



# KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

DIOCESE CHILD SAFETY  
FRAMEWORK

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne and Affiliated Regions recognizes and promotes the inherent dignity of children and young people. Therefore we strive to provide an environment where all children are safe from harm, nurtured, respected, cared for, and spiritually sustained. We commit to the safety and well being of the entire community and especially children and other vulnerable members of our community.

The Coptic Orthodox Church believes that we are all created in the image of God and that to live as a Christian we are commanded to love God and to love others. Jesus Christ has also extolled us to protect, listen to and learn from children. Therefore we have a particular obligation to ensure the safety of our children; keep them safe from harm, exploitation and abuse. This is also known as our 'duty of care.'

We also recognize that this is a collective responsibility. Protecting children is everyone's business and responsibility. Therefore, whenever the policy states 'we' it is referring to every entity and individual connected to the Church and all who engage in and with the Church community. Ensuring the safety and spiritual growth of our children and other vulnerable members of our congregation are the responsibility of every member of the Coptic Orthodox Church and the preeminent task of its leadership.

In addition to our religious conviction, values and obligation, the Coptic Orthodox Diocese is mandated by the Australian federal and state governments to enact a transparent and comprehensive child safety framework and ensure compliance with its measures as a faith community working with children. The child safety framework also outlines how the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne and affiliated regions will embed a culture of child safety and prioritize the safety and wellbeing of children.

Add vulnerable persons when also referring to child/children

## 2. COMMITMENT TO CHLD SAFETY

The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne and Affiliated Regions is committed to the safety and well being of children. We affirm the right of all children to feel and be safe from harm wherever they may be. Ensuring the safety and spiritual growth of our children and other vulnerable members of our congregation are the responsibility of every member, volunteer, servant and staff of the Coptic Orthodox Church and the preeminent task of its leadership.

The Coptic Orthodox Diocese has **zero tolerance** of harm or abuse against children and we will do all in our power to safeguard against abuse. No one is exempt due to perceived status or position. We commit to fully and fairly investigating any allegations of abuse, mistreatment and misconduct by clergy, volunteers, servants, board members and employees of the Diocese and reporting these instances to appropriate authorities and bodies when required.

The Church also affirms its commitment to uphold the law, which includes the requirement to report abuse to the appropriate authorities. This means that we commit to responding to disclosures of abuse or harm in a timely and compassionate manner. **DO WE PUT SOMETHING HERE ABOUT CONFESSIONAL.**

Our commitment is reflected in our articulation of child safety standards and protocols outlined in this document as well as our commitment to continually and actively implement these policies and standards.

We are also committed to communicating to children their rights to feel safe and that they will be supported and listened to when they do not feel safe or have experienced any incident or risk of harm or abuse. We will consider and listen to the voices of children to help us prevent harm and abuse. We also will support children in the difficult times when they need to talk about or disclose harm or abuse.

We also strive to empower children and make them aware of their responsibilities to themselves and to others and to teach them to take Christ's teachings to heart.

We particularly acknowledge the needs of the potentially most vulnerable children of indigenous, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, refugees and those with disability

We affirm the right of all children to feel and be safe from harm wherever they may be, but especially when they are within any of the Church's physical premises and when attending any of the Church's services, events, trips, excursions, camps, programs or are with any other related entities or activities of the Church. In addition to physical spaces, this child safety policy also applies to the activities, relationships and communications online and electronically.

We also commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children. We will cooperatively engage with and listening to the views of parents and carers about their children and our child-safety practices, policies and

procedures. We will commit to listening to all concerns voiced members of the Diocese. We commit to providing pastoral care to anyone who has suffered abuse or mistreatment as well as pastoral accountability and support to anyone in our community who has been alleged or known to have committed abuse or harm to children.

Likewise we will support church staff, volunteers, board members, servants and clergy to enable them to fulfil their roles and obligations to ensuring child safety. We will clarify and confirm our child safety policies and procedures and support them when they report concerns or when they questions.

This framework is an acknowledgement of our religious calling and our responsibility to safeguard children and young people and promote their welfare and wellbeing. Our Child Safety Framework reflects our statutory responsibilities, government guidance and reflects best practices.

### **3. PRINCIPLES**

Our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children is drawn from the teachings of Jesus Christ and inherent to the Gospel teachings of love, justice, and the dignity of all. We are commanded and called by God to love, protect and guide the innocent and the vulnerable. Jesus Christ himself extolled us to protect, listen to and learn from children.

During his time on earth, Jesus found joy in his time with children. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14) He also instructed us to be more like children. "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:13)

Our Christian religion and Jesus' teaching reveal to us that children have inherent rights and children should be valued. This also means that adults and leaders have responsibility in our community to the safety and wellbeing of our children.

While few people set out to intentionally harm children or other vulnerable people; lack of information, carelessness or other interests can unintentionally compromise their safety and wellbeing. Christ himself has instructed us to always be mindful that our other interests do not get in the way of our obligations to our children. Jesus said, "If anyone causes one of these little ones--those who believe in me--to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matthew 18:6) revealing that harming children is one of the gravest sins.

Adults working with children within our community should be guided by Christ's example – they should be patient, loving, and respectful towards them and ever vigilant that harm should not come to them. As Jesus teaches, we must put ourselves in the position of a child, see things from their point of view, and be as innocent, open and loving.

The damage to children from abuse or harm can have lifelong adverse consequences, therefore we have a strategy and attitude of prevention, knowing that **prevention** is the best child protection strategy. Our aim is always to be preventative rather than reactive.

We also are guided by '**best interest principles**' which means that we will strive to act on the best interests of the child. This means – reporting instances of abuse or risk of abuse to Child Protection, making the child's ongoing safety and wellbeing the primary focus of decision-making, protecting and promoting the cultural and spiritual identity of a child, and assisting a child and the child's family to access appropriate services in order to reduce the long-term effects of abuse or neglect.

The Coptic Orthodox community is a minority community and CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) within the Australian context. We acknowledge that there are cultural differences in child-rearing practices but those differences should not compromise a child's safety and wellbeing.

We also acknowledge that there are a number of children and families with refugee background in our community as well as children with disabilities which require sensitive consideration.

Because children and families with refugee backgrounds have experienced trauma, dislocation, loss and major life changes with their settlement, this can significantly affect their wellbeing and parenting capacity. These families and children require particular support and our community is committed to assisting them and helping ensure that a child's safety and wellbeing is not compromised as a result.

We recognise that families are primarily responsible for the upbringing of their children and for making the decisions affecting their children. We will do all we can to support families to bring up their children according to Christ's teachings.

We also want to empower and enable our children to participate in decisions that affect them and teach them how to safeguard their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. We commit to respecting and believing children who raise concerns about their safety or wellbeing.

The Diocese also operates on the principal of transparency and accountability. This means that we will communicate openly and honestly with children and families and to involve and inform them of our child safety policies and approach.

We also commit to support and educate our staff, clergy and servants on matters of child safety and child abuse. We encourage them to come forward with concerns and questions.

## 4. DUTY OF CARE

The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne has a duty of care to all of our children and vulnerable people. All those working with children in our Diocese have a duty to support and protect children and young people whenever they are in our care.

Adults leaders – including volunteers, servants, staff, board members and clergy who work with children – have power (due to their age, maturity and life experience) over children and other vulnerable members of our community. This authority must be harnessed positively. Abuse is power misused.

A vulnerable person is defined as a 1. Child or 2. An individual who is 18 years and over who is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability or any other reason (such as health status, age, previous experience of abuse, social isolation or other temporary or permanent hardship.)

The duty of care is breached if

- A person does something that a reasonable person in the same position would not do in a similar situation
- Fails to do something that a reasonable person would do in the similar circumstance
- Acts or fails to act in a way that causes harm to a child or young person to whom they have a duty of care

The Diocese leadership – currently the Diocese Management Committee - has the ultimate responsibility when it comes to implementing child safety policies. Therefore our leaders commit to modelling our child safety practices and commit to their implementation.

We also have an ethical and legal duty to report instances of harm or abuse or the risk of harm or abuse to the appropriate authorities in order to protect the safety and well being of children and young people.

The Diocese leadership, board members, clergy, staff, volunteers and servants have both individual and shared responsibility for child safety. This means that we will all strive to fulfil our responsibilities when it comes to the safety and protection of children and young people and work to raise awareness of child safety issues in our community.

## 5. POLICY PURPOSE & APPLICATION

The purpose of this policy is the following:

- To facilitate the prevention of child abuse or harm to children occurring within the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne & Affiliated Regions
- To create an organisational culture of child safety

- To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for preventing abuse or detecting and reporting abuse
- To provide guidance to staff, volunteers, servants, clergy, board members, contractors and leaders as to what actions they should take when they suspect abuse or harm
- To provide a clear statement of zero tolerance of abuse
- Assure that all cases of suspected abuse will be fairly and thoroughly investigated and reported according to regulatory frameworks.

The Diocese Child Safety Policy Framework is principally a tool for the leadership of the Diocese, parish clergy, parish boards and other executive management to manage and monitor its approach to child safety.

The Diocese leadership is responsible for the prevention of child abuse and ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place. Individual parish leadership, the head clergy member and parish board, are also responsible.

The Bishop and Diocese leadership is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all clergy, board members, staff, volunteers, servants and contractors are aware of relevant laws, Diocese policies and procedures and the Diocese's Code of Conduct.
- Conducting investigations into reports of child abuse and reporting according to regulatory frameworks
- Ensuring all relevant adults within the Diocese community are aware of their obligation to report suspected abuse of child in accordance with these policies and procedures
- Educate clergy, board members, staff, volunteers and servants about the prevention and detection of child abuse
- Providing support for clergy, staff, volunteers, servants and contractors in undertaking their child protection responsibilities

The child safety policy applies to all those who work or volunteer or operate on behalf of the Diocese. Further, the entire Coptic Orthodox Diocese community is responsible for upholding the commitments and principles outlined in this child safety policy. We recognise that the creating a child safe environment is a collective responsibility of the entire community and that requires collaboration and proactive approaches to child safety and wellbeing. Our child safety policies and commitments apply to *all* members of our community as it relates to activities of the Diocese.

That means that all clergy, board members, staff, volunteers or servants of the Diocese must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times and familiarise themselves and adhere to the Diocese's policy and procedures, relevant laws, the Code of Conduct in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;

- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children’s emotional and physical safety.
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.
- Report any reasonable belief that a child’s safety is at risk to the Diocese Child Safety Committee, relevant authorities when required and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters, if they are one;
- Report any suspicion that a child’s safety may be at risk to the senior parish priest, parish appointed child safety officer and/or the Diocese Child Safety Committee

## **6. DIOCESE CHILD SAFETY MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION CHART**

### **7. CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Diocese’s Code of Conduct is intended to promote the safety and well-being of children within our community by providing clear guidelines for adults working with or around children. It outlines the standards by which anyone within the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne and Affiliated Regions should relate, interact and behave with children.

While few people set out to intentionally harm children; lack of information, carelessness or other interests can unintentionally compromise our children’s safety and wellbeing. Therefore, prevention is the best strategy for child protection. By defining what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of adults working with children, the Code of Conduct serves to protect children and young people, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and signals that child safety is a priority within our community. The Code of Conduct is a key part of our Child Safety Framework. Anyone working with or around children on a regular basis within the Diocese is required to read, understand and sign that they will adhere to these standards.

The Code of Conduct also provides a reference point for discussion when there may be confusion, uncertainty or grey areas concerning appropriate behaviour with children. An allegation regarding a breach of the Code of Conduct should be reported to the Diocese Child Safety Investigations Team and/or the Parish Child Safety Officer/Committee which will then refer founded allegations to the Diocese Child Safety Investigations Team to investigate. Any allegation that falls within a Reportable Conduct Scheme within any of the jurisdictions under the Diocese will also be reported to the relevant scheme. Any allegation that is criminal in nature will be reported to the police. The subject of an investigation will be suspended from their paid or volunteer position until the matter is fully investigated. Anyone found to be in violation of the Code of Conduct will be reviewed and potentially removed from their paid or volunteer position within the Church.

This code of conduct applies to all adult members of and visitors to the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne. Those who must read, agree and sign the code of conduct are:

- Priests and other members of the clergy
- Deacons in all their ranks

- Church Board members and others in various lay leadership positions within the Diocese
- Sunday school teachers and drivers
- Regular church servants and volunteers
- Scout, choir, sporting and activity leaders
- Paid employees, contractors and anyone working on behalf of the Diocese

The Diocese Management Committee is responsible for endorsing the Code of Conduct and for ensuring all relevant individuals to which the Code of Conduct applies are aware of the Codes of Conduct and for implementing the standards of conduct as set out within these codes. The senior priest of each parish is responsible for ensuring that all employees have signed the Code of Conduct and for appointing a Child Safety Officer/Team in their parish. **Clarify whether the DMC is going to be ultimately responsible or some other individual or group.**

The Diocese Code of Conduct is attached as an appendix document to the Child Safety Framework.

## 8. GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

In addition to the principles and guidelines outlined in the Diocese Code of Conduct, there is additional advice regarding acceptable behaviour around child and additional guidelines for working with children and principles for how we view children and their rights and agency.

We acknowledge that adults working with children have power and that abuse is power misused. Adult members of our Diocese have authority over children because of their position, greater age, maturity, physical size and life experience.

We must remain alert to 'grooming' which refers to actions deliberately child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child and often involves secrecy. We must remain aware that those seeking to harm children may use group-based activities in order to gain the trust of a child. Having gained that trust, they may then engage in one-to-one activities that offer an opportunity for abuse to occur, including sexual abuse. Abuse of a child often starts with something relatively minor, but can then gradually build up to more involved behaviours through a process of grooming.

We must also strive to empower and teach our children to love and care for themselves and others, as well as create appropriate boundaries in our interactions.

We are guided by the principles that:

- Children and young people have rights
- Children and young people have the right to be safe and looked after when they are in our care.
- Children have the right to be protected, listened to and their needs addressed in all church activities that they are part of

Adults must always be vigilant in their actions and conduct themselves in a manner that is above reproach when working with children. Adults also need to ensure to the best of their abilities that their words and actions cannot be misconstrued or misinterpreted.

Guidelines regarding what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable is outlined in our Code of Conduct which is included as an addendum to this policy.

Everyone working with children must read and sign the Code of Conduct but the standards and specifics of behaviour outlined in the Code of Conduct applies to every member of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese, visitors, contractors, volunteers, etc. etc.

As a general principle, adults working with children should endeavour not to be alone with children (unless the circumstance requires it) and that working in pairs is the best policy.

Persons unknown to the leaders or not part of the children's and youth ministry should not be allowed access to children and youth. [Add additional details on guidance?](#)

## **9. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING & RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE & CHILD SAFETY CONCERNS**

The Diocese has outlined policies and procedures for reporting and investigating allegations and instances of abuse and child safety concerns. They are outlined in an addendum to this document: Policies and Procedures for Reporting Abuse & Child Safety Concerns

This document

- Outline process for how to handle allegation or observed reported instances of harm
- Contact person to report inappropriate behaviour
- Details about how to raise and report concerns about child safety
- Information about the Diocese's responsibility to report child abuse and the associated reporting procedures
- Outlines indicators of abuse

The reporting guidelines are broadly outlined as follows:

#### Who Reports?

- Anyone can and should report an allegation of abuse, harm or misconduct towards children by an employee, clergy or volunteer of the Diocese. Parents, other adults, children, clergy, employees and volunteers of the church, ANYONE.

#### What Can be reported?

- Disclosures of abuse by a child, allegations of abuse or misconduct, reportable conduct and/ or violations of the code of conduct

#### Who to Inform?

- Concerns/ Allegation - Diocese Child Safety Committee, Parish Child Safety Officer, and/or Senior Priest
- Immediate risk of harm/ criminal conduct - Police, Child protection authorities, and Diocese Child Safety Committee

#### What else do I need to do?

- Complete incident report
- Seek support/debrief
- Follow up on any action items
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality

#### Special Information

- If the incident/ allegation involves a clergy member or senior lay person the Diocese must be informed immediately

#### In the case of an emergency

- CONTACT 000 if a child is in immediate danger

## 10. RISK MANAGEMENT OF CHILD SAFETY

## 11. CLERGY, STAFF, & VOLUNTEER INTAKE & SCREENING

As a Diocese we are also committed to the ongoing training, supervision and support of our staff, clergy, volunteers, servants and members. **Add additional details of how we will do this**

## 12. COMMUNICATING THE POLICY/ COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Communicating our commitment to child safety and the child safety framework and policies enacted by the Diocese is a joint responsibility of the:

1. Diocese Management Committee,
2. Diocese Child Safety Committee, and the

3. Senior priest/ child safety officer/ team of each parish.

In each parish and affiliated Diocese organisation, we will strive to ensure that

- Parents and guardians know about and understand our Child Safety Framework and related policies and procedures.
- Children know about their rights and understand our commitment to their safety and our commitment to take their views and concerns when it comes to matters of their own safety and agency.
- Staff, clergy, volunteers, servants, board members and contractors know about and understand our Child Safety Framework and related policies and procedures.

We will communicate our commitment to child safety and the policies and procedures contained in the Child Safety Framework via:

- Diocese and parish websites
- Newsletters, bulletins and announcement
- Commitments by parish boards
- Information and briefings sessions

Communicating our commitment to child safety, as well as awareness of the Child Safety Framework and related policies and procedures make up a key part of our Child Safety Action Plan.

### **13.PARENTAL CONSENT & PERMISSION FORMS**

The consent and knowledge of parents and guardians of the children participating in Diocese and parish sponsored activities is required. Parents and guardians also need to be informed of any incidents relating to child safety as concerns their child. The Diocese's parental consent guidelines, incident reports and template permissions forms are attached as an addendum to this Child Safety Framework.

### **14. SOCIAL MEDIA, PHOTO/VIDEO & COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **15. REVIEW**

This is a living document and will be reviewed at least annually. This child safety framework may also be reviewed and revised in instances where there is a change of legislation, government or legal guidance, and changes in government policy or procedures. It will also be reviewed in light of any allegations or instances of harm to children or as a result of any other significant change or event.

#### **16. LEGAL FRAMEWORK & DEFINITIONS need to add to definitions**

The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne and Affiliated Regions encompasses parishes and affiliated organisations in the following Australian states – Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia and the following countries – New Zealand and Fiji. This policy reflects the following legislations that seeks to protect children, namely:

## **National Framework**

*National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children "Protecting Children is Everyone's Business" 2009 – 2020 (Commonwealth of Australia)*  
*Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*

## **State Legislation**

(VICTORIA)

*Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*  
*Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Vic.)*  
*Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*  
*Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)*  
*Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic.)*  
*Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (the Charter Act)*  
*Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic.)*  
*Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Vic.)*  
*Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017 (Vic.)*

(AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY)

*Ombudsman Act 1989 (ACT)*  
*Crimes Act 1990 (ACT)*  
*Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT)*  
*Crimes (Child Sex Offenders) Act 2005 (ACT)*  
*Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)*  
*Children and Young People Act (ACT Childcare Services) Standards 2009 (No. 1)*  
*Children and Young People (Employment) Standards 2011 (No. 1)*  
*Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (ACT)*  
*Family Violence Act 2016 (ACT)*

(SOUTH AUSTRALIA)

*Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA)*  
*Family and Community Services Act 1972 (SA)*  
*Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)*  
*Domestic Violence Act 1994 (SA)*  
*Child Protection Review (Powers and Immunities) Act 2002 (SA)*  
*Children's Protection (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2005 (SA)*  
*Child Sex Offenders Registration Act 2006 (SA)*  
*Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)*  
*Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016 (SA)*  
*Children and Young People (Safety) Bill 2017 (SA)*

(TASMANIA)

*Criminal Code Act 1924 (Tas.)*  
*The Police Offences Act 1935 (Tas.)*  
*Youth Justice Act 1997 (Tas.)*  
*Education Act 1994 (Tas.)*  
*Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 (Tas.)*  
*Child Care Act 2001 (Tas.)*  
*Child Protection (International Measures) Act 2003 (Tas.)*  
*Family Violence Act 2004 (Tas.)*

*Children, Young Persons and their Families Amendment Act 2009 (Tas.)*  
*Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013(Tas.)*  
*Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016 (Tas.)*  
*Community Protection (Offender Reporting) Bill 2016 (Tas.)*

(WESTERN AUSTRALIA)

*Criminal Code Compilation Act 1913 (WA)*  
*Family Court Act 1997 (WA)*  
*Restraining Orders Act 1997 (WA)*  
*Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)*  
*Community Protection (Offender Reporting and Registration) Act 2004 (WA)*  
*Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)*  
*Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006 (WA)*  
*Child Care Services Act 2007 (WA)*

(NEW ZEALAND)

*Crimes Act 1961*  
*Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989*  
*New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990*  
*Human Rights Act 1993*  
*Children's Commissioner Act 2003*  
*Care of Children Act 2004*  
*Children's Act 2014*

(FIJI)

*Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) ratified 1993*  
*Family Law Act 2003*  
*Child Protection Baseline Report. 2008*  
*National Coordination Committee on Children 2008*  
*Marriage Act (Amendment) Decree 2009Crimes Decree 2009*  
*Human Rights Commission Decree No. 11 of 2009*  
*Domestic Violence Decree 2009,*  
*Child Welfare Decree 2010*

## **DEFINITIONS** add

**Child** means a person below the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.

**Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

**Child safety** encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

**Child abuse** means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment. Child abuse includes a) any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or grooming- which refers to actions deliberately child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.) b)infliction on a child of: physical violence c) serious emotional or psychological harm d) serious neglect of a child

**Child sexual abuse:** Any sexual activity between a child under the age of consent and an adult or older person. Child sexual abuse can also be any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult in a position of power or authority over them; the age of consent laws do not apply in such instances; any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult family member, regardless of issues of consent, equality or coercion; sexual activity between peers that is non-consensual or involves the use of power or coercion; non-consensual activity between minors (e.g. a 14 year old and an 11 year old), or any sexual behaviour between a child and another child or adolescent who, due to their age or stage of development, is in a position of power, trust or responsibility over the victim.

**Child physical abuse:** Generally, child physical abuse refers to the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child.

**Child Sexual abuse:** when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It does not always involve physical contact or force.

**Grooming:** when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating, including online, and/or attempting to establish a relationship or other connection with the child or their parent/guardian.

**Neglect:** Serious neglect significantly impairs the health or physical development of the child, or places this development at serious risk.

**Emotional Abuse:** Emotional child abuse is when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or by witnessing family violence.

**Child protection:** Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm.

**Mandatory Reporting:** The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. Mandated persons include teachers, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical practitioners.

**Reasonable grounds for belief** is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. A reasonable belief is formed if

a reasonable person believes that - a) the child is in need of protection, b) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury," or c) the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

**Working with Children:** Working in a position that involves regular contact with children, either as part of the person's position description or due to the context of the work that brings the person into regular contact with children.

**Screening:** This term includes criminal record checks (often called "police checks" or "Police Clearance Reports") which are conducted to determine if a person has any known criminal history. Additional screening measures may include: "working with children" checks, identity checks, verbal referee checks and targeted, behavioural-based interview questions.

## 17. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SOURCE MATERIAL

CCYP Website and documents

Uniting Church documents

Baptist Church documents

Safe Church Awareness Workbook and other National Council of Churches in

Australia Sage Church Program

Save the Children Child Protection Policy

Child Abuse Royal Commission

Victorian Safe Schools

Look up reference material and add