



Keeping Them Safe

A policy for the protection of children and young people and those with responsibility for them

NB: this document is a Policy only document—copied from the full **Keeping Them Safe** (2019) publication, but only contains Policy. The full document that contains the Policy, PLUS forms and additional material can be found [here](#).

*Anglican Diocese of Christchurch
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FOREWORD

By Bishop Peter

The Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is a place of healing and wholeness. For many it is a place where they experience the unconditional love of God for the very first time. Unfortunately the Church can also be a magnet for people who wish to bring harm to others and who can be quite threatening. It is our responsibility as a Diocese to welcome all people in the name of Christ while also keeping safe the vulnerable, the lost and the lonely. To do this we have a number of systems and trainings in the Diocese of Christchurch to help parishes and ministry units provide safe and secure environments in which God and human community can be encountered and enjoyed. Thank you for taking seriously the responsibility of being both a disciple of Christ and one who helps others in their Christian walk.

In Christ's love,

+ Peter



Introduction

The Anglican Diocese of Christchurch is committed to the safety of all people within the church.

Christ valued children and urged his followers to do the same.

“If anyone should cause one of these little ones to lose their faith in me, it would be better for that person to have a large millstone tied around their neck and be drowned in the deep sea.” Matthew 18:6

“See that you don’t despise any of these little ones. Their angels in heaven, I tell you, are always in the presence of my Father in heaven.” Matthew 18:10

This resource specifically addresses the safety of children and young people and those who work with them.

It is of paramount importance that our ministry to children and young people does not compromise their safety in any way.

It is also essential that workers, whether paid or unpaid, are not put at risk through unsafe practices.

Hence the following protocols, resources, forms and templates have been developed.²

Rationale

The Anglican Diocese of Christchurch requires that:

1. a safe environment is provided for the spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional well-being of children and young people and that they are treated with dignity and respect,
2. those with responsibility for children and young people provide their service with integrity in a safe and professional manner,
3. those with responsibility for children and young people are provided with appropriate conditions, guidance, instruction, training and supervision to ensure best practice standards so that the service provided is above reproach.

² The full document that contains the forms and additional material can be found [here](#).

Purpose

The purpose of this resource is to:

1. promote the safety of children and young people and also the safety of people with responsibility for children and young people
2. provide safety guidelines, procedures and a resource base for ministry units engaged in children's/young people's ministries
3. define the roles and responsibility of the Vestry and Health and Safety Champion in each parish/ministry unit, including the Children and Young People's Safety Officer (CYP SO) in each parish/ministry unit and the assistance that may be offered to them by various local resource people and/or Diocesan staff.

Our Beliefs

The Diocese of Christchurch believes that when this policy is implemented:

1. The safety of children and young people will be more assured
2. Workers can be confident their practice is consistent with best practice standards
3. The community can have confidence that the church is taking its responsibilities seriously.

Definitions:

For the purpose of this document the following definitions shall apply, unless stated otherwise:

Classification of Persons:

Child	Any person under the age of 14 years
Young person	Any person aged 14 to 18 years
People with responsibility for children and young people	Any person who has designated responsibility over children and/or young people in a parish/ministry unit in the Diocese. It may refer to clergy, paid employees, or unpaid volunteers, including but not limited to leaders, teachers and assistants.
Caregiver	Means the parent, guardian or caregiver who has the day to day responsibility for a child or young person.

Classifications of Responsibility:

Leader	Involves oversight for an area of ministry, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sunday school/children's church• Crèche• Youth group• Camp• Holiday Programme NB: If employed in either a full-time or half-time capacity, the Diocese requires such people to hold a Bishop's license.
Assistants	Teachers and other rostered helpers for any children's or youth activity or programme.
Special events workers	Those invited to present a specific programme, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visiting speakers• Performers• Instructors
Helpers	People from the parish/ministry unit or elsewhere who may be called upon from time to time to assist for a special purpose (e.g. driver) or to cover for a regular worker who is absent.

Important Notes:

1. The term "worker" is used to cover all persons with designated responsibility for children or young people, whether that person is a leader, an assistant, a special events worker or a helper
2. These workers may be paid or volunteers
3. Note that the CYP SO cannot be a Leader or an Assistant, however they could fill in as a Helper from time to time.

Children and Young Persons Safety in the Parish:

The Vestry of each parish/ministry unit is responsible for the safety of any children and young people they work with. It is vital that these parish leaders, as well as the Vestry's Health and Safety Champion, regard themselves as responsible, along with any appointed Children and Young People's Safety Officer (CYP SO).

Joint responsibility, along with clearly designated lines of reporting and accountability, ensure that a CYP SO does not work in isolation, and encourages a shared, positive attitude towards safety in the parish/ministry unit. They should report directly to the Health and Safety Champion on the Vestry.

Vestries are strongly advised to initiate a regular time slot at their meeting for Children and Young People's safety matters, managed by their Health and Safety Champion. This encourages all members of Vestry and parish leaders to regard these matters as important so that they become a normal part of discussions, and parish/ministry unit functioning. This does not mean the CYP SO has to attend all Vestry meetings or create monthly reports unless necessary or requested for a particular reason. A twice-yearly report to the Vestry is expected.

Policy for Addressing Suspected or Alleged Child Abuse

The provisions of the Children Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 are acknowledged.

Definition

Child abuse means the harming, (whether physically, emotionally or sexually) ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.

(Child: under 14 years. Young Person 14-17 years)

Section 2, Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989.

Rationale

The Anglican Diocese of Christchurch requires that a safe environment be provided for the spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual wellbeing of children and young people that ensures they are treated with dignity and respect.

Purpose

1. To ensure the safety of children and young people is paramount.
Paramountcy Principle, Section 6, CYP&F Act 1989 – see Section 8
Additional useful information
2. To provide procedures for address all cases of suspected or alleged abuse and/or neglect.

Guidelines

Seeking advice and reporting:

- Where a worker or other person suspect's child abuse or has child abuse disclosed to them they shall follow the procedures outlined below.
- The same procedures should be followed where a worker or any person has abuse reported to them relating to a child or young person who is not a participant in the group programme.

Additional Notes:

1. Reporting suspected child abuse is voluntary under New Zealand law. However the Anglican Diocese of Christchurch and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) requires that all necessary steps should be taken to keep children and young people safe from abuse.
2. Under section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act people may report directly to a Social Worker or the Police.
3. Section 16 of the Act provides protection from prosecution for people making a report in good faith.

Managing reporting:

- It will be the responsibility of the parish/ministry unit's Children and Young People's Safety Officer(CYPSO) to manage the process in consultation with another person for example, the Vicar, Vicar's Warden, the children/young people's worker or their supervisor (as appropriate, excluding the alleged offender). It is important these decisions are not made in isolation.
- Where the CYPSO is implicated the Vicar shall have the management responsibility in consultation with another person as above.

Ensuring the safety of the child:

- The first consideration will be to ensure the immediate safety of the child.

Informing parents:

- Decisions to inform parents (If the parents are implicated) about suspected or alleged abuse will be made only after consultation between the parish/ministry unit and the statutory agency involved: Oranga Tamariki or Police.

Confronting the suspected or alleged offender:

- No person shall confront any person identified as allegedly responsible for abuse. This is the role of the statutory agency involved.

Ensuring confidentiality/privacy:

- To protect the victim(s), the alleged offender and the integrity of the investigation, it is important to ensure that issues are kept as confidential as possible.
- Where there is a serious or imminent threat to personal or public safety, workers are entitled to disclose confidential information. In such cases workers will inform the child/young person of any information divulged to a third party in a way that is appropriate for the child/young person's age and maturity.
- Personal details will be disclosed only to those who need to know, usually Oranga Tamariki, Police, people with responsibility for children and young people and/or a supervisor.
- Storage of information: Information should be stored securely for at least the duration of any investigation and legal proceedings. Advice should be sought from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner (0800 803 909).

Supporting those involved:

- The parish/ministry unit shall ensure, support is provided to all parties involved in the reporting process and to any others, e.g. workers, as needed.
- The parish/ministry unit shall seek advice relating to support from Oranga Tamariki, the Police, and ACC Counselling.
- It is advisable for the parish/ministry unit to contact the Diocesan Monitor to discuss appropriate management of the process. This is compulsory where the alleged offender is an ordained person or holds a Bishop's Licence.

Withdrawing workers:

- When any lay person with responsibility for children and young people is suspected of or alleged to have abused a child or young person that person will be suspended from their position of responsibility for the duration of the investigation. Their further involvement would need to be decided upon by the vestry in consultation with the Diocesan Monitoring Committee. Such a decision is to be made after the completion of any investigation. Care must be taken to ensure that the legal process is not hindered in any way.
- When an ordained person is suspected of or alleged to have abused a child or young person the Diocesan Monitor shall be informed as soon as practicable. The Monitor will invoke the Diocesan statute entitled *The Ethical Conduct and Complaints Procedures of the Diocese of Christchurch Statute* contained in the Diocesan Regulations Blue Book.

Training:

- The parish/ministry unit shall ensure workers are trained to implement this policy.
- The Diocese shall ensure appropriate training is provided at least annually to equip workers to implement this policy.

Procedures

1. Respond appropriately:

A.	Listen:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not put words into a child's mouth• Allow them to tell only as much as they want• Ensure the child's immediate safety• Write down exactly what the child/young person has told you.
B.	Let them know:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...you're glad they told you• ...you're sorry it happened• ...it's not their fault• ...you'll help.
C.	Do not:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ... over-react/panic or ask leading questions• ... promise a child you will not tell anybody.

Note: *It is most important to reassure the child, thank them for telling you, and let them know you will get help.*

2. Document:

- Record the dates, details and anything said by yourself and the child, using as far as is possible the exact words of the child and yourself.
- Complete the notification form on pages 80-81, entitled **Care & Protection Documentation (Disclosure) Form³**.
- This can be scanned/faxed to Oranga Tamariki or the police and then stored securely for the duration of the investigation.

3. Inform:

- Inform the Children and Young People's Safety Officer or the Vicar (excluding the alleged offender) who will manage the steps outlined in 3,4,5,6,and 7.

³ The full document that contains the forms and additional material can be found [here](#).

- This person shall consult with another person for example, the Health and Safety Champion, the Vicar, Vicar's Warden, the children/young people's worker or their supervisor, as appropriate, excluding the alleged offender.
- If unavailable, seek advice directly from Oranga Tamariki or the Police.

4. Seek Advice:

- Seek advice from Oranga Tamariki or the Police to determine the appropriate course of action regarding the child's safety.
- Phone 0508 Family (0508 326 459) this number can be called for any kind of advice regarding the situation.

5. Take further action based on the Agency's advice:

- Report the alleged abuse to the appropriate agency based on advice given by Oranga Tamariki or the police.
- Once an agency is involved the agency will investigate and parish/ministry unit will act on the advice from the agency.

6. Support:

- Seek support for the child or young person and the person who took the disclosure from the agency involved.
- A safety plan for a worker who takes the disclosure from a child may need to be devised. (See sample Documents)

7. Inform Diocesan Monitor:

- Inform the Diocesan Monitor of the allegation against any ordained person or any person who holds a Bishop's Licence who is suspected of or alleged to have abused a child or young person, as soon as is practicable (by the next working day).

The below information has been copied from the Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children website www.orangatamariki.govt.nz

Reporting child abuse:

It is very important to take immediate action if abuse is suspected. When you report this it may:

- Ensure that the abuse stops
- Protect children from further harm, ensure children receive professional help as soon as possible.
- SAVE A CHILD'S LIFE.

It is the responsibility of the authorities to investigate the situation and determine the child's condition.

You should report any suspicions that a child has been or is being abused, you do not need proof.

Your suspicions may include:

- What you saw
- What you heard
- What the child told you
- What someone else told you (Be careful with this one)

When to report:

It is best to report your suspicions immediately. The child may need immediate protection or medical attention. As well there may be certain physical signs of abuse such as bruising or scars, which could be used as evidence.

Keep a written copy of all the telephone calls, letters and notes, including dates, times and observations and exactly what was said.

It is essential the when reporting what a child said that you report exactly what they say, do not assume anything.

Who to report to:

Police, duty social worker at your nearest Oranga Tamariki office, call 0508326459 all these services have 24hr help lines.

Even if your report proves false as long as it was given in good faith it is better to report than not to and a child is harmed further. Children have a right to be protected.

What happens after a report?

The appropriate authorities will take action, you should be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

What is physical abuse?

Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm.

Physical abuse indicators:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions in unusual locations e.g.. Face, lips, gums, mouth, eyes, torso, back, buttocks, back of legs, external genitalia.
- Shape of injury e.g. specific marks of belt.
- Unexplained burns – small circular burns on palms, soles of feet. Immersion burns, specific shape e.g. element, rope burns on neck, torso etc.
- Unexplained fractures:
- Skull, facial bones, spinal – bruising associated with these different colours indicating different stages of healing.
- Multiple fractures
- Fractures in very young children
- Bald patches on scalp.

Children's behaviour that could indicate physical abuse:

- Cannot recall how the injuries occurred, or offers inconsistent explanations.
- Is wary of adults.
- May cringe or flinch if touched unexpectedly
- May display a vacant stare or frozen watchfulness
- May be extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn
- Displays extremely indiscriminate affection-seeking behaviour. For example, goes readily to strangers for nurturing.
- May be extremely compliant or eager to please
- Tries to take care of or protect the parents or caregiver
- When at play, imitates negative behaviour or language e.g. spanks or yells at a doll
- Is dressed inappropriately to hide bruises or other injuries
- Runs away from home or is afraid to go home
- Describes abusive situations
- May regress
- May indicate a general sadness. May show this in drawing and play
- Could have a vision or hearing delay
- Is violent to animals or other children

Adult behaviour

- Maybe vague about details of cause of injury
- May appear unconcerned about child
- May blame the accident on other people or child
- Explanation provided not believable given the age of the child
- Disagreement between adults about how the injury occurred
- May have unrealistic expectations of the child
- Little or no knowledge of child development
- Delay in seeking medical attention
- Shakes the infant
- Threatens or attempts to injure child
- Is aggressive or violent towards other family members
- Is aggressive towards the child in front of others

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse can occur within or outside the family and can be homosexual or heterosexual in nature. Most sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows and trusts.

Early warning signs

- Children can be alerted to possible sexual abuse grooming, they should be encouraged to tell an adult if someone.....
- Asks them to do things in private that involves physical contact – back rubs, massages.
- Looks at or touches their body saying it is to see how they are developing.
- “Accidentally” touches or brushes up against their body.
- Comes into their bedroom or bathroom when they are undressed.
- Says sexual things about their body or how they dress, either directly or by phone or internet.
- Comes into their bedroom at night.
- Asks them to keep this a secret.

(Remember indicators do not necessarily prove that a child has been abused. They are clues that alert us that abuse may have occurred and that a child may require help or protection.)

Neglect

Is the failure to provide for the Child's basic needs, such as housing, nutrition, adequate supervision, medical and psychological care, and education.

Neglect is a pattern of behaviour which occurs over a period of time, and results in impaired physical functioning or development of the child.

Neglect causes both physical and emotional harm to the child.

Neglect may be characterised by:

Physical neglect- failure to provide the necessities to sustain the life or health of the child or young person.

Neglectful Supervision – failure to provide developmentally appropriate or legally required supervision of the child or young person, leading to an increased risk of harm.

Medical Neglect – failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for the child or young person resulting in their impaired function or development.

Abandonment – leaving a child or young person in any situation without arranging necessary care for them and with no intention of returning.

Refusal to assume parental responsibility – unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care of control for a child.

Physical, Behavioural and adult behaviour can indicate neglect

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child's emotional, psychological or social well-being is continually assaulted.

The effects of this form of abuse are not always visible. The long – lasting effects of emotional abuse may only become evident as a child becomes older and begins to show difficult or disturbing behaviours or symptoms.

“Never assume, it is essential to recognise all the indicators but they do not tell the whole story. Always be mindful of the strengths in a child's life.”

Family Violence

Is the coercive and controlling behaviour by a family member that causes physical, sexual and emotional damage to others in the family.

Family violence includes threatening to harm people, pets or property, and causes family members to live in fear. Children are always affected either emotionally or physically where there is family violence even if they are not personally injured or physically present.

The indications that children have been affected by family violence are also those covered in the physical, sexual, neglect and emotional abuse sections of the book.

For more information please refer to: Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children.
www.orangatamariki.govt.nz