

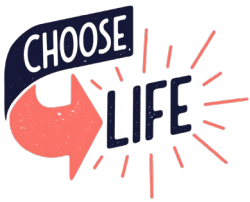


Child Safety Policy – Melbourne Christadelphian Family Conference 2022

Version 1.0 – 2/02/2021

This document represents the Child Safety Policy of the Melbourne 2022 Christadelphian Conference (the **Conference**). The Conference is governed by the appendices relating to its State of operation contained within this document which set out any additional requirements and procedures specific to that State.

The Conference may implement further guidelines in relation to child safety by creating a Child Safety Procedure, provided that it is consistent with this Policy.



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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 Conference. Appendix A includes the Bible teachings that provide a clear foundation for this policy.
- 1.2 The Conference acknowledges the responsibility for families and the Conference to work together to provide a harmonious environment for children which respects their safety and well-being.
- 1.3 Everyone registered and attending the Conference 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 B defines terms used in this policy.
- 1.6 If any person believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all registered attendees, Management Committee members, and Volunteers that are involved or engaged in an activity of the Conference.
- 2.2 This policy extends to all aspects of the Conference's work including within the Conference environment and online interactions.

3. Aim

- 3.1 This policy aims to:
 - 3.1.1 Prevent child abuse occurring in the Conference environment;
 - 3.1.2 Work towards an organisational culture of child safety;
 - 3.1.3 Ensure that all registered attendees are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse
 - 3.1.4 Establish controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs;
 - 3.1.5 Provide guidance on action that should be taken where people suspect any child abuse within the Conference environment;
 - 3.1.6 Provide a clear statement to everyone forbidding any such abuse; and
 - 3.1.7 Provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.
 - 3.1.8 Provide clear requirements for:
 - (a) The safety and well-being of children at the Conference's activities, and
 - (b) The management of complaints;
 - 3.1.9 Provide a framework for supporting:
 - (a) Victims of child abuse and their families, and
 - (b) Alleged or convicted offenders and perpetrators; and
 - 3.1.10 Demonstrate compliance with the child safety legislation as relevant to the state of operation.



4. Principles

The Conference affirms these principles which are the basis of this policy:

- 4.1 The Conference has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- 4.2 The safety and well-being of children at the Conference's activities is of paramount importance.
- 4.3 Child abuse violates Bible teaching (refer to Appendix A) and is defined by law as criminal behaviour. The Conference does not tolerate or condone criminal behaviour.
- 4.4 Child protection is a shared behaviour.
- 4.5 All children have a right to feel safe and be safe, and every child has an equal right to protection from abuse;
- 4.6 The Conference will be sensitive, compassionate, objective, confidential, fair, truthful and compliant in any matter related to child abuse, alleged or proven.
- 4.7 The Conference will provide support and assistance to people affected by child abuse, alleged or proven.
- 4.8 The Conference 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 Abuse¹. The requirements in Section 5 are grouped under sub-headings which relate to each of the Child Safe Standards.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1. Management Committee
 - 5.1.1 Management Committee have the primary responsibility for the care and safety of children at activities of the Conference.
 - 5.1.2 The Management Committee must:
 - (a) Provide leadership in child safety (refer to Section 6.1);
 - (b) Communicate the requirements of this policy to people associated with the Conference (refer to Sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4);
 - (c) Ensure people involved with the care and supervision of children are suitable and supported (refer to Section 6.5);
 - (d) Ensure complaints are managed appropriately (refer to Section 6.6);
 - (e) Arrange regular review of this policy (refer to Section 6.9); and
 - (f) Ensure matters related to child safety are documented appropriately (refer to Section 6.10).
 - 5.1.3 The Management Committee may appoint a person to be the Conference's Representative for Child Safety to coordinate administrative requirements of this policy under their direction. If the Management Committee do not appoint a person to have this function they also have the responsibilities in Section 5.2
- 5.2. Conference's Representative for Child Safety
 - 5.2.1 The Conference's Representative for Child Safety is a person appointed by the Management Committee to coordinate administrative requirements of this policy.

Note: The Conference's Representative for Child Safety is an administrative function and does not carry sole responsibility for child safety. All registered attendees at the Conference, employees, contractors and volunteers are variously responsible for child safety as defined in Sections 4 and 5 of the policy.

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



- 5.2.2 The Conference's Representative for Child Safety must:
- (a) Be familiar with the requirements of child safety law (refer to Appendix E);
 - (b) Be familiar with the requirements and processes for Working with Children Checks;
 - (c) Facilitate Working with Children Checks on behalf of the Conference;
 - (d) Maintain records of Working with Children Checks on behalf of the Conference.
 - (e) Coordinate training (refer to Section 6.7); and
 - (f) Advise the Management Committee if / when they become aware of changes in law or associated processes which may require a revision to this policy.
- 5.3. Activity Coordinators
- 5.3.1 An Activity Coordinator is a person appointed by the Management Committee to coordinate an activity of the Conference.
- 5.3.2 For the activity they have been requested to coordinate, an Activity Coordinator must:
- (a) Ensure persons working with children have Working with Children Checks or State equivalent;
 - (b) Develop and implement activity guidelines which include arrangements for child safety (refer to Section 6.8); and
 - (c) Report to the appropriate authorities (refer to Section 6.6 and Appendix E) if they have a reasonable belief that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused.
- 5.3.3 Activity Coordinators who are Youth Workers also have the responsibilities in Section 4.4.
- 5.4. Youth Workers
- 5.4.1 A Youth Worker is an adult person appointed by the Management Committee to work with children at an activity of the Conference.
- Note: A Youth Worker may be a registered attendee at the Conference, an employee, contractor or volunteer. 'Work with children' is any role which involves contact with children, including care, supervision and teaching.
- 5.4.2 Youth Workers must:
- (a) Comply with the standards of behaviour for interactions with children defined in the Conference's code of conduct;
 - (b) Maintain a current Working with Children Check;
 - (c) Attend child safety training organised by the Conference;
 - (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 6.6 and Appendix E) if they have a reasonable belief that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused.
- 5.4.3 Youth Workers who are Activity Coordinators also have the responsibilities in Section 4.3.
- 5.5. Registered Conference Attendees
- 5.5.1 All registered attendees at the Conference, including those listed in Sections 5.1 to 5.4 above, must:
- (a) Comply with the standards of behaviour for interactions with children defined in the Conference's code of conduct;
 - (b) Comply with the requirements of this policy;
 - (c) Provide a safe environment for all children;
 - (d) Make every effort never be alone with a child; and



- (e) Report to the appropriate authorities (refer to Section 6.6 and Appendix E) if they have a reasonable belief that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused.
- 5.4.2 All adult registered attendees at the Conference, including those listed in 5.1 to 5.4 above, must:
 - (a) promote child safety at all times;
 - (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.
- 5.4.3 Employees, contractors and volunteers who are not registered attendees at the Conference, but are engaged by the Conference, must:
 - (a) Comply with the standards of behaviour for interactions with children defined in the Conference's code of conduct;
 - (b) Comply with the requirements of this policy; and
 - (c) Report to the appropriate authorities (refer to Section 6.6 and Appendix E) if they have a reasonable belief that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused.

6. Requirements

- 6.1 NP 1: Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture
 - 6.1.1 The Conference must have a code of conduct which includes expected standards of behaviour for interactions with children.
 - 6.1.2 The Management Committee must review and approve nominations for any person whose role or function may involve working with children, including:
 - (a) Secretary;
 - (b) Sunday School superintendent;
 - (c) Youth Workers, including Sunday School teachers (including relief teachers), supervisors and youth leaders.
 - 6.1.3 The Management Committee must provide sufficient oversight of the Conference's activities to ensure that child safety arrangements are effective.
- 6.2 NP 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
 - 6.2.1 The Management Committee recognises the importance of engaging with and empowering children. Children should be engaged in processes designed to ensure their safety (particularly in relation to Sections 6.6 and 6.8).
 - 6.2.2 The Management Committee will endeavor to put in place age-appropriate strategies to proactively :
 - (a) Engage with children;
 - (b) Seek children's views;
 - (c) Consult with children about decisions that affect them;
 - (d) Educate and inform children on their rights to be safe from abuse and what is and isn't appropriate behavior towards them from both peers and adults; and
 - (e) Consult with children about what makes them feel safe and how this can be recognised and implemented by the Management Committee.
 - 6.2.3 The Management Committee will inform children of safe and respectful relationships and where they can go if they have any concerns or would like further information and supports.

Notes: The Management Committee 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.

- 6.3 NP 3: Families and communities are informed and involved
- 6.3.1 The Management Committee must inform anyone with a responsibility under this policy about:
- (a) The policy;
 - (b) Policy requirements which specifically apply to that person's role or function; and
 - (c) Where the policy is available to them.
- Note: The Conference may make the policy available to other parties at its discretion.*
- 6.3.2 The Management Committee must inform all registered attendees at the Conference and their families about the policy and make it available to them.
- 6.3.3 Any person may provide feedback about the policy for the Management Committee to consider changes for further improving child safety.
- 6.4 NP 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs are considered
- 6.4.1 The Conference must offer appropriate support to an adult who alleges they were abused when a child. This may include assisting them to find appropriate professional counselling and encouraging them to make a report to appropriate authorities if appropriate.
- 6.4.2 The Conference must offer appropriate support to anyone implementing any aspect of this policy while acting on behalf of the Conference.
- Note: This may include counselling services following a disclosure by a child.*
- 6.4.3 The Conference must provide support to children who are victims of abuse and their families, including pastoral care and accessing professional services.
- 6.5 NP 5: People working with children are suitable and supported
- 6.5.1 To work with children, an adult must have met the legal requirements to do so, such as obtaining a Working with Children Check or equivalent, prior to commencing this work.
- 6.5.2 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 Conference's activities is unrelated to their profession or occupation.
- 6.5.3 Appendix F should be used to determine whether a Working with Children Check or equivalent is required in Victoria.
- 6.5.4 An adult who works with children must advise the Management Committee:
- (a) Whenever they apply to associate their Working with Children Check with another organisation;
 - (b) If they have a complaint made against them (whether related to activities of the Conference or not); and/or
 - (c) If their Working with Children Check (whether associated with the Conference or not) is withdrawn, suspended, cancelled or lapsed.
- 6.5.5 An adult must not work with children:
- (a) If they have been a Member of an Ecclesia for less than three months;
 - (b) If they are the subject of an unresolved complaint;
 - (c) If the Management Committee have directed their contact with children must be restricted at the Conference's activities; or



(d) If they have been convicted of sexual offending.

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

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

6.5.6 The Conference must maintain a register of the status of Working with Children Checks associated with the Conference.

6.6 NP 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child-focused

6.6.1 A complaint or disclosure must be treated seriously, respectfully and sensitively. The Management Committee 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.

6.6.2 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 (see Appendix F) and request direction from them concerning the child's immediate welfare;
- (b) If the alleged abuse relates to a Conference activity, also advise a member of the Management Committee who has no conflict of interest. A person should only do this if they feel comfortable to do so; 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 C).

6.6.3 If a child makes a disclosure, the person to whom the disclosure was made or the Committee Member must notify the Management Committee which must:

- (a) Document the disclosure, including:
 - (i) The date and time the disclosure was made;
 - (ii) To whom it was made;
 - (iii) The disclosure (as near as possible the actual words); and
 - (iv) Who the child alleges was/is the perpetrator (who may or may not be a registered attendee at the Conference).

Note: Police or other authorities may wish to speak to a child before other interviews occur. 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 confirmed that further inquiries can be made

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

6.6.4 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) Reporting to the Management Committee.

6.6.5 Registered attendees at the Conference must fully cooperate with an appropriate authority exercising a lawful power.

6.6.6 A Committee Member must not be involved in any matter related to a complaint or



disclosure where there may be a real or perceived conflict of interest.

- 6.6.7 When the Management Committee 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.*

- 6.6.8 If a Committee Member is informed of a complaint or disclosure of child abuse that has not yet been reported to the appropriate authorities, they should make a report as soon as is reasonably practicable in accordance with the reporting obligations for the state in which they reside, set out in Appendix E.

- 6.6.9 If a Committee Member is informed of a complaint or disclosure that may be reportable conduct under the applicable Reportable Conduct Scheme, they must inform the Management Committee (collectively except as in 6.6.6). The Management Committee must determine if the circumstances constitute a reasonable belief (see Appendix C) of child abuse and reportable conduct within the meaning of applicable legislation within the relevant state.

- (a) If the Management Committee 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 Management Committee 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 Management Committee not to report a complaint or disclosure to the appropriate authorities does not prevent any other person from reporting it to the appropriate authorities.

- 6.6.10 Where an investigation is required by law, the Management Committee should consider whether to engage an external investigator. To ensure the independence and integrity of an investigation, where possible and permitted, the Management Committee should engage an external investigator.

Note: *The appropriate authorities have professional personnel who are specialised in investigating child abuse and minimising the possible detrimental effect detailed questioning may have on alleged victims. For the same reason, qualified external investigators are recommended where internal investigations are required.*

- 6.6.11 The Management Committee must advise the Conference's insurer of any complaint or disclosure reported to the appropriate authorities.

- 6.6.12 A person who attends an activity of the Conference and who is the subject of a complaint, whether related to activities of the Conference or not, must:

- (a) Immediately inform the Management Committee;
- (b) Cooperate with the appropriate authorities in their investigation of the complaint;
- (c) Comply with the Management Committee directions regarding that person's participation in the Conference's activities and interactions with children; and
- (d) Keep the Management Committee informed of the status of the investigation into the complaint and its resolution.

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

- 6.7.1 The Management Committee must arrange for any person whose role or function may involve working with children (refer to Section 6.1.2) to be trained in this policy:

- (a) Upon appointment; and
- (b) At least annually thereafter during the period of their tenure.



- 6.7.2 Training required by Section 6.7.1 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 C);
 - (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.
- 6.7.3 The Management Committee must provide registered attendees involved in the care and supervision of children with appropriate opportunities to develop practical skills in protecting children and responding to disclosures.
- 6.8 NP 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur
- 6.8.1 Activity Coordinators must develop and implement activity guidelines for the Conference activity for which they are responsible, consistent with our overarching Risk Management Strategy.
- 6.8.2 The Management Committee must review and approve the activity guidelines before a Conference activity starts.
- 6.8.3 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.
- 6.8.4 Wherever possible, the following safeguards must be implemented to support child safety in connection with the Conference's activities:
- (a) Persons who work with children must comply with Section 6.5;
 - (b) Children must not have uncontrolled access to the online environment through a system provided by the Conference (as relevant to the activity or the circumstances surrounding the activity of the Conference);
 - (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 a pre-baptismal interview with a youth – must be conducted:
 - In the presence of at least two adult registered attendees at the Conference approved to work with children; and
 - Where the child is female, at least one of the adults must be an adult female registered attendee at the Conference approved to work with children.
- Note: *Where it is impractical to have at least two adults present in accordance with clause 5.8.4(c) the Conference 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 Conference 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 registered attendees at the Conference)*
- *The Conference to reach out to the child after the meeting or activity to check in with the child*
- *Individuals only meeting alone with the child if it is absolutely necessary to undertake the activity or interaction with the child.*

6.8.5 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.

6.8.6 A registered attendee at the Conference must inform the Management Committee if they become aware that a person attending an activity of the Conference is the subject of a complaint or has been convicted of sexual offending.

6.9 NP 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

6.9.1 This NPP does not apply to the Conference.

6.10 NP 10: Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe

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

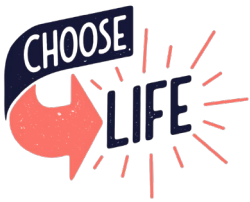
7. Breaches

7.1 Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to the registered attendee having their registration withdrawn from the Conference.

8. Related policies and procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related documents:

Privacy Policy



9. Document Change History

Table 1: Document Change History

Version	Change Details	Date of Issue
0.1	Initial draft for review by Main Committee	January 2021



1. Appendix A: Reference Bible Passages

- A.1. The following Bible teachings are the foundation of this policy.
- A.2. The Bible teaches that children are God's heritage. (Matthew 19:14; Psalm 127:3).
- A.3. The Bible teaches that we should "do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). This provides the over-arching principle and guide for planning, managing and deciding all matters within the Ecclesia.
- A.4. 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).
- A.5. 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).
- A.6. 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).
- A.7. 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).
- A.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. Appendix B: Definitions

- B.1. Terms used in the policy have the meaning given in Table 2.
- B.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.²
- B.3. Definitions which include '(Source: NSW DFCS)' are as given by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services³.
- B.4. Sources for other definitions are as given.

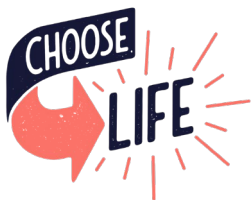
Table 2: Definitions

Term	Definition (Source)
Activity Coordinator	A person appointed by the Management Committee to coordinate an activity of the Ecclesia
activity of the Conference (Conference activity)	An event that is organised, sponsored and/or advertised by the Conference for its registered attendees. The event may not necessarily be at the Conference's usual place of meeting. An event organised by an registered attendee as a private function (such as a family gathering) is not an Conference 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 ⁴)
child abuse	Is emotional abuse, neglect, physical abuse and/or sexual abuse (all as defined).
complaint	Includes any allegation, suspicion, concern or report of a breach of this policy or the Ecclesia's code of conduct. It also includes disclosures made to the Ecclesia that may be about or relate to child sexual abuse in an Ecclesial context. The Ecclesia may receive a complaint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • directly or through a redress scheme • from anyone – a child, adult survivor, parent, trusted adult, independent support person, staff Member, volunteer or community Member

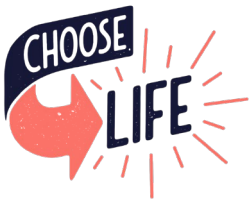
² McClellan, Hon. Justice P. et al (2017). Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: Final Report, Volume 1 – Our Inquiry. Canberra, ACT : Commonwealth of Australia, page 319ff.

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

⁴ 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>.



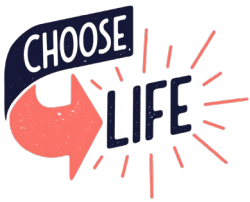
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> about an adult allegedly perpetrating child sexual abuse or about a child exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours in writing, verbally or as a result of other observations, including behavioural indicators. <p>A complaint may become a 'report' to an external authority or agency. (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 or aggression.</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 Conference or a 'report' when made to an external authority or agency. (Source: RCIRCSA, with 'institution' replaced by 'Conference')</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. (Source: NSW DFCS)</p>
employee (employed)	<p>A person appointed or contracted by the Conference to perform a function, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. They may or may not be a registered attendee of the Conference.</p>
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. (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)
Management Committee	A group of registered attendees at the Conference appointed by the Melbourne Christadelphian Ecclesias to oversee and manage the affairs of the Conference.
mandatory reporting	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 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). (Source: RCIRCSA)
Registered attendee	A person listed as an registered attendee on the Conference register of attendees.
neglect	Is when a parent or caregiver cannot regularly give a child the basic things needed for his or her growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, adequate supervision, and enough parenting and care. (Source: NSW DFCS)
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 C. 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 Conference – 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 'Conference')
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)
risk of harm	Circumstance where there is a likelihood of harm to a child.
secondary victim	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 whistleblowers and other people (including other children) within the institution where the abuse occurred. (Source: RCIRCSA)
Secretary	The Member of the Management Committee appointed to coordinate Conference administration.
sexual abuse	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. (Source: RCIRCSA)
sexual offending	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. (Source: RCIRCSA)
Sunday School superintendent	The Member of the Children's Activity Committee appointed to coordinate the Sunday School.



Sunday School teacher	A Youth Worker (as defined)
training	Provision for those engaged with children in activities organised or conducted under the auspices of the Ecclesia to understand their responsibilities under this policy
Unity Basis	<i>Unity in Australia: The Accepted Basis</i> ⁵ , the basis upon which Christadelphian ecclesias in the Central Fellowship in Australia agree to relate to each other and conduct some of their affairs.
Working with Children Check	Is a pre-employment screening program which ensures child-safe working environments in Australia. 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. (Source: National Crime Check ⁶)
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.

3. Appendix C: Recognising Child Abuse

C.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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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



- C.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.
- C.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.
- C.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.
- C.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.



4. Appendix D: Interview Guide

D.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 our Conference and understood your responsibilities?
- (i) Do you have any further questions regarding the child safety policy or the associated procedures of our Conference?



5. Appendix E: Child Safety Procedures

E.1. This appendix contains Child Safety Procedures for the state of Victoria. These Procedures may differ from those in other states of Australia. These procedures provide supporting information about:

- (a) Screening requirements for adults who will work with children;
- (b) Who is a child;
- (c) Who must report child abuse;
- (d) Who can report child abuse;
- (e) Child protection and related legislation;
- (f) Appropriate authorities; and

Note: *The Conference should liaise with relevant authorities in implementation of this policy.*

- (g) Where to access information and support services for children and their families⁷.

E.2. These Child Safety Procedures do not remove any obligations of the Conference to operate in accordance with its Child Safety Policy.

⁷ Information on resources is as published by the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Retrieved on 8 October from <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/practice-guides>.



6. Appendix F Child Safety Procedures – Victoria

1. Recruitment obligations

- 1.1 Victoria has a Working with Children Check (WWCC) system under the *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic).
- 1.2 The Conference is required to ensure that:
 - a) people in roles that have direct contact with children hold a WWCC or equivalent;
 - b) they assess the suitability of the volunteers / members; and
 - c) there are sound practices in place such as reference checks and monitoring expiring WWCCs.

This aligns with the Conference's Child Safety Policy which requires a register of the status of WWCCs or equivalent for registered attendees who will work with children at all activities associated with the Conference.

- 1.3 Amendments were made in 2017 following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Some key changes are:
 - a) Individuals who have oral, written or electronic communication with children must also have a valid WWCC.
 - b) Even if an individual only interacts with children under the supervision of others, they will require a WWCC.
 - c) The Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation can compel the production of information for compliance monitoring.

2. Mandatory reporting

- 2.1 Table 15 (next page) defines mandatory reporting requirements in Victoria.

3. Failure to report

- 3.1 Under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic), any person 18 years or older is required to make a report to the police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child by another person of or over the age of 18 years.

4. Voluntary reporting

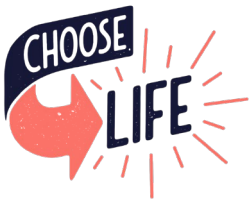
- 4.1 Under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic), any person may make a report to the police or DHHS if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.
- 4.2 A belief will be a belief on reasonable grounds if a reasonable person practising the profession or carrying out the duties of the office would have formed the belief on those grounds.
- 4.3 If a person is unsure whether they have reasonable grounds to make a report, they should speak to the Management Committee or the Conference's Representative for Child Safety.
- 4.4 In accordance with good practice, a person should also be encouraged to report outside of the Conference if they so wish. 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 or make the person subject to any liability in relation to the report.

Table 15: Mandatory Reporting Requirements in Victoria

Key legislation	<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i>
Who is a child?	A person under the age of 17 years old (or if there is a child protection order, a person who is under the age of 18 years)
Child Protection Authority and contact	Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) – refer to their website or call 13 12 78
Mandatory reporters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A registered medical practitioner; • A registered nurse; • A registered teacher; • The head teacher or principal; • A member of the police force; • The proprietor of, or a person with a post-secondary qualification in the care, education or minding of children who is employed by, a children's service to which the Children's Services Act 1996 applies; • A person with a post-secondary qualification in youth, social or welfare work who works in the health, education or community or welfare services field; • A person employed under Part 3 of the Public Administration Act 2004 to perform the duties of a youth and child welfare worker; • A registered psychologist; • A youth justice officer; and • A youth parole officer.
When reporting is required	<p>A mandatory reporter who, in the course of practising his or her profession or carrying out the duties of his or her office forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is <u>in need of protection</u> must report to the DHHS that belief and the reasonable grounds for it as soon as practicable—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> after forming the belief; and after each occasion on which he or she becomes aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.
When is a child in need of protection?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child has been abandoned and the parents or another suitable person cannot be found; • The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> physical injury; sexual abuse; or emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is, or is likely to be, significantly damaged <p>and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;</p> • The child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be, significantly harmed and the child's parents have not provided,



	arranged or allowed the provision of, or are unlikely to provide, arrange or allow the provision of, basic care or effective medical, surgical or other remedial care.
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5. Reportable Conduct

- 5.1 Victoria also has the Reportable Conduct Scheme (**the Scheme**), which requires heads of entities to make reports to the Commission for Children and Young People (**CCYP**) if they become aware of a reportable allegation.
- 5.2 A reportable allegation is defined as any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that an employee has committed:
- (a) reportable conduct; or
 - (b) misconduct that may involve reportable conduct

whether or not the conduct or misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person's employment (i.e. includes conduct before the person was an employee).

- 5.3 Reportable conduct includes:
- (a) a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not criminal proceedings in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded;
 - (b) sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child;
 - (c) physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child;
 - (d) any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or
 - (e) significant neglect of a child.
- 5.4 The Scheme also places obligations on the head of entities to undertake an investigation into the reportable conduct.



5.5 The timeframe for reporting to the CCYP is strict and is as follows:

Three business day notification	30 calendar day update	Advice on investigation	Outcomes of investigation	Additional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of the worker or volunteer • Date of birth • Police report • Organisation contact details • Head of organisation's name • Initial advice on the nature of the allegation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the allegation • Details of your response to the allegation • Details about any disciplinary or other action proposed • Any written response from the worker or volunteer about the allegation and the proposed disciplinary or other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of investigator • Contact details • As soon as practicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of findings and reasons for the findings • Details about any disciplinary or other action proposed • Reasons for taking or not taking action • As soon as practicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission may request further documents from the head of the organisation

5.6 The Conference should refer to the CCYP's [investigation guide](#) for more information about the investigation requirements under the Scheme.

6. Information and support services

6.1 Table 16 contains information on support services available to children and families in Victoria.

Table 16: Information and support services available in Victoria

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