is not a child.
appropriate authorities	Agencies authorised by law to respond to complaints of child abuse and/or have a responsibility for child safety.
breach	An action – or inaction – by a person which does not comply with this policy.
caregiver	See 'parent / caregiver'
child	A human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. (Source: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child <sup>4</sup> )
child abuse	This is emotional abuse, neglect, physical abuse and/or sexual abuse (all as defined).

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<sup>2</sup> McClellan, Hon. Justice P. et al (2017). Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: Final Report, Volume 1 – Our Inquiry. Canberra, ACT : Commonwealth of Australia, page 319ff.

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved 8 October 2018 from <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/reporting-child-at-risk/harm-and-neglect>.

<sup>4</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989. United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Retrieved 5 October 2018 from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>.

Term	Definition (Source)
complaint	<p>Includes any allegation, suspicion, concern or report of a breach of this policy or the NCC's code of conduct. It also includes disclosures made to the NCC that may be about or relate to child sexual abuse in an Ecclesial context.</p> <p>The Ecclesia may receive a complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directly or through a redress scheme (should one exist);</li> <li>• From anyone – a child, adult survivor, parent, trusted adult, independent support person, staff Member, volunteer or community Member;</li> <li>• About an adult allegedly perpetrating child sexual abuse or about a child exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours; or</li> <li>• In writing, verbally or as a result of other observations, including behavioural indicators.</li> </ul> <p>A complaint may become a 'report' to an external authority or agency.</p> <p>(Source: RCIRCSA, with 'institution' replaced by 'Ecclesia')</p>
disclosure	<p>A process by which a child conveys or attempts to convey that they are being or have been sexually abused, or by which an adult conveys or attempts to convey that they were sexually abused as a child.</p> <p>This may take many forms and might be verbal or non-verbal. Non-verbal disclosures using painting or drawing, gesticulating, or through behavioural changes, are more common among young children and children with cognitive or communication impairments. Children, in particular, may also seek to disclose sexual abuse through emotional or behavioural cues, such as heightened anxiety, withdrawal, aggression or inappropriate sexual behaviour.</p> <p>Disclosures can be intentional or accidental, and they might be prompted by questions from another person or triggered by a memory of the abuse. A disclosure may also become a 'complaint' when made to the NCC or a 'report' when made to an external authority or agency.</p> <p>(Source: RCIRCSA, with 'institution' replaced by 'Ecclesia')</p>
emotional abuse	<p>Serious psychological harm can occur where the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional disturbance or psychological trauma.</p> <p>Although it is possible for 'one off' incidents to cause serious harm, in general it is the frequency, persistence and duration of the parental or carer behaviour that is instrumental in defining the consequences for the child or young person.</p> <p>This can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour.</p> <p>(Source: NSW DFCS)</p>

Term	Definition (Source)
employee (employed)	A person appointed or contracted by the NCC to perform a function, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. They may or may not be a Member of an Ecclesia.
grooming	<p>Behaviours that manipulate and control a child, their family and other support networks, or institutions with the intent of gaining access to the child, obtaining the child's compliance, maintaining the child's silence, and avoiding discovery of sexual abuse.</p> <p>Grooming can take place in person and online and is often difficult to identify and define. This is because the behaviours involved are not necessarily explicitly sexual, directly abusive or criminal in themselves, and may only be recognised in hindsight.</p> <p>Some grooming behaviours are consistent with behaviours or activities in non-abusive relationships, and can even include desirable social behaviours, with the only difference being motivation. Perpetrators can groom children, other people in children's lives, and institutions.</p> <p>(Source: RCIRCSA)</p>
harm	A detrimental effect to a child's safety or well-being caused by child abuse.
law	The law of the Commonwealth of Australia or of a State or Territory. (Source: RCIRCSA)
legislation	Acts and regulations. (Source: RCIRCSA)
mandatory reporting	<p>Where a legislative requirement is placed on an individual of a certain profession who forms a reasonable belief that a report needs to be made to report regarding known and/or suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the relevant state based authority. This may be a nominated government department or agency (typically the police and/or child protection authority).</p> <p>(Source: RCIRCSA, amended for consistency with current legislation)</p>
Member	A person listed as an active member on the Ecclesia's membership register.
NCC (New South Wales Christadelphian Committee)	Secretaries/ Recorders or their representatives of affiliated Christadelphian ecclesias in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory which endorse the Australian Unity Basis.
NCC activity	An event that is organised or sponsored by the NCC. NCC activities do not include activities that the NCC simply circulates information about for publicity purposes to ecclesias from other ecclesias or groups.
NCC office-bearer	A person who has been appointed by the NCC to undertake a particular role for the NCC (for example, secretary, treasurer).

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition (Source)</b>
offender	A person who is found by a court to have done something that is prohibited by law. (Source: RCIRCSA)
parent / caregiver	The child's mother, father or someone else having or exercising parental responsibility for the child. A parent of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child includes a person who under Aboriginal or Islander custom is regarded as a parent of the child.
perpetrator	An adult who has sexually abused a child. (Source: RCIRCSA)
physical abuse	Is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child or young person caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation. Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints. Hitting a child or young person around the head or neck, or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punishing a child or young person (in a non-trivial way) is a crime. (Source: NSW DFCS)
psychological harm	See 'emotional abuse'
reasonable belief	Facts or evidence which would lead a reasonable person to think that there is a risk of harm to a child based upon indicators such as those outlined in Appendix B. It does not require certainty, but it should be more than suspicion (i.e. the individual has some objective basis for the belief).
record	Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and/or as an asset by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business or for its purposes, regardless of medium, form or format. (Source: RCIRCSA)
report	Where concerns relating to child sexual abuse are notified to an authority or agency external to the Ecclesia – for example, where a person or institution notifies the police, a child protection agency, an oversight agency or a professional or registration authority. (Source: RCIRCSA, with 'institution' replaced by 'Ecclesia')
reportable conduct	Conduct that must be reported under legislation that obliges designated institutions to report allegations of institutional child sexual abuse to an independent statutory body. (Source: RCIRCSA)
Reportable Conduct Scheme	A scheme established under legislation by a State or Territory to monitor, investigate and report on reportable conduct.
risk of harm	Circumstance where there is a likelihood of harm to a child.

Term	Definition (Source)
secondary victim	<p>People who are affected by the sexual abuse perpetrated against the primary victim (the child who is sexually assaulted). Secondary victims can include partners, children (including children born as a result of the abuse), parents, siblings and extended family. Trauma impacts can extend across generations and there may also be collective trauma impacts for whole communities or populations. The impacts of sexual abuse can also be felt by a wider range of people, including whistle-blowers and other people (including other children) within the institution where the abuse occurred.</p> <p>(Source: RCIRCSA)</p>
sexual abuse	<p>Any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.</p> <p>(Source: RCIRCSA)</p>
sexual offending	<p>Sexual behaviours that fall within the definition of a sexual offence under Australian law, where the person could be held criminally responsible for their conduct. In Australia, anyone aged 10 and over may be charged with a sexual offence.</p> <p>(Source: RCIRCSA)</p>
training	<p>Provision for those engaged with children in activities organised or conducted under the auspices of the Ecclesia to understand their responsibilities under this policy</p>
Unity Basis	<p><i>Unity in Australia: The Accepted Basis</i><sup>5</sup>, the basis upon which Christadelphian ecclesias in the Central Fellowship in Australia agree to relate to each other and conduct some of their affairs.</p>
Working with Children Check	<p>Is a pre-employment screening program which ensures child-safe working environments in Australia.</p> <p>Pre-employment screening of adults and volunteers who come in contact with children is mandatory and legislated for across most States and Territories in Australia. However, there is no national framework setting out the requirements for obtaining a Working with Children Check (or Police Checks) - and each State and Territory has their own procedures and requirements.</p> <p>(Source: National Crime Check<sup>6</sup>)</p>

<sup>5</sup> *Unity in Australia: The Accepted Basis*, with special reference to the work of the late Brother John Carter towards reunion in 1958. First Edited and Published by the Australian Christadelphian Central Standing Committee 1963. Reprinted by the Australian Christadelphian Committee 1999. Reprinted by the Association of Australian Christadelphian Ecclesias 2010.

<sup>6</sup> National Crime Check is an Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) accredited agency. Retrieved 6 October 2018 from [https://www.nationalcrimecheck.com.au/resources/working\\_with\\_children\\_checks\\_in\\_australia](https://www.nationalcrimecheck.com.au/resources/working_with_children_checks_in_australia)

Term	Definition (Source)
work(ing) with children	Is any role or function which involves contact with children, including care, supervision and teaching.
youth (young person)	A teenager who is a child. <i>Note: This term is used in recognition that a teenager may not identify as being a 'child' (notwithstanding the definition)</i>
youth leader	A Youth Worker leading or coordinating an activity for youth.
youth worker	An adult who has volunteered or been appointed to teach, lead, supervise or work with children or youth.

## Appendix B: Recognising Child Abuse

B.1. Child abuse includes:

- (a) Any act committed against a child involving:
  - A sexual offence; or
  - Grooming.
- (b) The infliction, on a child, of
  - Physical violence; or
  - Serious emotional or psychological harm.
- (c) Serious neglect of a child.

B.2. People in contact with children and their families should be aware of the indicators of child abuse. Recognising indicators of child abuse is part of forming a responsible suspicion that harm to a child has occurred, is occurring or that there is a risk of harm.

B.3. Sexual offenders exploit the dependency and immaturity of children. They may use a range of tactics including force, threats, and tricks to engage children in sexual contact and to try to silence them. They may also try to gain the trust and friendship of parents or caregivers to obtain access to children. They may be family members or close family friends.

B.4. Possible indicators of child sexual abuse, which may be present either individually or in combination, include:

- (a) Direct or indirect disclosures;
- (b) Describing sexual acts;
- (c) Age-inappropriate behaviour and/or persistent sexual behaviour;
- (d) Bleeding from the vagina or external genitalia or anus;
- (e) Injuries such as tears or bruising to the genitalia or anus;
- (f) Injuries to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen and thighs.
- (g) Self-destructive behaviour, drug dependency, suicide attempts, self-mutilation;
- (h) Overtly sexual themes in artwork, play or writing;
- (i) Changes in eating habits such as anorexia or over-eating;
- (j) Going to bed fully clothed;

- (k) Regression in developmental achievements;
- (l) Unexplained accumulation of money or gifts;
- (m) Sexually transmitted diseases;
- (n) Persistent running away from home; and/or
- (o) Adolescent pregnancy.

B.5. Other symptoms of child stress, which may be indicators of child abuse, include:

- (a) Poor concentration at school;
- (b) Sleeping or bedtime problems such as nightmares or bedwetting;
- (c) Marked changes in behaviour including tantrums, aggressiveness, withdrawal, complaints of stomach aches and headaches with no obvious physical cause;
- (d) Indicators in parents, caregivers, siblings, relatives, acquaintances or strangers;
- (e) Exposing a child to pornography or using a child for pornographic purposes;
- (f) Intentionally exposing a child to the sexual behaviour of others;
- (g) Inappropriate nakedness of either a child or an adult in a child's presence such as inappropriate exposure of genitals;
- (h) Having committed or being suspected of child sexual abuse;
- (i) Forbidding a child to engage in age-appropriate activities;
- (j) Coercing a child to engage in sexual behaviour with other children;
- (k) Verbal threats of sexual abuse;
- (l) Denial of an adolescent's pregnancy by the family; and/or
- (m) Domestic violence or physical child abuse.

## Appendix C: Interview Guide

C.1. The following questions may help in assessing the suitability of a candidate to work with children:

- (a) Why have you applied for this position?
- (b) Why do you feel you are suitable for the role?
- (c) Please describe positive experiences you have had with children or young people.
- (d) Have you ever been in a situation where you have disciplined a child or young person and, if so, how did you handle the situation?
- (e) Have you ever been investigated for a complaint involving a child and, if so, what were the circumstances?
- (f) Have you ever been investigated for an alleged violent or sexually-related offence and, if so, what were the circumstances?
- (g) Is there any other information relating to your suitability for this position, which we should be aware of?
- (h) Have you read the Child Safety Policy of the NCC or the organising Ecclesia and understood your responsibilities?
- (i) Do you have any further questions regarding the child safety policy or the associated procedures of the NCC or the organising Ecclesia?

## Appendix D: Child Safety Procedures

### 1. Recruitment obligations

- 1.1 New South Wales has a Working with Children Check (WWCC) system under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW).
- 1.2 The Ecclesia is required to ensure that:

**People in roles that engage in child-related work hold a valid WWCC;**

**They verify and record WWCCs; and**

**There are sound practices in place for monitoring expiring WWCCs.**

This aligns with the Ecclesia's Child Safety Policy which requires a register of the status of WWCCs associated with the Ecclesia.

- 1.3 The definition for 'child related work' is expansive and involves direct contact by an individual with a child or children and that contact is a usual part of and more than incidental to the work.
- 1.4 Legislative changes were made in 2018 which require:
  - (a) Individuals to keep their personal details up to date or risk a penalty;
  - (b) Employers to verify the WWCCs of individuals or risk a fine; and
  - (c) Parent volunteers attending overnight kid's camps are to obtain a WWCC.

### 2. Mandatory reporting

- 2.1 Table (next page) defines mandatory reporting requirements in New South Wales.

### 3. Concealing child abuse

- 3.1 Under the *Crimes Act 1990* (NSW), any adult who:
  - a) Knows, believes or reasonable ought to know that a child abuse offence has been committed;
  - b) Knows, believes or reasonably ought to know that he or she has information that might be of material assistance in securing the apprehension of the offender or the prosecution or conviction of the offender for that offence; and
  - c) Who fails without reasonable excuse to bring that information to the attention of a member of the NSW Police Force as soon as it is practicable to do so,is guilty of an offence punishable by up to five years of imprisonment.



**Table 4: Mandatory Reporting Requirements in New South Wales**

<b>Key legislation</b>	<i>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)</i>
<b>Who is a child?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person under the age of 16 years for mandatory reporting.</li> <li>• A person under the age of 18 for reportable conduct.</li> </ul>
<b>Child Protection Authority and contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police on 000 or CrimeStoppers on 1800 333 000 if the conduct involves a criminal allegation.</li> <li>• Department of the Communities and Justice – call Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11 or online through the Child Story Reporter Community if the conduct poses a risk of significant harm to a child.</li> <li>• For Reportable Conduct advice and support – Reportable Conduct Directorate – Mon-Fri 9am-4pm on (02) 8219 3800 or reportableconduct@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au.</li> </ul>
<b>Mandatory reporters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person who, in the course of his or her professional work or other paid employment delivers health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services, or law enforcement, wholly or partly, to children, and</li> <li>• People in Religious Ministry or providing religion religious-based activities to children (and all registered psychologists are mandatory reports, and</li> <li>• A person who holds a management position in an organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services, or law enforcement, wholly or partly, to children.</li> </ul>
<b>When reporting is required</b>	<p>If:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) A person to whom this section applies has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of harm, and</li> <li>(b) Those grounds arise during the course of or from the person's work, the person must, as soon as practicable, report to the Recorder/Secretary the name, or a description, of the child and the grounds for suspecting that the child is at risk of harm.</li> </ol>

<b>When is a child at risk of harm?</b>	<p>A child or young person is at risk of harm if current concerns exist for the safety, welfare or well-being of the child or young person because of the presence of any one or more of the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The child's or young person's basic physical or psychological needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met;</li> <li>(b) The parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child or young person to receive necessary medical care,</li> <li>(c) The child or young person has been, or is at risk of being, physically or sexually abused or ill-treated, the child or young person is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, the child or young person is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm; or</li> <li>(d) A parent or other caregiver has behaved in such a way towards the child or young person that the child or young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm.</li> </ul>
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#### 4. Voluntary reporting

- 4.1 Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW), a person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person is, or that a class of children or young persons are, at risk of harm may make a report to the DFCS.
- 4.2 "Reasonable grounds" is not defined in the Act. If a person is unsure whether they have reasonable grounds to make a report, they should speak to the NCC or the NCCs Representative for Child Safety.
- 4.3 In accordance with good practice, a person should also be encouraged to report outside of the NCC if they so wish. Reports can be made anonymously and reporters are protected in that if a report is made in good faith, this will not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics, make the person subject to any liability in relation to the report or require the person to be compelled in any proceedings to produce evidence. Reporters will also have their identity protected.

#### 5. Reportable Conduct

- 5.1 Under the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme (the Scheme), heads of entities must make reports to the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) if they become aware of a reportable allegation.
- 5.2 Religious bodies are captured by the Scheme if they are:
  - (a) a body established for a religious purpose, and
  - (b) an entity that establishes, or directs, controls or administers, an education or other charitable entity that is intended to be, and is conducted in accordance with religious doctrines, beliefs or principles.
- 5.3 This is an 'allegations based' Scheme which means the allegation triggers the obligation to notify the OCG. There does not need to be any evidence or proof that the conduct occurred if the allegation falls within one of the following categories of reportable conduct:

- (a) a sexual offence under a law of the State, another State, a Territory or the Commonwealth committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not criminal charges / proceedings in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded;
- (b) sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child that is sexual in nature but is not a sexual offence;
- (c) assault of a child;
- (d) ill-treatment of a child;
- (e) neglect of a child;
- (f) any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or
- (g) criminal offences such as the failure to reduce or remove risk of a child becoming the victim of abuse and concealing child abuse.

5.4 The head of the entity of a religious body must notify the OCG of reportable allegations against any employee, volunteer or contractor. who holds, or is required by the religious body to hold, a working with children check for the purpose of employment / engagement with the religious body, whether or not the conduct or misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person’s employment / engagement. This includes conduct before the person was an employee or conduct engaged in outside of work.

5.5 The head of the entity has 7 business days from being informed of a reportable allegation to notify the OCG.

5.6 The Scheme also places obligations on the head of entities to undertake an assessment and investigation into the reportable conduct.

## 6. Information and support services

6.1 Table 5 contains information on support services available to children and families in New South Wales.

**Table 5: Information and support services available in New South Wales**

<b>For children:</b>	<a href="#">Kids Help Line</a> : call 1800 55 1800 for free counselling and advice for young people between the ages of 5 and 25.
<b>For adults:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Lifeline</a>: call 13 11 14 for this free Australia-wide crisis support and suicide prevention service.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Adelphicare</a>.</li> <li>• See <a href="#">this linked page</a> for a contact list of information and support services for parents, families and young people in NSW.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources:</b>	The resources listed <a href="#">on this linked page</a> have a practice focus, and are designed to assist practitioners, managers and service providers in their work.