



Child Safety and Protection Policy 1.2

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Child Safety and Protection Policy

ISSUED BY Legal and Compliance Team, Board of Operations

EFFECTIVE DATE 27/05/2017

Policy Statement

Anchor Church is committed to providing a safe and happy environment for all children who participate in our Kids Programs. We honour God by supporting and respecting our children, staff, volunteers and interns.

We support the active participation of kids in our church and will provide an environment where they can grow into their true identity in Christ as well as participate in the vision of being disciples who make disciples.

Scope

This policy is provided to staff and volunteers for Kids Programs during their employment or engagement with Anchor Church to ensure a clear understanding of their responsibilities and obligations while children are under their supervision. This policy establishes expected standards of behaviour to enable staff and volunteers to foster a gospel-centred environment and promote participation in Anchor Kids programs.

This policy is informed by key items of child protection legislation in NSW and outlines the key concepts under the relevant legislation, including mandatory reporting and risk management.

Our Core Convictions

- We want to ensure that there are structures of gospel-centred accountability in place at Anchor Church.
- Everyone at Anchor Church should be confident in reporting inappropriate behaviour around kids.
- Everyone at Anchor Church should report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person immediately.

Policy guidelines

Supporting staff and volunteers

At Anchor Church we highly value and respect all of our staff and volunteers. All members of the Kids Ministry Team are encouraged to promote respect and fairness amongst each other, as well as towards children.

To ensure our volunteers are shown active consideration and support, a Child Safety Officer has been appointed for each Anchor plant. The appointees are as follows: Sarah Donovan at City, Katherine Santiago at South West, and Jess Hodgkinson at Northern Beaches. Their role is to provide support and advice to all individuals involved in the Kids Ministry, whether that is a helper, parent, or a team leader.

Resources and training

Building a child-safe culture requires informed and supported individuals who understand their role in ensuring a safe environment for children. All staff, volunteers, and others engaged in the care of children will receive a copy of this policy, including our Code of Conduct (see Appendix A).

Initial and ongoing training is provided to:

- equip individuals to create a gospel-centred environment for Anchor Kids;
- equip leaders and volunteers to facilitate Kids Programs;
- raise awareness of child sexual abuse, grooming and mandatory reporting;
- raise awareness of appropriate/inappropriate behaviour;
- ensure understanding of the process for handling complaints and/or allegations; and
- ensure understanding of the requirements of a child safe environment.



If volunteers require additional resourcing and information to better equip themselves to serve on the Kids Ministry Team outside of the provided training, please seek assistance from the Kids Ministry Director at the relevant Anchor plant; Sarah Donovan at City, Katherine Santiago at South West, and Jess Hodgkinson at Northern Beaches.

Code of Conduct

Anchor Church has developed a Code of Conduct to promote child safety and protection in the programs facilitated by the Kids Ministry Team. The Code of Conduct establishes behaviour expected from all staff and volunteers engaged in Kids Ministry. The Code of Conduct also helps the Leadership Team raise behavioural issues and provides a reference point for volunteers when there may otherwise be confusion, ambiguity or a lack of confidence about boundaries or appropriate behaviour with children.

The information contained in the Code of Conduct must be read prior to commencing to serve in the Kids Ministry Team. The advice contained in the Code of Conduct is informed by legislation, however does not replace any legislation or regulatory obligations.

See the Code of Conduct (Appendix A).

Risk Management

Anchor Church has a duty of care to provide a safe and happy environment for all children who participate in our Kids programs. Creating a safe environment requires ongoing planning, commitment and maintenance. To fulfil the duty of care, a Risk Management Plan has been developed to manage the risk of harm to children while participating in Kids Programs.

The major objectives of the Risk Management Plan are to:

- ensure Anchor Church complies with child safety obligations established in relevant legislation and regulations;
- reduce the risk of harm to children participating in Kids Programs;
- equip the Kids Ministry Team to meet the expectations established in the Code of Conduct;
- develop a sustainable system to manage the risks of harm to children and young people; and
- implement the goal of this policy document.

The Risk Management Plan should be read prior to engagement with children in the capacity of an individual serving in the Kids Ministry Team. The advice contained in the Code of Conduct is informed by legislation, however does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations.

See the Risk Management Plan.

Reporting

Anyone who suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is at risk of being neglected or physically, sexually or emotionally abused, should report it to the Child Safety Officer.

It does not mean that reporters are required to confirm their suspicions or provide solid proof before making a report. A useful rule of thumb is to consider whether another person, when faced with similar information, would also draw the same conclusion.

Who must report

All members of Anchor Church have an obligation to report any concerns they have about the safety and wellbeing of children. The avenue for voicing the concerns is the same process for both individuals serving on the Kids Ministry Team and those who do not.



How to report

All concerns must be reported to the Child Safety Officer.

Name: Sarah Donovan Contact Number: 0435 712 402

Name: Katherine Santiago Contact Number: 0416 889 142

Name: Jess Hodgkinson Contact Number: 0404 339 689

Any member of the church can make a complaint, or raise a concern, directly to the Child Safety Officer.

The concern in the initial instance can be made verbally, however for further investigations; there may be an instance where the concern will need to be put in writing.

When to report

You must make a report to the Child Safety Officer when you have current concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child for any of the following reasons:

- the basic physical or psychological needs of the child or young person are not being met (neglect);
- the parents or caregivers have not arranged necessary medical care for the child or young person (unwilling or unable to do so);
- the parents or caregivers have not arranged for the child or young person to receive an education in accordance with the *Education Act 1990* (unwilling or unable to do so);
- risk of physical or sexual abuse or ill-treatment (physical or sexual abuse);
- parent or caregiver behaviour towards the child causes or risks serious psychological harm (emotional abuse); and/or
- incidents of domestic violence and as a consequence a child or young person are at risk of serious physical or psychological harm (domestic or family violence).

Concerns about members of Anchor Church that should be reported include:

- disclosure of abuse from child, member or a third party;
- inappropriate behaviour around children;
- suspicion of abuse or harm to a child;
- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence);
- any assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child; and/or
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child.

You do not need to report conduct that is reasonable for the management and care of children.

Not all abuse that needs to be reported will have happened in relation to Anchor Church, reporting responsibilities extend beyond the Sunday Gathering. Please refer to the tables below outlining indicators of harm to understand what to look out for.

Anchor Church has a clear process for responding to those who have been harmed or potentially harmed. Where a complaint of abuse of a child becomes known (proven based on evidence) it will be immediately reported to the authorities, including police and other statutory authorities, and steps must immediately be taken to assess and minimise any risk or harm. Anchor Church mandates any person who is aware of or suspects child abuse to make a report to the Child Safety Officer or authorities.



The role of the Child Safety Officer

What to do when a report is made

When the Child Safety Officer (CSO) receives a formal or informal complaint or concern about the safety and wellbeing of a child, the Child Safety Officer will take the following actions:

1. Listen to the person making the complaint and make a record of the complaint.
2. Assess the complaint and if required report the complaint to Community Services and other appropriate authorities if warranted. (i.e., Police). Inform everyone involved in the complaint of the requirement to make this report.
3. If the complaint involves inappropriate behaviour and a breach of the Code of Conduct, the Leadership Team will take action in accordance with Anchor Discipline Procedures.

Reporting a member of the Kids Ministry Team

When a report is received regarding an active member of the Kids Ministry Team, (an individual volunteering in the Kids Program) the Leadership Team, with the support where necessary of the CSO, are required to take immediate action to mitigate risks.

The volunteer or staff member referenced in a report will be immediately stepped down from the Kids Ministry Team while the investigation is underway. This is to safeguard both the volunteer and the children in the Kids Programs.

When an investigation is finalised, the outcome will be notified to all persons involved. If the team member is cleared, rejoining the Kids Ministry Team will be determined by the Kids Ministry Director.

The process that will be followed is outlined in the guidelines for handling abuse allegations against a Kids Ministry volunteer or staff member.

Record Keeping

When a child joins a Kids Program, a child's full details are collected along with the details of their parents. Information about medical conditions, allergies, behavioural issues and permission to obtain emergency medical treatment are also sought. The information is processed and stored securely in the church's Content Management System.

The Team leader of each Kids Program must ensure each volunteer in the group has been provided with relevant information in relation to the children or young people of the group. For example all volunteers in a group must be made aware of allergies, medical conditions, non-contact orders and any cases where permission has not been given for photos.

Information regarding the operations of Kids Programs should be collected by staff and volunteers in a manner that is consistent, accurate, and kept up-to-date. The additional information will be used to identify trends, identify and manage risks, and improve our child safe policies and practices.

Check-in/Check-out procedure

All children are required to undergo a security check-in/check-out procedure when participating in Kids Programs. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a sticker for the child. The parent or guardian must present the sticker on the child in order to sign the child into a Kids Program. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to be checked in, the child will be required to attend the wider church gathering. The Team leader on the day will be responsible for releasing the child back into the care of a parent or guardian after the wider church gathering.

Sick child

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Anchor Church. Parents are



encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should not be dropped off:

- fever, diarrhoea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours;
- green or yellow runny nose;
- eye or skin infections; and/or
- other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease.

Children who are observed by our Kids Ministry Team members to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child is picked up from the Kids Program.

Medications

It is the policy of Anchor Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home.

Exceptions to the medications guidelines may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the Kids Ministry Director to develop a plan of action.

Discipline

It is the policy of Anchor Church not to administer punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There will be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, shouting or other physical or verbal discipline of children. Workers should consult with the Kids Ministry Director if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Bathroom guidelines

In order to make parents fully aware of how toileting procedures are handled, parents must have the following guidelines clearly communicated upon commencement of the Anchor Kids program.

During programs, parents always have the option of toileting their own children. Where this has been communicated or at the kids leaders discretion, parents will be texted to come and collect their child. Where this is not applicable, kids leaders will escort children to the bathroom.

Children aged five years or younger in the preschool program will be escorted as a group to the bathroom with a minimum of two leaders. Children aged five to ten years in the primary program will be escorted to the bathroom with a minimum of one leader and one other person.

Children should never be taken to the bathroom alone. Kids leaders should remain outside the bathroom door and then escort children back to the room where the program is being facilitated. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the leader should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the leader should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For the protection of all, leaders should never escort a child to the bathroom alone and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to the commencement of the Kids Program.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the Kids Team leader. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed, where necessary, via the following link:

<https://anchorchurchsydney.churchcenter.com/people/forms/506313>



Recruitment to the Kids Ministry Team

Anchor Church adopts practices of recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers in child-related roles that enhance the possibility of a child safe environment.

The Kids Ministry Director will appoint staff and volunteers to children-related positions if staff and volunteers meet our recruitment and screening requirements

Eligible persons to serve on the Kids Ministry Team must:

- have appropriate skills to meet the role requirements;
- be cleared by the WWCC;
- be at least 18 years or older; a young person under 18 years of age can be a 'helper' in addition to the required number of adult leaders;
- be an active member of the church for at least 6 months*; and
- display Godly characteristics.

The recruitment process

Once an individual has expressed interest in serving on the Kids Ministry Team, the Ministry Director will facilitate an informal discussion to gain an understanding of:

- the individual's skills and ability to meet the role requirements;
- maturity of their faith;
- personal standards and character;
- ability to develop appropriate relationships; and
- awareness and willingness to work within Anchor Church's standards of behaviour, and policies.

After this discussion, if the Kids Ministry Director is reasonably confident to proceed, the following will occur:

- obtain reference checks;
- obtain a Working With Children's Check
- undertake a Safe Ministry screening check
- actively seek guidance on character and ability from Gospel Community leaders or other members of Anchor Church; and
- The kids ministry director will appoint volunteer to the Kids Ministry Team and regularly review their ongoing scheduling to serve

***The 6 month rule**

If a person is not known to Anchor Church, and has no previous leadership experience that can be substantiated by a referee check, they will not be eligible to serve in any capacity in the Kids Ministry Team for at least 6 months. After 6 months, an individual can then be considered for a position on the Kids Ministry Team.

Successful applicants

Once an individual is appointed to the Kids Ministry Team, they will be provided with appropriate training and information. Each appointment will be reviewed every two years to consider where further training might be appropriate and to re-assess suitability for the role. The assessment of Team members may be carried out at the Team leader level.

If it becomes known an individual appears to only attend church when rostered to serve for an extended period of time, it is recommended removing this person from the Kids Ministry Team to provide space for spiritual growth and development.

Unsuccessful applicants

The decision to decline an individual's interest in serving on the Kids Ministry Team will be communicated in a



sensitive manner, and the person may be followed up by their Gospel Community leaders to work through pastoral concerns raised through the screening process. The Kids Ministry Director will seek to recommend other ways to serve within the church.

Team structure

To provide sufficient care to children participating in Kids Programs, Anchor Church has adopted child to adult ratios in line with the Education and Care Services National Regulation. At any one time, there will always be a teacher and helper for each Kids Program being facilitated.

Adult to Child ratio
Birth to 24 months 1:4
Over 24 months and less than 36 months 1:5
Over 36 months and not yet attending school 1:10
School aged children 1:15

Teacher

The Teacher:

- is appointed through the recruitment process undertaken by the Kids Ministry Director;
- leads a Sunday program undertaking work with children, babies and parents;
- has responsibility for the facilitation of the kids program they are leading
- provides the helper/s with support and delegation of preparation tasks
- is directly accountable to the Kids Ministry Director.

Helper

Helper:

- is appointed through the recruitment process undertaken by the Kids Ministry Director;
- is a member of a team undertaking work with children, babies and parents; and
- is directly accountable to the Teacher and Kids Ministry Director

Identifying child abuse and indicators of harm

The following tables are to be used as a guide to assist members of the Kids Ministry Team identify child abuse and to decide whether to report an incident. The tables are not exhaustive, and not all physical indicators or behavioural indicators quantify as child abuse. It is important to use discretion, and if unsure in a circumstance where child abuse may have occurred, it is practice to advise the Child Safety Officers for determination.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse consists of any non-accidental form of injury or serious physical harm inflicted on a young person or child. Physical abuse does not mean reasonable discipline, though it may result from excessive or inappropriate discipline. All children have accidents, trips and falls, therefore not all bumps and bruises necessarily mean a child has been physically abused. The list below is not exhaustive, and there isn't one sign or symptom that will indicate a child has definitely been physically abused, though if a child often has injuries, there seems to be a pattern, or the explanation given isn't consistent with the injury then this should be reported to the Child Safety Officer.

Physical abuse can include:

- being hit, kicked, poisoned, burned, slapped or having objects thrown at them;
- Shaking or hitting babies;
- inflicting injury by causing a child to hit a hard or soft surface; and/or
- making up or causing the symptoms of illness in their child, perhaps giving them medicine they don't need and making the child unwell.

Indicators of physical abuse in children and young people

Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bruises or welts • commonly on the head but also on the ear or neck or soft areas - the abdomen, back and bottom • defensive wounds commonly on the forearm, upper arm, back of the leg, hands or feet • clusters of bruises on the upper arm, outside of the thigh or on the body • bruises with dots of blood under the skin • a bruised scalp and swollen eyes from hair being pulled violently • bruises in the shape of a hand or object. 	<p>Things you may notice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct or indirect disclosure of an injury • inconsistent or unlikely explanation of an injury • inability to remember how the injury was caused • withdrawn • suddenly behaves differently • anxious • clingy • fearfulness when other children shout or cry • excessively friendly with strangers • fear of the dark • little or no fear when threatened • sadness and frequent crying • depressed • aggressive • problems sleeping • wets the bed • soils clothes • weariness or fear of a parent; reluctant to go
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • burns or scalds • can be from hot liquids, hot objects, flames, chemicals or electricity • on the hands, back, shoulders or buttocks; scalds may be on lower limbs, both arms and/or both legs • a clear edge to the burn or scald • sometimes in the shape or an implement for 	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● example, a circular cigarette burn ● multiple burns or scalds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● home or a desire to live somewhere else ● takes risks ● misses school ● changes in eating habits ● obsessive behaviour ● wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions (such as long tops) to hide injuries ● nightmares ● constantly on guard around adults, cowers at sudden movements, usually deferent to adults ● lacks empathy ● drugs ● alcohol ● self-harm ● thoughts about suicide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● bite marks ● usually oval or circular in shape ● visible wounds, indentations or bruising from individual teeth. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● fractures or broken bones ● fractures to the ribs or the leg bones in babies ● multiple fractures or breaks at different stages of healing 	
<p>Other common indicators that you may notice include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● multiple injuries, old and new ● cuts and grazes to the mouth, lips, gums and eye area ● bald patches where hair has been pulled out ● anxiety related illness such as anorexia or bulimia 	

Indicators of physical abuse towards children in parents or caregivers

Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● visits with child to health or other services with unexplained or suspicious injuries, swallowing of non-food substances or internal complaints ● non-family member presents child to health services ● presentation at a number of different medical centers overtime ● explanation of injury is not consistent with the visible injury ● family history of violence ● disclosed/apparent use of excessive discipline ● aggressive behaviour displayed in the presence of the child or young person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● history of their own maltreatment as a child ● fears injuring their own child

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is sexual activity or behaviour that is imposed, or likely to be imposed, on a child or young person by another person. Sexual activity doesn't have to be physical contact and it can happen online. Sometimes the child won't understand that what's happening to them is abuse. They may not even understand that it's wrong.

Sexual abuse can include:

- sexual touching of any part of the body whether the child's wearing clothes or not;
- rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus;

- forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity;
- making a child take their clothes off, touch someone else's genitals or masturbate;
- encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts;
- not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others;
- meeting a child following sexual grooming with the intent of abusing them;
- online abuse including making, viewing or distributing child abuse images;
- allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images;
- showing pornography to a child; and/or
- sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child exploitation).

Indicators of sexual abuse in children and young people

Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● anal or vaginal soreness ● an unusual discharge ● discomfort in urinating ● sexually transmitted infection (STI) ● frequent urinary tract infections ● pregnancy ● bruises, bites or marks on the breasts, bottom, lower abdomen or thighs ● anxiety related illness such as anorexia or bulimia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the child may stay away from certain people ● they might avoid being alone with people, such as family members or friends ● they could seem frightened of a person or reluctant to socialise with them.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● show sexual behaviour that's inappropriate for their age ● a child might become sexually active at a young age ● they might be promiscuous or provocative ● they could use sexual language or know information that you wouldn't expect them to.
	<p>Other common indicators that you may notice include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● direct or indirect disclosure of an sexual abuse ● sexual themes in child's artwork, stories or play ● engages in or talks about sexual acts, including violent sexual acts ● persistently runs away from home ● wears baggy clothes in order to disguise gender, body shape, bruising or injury ● nightmares ● clingy ● poor self esteem ● depression ● poor self-care or personal hygiene ● problems sleeping

Indicators of being a perpetrator of sexual abuse towards children, this could be from a parent, family friend or caregiver

Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appears to encourage or tolerate sexualised behaviour • controlling attitude and behaviour to child, young person and/or partner • exposes child or young person to prostitution or pornography, or uses a child for pornographic purposes • intentionally exposes a child or young person to sexual behaviours of others • committed or has been suspected of child sexual abuse or child pornography • coerces a child or young person to engage in sexual behaviour with other children and young people • minimises disclosure or defends against accusations of sexual abuse by claiming the child or young person is lying • inappropriately curtails development of child's age appropriate independence from the family • overly critical of adult partner • family denies pregnancy of child or young person • minimisation of the impact or seriousness of abuse • justification of abuse by blaming victim • grooming behaviour

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment or emotional neglect of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse and can seriously damage a child's emotional health and development.

Because there's an element of emotional abuse in all other types of child abuse and neglect, it can be difficult to spot the signs and to separate what's emotional abuse from other types of abuse.

Emotional abuse can include:

- humiliating or constantly criticising a child;
- threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names;
- making the child the subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child;
- making a child perform degrading acts;
- not recognising a child's own individuality, trying to control their lives;
- pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations;
- exposing a child to distressing events or interactions such as domestic abuse or drug taking;
- failing to promote a child's social development;
- not allowing them to have friends;

- persistently ignoring them;
- manipulating a child;
- never saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating a child on successes; and
- never showing any emotions in interactions with a child, also known as emotional neglect.

Indicators of emotional abuse in children and young people

Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● babies and preschool children may: ● be overly-affectionate towards strangers or people they haven't known for very long ● lack confidence or become wary or anxious ● not appear to have a close relationship with their parent, e.g. when being taken to or collected from nursery etc. ● be aggressive or nasty towards other children and animals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● feels worthless, low self-esteem, not confident ● takes extreme risks, is markedly disruptive, is a bully, is aggressively violent ● regresses in developmental achievements ● clingy ● sleeping problems ● wets the bed ● soils clothes ● extreme attention seeking ● lacks age appropriate interpersonal skills ● doesn't value others or show empathy ● avoids adults ● submissive to adults, obsessively flattering ● highly self-critical ● depressed ● anxious ● displays rocking, sucking, head-banging behaviour
<p>Older children may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use language, act in a way or know about things that you wouldn't expect them to know for their age ● struggle to control strong emotions or have extreme outbursts ● seem isolated from their parents ● lack social skills or have few, if any, friends. ● self-harms, attempts suicide 	

Indicators of emotional abuse towards children in parents or caregivers

Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● uses inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment ● presence of domestic violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● constantly criticises, belittles, teases child / young person ● ignores or withholds praise and affection ● persistently hostile and verbally abusive, rejects and blames child unnecessarily ● makes excessive or unreasonable demands ● presence of domestic violence ● unmanaged mental health condition ● believes that a particular child or young person is bad or evil ● isolates and/or prevents the child or young person from engaging in normal peer relationships ● unable to respond to the psychological needs of the child or young person due to their own drug and/or alcohol use

Neglect

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and is the most common form of child abuse.

A child who's neglected will often suffer from other abuse as well. Neglect is dangerous and can cause serious, long-term damage - even death.

Neglect can be really difficult to identify, making it hard for you to take early action to protect a child.

Having one of the signs or symptoms below doesn't necessarily mean that a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple, or persistent, signs then it could indicate there's a serious problem.

Neglect can include:

- leaving a child hungry or dirty, without adequate clothing, shelter, supervision, medical or health care;
- putting a child in danger or not protected from physical or emotional harm; and/or
- not providing the love, care and attention they need from their parents.

Indicators of neglect in children and young people

Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● poor appearance and hygiene ● be smelly or dirty ● have unwashed clothes ● have inadequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat ● seem hungry or turn up to the Gathering without having breakfast ● have frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants. 	<p>Things you may notice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● direct or indirect disclosure of an injury ● inconsistent or unlikely explanation of an injury ● inability to remember how the injury was caused ● withdrawn ● suddenly behaves differently ● anxious ● clingy ● fearfulness when other children shout or cry ● begging or stealing food ● gorging when food is available, focus is on basic survival ● consistently hungry, tired and falling asleep ● longs for or indiscriminately seeks adult supervision ● stays at the homes of friends and acquaintances for prolonged periods, rather than at their own home ● overly passive, emotionless ● displays rocking, sucking, head-banging behaviour ● failure to thrive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● health and development problems ● untreated injuries, medical and dental issues ● repeated accidental injuries caused by lack of supervision ● recurring illnesses or infections ● not been given appropriate medicines ● missed medical appointments such as vaccinations ● poor muscle tone or prominent joints ● skin sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm ● thin or swollen tummy ● anemia ● tiredness ● low weight or growth and not reaching developmental milestones ● poor language, communication or social skills. 	

<p>Housing and family issues</p> <p>They may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● living in an unsuitable home environment for example dog mess being left or not having any heating ● left alone for a long time ● taking on the role of carer for other family members. 	
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Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. But it isn't just physical violence – domestic abuse includes emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse.

Abusive behaviour can occur in any relationship. It can continue even after the relationship has ended. Both men and women can be abused or abusers.

Domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people. Witnessing domestic abuse is a form of child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

Domestic abuse can include:

- sexual abuse and rape (including within a relationship);
- punching, kicking, cutting, hitting with an object;
- withholding money or preventing someone from earning money;
- taking control over aspects of someone's everyday life, which can include where they go and what they wear;
- not letting someone leave the house;
- reading emails, text messages or letters; and/or
- threatening to kill or harm them, a partner, another family member or pet.

Children can experience domestic abuse or violence in lots of different ways. They might:

- see the abuse;
- hear the abuse from another room;
- see a parent's injuries or distress afterwards; and/or
- be hurt by being nearby or trying to stop the abuse.

Indicators of domestic abuse in children and young people

Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● low weight or growth and not reaching developmental milestones ● unexplained physical injuries ● eating disorders ● psychomatic complaints ● health and development problems ● difficulty eating or sleeping ● no or little emotion or fear when threatened 	<p>Things you may notice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● become aggressive or violent ● display anti-social behaviour ● suffer from depression or anxiety ● not do as well at school - due to difficulties at home or disruption of moving to and from refuges. ● directly or indirectly discloses domestic violence



Procedures

The Leaders of our children’s programs are to provide a safe environment for their planned activities. This will include:

1. A Risk Management assessment of planned activities and implementing strategies to reduce any significant risk where applicable.
2. Recording of any incidents during the program via Anchor’s Incident Report Form.
3. Reviewing incidents to ensure procedures are implemented to reduce risk of incident reoccurring.
4. All incidents with children should be reviewed with the Child Safety Officer (to ensure no patterns are occurring).

See *Risk Management and Incident Reporting forms*.

Communication

Anchor Church will remind the employees and volunteers of its Child Safety and Protection policy and procedures on a yearly basis.

All new employees and volunteers will be taken through the policy before they commence in their role.

Kids and parents joining our programs will receive access to this document.

When the policy applies

This policy applies on:	This policy does not apply:
A Sunday at the Gathering A Gospel Community activity Anchor Church Camps Recognised Anchor Church events and activities	Outside of Anchor Church activities While babysitting for members of Anchor Church Where a person 18 years or over discloses that he or she was subject to child abuse while he or she was a child these procedures do not apply, but the person should be encouraged to take appropriate steps about the matter.

Roles and responsibilities

- The Kids Ministry Director is responsible for oversight of the Kids Ministry, including recruitment and appointment of staff and volunteers to child-related positions.
- The Child Safety Officer is responsible for providing support and advice to volunteers.
- All Volunteers working with children are responsible for creating a safe environment for children while they are rostered on, this including adhering to this policy and the Code of Conduct.



Definitions

Kids Ministry: all coordinated activities for children aged 0-15 facilitated by Anchor Church.

Child: anyone under the age of 18 years.

Abuse: both adult to child abuse and child to child abuse.

Abuse and neglect include, but are not limited to:

- o Physical abuse – when a person purposely injures or threatens to injure a child or young person.
- o Emotional abuse – an attack on a child or young person’s self-esteem such as bullying, name calling, threatening, ridiculing, harassing, intimidating or isolating the child or young person.
- o Family violence – when a family member, partner or ex-partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate the other.
- o Sexual abuse – any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child.
- o Grooming – predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity.
- o Neglect – where a child is harmed by the failure to provide the basic physical and emotional necessities.

Staff and volunteers, Kids Ministry Team members- refers to all relevant (according to the context in which it appears) persons, and may include the Leadership team, paid employees of Anchor Church, volunteers, parents, carers, Anchor Church members, people in the specified ministries of the Church, and any other person with responsibility for the care of children.

WWCC: Working With Children’s Check.



ANCHOR

CHURCH

SYDNEY

Legislation

Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000 (NSW)
Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)
Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 (NSW)
The Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)
Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment Bill 2009
The Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 (NSW) (the WWC Act)

Related policies

Anchor Church Constitution

Other related documents

Code of Conduct
Recruitment Forms
WWCC
Risk Management and Incident Reporting Forms

Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1	27/05/2017	Initial enactment of policy	Ellen Humphreys, Board of Operations, Legal and Compliance Team
1.0	24/9/2018	Review to ensure policy is up to date	Ellen Humphreys, Board of Operations, Legal and Compliance Team
1.1	16/06/2022	Review to ensure policy is up to date	Mitch Brice, Board of Operations
1.2	18/07/2024	Review to ensure policy us up to date	Mitch Brice, Board of Operations

Review date

18/07/2026

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or as needed, and incorporate comments and suggestions from staff, volunteers, parents and the leadership team.

Contacts

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Northern Beaches: Jess Hodgkinson, 0431 893 966



Appendix A

CHILD SAFETY POLICY | CODE OF CONDUCT

- I commit to conducting myself in a manner consistent with the Safe Ministry Check Training Course when serving at Anchor Church Sydney.
- I will treat adults, children and young people with respect and value, without favouritism.
- I will behave appropriately, being faithful to my appointed tasks, being an example to others, and being careful in how I physically interact with others.
- I will never use physical punishment or abusive language - even as a form of discipline.
- I will act transparently, as far as possible, ensuring that another adult is present or within eyesight when I am with a vulnerable person (including other people's children).
- I commit to ensuring that the spaces and activities I'm responsible for are safe and do not put people at risk of significant harm.
- I commit to including vulnerable people (and/or their carers/significant other) in discussions about decisions that will significantly affect them.
- I commit to encouraging openness by listening to people's concerns with a willingness to support them and help them.
- I commit to reporting any concerns or suspicions about harmful behaviours and significant risks to the Anchor Church Sydney Safe Ministry Contacts without bias or partiality.
- I will submit to the Anchor Church Sydney leader screening process to ensure I'm a suitable person to work with vulnerable people.
- I will submit to disciplinary steps if I am found to violate these commitments or act in an otherwise inappropriate or illegal manner at Anchor Church Sydney.