



narellan community
congregational church

Safe Church Policy & Procedures

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VERSION HISTORY

Version 01 – 19 Oct 2020

Initial version adopted by NCCC

Version 02 – 17 Dec 2021

Review by Lisa Gruar and Franz Brosch

Description of changes:

- Replaced “Executive Team” with “Ministry Team” throughout document
- Replaced “Safe Church Team” with “Safe Ministry Team” throughout document
- Removed references to face to face components in Safe Ministry Training (all training modules are currently done online)
- Safe Church Policy Section 2.1a-d: adjusted wording to reflect that screening and induction processes are required for most but not all staff and volunteers
- Safe Church Policy Section 9: adjusted definitions of terms removing aspects not applicable to NCCC
- Procedure for Staff and Volunteers: clarifications and adjustments made, esp.
 - Part 1 – Recruitment and Screening / Category 2 b – Volunteers not in leadership roles or engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults: no position description required; no Screening Check Questionnaire required; no interview by the relevant Ministry Leader required; no induction process required
 - Part 1 – Recruitment and Screening / Category 3 – Supervised volunteers aged under 18: position description & Screening Check Questionnaire & interview by the relevant Ministry Leader & induction process required only if engaged in child related work or work with vulnerable adults
 - Part 1 – Recruitment and Screening / Overview table (page 6): made adjustments to reflect updates throughout the procedure
- Safe Ministry Screening Questionnaire: adjusted to reflect updated screening & induction requirements
- Safe Church Register: adjusted to reflect the actual format and procedure of the register
- Minor formatting corrections throughout document
- Correction of Index section

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Safe Church Policy

Adopted by Narellan Community Congregational Church on 19/10/2020

Commitment

The Church is committed to providing places, services and programs that promote physical, emotional and spiritual health and safety and model the love of Christ to all whom we have contact with, particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Purpose

The Church has adopted the *Safe Church Policy* to:

- help us live out our biblical mandate to ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbour as yourself’ (Mark 12:30-31);
- implement the 10 Child Safe Standards;
- provide a framework to inform the provision of safe environments and programs for children, young people and vulnerable adults; and
- meet our legal obligations in relation to:
 - staff and volunteers engaged in Child-related Work and
 - reporting matters, including Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct, and Reportable Conduct involving a Child, to government authorities.

The *Safe Church Policy* outlines the commitment of the church to principles in various areas. More detail regarding the practical implementation of these commitments is available in the relevant procedures and guidelines

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- all Church Leadership, staff and volunteers;
- all people who are involved in or attend the Church and its programs;

1. Activities and Services for Children at the Church

As a church, we commit to providing spaces, programs and relationships that are physically, emotionally and spiritually safe.

1.1 Church Leadership:

- a. recognise that children and young people are an integral part of the Church and talk about this in services, sermons, training events and meetings;
- b. involve children and young people in the routine of church life where appropriate
- c. consider the needs of children and young people when they make decisions about budgets, buildings, renovations, use of property, décor, or catering; and
- d. encourage children and young people to have input in decisions that affect them by including them in church forums and meetings when appropriate.

1.2 Safe Church Team:

- a. talk with children and young people about the fact that they have the right to feel safe, to be listened to and to have their views respected (including discussing what they should do and who they should approach if they feel unsafe or hurt, or they suspect that someone else is unsafe or hurt); and
- b. ensure their contact details are accessible to children

1.3 Staff and volunteers:

- a. listen to children and take seriously what children are saying;
- b. talk with children and young people about the kinds of behaviours, attitudes or 'culture' that they would like to promote in their group;
- c. encourage children and young people to have input regarding the content and activities they would like to be part of their group.

Please see the *Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People* for more detail.

2. Staff and Volunteers

2.1 Screening, selection and induction of Staff and Volunteers

- a. The church will undertake screening processes for staff and volunteers as appropriate
- b. The church will engage in fair and transparent selection processes for all staff and volunteers
- c. The church will provide induction for staff and volunteers as appropriate
- d. Staff and volunteers are to be recruited, selected, and inducted in accordance with the *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers*.

2.2 Training and Resourcing of Staff and Volunteers

- a. The church will ensure that staff and volunteers develop the knowledge and skills to create safe spaces for everyone, particularly children and young people.
- b. The church will ensure that staff and volunteers have access to information about creating safe spaces and that they all undergo appropriate training regarding the available Procedures, Guidelines and Forms.
- c. The church will support staff and volunteers with adequate resources to enable them to maintain and promote safe spaces for everyone, particularly children and young people.
- d. The church will implement the *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers*

2.3 Standards of Behaviour for Staff and Volunteers

- a. The church will provide spaces, programs and relationships that are physically, emotionally and spiritually safe.
- b. The church will expect all staff and volunteers to uphold the *Code of Conduct* which includes expected behaviours for those who engage in ministry with children and/or vulnerable people.
- c. The church will expect staff and volunteers to follow *Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People*.

Please see the *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers* and the *Screening Questionnaire* for more detail.

3. Conflict, Complaints and Concerns

3.1 Responding to Child Protection Concerns

- a. The church will ensure appropriate and timely reporting of all child protection concerns and any complaints relating to child sexual abuse and/or sexual misconduct involving a child in accordance with the *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*.
- b. The church will ensure that all child protection concerns and complaints will be reported to the relevant government departments and, if necessary, Police as soon as possible and in accordance with legislative duties.

3.2 Complaint Handling

- a. The Church will respond to complaints in accordance with the *Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers*.
- b. Where there is a complaint that a staff member or volunteer has engaged in abuse, including child sexual abuse and sexual misconduct involving a child, the Church will treat the allegation as a serious breach of the *Code of Conduct* and respond in accordance with the *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*.
- c. In the event of receiving a complaint that relates to a minor breach of the Code of Conduct or a grievance, the Church may determine to respond to the matter in accordance with the *Procedure for Resolving Conflict*.

Please see the *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns* and the *Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers* for more detail.

4. Safe Environments

4.1 Physical Environments

- a. The Church will ensure that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
- b. The Church will comply with Work, Health and Safety requirements.
- c. The Church will consider the impact of the physical environment on the potential for risk to children and vulnerable people.
- d. The Church will identify and address risks arising from the physical environment in which programs and activities take place.
- e. If the Church has any residential property that is identifiable as being church property then the Church will ensure that all regular adult occupants of that property obtain and hold WWCC clearance for the duration of their residence.
- f. The Church will consider whether any ministries it supports, including overseas ministries, have appropriate child protection practices in place? (This includes consideration of whether supporting orphanages overseas is appropriate)

4.2 Online Environments

The Church will promote safe online behaviour in any electronic communication
Please see the *Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People* for more detail.

5. Risk Management

5.1 Persons of Concern

The Church will manage any person identified as a Person of Concern in accordance with the procedure corresponding to Child Protection Concern.

5.2 Risk Assessments

- a. The Church will ensure that Ministry Leaders complete and make a record of a risk assessment in relation to any program or activity undertaken at, for or with the Church.
 - for regular activities, the risk assessment will be conducted at least annually and whenever there are significant changes in the program activities, attendance or location.
 - for special activities, the Ministry Leader or Safe Church Team will complete a risk assessment.
- b. The Church will ensure that appropriate and reasonable precautions are adopted to address risks identified as part of a risk assessment. When considering what measures are appropriate, the Church will consider the likelihood of an incident occurring, the seriousness of the consequences and the difficulty of avoiding the risk.
- c. The Church will store risk assessment forms in a secure location for a period of at least 45 years.

6. Third Parties and Affiliated Entities

- a. The church will require any third party (tenant or external party using church property) that provides services to children and/or young people to provide written confirmation of their compliance with the Child Safe Standards at least annually.
- b. The church will ensure that any affiliated entities (any entity or program that is, or is represented as, a ministry of the Church) comply with Child Safe Standards including annual reports to the governance body regarding child safety.

7. Recordkeeping

- a. The Church will retain all written records for a minimum of 45 years, in hard copy and/or electronically in a secure manner.
 - Where records contain, or may contain, sensitive information, they will be kept in a manner that protects confidentiality and will only be accessed by a limited number of authorised persons.
 - Where records are kept in hard copy, they will be held in a secure location with proper consideration of access, and physical conditions.
 - Where records are kept electronically, they will be monitored to ensure security and ongoing accessibility.
- b. Records to which this item applies includes, but is not limited to:
 - Ministry Information Sheets
 - Staff and Volunteer files
 - Attendance (sign-in/sign-out) sheets
 - Risk assessment forms
 - Safe Church Register
 - Safe Church Concerns forms and any contemporaneous notes regarding reporting decisions
 - Annual Safe Church commitment by third parties and affiliated entities
 - Dated copies of any *Safe Church Policy, Procedure, Form* or associated document in force at any time

Please see the *Privacy Policy* for more detail.

8. Review and Accountability

8.1 Internal Review

The Church will review this policy annually.

8.2 External Accountability

The Church will seek advice from and communicate with the Hunters Hill Property Trust and the Fellowship of Congregational Churches of NSW in relation to any Reportable Conduct, Child Protection Concerns and/or Complaints against Accredited or Recognised Ministers in accordance the *Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers* and the *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*.

9. Definitions

In the *Safe Church Policy* and associated documents, unless the context otherwise requires:

Church means the local church which adopted this *Safe Church Policy*, as indicated on the cover of the Policy.

complaint includes any allegation, suspicion, concern or report of a breach of the Church's *Code of Conduct*. It also includes disclosures made to an institution about any child protection concern.

Safe Ministry Training means Safe Ministry training offered by Ansva or alternative training that is Safe Church Training Agreement approved.

disclosure means a process by which a person conveys or attempts to convey that they are being or have been abused or neglected.

FCC means the Fellowship of Congregational Churches

governance body means the body designated by the constitution of the church to be responsible for the management of church affairs. This may be the Ministry Team or the Elders.

HHCPT means Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust

Mandatory Reporting Legislation means the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*.

Pastoral Staff means any pastor or any accredited or recognised minister or any paid or unpaid staff member of the Church who is engaged in pastoral ministry through the Church.

Reportable Conduct Legislation means the *Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)*.

Safe Church Register means the register required to record information relating to staff and volunteers who engage in Child-related Work and their relevant details in accordance with section 9A of the WWCC Legislation.

vulnerable means the state of being unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason, and includes those that suffer disadvantage such as social and financial hardship.

WWCC Legislation means the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)*.

young person means a person who is 16 or 17 years old.



Procedure for Staff and Volunteers

Adopted by Narellan Community Congregational Church on 19/10/2020

Purpose

The *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers* sets out a procedure for the thorough recruitment, screening, training and resourcing of staff and volunteers as appropriate, particularly those engaged in Child-related Work.

Scope

Part 1 of the Procedure applies to Recruitment and Screening of staff and volunteers within the Church.

Part 2 of the Procedure applies to the Induction of staff and volunteers

Part 3 of the Procedure applies to Training and Resourcing of staff and volunteers

Part 4 of the Procedure applies to Recordkeeping and Review of documents related to staff and volunteers

This Procedure should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

- *Screening Check Questionnaires*
- *Safe Church Register*
- *Code of Conduct*
- *Privacy Policy*

Part 1 – Recruitment and Screening

Category 1 a – Pastoral staff and staff in leadership roles and/or engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults

The screening process for pastoral staff applies

- to any staff member who undertakes pastoral work in or on behalf of the church. (This typically includes any role that includes the word ‘Pastor’ or ‘Minister’ but may include other roles);
 - to any staff member in a leadership role (ie/ considered a ‘spiritual officer’ of the church);
 - to any staff member engaged in child-related work
1. Prior to recruitment:
 - a) the **position description** will be reviewed and updated if necessary;
 - b) the position will be advertised appropriately; and
 - c) the position description and/or advertisement will state that any offer of employment is subject to applicants:
 - agreeing to abide by, and upholding, the *Code of Conduct*;
 - completing a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
 - undergoing a National Police Criminal Record Check; and
 - being eligible for, or holding a current clearance in accordance with **WWCC Legislation**.
 - In addition, for pastoral staff,
 - providing evidence of Accreditation or Recognition of a completed Child Protection course (or an application to be accredited or recognised); and
 - agreeing to abide by and uphold the *Code of Ethics and Conduct*
 - The Elders, having agreed upon a candidate, will provide notice of an extraordinary meeting for the purpose of calling a Pastor. This will be communicated at the worship services for 3 weeks prior to the meeting taking place. The election will be by secret ballot. The quorum will include absentee votes and consist of no fewer than 67% of members on the roll. 75% of the votes in favour of the nomination will be required to secure election. The final decision of the church respecting any one candidate will be made before another is introduced.
 2. Applicants for the position will submit a written application including a resume and an outline of their willingness to commit to the mission and values of the Church
 3. Shortlisted applicants will:
 - a) complete a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
 - b) be interviewed by **Ministry Team or Elders**
 - c) undertake a National Police Criminal Record Check;
 - d) provide evidence of a current clearance in accordance with **WWCC Legislation**; and
 - e) provide a minimum of 2 references
 4. Successful applicants will:
 - a) sign and agree to abide by the *Code of Conduct*;
 - b) participate in an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including being given a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and all Procedures and guidelines; and
(in addition, for Pastoral Staff) provide evidence of completion of a relevant

Child Protection course that they are Accredited.

Category 1 b – Staff who are not in leadership roles or engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults

The screening process for staff who are not engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults applies

- to any staff member to whom the screening process in Category 1 a does not apply; and
- in addition to any requirements under the Church's Constitution.

1. Prior to recruitment:

- a) the **position description** will be reviewed and updated if necessary;
- b) the position will be advertised appropriately and in accordance with any constitutional requirements; and
- c) the position description and/or advertisement will state that any offer of employment is subject to applicants:
 - agreeing to abide by, and upholding, the *Code of Conduct*;
 - completing a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;

2. Applicants for the position will:

- a) submit a written application including an outline of their willingness to commit to the mission and values of the Church and hold to the Christian faith; and
- b) submit their Curriculum Vitae, ensuring that information relevant to the particular position is included.

3. Shortlisted applicants will:

- a) complete a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
- b) be interviewed by **Ministry Team or Elders** or committee appointed by the Church members;
- c) provide a minimum of 2 references

4. Successful applicants will:

- a) sign and agree to abide by the *Code of Conduct*; and
- b) Participate in an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including being given a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures and guidelines.

*Category 2 a – Volunteers in leadership roles, engaged in child-related work and/or engaged in work with vulnerable adults**

The screening process for volunteers engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults applies to:

- any church leader, Ministry Team member or any elder (ie/ 'spiritual officer');
- any volunteer involved in ministry to children and/or young people (this may include children's ministry, playgroup, creche, youth ministry, families ministry);
- any volunteer engaged in a role that includes leadership of a ministry area in which children or young people are also part of the ministry team (this may include music leader, sound/AV coordinator, discipleship coordinator, outreach coordinator etc); and
- any volunteer engaged in ministry to vulnerable adults*

1. Prior to being appointed, a potential volunteer will:
 - a) be provided with a current **position description**
 - b) complete a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
 - c) be interviewed by the Ministry Leader or by a Safe Church Team member
 - d) sign and agree to abide by the *Code of Conduct*
 - e) provide evidence that they have completed Safe Ministry Check training within the past 3 years, or complete the online component
 - f) provide evidence that they hold a current clearance in accordance with **WWCC Legislation*** (unless the volunteer is aged under 18).
 - g) participate in an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including being given a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures and guidelines.

2. Prior to the volunteer commencing in the role the Safe Church Team (or Ministry Leader) will
 - a) Verify the WWCC number* (if in NSW and over 18 years of age)
 - b) Provide an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including providing a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures and guidelines.

*In NSW, the WWCC clearance is only required if the person is engaged in 'child-related work'. In religious organisations, this includes leadership roles (those considered to be spiritual officers) but does not include roles involving ministry to vulnerable adults. A volunteer who is involved in ministry to vulnerable adults but not considered a 'spiritual officer' or involved in child-related work should not be required to obtain a WWCC clearance but should still complete CSS (Creating Safe Spaces) training.

Category 2 b – Volunteers not in leadership roles or engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults

The screening process for volunteers not-engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults applies to

- any volunteer who is **not** a Church Leader, Ministry Leader, engaged in child-related work or engaged in work with vulnerable adults. (this may include volunteers on the flower, cleaning or maintenance roster)

1. Prior to being appointed, a potential volunteer will:
 - a) sign and agree to abide by the *Code of Conduct*; and

2. Prior to the volunteer commencing in the role the Safe Church Team (or Ministry Leader) will:
 - a) Obtain written parental consent for the volunteer to undertake the role suggested (if the volunteer's age is less than 18)

Category 3 – Supervised volunteers aged under 18

1. The screening process for supervised volunteers aged under 18 applies to:
 - volunteers who are engaged in junior, trainee, support or helping roles which require that the volunteer is supervised at all times.

Where a volunteer is engaged in a trainee, support or helping role but is aged over 18 they will need to be screened in accordance with category 2 as appropriate in order to meet legal requirements.

*The Church may determine that specific 16 or 17-year-olds have sufficient maturity to volunteer without direct supervision, despite being under 18 years of age. These volunteers will be screened and trained in accordance with category 2, including Safe Ministry Check training. **However, note that there should always be at least one adult leader on-site and participating in the program.***

Please see the *Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People* for more details on the differences between junior/trainee volunteers and volunteers.'

2. Prior to being appointed, a potential volunteer will:
 - sign and agree to abide by the *Code of Conduct*; and
 - if they are going to be engaged in child related work or work with vulnerable adults,
 - be provided with a current **position description**;
 - complete a *Screening Check Questionnaire*;
 - be interviewed by the Ministry Leader;
 - participate in an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including being given a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures and guidelines.

3. Prior to the volunteer commencing in the role the Safe Church Team (or Ministry Leader) will:
 - obtain written parent/guardian consent for the volunteer to undertake the role suggested if the volunteer is under 16 years old (we also recommend getting parent/guardian consent for 16 and 17-year-olds wherever possible);
 - provide an induction process to enable them to safely fulfil their position, including being given a copy of the *Safe Church Policy* and Procedures; and
 - provide an additional briefing on child protection responsibilities and practices, including the procedures and guidelines relevant to their area of ministry.

<i>Please see category definitions for further detail</i>	Screening questionnaire	Code of Ethics and Conduct	Accreditation or Recognised Minister	Interview, induction	Code of Conduct	WWCC	CSS	Police Check
1a: Pastoral Staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1a: Staff engaged in leadership, child-related work or work with vulnerable adults	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1b: Other Staff (not engaged in leadership, child-related work or work with vulnerable adults)	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Maybe at church discretion
2a: Volunteers in leadership, child-related work or work with vulnerable adults	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes (unless under 18)	Yes	No
2b: Other Volunteers (not engaged in leadership, child-related work or work with vulnerable adults)	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
3: Supervised volunteers under 18 (engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults)	Yes (use under 18 screening)	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
3: Supervised volunteers under 18 (not engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults)	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

Part 2 – Induction

- 2.1 Staff and volunteers will be provided with an induction appropriate to their role. This applies to:
- staff / category 1a and 1b
 - volunteers / category 2a
 - volunteers / category 3 if engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults
- 2.2 The induction will include:
- a) an overview of general site health and safety expectations;
 - b) operating procedures that apply to relevant equipment;
 - c) the content of the *Code of Conduct* and expectations and appropriate behaviours for staff and volunteers as set out in the *Safe Church Policy*;
 - d) the role description and any reporting structure;
 - e) expectations regarding Safe Ministry Check training, as required
 - f) an overview of the *Procedures for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers, Conflict Resolution and Responding to Child Protection Concerns*;
 - g) who to contact in the event of any conflict, concerns or complaints; and
 - h) any Guidelines appropriate to their ministry area.
- 2.3 A record of the induction (including the name of the person giving the induction, the date of the induction and the topics covered) will be kept.

Part 3 – Training and Resourcing

3.1 Safe Ministry Check Training

- a) All staff and volunteers engaged in leadership and/or child-related work and/or work with vulnerable adults will:
 - will complete the online component of the training prior to commencement.
- c) The Safe Church Team will ensure that information about staff and volunteer attendance at Safe Ministry Check Training is recorded in the *Safe Church Register*.

3.2 Other training

Church Leadership (or Ministry Leaders) will arrange ongoing staff and volunteer training as required. (This may include in-house training, attendance at any required external training opportunities identified by the Ministry Team.)

3.3 Resourcing

Church Leadership will ensure that Church programs are adequately resourced with staff and volunteers and have the required equipment for the safe and effective running of the program.

3.4 Supervision

Church Leadership will provide ongoing support and supervision for all staff and volunteers, to ensure they feel valued, respected and fairly-treated, including:

- a) up to date *Safe Church Policy*, guidelines and procedures;
- b) formal or informal support mechanisms, so that staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of who to go to for support and what type of support is available to them (for example, team meetings, counselling, prayer); and

- c) an annual process of position review to provide an opportunity for mutual feedback and encouragement.

Part 4 – Recordkeeping and Review

4.1 Recordkeeping

For each staff member or volunteer, the following items should be recorded and kept for a minimum of 45 years.

- a) their written application for the position (if applicable);
- b) their completed *Screening Check Questionnaire* (if applicable);
- c) all notes relating to the interview and reference checks (if applicable);
- d) notes confirming the content and date of their induction;
- e) signed *Code of Conduct*;
- f) signed *Code of Ethics and Conduct* (if required);
- g) a copy of the *National Police Criminal Record Check* (if required);
- h) evidence of their current WWCC (if required);
- i) evidence of the date of completion of Safe Ministry Check training (or equivalent Safe Church Training approved training); and
- j) records of all other relevant training, incidents, annual reviews, etc.

Any items which contain sensitive information (such as Screening Questionnaires, Safe Church Concerns Forms, investigation notes and reports) must be kept in a manner which protects confidentiality and will only be accessed by a limited number of authorised persons (for example, the current Senior Pastor).

4.2 Safe Church Register

The church must maintain a *Safe Church Register* which records a summary of necessary screening and training for all staff and volunteers.

4.3 Review

- a) Pastoral Staff should participate in pastoral or professional supervision in addition to other review processes.
- b) Staff should participate in a formal review process each year. This process should
 - review the position description and make any necessary amendments;
 - provide an opportunity for mutual feedback and encouragement;
 - identify opportunities for training and development in the following twelve months; and
 - consider involving a committee comprising members of the governance body and any other church members who may be appropriate
- c) Volunteer positions should be reviewed at least annually to identify areas for support or development and to amend role descriptions where appropriate.



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Procedures For Handling Allegations

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1. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Purpose of the Procedures

These procedures provide guidance and instruction, primarily to the Elders and Ministry Team and Safe Ministry Team (SMT) and the Ministry Leaders. They should be read in conjunction with the Congregational Rules and Procedures.

This procedure aims to take into consideration all vulnerable people under the authority of church leaders, whether they are children, young people, elderly, those with disabilities or the emotionally and/or spiritually vulnerable.

1.2 Underlying Values

(a) Good governance which reflect our core values

- (ii) encourages empowerment and accountability of decision makers at appropriate levels
- (iii) fosters a culture of transparency in its processes and reporting, and
- (iv) (iv) minimises bureaucracy and permits decisions to be made in a timely manner.

(b) Effective conflict resolution, noting that:

- (i) ministering together in community may occasionally give rise to conflict; the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes in private or within the Christian community
- (ii) conflict impacts upon the Church and its witness for Christ
- (iii) biblically based dispute resolution procedures aim to bring glory to God, allow us to grow to be more like Christ, and assist us to resolve the dispute and achieve reconciliation.

1.3 Underlying Theological Position

The church is called to be a Christian community that nurtures and sustains those who are called to be disciples and to participate in God's mission. It is a place that proclaims the good news of God's salvation in word and deed and to witness to God's inclusive and nurturing love for all persons. This includes treating everyone with respect, avoiding harmful discrimination, respecting physical and emotional boundaries and care for the most vulnerable.

Leaders, especially pastors, have a particular responsibility in this regard. Just as Jesus did not come to be served but to serve, he calls his disciples to be the servants of others. Pastoral leaders are called to live lives in humility and faithfulness in the power of the Holy Spirit in which their personal behaviours and ministry practice provide a safe place for everyone, where integrity is honoured, accountability is practiced and forgiveness encourages healing while not concealing misconduct. Scripture exhorts that leaders and pastors are to be people of good reputation, especially with those outside the church (1 Timothy 3:7) and, as far as possible, above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2). They are to be held to a higher standard than those they lead. God identifies groups of vulnerable people who were to be particularly protected and given special care and treatment in society because of their powerlessness (Exodus 22:21-22, Deuteronomy 10:17-19, Jeremiah 22:2-4, James 1:27). Jesus named and criticised evil and called to account those who misused or abused their power.

Christian faith also involves calling those who misuse or abuse power to true repentance. In Ezekiel 18:30-31 God requires an abuser to responsibly own the hurt caused to the victim and to make a complete change of attitude and behaviour. Readiness to accept discipline and make restitution are indicators of true repentance (Matthew 3:7-12).

NCCC aims to create an atmosphere of support and compassion for all people and which allows victims/survivors of leadership misconduct to move towards healing. Jesus continually broke the rules governing religious niceties, exclusivity and silence. Support and compassion should never be given in an atmosphere of silence, cover-up or denial.

Christian faith strongly upholds the virtues of love, justice and mercy. Jesus Christ came to give freedom to the captives, sight to the blind and liberty to those who are oppressed (Luke 4:18). Ministers and church workers must be aware that their leadership position places them in a position of power in a relationship. Any sexual contact by a minister or church worker with a person with whom they are in a pastoral relationship is unethical and subject to discipline. In pastoral relationships the factors of power, trust and dependency limit the possibility of a church member or other person in such a relationship to freely give consent to sexual contact. In other words, the dynamics of such a relationship can result in a person being unable to withhold

consent. Because the minister or church worker has the greater power and pastoral responsibility, the responsibility lies with them to guard the interpersonal boundary against sexual contact.

Physical, spiritual and emotional cruelty also constitute a form of abuse of power. Where a Christian leader is in a position of power and acts in such a way as to cause serious physical or mental pain or anguish, as judged by the standards applied at the time it occurs, then this constitutes abuse of position. This would include bullying behaviour. This underlying theology of transformation requires:

- Righteous anger at evil. Jesus uncompromisingly told the truth. He named and criticised evil and called to account those who abused their power.
- Calling abusers to true repentance. This differs greatly from guilt-ridden remorse. In Ezekiel 18:30-31 God requires an abuser to responsibly own the hurt caused to the victim and to make a complete change of attitude and behaviour. Readiness to accept discipline and make restitution are indicators of true repentance (Matthew 3:7-12).
- An atmosphere of support and compassion. This allows victims/survivors to move towards healing. Jesus continually broke the rules governing religious niceties, exclusivity and silence. Support and compassion can never be given in an atmosphere of silence, cover-up and denial.
- Protection of the vulnerable. James 1:27 reminds us that the religion that God honours is first about caring for the widows and orphans. God's heart is for those who cannot protect themselves.

Scriptures which offer themselves for consideration and reflection by all involved in making, responding and addressing a complaint include 1 Corinthians 10: 31, 32; 1 Corinthians 13; Matthew 5:23, 24; Matthew 18; Luke 6:41-42; Gal.6:1; Eph. 4:1-3; Phil. 2:3, 4; Col. 3:12-14; James 3:13-4:3.

1.4 Background to the Procedures

Most Christian leaders serve honourably based upon the Holy Spirit's gifting and the local church's affirmation. However, some have abused their positions of authority and trust, resulting in great harm. We affirm that all people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected, and have their views and opinions respected. We also live in a country that legislates for people's safety, particularly in the area of child protection. These procedures and the associated policy have been developed to help us live out our biblical mandate and our responsibilities under legislation.

People who attend any churches need to be confident that Narellan Community Congregational Church will do all they can to provide safe places for them to be nurtured and encouraged as they grow, as well as be protected from harm.

These procedures should also be read in conjunction with the Code of Ethics and Conduct, which is the key reference document for breaches in expected behaviour.

It should be noted that many issues and complaints which occur within churches, namely those that do not involve serious risk of harm and have not become 'public knowledge' within the church (and even some that have), can be resolved at the local level. NCCC will encourage this option of local resolution, where appropriate, before engaging these procedures. These procedures exist for the small number of more serious matters that cannot be appropriately resolved in this way

1.5 Key Terms and Definitions

Accredited or Recognised Minister - An accredited or Recognised Minister is someone who has been Accredited or Recognised as a Minister of Religion by Narellan Community Congregational Church.

FCC – Fellowship of Congregational Churches

Complainant - The person who is making a complaint or allegation, or their legal guardian if appropriate.

Complaint - A complaint or concern made against an Accredited or Recognised Minister.

Church Leadership - Those whom a church meeting has elected or a church has formally endorsed to undertake a specific leadership role.

Safe Ministry Team (SMT) - The committee tasked with responsibility in regard to complaints as provided in this document.

Natural Justice - Natural justice means to act fairly, without bias throughout each of the stages of this procedure.

Pastoral Relationship - The relationship between a congregational member or other person with the Accredited or Recognised Minister where the latter is deemed to exercise a ministry of spiritual and personal welfare.

Support Person - A person engaged by a party, or recommended to the party by the Association to be engaged by them with a view to:

1. offering pastoral support to the party throughout the process, or
2. assisting the party to understand the stages in the procedure, or both.

3 THE SAFE MINISTRY TEAM

2.1 Purpose and Scope

The role of the Safe Ministry Team is to:

- Receive, and process complaints.
- Receive reports and recommendations from the Elders, Ministry Team and Ministry Leaders.
- Prepare final reports, make decisions and, subject to this procedure, enact those decisions.
- Facilitate resolution of complaints.
- Educate, support and advise the Church on matters in which the Committee has expertise.

Those recruited for these roles should:

Essential Criteria:

- Be able to build rapport and confidence with the Complainant and the Respondent;
- Have counselling and / or support skills;
- Have knowledge of key issues around a particular area of expertise. e.g. financial fraud matters, or sexual misconduct issues, psychological, social, spiritual or legal dimensions; and
- Have the confidence of the denomination.

Desirable criteria (or willingness to obtain):

- Be trained in Biblical conflict resolution principles;
- Have knowledge of denominational structures and processes as they apply to issues of misconduct;
- Have experience and/or have undertaken training in investigative processes.

The SMT shall undertake a recruitment process as often as is required to maintain a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced people to undertake these roles.

3 COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

3.1 Key Principles

In the handling of complaints and allegations, the following principles will apply:

- Complaints will be addressed having regard to both the underlying theology (see section 1.3) and the Church's core and operational values (see section 1.2).
- As far as possible, the well-being of the Complainant and the Respondent, and their families will be ensured.
- As far as possible, confidentiality will be maintained.
- Communication with Church Leadership will be considered as appropriate on a case by case basis, taking into account confidentiality and risk.
- Complaints will be actioned as quickly as possible with genuine regard to the seriousness of the allegations.
- Principles of natural justice, transparency and fairness will be applied throughout.
- Every person who is involved in handling a complaint will declare any conflict of interest in the matter or any personal connection or relationship with any party, past or present.
- Presumption of innocence will be assumed until guilt is determined by admission or due process.
- Decisions will be made on the "balance of probabilities" (which is the standard generally accepted in civil proceedings rather than "beyond reasonable doubt" which is the standard required in criminal proceedings).
- Where a matter is between two parties and there are no other witnesses or external evidence then it is likely that there will be insufficient evidence to substantiate the allegations
- The Church recognises the vulnerability of anyone who has experienced any form of trauma, abuse and harm and will therefore act with sensitivity and compassion, whilst

ensuring that natural justice and procedural fairness are afforded in any complaint process.

- No complaint will be addressed in such a manner as to interfere in any way with the proper
- processes of criminal or civil law, whether they are in progress or specifically contemplated in the foreseeable future. Where a complainant chooses not to report a matter to the Police or other relevant civil authority, or these authorities have decided to take no further action, the Association may then act on the complaint.

3.2 STAGE 1 - Receiving of Complaints and Allegations

A complaint against may be made for serious breaches of the Code of Ethics and Conduct, including, but not limited to, misuse of power, financial fraud, bullying, and sexual misconduct. Anyone wishing to make a complaint may do so orally or in writing to any in the Safe Ministry Team.

Any person receiving a complaint has a responsibility to consider if the issue being complained about requires immediate notification to either the NSW Police or Community Services or other relevant civil authorities.

Any party receiving a complaint will immediately notify the Safe Ministry Team. If the complaint was made orally, the Complainant will be required to put the matter in writing as soon as is reasonably possible using any form developed by the church for this purpose. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged by the Safe Ministry Team in writing or by email. Normally, the triage process outlined below will not commence until the written form has been received. However, if the Complainant is legitimately unable to put a complaint in writing, then the Safe Ministry Team may assist the Complainant in this process. The Safe Ministry Team has the discretion to commence the triage process without a written complaint if appropriate.

In the first instance, the Safe Ministry Team will:

- Consider and / or take advice about whether mandatory reporting to Police or other civic authorities (Community Services etc.) is required.
- Advise the Complainant of the process and send a copy of these procedures
- Clarify allegations and compare with the Code of Conduct and Ethics to identify potential areas of breach
- Clarify Complainants' expected or wished for outcomes and advise of limits of Safe Church Ministry Team role
 - Begin case file
- Seek legal advice if required
- Advise the Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust of the complaint and discuss whether any immediate advice to local church is required (this may include a recommendation to stand the Respondent down if the allegations are serious enough)
- Establish whether appropriate support people are in place or needed and clarify the support person's role
- Consider whether the complaint should exit to another process. (For example: Local Resolution, or Persons of Concern process)
 - When the complaint concerns an alleged crime, assist the Complainant to report this to the appropriate authorities, or if the Complainant is not willing to do so, advise the Complainant that the Association is obligated to do so.

Once the Safe Ministry Team has determined that a matter should proceed, depending upon the seriousness and issues, and in consultation with Pastor, a decision is to be made whether the matter goes to the next scheduled meeting or requires an extraordinary meeting.

3.2.1 Anonymous Complaints

Although anonymous complaints present difficulties for investigation they are still to be treated seriously, and some level of preliminary investigation is to occur to determine if a formal process is required.

3.2.2 Complaint By or in Relation to Children and Young People

Children under the age of sixteen at the time of the complaint are to be represented by a person of their choice, preferably their parent or legal guardian, who will make a formal complaint in writing on their behalf and generally act on their behalf as required for the processing of the complaint. If an older child requests to be present for part or all of the proceedings, this should be carefully assessed and agreed to where possible. Young People, legally defined as those 16 or 17 years, are able to make the determination of whether they are represented or represent themselves.

In NSW a report to the Department of Communities and Justice is mandatory where there is risk of significant harm to a child or young person. Because there is the risk of contaminating a child's or young person's evidence for court proceedings, any review in relation to alleged or suspected abuse must in the first instance be done by the Department of Communities and Justice.

3.2.3 Persons with an Intellectual or Psychiatric Disability

Special care should be taken when interviewing anyone with an intellectual or psychiatric disability and any interviews should only be conducted by someone with experience and expertise in working with people with these disabilities.

Consideration should also be given to the amount of preparation required by talking with any case workers or support services involved, with appropriate consent.

3.2.4 Where the Respondent Refuses to Take Part

Where a Respondent refuses to take part in the process of review, the review may still proceed, with the Reviewing Officer/s still endeavouring to make a determination, albeit one that acknowledges the limitations of the lack of co-operation. This refusal would be a further matter of misconduct for consideration.

3.3 STAGE 3 – Reporting and Findings

3.3.1 Report to Safe Ministry Team

A report is to be presented to the Safe Ministry Team once the review is completed. This report will include:

- the process of investigation that has been undertaken;
- the key evidence and findings against each allegation
- any areas of contention or disagreement.

3.3.2 Notification of Outcome of Complaint Process

After the Safe Ministry Team has confirmed that due process and the guidelines of this procedures document have been followed they will ensure that all relevant parties are notified in writing of the outcome, as appropriate. This written notice will normally be delivered in person and will include the opportunity for discussion regarding the reasons for the decision. This communication will occur in a timely manner, and with due sensitivity to the gravity of information being shared. All reasonable efforts will be made to communicate the outcome in person, however in some situations, particularly where great distance is involved, communication through online applications (for example Skype or Facetime) may be more appropriate. Advice of the outcome to the parties by phone, email or post will only occur as a last resort. The written advice will include a statement regarding the right of appeal.

3.4 Recording Requirements Throughout the Complaint Process

All members of the Safe Ministry Team are required to record the date, time and nature of any contact or enquiry, and the outcomes or follow up actions. All these records and all documents relevant to the complaint will be kept in a single file.

Relevant parties are to be advised of the existence of the file and storage procedures. To preserve confidentiality, all records of complaints shall be stored in a locked filing cabinet. Records must be kept for a minimum of 7 years, or in matters involving a child or confirmed sexual abuse, they must be kept for a minimum of 30 years, or as long as required by law.

3.5 Confidentiality and its Limits

Narellan Community Congregational Church will seek to maintain confidentiality in terms of ensuring only those with a need to know about a matter do know. In the local church context, the only persons with whom complaints and allegations should be discussed are those either directly involved (for example by way of interviewing), those in positions of leadership who need to know in order to make appropriate decisions, and others who may have direct responsibility. In all instances, NCCC, shall act in a way so as to limit the general knowledge amongst church members of the specifics of allegations, except in the rare instances where it may be necessary for safety.

NCCC will at times be required, by law, to share information it holds with third parties. This includes, but is not limited to situations of risk of harm, criminal investigations and requests governed by privacy legislation. Records held may also be subpoenaed by a Court of law. NCCC members may also be subpoenaed, as may Safe Ministry Team members.



Procedure for Conflict Resolution

Adopted by Narellan Community Congregational Church on 19/10/2020

Purpose

The Procedure for Conflict Resolution (the **Procedure**) sets out a procedure for resolving conflict between two or more staff, volunteers, members or attendees of the Church in a pastoral and restorative manner, rather than through a formal complaint handling procedure.

It is important to identify that some issues cannot be resolved in this manner, and this Procedure is **not** designed to:

- resolve issues relating to domestic violence, family law matters before the Family Law Court (or similar body),
- resolve complaints or concerns relating to abuse (including Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct involving a Child) or other serious breaches of the Code of Conduct that are to be resolved in accordance with the *Complaint Handling Procedure*; or
- replace any process set out in the Constitution of the Church in relation to the disciplining or removal of members from membership of the Church.

Scope

The Procedure applies to all staff, volunteers, members and attendees of the Church.

An attendee is a person who regularly attends (at least once a month) a ministry of the church (for example, Sunday services, Bible study, Friday night youth group).

The Procedure should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

- *Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers*
- *Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff or Volunteers*
- *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*

When does this procedure apply?

Situations to which this policy applies include the following:

- a) a disagreement between two or more staff, volunteers, members or attendees of the Church;
- b) a perceived offence caused by a staff member, volunteer, member or attendee to another;
- c) a perception by one person that they have been bullied by a staff member, volunteer, member or attendee (and that it is a matter that is able to be resolved in a pastoral manner);
- d) dissatisfaction with the manner in which a staff member or volunteer has fulfilled their ministry role; and
- e) a complaint that a staff member or volunteer has committed a minor breach of the Code of Conduct.

Raising an issue

- a) Anyone may raise an issue
 - with a person directly (see Pathway 1).
 - with Church Leadership or the Safe Church Team in order to seek assistance in resolving the issue (see Pathway 2).
- b) If the concern relates to a member of the Church Leadership or the Safe Church Team, the person should raise their concern with another member of the Church Leadership or Safe Church Team.

Key Principles

In raising an issue, all parties are to be guided by the following key principles:

- Seeking to glorify God in our responses to each other.
- Striving to serve each other even in the midst of our disunity.
- Seeking to be Christ-like in our reactions to each other.
- Extending grace to each other.
- Focusing on forgiveness and restoration of relationships where appropriate.
- Seeking help where needed, to address grievances.

The Church acknowledges that:

- the nature of relationship breakdown means that it is necessary to respond sensitively and with care for all parties involved;
- in many conflict situations, to help each party understand the key issues and ways forward, the assistance of a neutral third party becomes essential;
- many issues are specific to a particular context and relationship and so must be responsive to this, seeking resolution of substantive issues and where possible, appropriate restoration of relationships between all parties;
- the pathway recommended by Church Leadership will depend upon the nature of the issue, the positions or roles of the parties involved and the skills and capacity of Church Leadership to address the situation.

Pathway 1 – Personal Approach

- a) Where an issue arises between a staff member, volunteer, member or attendee and another and the parties feel able to address their concerns without involving other parties, they are to go to the other person and express their concerns with a view to resolving their differences in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17.
- b) The person initiating the personal approach should consider seeking counsel from a wise and unbiased senior leader (from within the church community or externally) or receiving conflict coaching before approaching the other person.
- c) This approach may be useful for addressing personal disagreements and perceived offences. This pathway will not be appropriate where there are concerns about significant power imbalances.

Pathway 2 – Locally-assisted Approach

- a) In the event of any of the following then the matter should be brought to the attention of Church Leadership.
 - Pathway 1 being unsuccessful in restoring relationship; and/or
 - the issue relates to perceived bullying; and/or
 - the issue relates to dissatisfaction with the manner in which a staff member or volunteer has performed their ministry role.
- b) If an issue is brought to the Church Leadership
 - Church Leadership are to provide support to all parties.
 - Where the Church Leadership considers the issue to be sufficiently serious, they are to appoint a suitably skilled person to assist in resolving the conflict. This may be a senior member of the pastoral staff. Church Leadership are to avoid conflicts of interest where possible when selecting this person. In some cases, for example, where the conflict involves the Senior Pastor, a church consultant from the Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust or the Fellowship of Congregational Churches if appropriate.
- c) Where all parties involved in the matter are willing to work towards restoring relationships, the person selected to assist in resolving the conflict will:
 - value confidentiality at all times;
 - meet with each person separately to ensure they are given a chance to tell their story in private, working through their underlying concerns in moving towards resolution;
 - clearly communicate the process to be used to each party during resolution meetings;
 - hold a meeting with the parties together to identify common ground, work through the issues and determine the course of action;
 - follow up to ensure that the solutions are being implemented; and
 - if appropriate, monitor the situation over the following weeks, including to check-in with the parties to ensure that the situation is resolving and that relationships are being restored.
- d) At any stage throughout the process, the person selected to assist resolve the issue may contact Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust or the Fellowship of Congregational Churches for assistance or resourcing.

Escalation to Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff or Volunteers

During the course of resolving a concern in accordance with this Procedure, it may be necessary to escalate the matter in accordance with the *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*. There may be several reasons this is required, including:

- that on inquiry into the issue it is identified that the conduct complained of would more appropriately be characterised as a serious breach of the *Code of Conduct* (such as child protection concerns); or
- the subject of the concern is a staff member or volunteer and they are not willing to participate in this Procedure (as required under the *Code of Conduct*).

Escalation to membership removal process

During the course of resolving an issue in accordance with this Procedure, it may be necessary to escalate the matter to the process for removing someone from membership of the Church as prescribed in the Constitution of the Church (if any).



narellan community congregational church

Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers

Adopted by Narellan Community Congregational Church on 19/10/2020

Purpose

The *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers* (the **Procedure**) sets out a procedure by which a complaint or information relating to a serious breach of the Code of Conduct can be received, investigated and resolved.

The Procedure should also be followed in the event of the Church receiving a complaint or information relating to Reportable Conduct. The Church has an obligation in accordance with Reportable Conduct Legislation to have practices and procedures to deal with Reportable Conduct, including:

- for receiving complaints of Reportable Conduct;
- for dealing with Reportable Conduct allegations; and
- for the receipt, handling and disclosure of information relating to Reportable Conduct and investigations.

Scope

This Procedure applies to all staff and volunteers of the Church.

This Procedure applies to all matters which are a serious breach of the *Code of Conduct*, including complaints relating to:

- A Child Abuse Offence, Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct involving a Child.

Please note: Accredited and Recognised Ministers are subject to:

- this procedure in relation to a complaint of a breach of the *Code of Conduct*, (If an Accredited or Recognised Minister is found to have breached the Fellowship of Congregational Churches *Code of Ethics and Conduct* that would also constitute a breach of the church's *Code of Conduct*); and
- the NCCC *Procedures for Handling Allegations* in relation to a complaint of a breach of the Fellowship of Congregational Churches *Code of Ethics and Conduct*.

Please note: This Procedure *does not* apply to matters which would more appropriately be dealt with under the *Procedure for Conflict Resolution* (for example, a low-level breach of the *Code of Conduct*).

If there is any doubt as to whether a complaint or information would fall within the scope of the Procedure, or about any of the steps set out in the Procedure, a church leader should contact the Fellowship of Congregational Churches on (02) 9588 5128.

The Procedure should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

- *Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers*
- *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*
- *Procedure for Conflict Resolution*
- *Privacy Policy*

1. Receiving a complaint or information

Anyone may make a complaint or pass on information that relates to a breach of the Code of Conduct (including Reportable Conduct) by staff or volunteers of the Church to:

- Church Leadership;
- the Safe Church Team Leader and the Safe Church Team; or
- any staff or volunteer.

Complaints or information may be received verbally, however a written outline of the complaint should be encouraged. In all cases, the Safe Church Team should document all complaints and information received in the Safe Church Concerns Form.

2. Reporting information

2.1 Determining appropriate reporting process

- a) Any complaint about a staff member or volunteer which may be considered a serious breach of the Code of Conduct should be reported to the Church Leadership. If the complaint or information relates to a member of the Church Leadership then it should not be reported to them, but instead reported to another person in the Church Leadership or the Safe Church Team.
- b) On receipt of a complaint or information that may relate to any form of child protection concern the person that has received the complaint or information is to also follow the *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*.
- c) Any person who has knowledge that a serious crime has been committed, whether or not it is related to children, should report that knowledge to the Police.
- d) If a complaint is, or should be, reported to government authorities the Church Leadership will only commence an investigation under this Procedure after consultation with the government authorities that it has been reported to.

2.2 Allegations regarding Reportable Conduct

- a) The Head of Entity (typically either the paid senior pastor or the chair of the church governance body) is obligated to notify the Reportable Conduct Scheme (in NSW, the Office of Children's Guardian) of Reportable Conduct allegations within a defined timeframe, in accordance with **Reportable Conduct Legislation**

In NSW,

- the Reportable Conduct Scheme covers any staff or volunteers who are required to hold a WWCC
- this notification must be made within 7 business days of receiving the complaint or information (s29(4) of the *Children's Guardian Act (2019)*).
- notification must be made within 30 days of receiving the complaint or information under s17G of the *Ombudsman Act 1989*.
- A 'final entity report' must be submitted within 30 days. If it is not possible to submit the final report within 30 days then an interim report must be submitted within 30 days in accordance with s38 of the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*.
- A report regarding the findings of the entity's investigation must be submitted as soon as practicable after the conclusion of the investigation under s17J of the *Ombudsman Act 1989*.

- c) The notification of the allegation to the Reportable Conduct Scheme must be in writing and should include:
- the name, date of birth and WWCC number of the person;
 - the name, contact details and head of the relevant entity;
 - details of the allegation;
 - the nature of the relevant entity's initial risk assessment and risk management action,
 - if a report to police has been made, the police report reference number;
 - if a report has been made under **Mandatory Reporting Legislation**, the report reference number; and
 - the names of other relevant entities that employ or engage the employee.

3. Risk Assessment

- a) In addition to considering or making a report under section 2 above, the Safe Church Team and Pastoral Staff must conduct a risk assessment relating to the safety of the complainant or any other children or vulnerable people and take reasonable precautions to minimise those risks.
- b) The Church should be careful not to prejudice ongoing criminal investigations and so there may be a need to initiate risk management without alerting the person subject of the complaint.
- c) Subject to the view of government authorities, if the Church has received a plausible complaint (ie/ not clearly false or vexatious) of Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct involving a Child and the complaint relates to a staff member or volunteer who is engaged in 'child-related work' (in NSW) then the Church Leadership is to suspend the person from such duties while the complaint is considered in accordance with this Procedure.

4. Appointing a person to handle the complaint

- a) Where a matter is to be investigated under this Procedure, the Church Leadership is to appoint a person to handle the complaint (the Investigator).
- b) In appointing the Investigator, the Church Leadership will avoid conflicts of interest (for example where there may be a close personal relationship between the subject of the complaint and the proposed investigator).
- c) For any matters related to any form of harm or abuse of a child, the Investigator should be an external person (unless this is not reasonably practicable and a suitably qualified and independent internal Investigator is available).
- d) Church leaders should contact the Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust (02) 9817 2289 or the Fellowship of Congregational Churches (02) 9588 5128 for assistance in identifying an external Investigator.

5. Providing support

The Church is to ensure that support is provided to both the Complainant and the Respondent, including:

- providing them with a contact person to whom they can direct inquiries about the progress of the complaint;
- offering them a support person; and
- considering providing them with access to counselling and other support services.

6. Investigating the complaint

- a) The Investigator is to investigate the complaint (or concern, or allegation if the investigation arises from information about Reportable Conduct that did not come in the form of a complaint)

- b) In Investigating the complaint, the Investigator is to:
 - act in good faith, without bias and without unreasonable delay;
 - collect and document evidence, including by conducting interviews and taking statements from the complainant and other witnesses; and
 - maintain a record of all relevant evidence obtained and steps taken in the investigation.
- c) If the matter is related to a Reportable Conduct Allegation, the Investigator is to consider matters in division six of the *Children's Guardian Act* (2019) including:
 - the nature of the reportable allegation and any defence;
 - the gravity of the matters alleged; and
 - whether the reportable allegation relates to conduct that is in breach of the Code of Ethics and Conduct, the Code of Conduct and/or accepted community standards.

7. Putting the complaint to the Respondent

- a) The Investigator is to put the complaint in writing to the person whose conduct is subject of the complaint (the respondent).
- b) In doing so, the Investigator is to:
 - set out the complaint with sufficient detail for the respondent to understand the complaint;
 - state the part of the *Code of Conduct* that is alleged to have been breached;
 - set out the potential adverse outcomes for the respondent in the event that there is a finding that the respondent breached the *Code of Conduct*; and
 - provide the respondent with an opportunity to respond to the complaint in writing and within a stated timeframe not exceeding 2 weeks.

8. Putting any further adverse information to the Respondent

If, in the course of the investigation, further adverse information is brought forward in relation to the respondent, the Investigator will:

- advise the respondent in writing of the further adverse information; and
- provide the respondent the opportunity to respond to the information.

9. Investigators findings

- a) The Investigator must provide a written report which sets out:
 - the complaint;
 - the part of the *Code of Conduct* that is alleged to have been breached;
 - the proposed finding
 - the evidence relied upon to make the finding, including the response of the respondent (if any) to the complaint; and
 - a finding about whether the complaint is sustained or not sustained, using the "balance of probabilities" as the standard of proof (for matters relating to child protection concerns, reference should be made to Reportable Conduct Legislation)
 - possible outcomes or consequences that the Church Leadership may consider implementing
- b) If the matter relates to an allegation of Reportable Conduct the Investigator should ensure that the report also sets out
 - information about the facts and circumstances of the reportable allegation;
 - the findings after completing the investigation including an analysis of the evidence and the rationale for the findings,
 - a copy of any written submission made by the employee or volunteer

- any copies of documents in the relevant entity's possession that are relevant to the report, including transcripts of interviews and copies of evidence.
- c) The Investigator's Report will be provided to:
- the Church Leadership; and
 - Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust (welcome@hunhillcongs.org) and the Fellowship of Congregational Churches (contact@tim.foskett@fccaus.org)
- d) A summary of the Investigator's report (considering both confidentiality and procedural fairness) will be provided to the Respondent along with:
- an invitation to respond in writing to the Church Leadership within a defined timeframe
 - written notice of the possible consequences if the Investigator's Report is accepted by the Church Leadership. This may include suspension, termination from duties for volunteers, termination of engagement for staff. It may also require notice to Police, Ombudsman and/or the Office of Children's Guardian, which may impact WWCC clearance.

10. Determination of Complaint and Outcomes

- a) The Church Leadership is to consider the report of the Investigator and to decide whether to accept the finding put forward by the Investigator.
- b) In doing so, the Church Leadership is to consider all relevant material available.
- c) If the Church Leadership makes a determination that a complaint is sustained and the *Code of Conduct* has been breached, they are to determine an outcome for the respondent, which may include, but is not limited to:
 - termination of employment/engagement;
 - suspension from employment/engagement for a period of time; and/or
 - imposing conditions on the employment/engagement.
- d) If the Church Leadership does not accept the Investigator's finding, the Church Leadership should decide whether there is another available finding on the basis of the evidence presented to it, and record written reasons for departing from Investigator's finding (and if relevant, propose an outcome for the respondent as above).

11. Communication of Outcome

- a) The respondent will be informed in writing of the:
 - determination of the complaint
 - any consequences arising from the determination
 - the reasons for the decision
- b) The person who raised the complaint will be informed of the outcome of the complaint.
- c) The Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust and the Fellowship of Congregational Churches will be informed of the outcome of the investigation
- d) If the matter constitutes a **Child Abuse Offence** or other serious criminal offence, a report must be made to the local police station (unless a report has already been made).
- e) If the matter is Reportable Conduct, the 'Head of Entity', must notify the Reportable Conduct Scheme (in NSW, the Office of Children's Guardian) in accordance with Reportable Conduct Legislation, including the:
 - Investigator's report;
 - any deviation made by the Church Leadership from the Investigator's findings, including reasons for the deviation; and
 - the proposed course of action in response.
- f) In NSW, if the matter relates to a finding that a staff member or volunteer has engaged in a **Child Abuse Offence**, Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct involving a Child, the Church is to make a report to the NSWOCG in accordance with WWCC Legislation. The respondent should be provided with written notice of this report having been made.



Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns (NSW)

Adopted by Narellan Community Congregational Church on 19/10/2020

Purpose

The ***Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*** (*the Procedure*) sets out a procedure to follow when a complaint or information about any form of child protection concern is received. In NSW this includes a Child Abuse Offence, Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct involving a Child, or that a child is at Risk of Significant Harm.

The Church and its staff and volunteers have legal obligations to report certain information to government authorities, this includes duties under the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW), *Ombudsman Act 1974* (NSW), *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW) and the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*.

Some of these duties apply to the church as an organisation or to church leaders, some of the duties apply to individuals. In some circumstances, failing to report knowledge of child abuse incidents to NSW Police may be a criminal offence.

Scope

This Procedure applies to all staff and volunteers of the Church.

If you have any doubt as to whether a complaint or information would fall within the scope of the Procedure, or about any of the steps set out in the Procedure, contact the Safe Church Team

The Procedure should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

- *Procedure for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*
- *Safe Church Concerns Form*

1. Receiving a complaint or identifying a child protection concern

A child protection concern may include concerns regarding:

- a child at Risk of Significant Harm
- a Child Abuse Offence,
- Child Sexual Abuse,
- Sexual Misconduct involving a child,
- Physical abuse of a child,
- Serious neglect of a child,
- Behaviour which may psychologically harm the child
- Inappropriately personal or intimate communication and/or behaviours which may constitute grooming
- Exposure of a child to Domestic and Family Violence
- or any other reason for concern.

A child protection concern may be received:

- from a child who has been directly involved;
- from an adult who has been directly involved (including personal disclosures of wrongdoing);
- from another person with information about a child or adult;
- from another organisation with information about a child or adult;
- from staff or volunteers who have concerns based on their observations and interactions with one or more children or adults.

If someone raises a concern or reports an allegation:

- DON'T promise not to report the information
- DON'T ask leading questions
- DON'T attempt to assess the validity of the concern, or seek to investigate any allegation yourself
- DO clarify information reported to you if appropriate (for example, 'Can you tell me more about that?')
- DO assure the person that appropriate action will be taken
- if a child, DO reassure them that they are not at fault and that they will not be in trouble for sharing this information

If a staff member or volunteer has a concern about a child's wellbeing but have not received any specific information they may report the concern using the *Safe Church Concerns Form*.

2. Consider whether there is an immediate danger to a child

Where there is an **immediate** danger to a child

- contact the Police immediately on (131 444 or 000) and report the information;
- follow any instructions given by the Police;
- address any immediate safety needs of others present; and
- organise support for the person who has disclosed the complaint or information.

3. Internal Reporting

a) Complete Safe Church Concern Form

If a staff member or volunteer has or is notified of a child protection concern they should complete a *Safe Church Concerns Form* as soon as possible. This form should include relevant details of the concern, contact information, and the signature of the person completing the form.

b) Notify the Safe Church Team

- If a staff member or volunteer has or is notified of a child protection concern they must inform the Safe Church Team as soon as possible. The Safe Church Team is responsible for ensuring the church fulfils its legal obligations and ensuring that all concerns are managed appropriately.
- If there is any delay before the Safe Church Team can be contacted, the individual should consider whether it is necessary to report their concerns to external government agencies as outlined in step 4 below.
- Staff and volunteers should ensure they do not discuss any concerns raised with the accused person at this point in time. Doing so may impede future investigation processes.
- If the concern raised would create a conflict of interest for a member of the Safe Church Team consider contacting the Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust (02)9817 2289 or the Fellowship of Congregational Churches on (02) 9588 5218 for advice.

4. External Reporting to Government Agencies

a) Safe Church Team responsibilities

The Safe Church Team should

- ensure all necessary reports are made. Reports to different government agencies is required for different purposes and therefore multiple reports may be required.
- keep detailed contemporaneous notes of all information and steps taken.
- should also follow all relevant steps outlined in the *Procedures for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*.

b) Report Risk of Significant Harm to Department of Communities and Justice (formerly known as FACS or DOCS)

- If it is identified that there is a child at Risk of Significant Harm then they are to make a report as soon as possible to the Child Protection Helpline via 132 111 or an e-report.
- If there is any doubt whether a concern would be considered a Risk of Significant Harm then the Safe Church Team should complete the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>
- If the MRG results in 'Immediate Report to the Child Protection Helpline', make a report as soon as possible via 132 111 or an e-report.
- The MRG result may suggest other actions be taken.
- Keep a copy of the MRG report for their records (regardless of the outcome).
- Follow any instructions given by the Department of Communities and Justice on the Child Protection helpline.

23 Child or young person at risk of significant harm

- (1) For the purposes of this Part and Part 3, a child or young person is at risk of significant harm if current concerns exist for the safety, welfare or well-being of the child or young person because of the presence, to a significant extent, of any one or more of the following circumstances—
 - (a) the child's or young person's basic physical or psychological needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met,
 - (b) the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child or young person to receive necessary medical care,
 - (b1) in the case of a child or young person who is required to attend school in accordance with the Education Act 1990—the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child or young person to receive an education in accordance with that Act,
 - (c) the child or young person has been, or is at risk of being, physically or sexually abused or ill-treated,
 - (d) the child or young person is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, the child or young person is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm,
 - (e) a parent or other caregiver has behaved in such a way towards the child or young person that the child or young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm,
 - (f) the child was the subject of a pre-natal report under section 25 and the birth mother of the child did not engage successfully with support services to eliminate, or minimise to the lowest level reasonably practical, the risk factors that gave rise to the report.
- (2) Any such circumstances may relate to a single act or omission or to a series of acts or omissions.

c) Report Child Abuse Offences to Police

- If the Safe Church Team considers that a Child Abuse Offence may have been committed they must report this to the NSW Police regardless of whether the victim of the alleged abuse wants this report to be made.
- The requirement to report to NSW Police includes both recent incidents and allegations of historic abuse. The Safe Church Team should notify the Hunter Hill Congregational Property Trust on (02) 9817 2289 and the Fellowship of Congregational Churches on (02) 9588 5128 of any allegations of a Child Abuse Offence.
- Failing to Report a Child Abuse Offence to NSW Police without a reasonable excuse may be considered a Concealing Child Abuse Offence which is punishable by up to two years imprisonment.

Concealing Child Abuse (Failure to Report) Offence

If an adult fails to report a Child Abuse Offence to the NSW Police this may constitute a Concealing Child Abuse Offence under s316A of the Crimes Act if they:

- believe, know or reasonably ought to know that a Child Abuse Offence has been committed against another person; and
- believe, know or reasonably ought to know that they have information that might be of material assistance to the NSW Police in securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of the person who has committed that offence; and
- do not have a 'reasonable excuse' not to report the information.

Reasonable excuses for not reporting to Police may include

- If you believe (on reasonable grounds) that the information is already known to Police;
- If you have made a Report/ to another government body such as Department of Communities and Justice, Ombudsman or the Office of the Children's Guardian
- If the alleged victim is no longer a child and you have reasonable grounds to believe that the person does not want the information reported to Police;
- If you have reasonable grounds to fear for the safety of the alleged victim or any other person (other than the offender) if the information is reported to Police

d) Report Allegations of Reportable Conduct to the Office of Children's Guardian

Under section 66(2) of the *Children's Guardian Act 2019* churches may nominate a Head of Entity for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme. The Head of Entity would typically be either the paid senior pastor or the chair of the church governance body. The Head of Entity may choose to delegate responsibilities under the Reportable Conduct Legislation to the Safe Church Team in accordance with section 65 of the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*.

In the event of receiving any allegations that any staff or volunteer who is required to hold a Working With Children Check has engaged in Reportable Conduct, the Head of Entity must:

- notify the Reportable Conduct Scheme (administered by the Office of the Children's Guardian) as soon as practicable, but within a maximum of 7 days from receiving the complaint or information (see Section 2.2 of the *Procedures for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*)
- As soon as practicable, conduct an investigation or appoint a suitable person to conduct an investigation regarding the reportable allegation (see Section 6 of the *Procedures for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*)
- Provide a written "entity report" to the Reportable Conduct Scheme within 30 days of receiving information about the Reportable Allegation (see Section 11 of the *Procedures for Handling Complaints Against Staff and Volunteers*)

Children's Guardian Act 2019

20 Meaning of "reportable conduct"

Reportable conduct means the following conduct, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the conduct has been commenced or concluded—

- a) a sexual offence,
- b) sexual misconduct,
- c) ill-treatment of a child,
- d) neglect of a child,
- e) an assault against a child,
- f) an offence under section 43B or 316A of the Crimes Act 1900,
- g) behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

5. Accountability Measures

a) Report back to person making initial notification

- As soon as is practicable (no longer than 48 hours after notification), the Safe Church Team must inform the person completing the initial *Safe Church Concerns Form* of what action they have taken including any reports made and the 'report number' for reports to NSW Police or the Child Protection Hotline.
- If the Safe Church Team determines that it is not necessary to make a report to NSW Police, or the Child Protection Hotline, the person who completed the initial *Safe Church Concerns Form* may choose to make a report to NSW Police, or the Child Protection Hotline themselves in order to ensure that they have not breached s316A of the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW), or obligations under the Mandatory Reporting legislation.

b) Report to Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust and the Fellowship of Congregational Churches

If a Child Protection Concern has been reported to any government agency the Safe Church Team should advise the Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust (email welcome@hunhillcongs.org) and the Fellowship of Congregational Churches email on tim.foskett@fcc.org (Confidential emails) of the matter for the Association's confidential records, and to seek confirmation that the matter has been managed appropriately.

6. Recordkeeping

The Safe Church Concerns Form, Mandatory Reporters Guide report (if completed) and detailed notes of action taken in relation to any Child Protection Concern must be kept secure for a minimum of 45 years.

7. Advice and Support

If you have questions about whether a report should be made please contact the Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust or the Fellowship of Congregational Churches for advice, guidance and support.



narellan community
congregational church

Code of Conduct For Staff and Volunteers

Adopted by Narellan Community Congregational Church on 19/10/2020

Purpose

The Church is committed to creating safe spaces where people can be confident that they will be cared for, nurtured and encouraged as they grow and at the same time, protected from spiritual, physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

As part of this commitment, staff and volunteers are required to sign and abide by this *Code of Conduct*

The *Code of Conduct* sets out the following:

- the ministry commitments of staff and volunteers
- minimum behavioural standards and appropriate boundaries required of staff and volunteers;
- the obligation of staff and volunteers to comply with Safe Church Policy and Procedures; and
- the steps to be taken in the event of a potential breach of this Code.

The *Code of Conduct* seeks to reflect the biblical call to godliness and faithfulness in ministry (eg/ 1 Timothy 3) but it is not intended as a replacement for the Bible as a fundamental guide for faith and practice.

Scope

The *Code of Conduct* applies to all staff and volunteers aged 16 and over

The *Code of Conduct* should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

- *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers*
- *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*
- *Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers*
- *Procedure for Conflict Resolution*

1. Staff and Volunteers are encouraged to:

Nurture their own relationship with God

- join regularly in the life and ministry of the Church;
- study and reflect on the Scriptures in private and in groups;
- pray regularly in private and in fellowship with and for the people and ministry of the Church; and
- give of your time and finances to the work of the Church, as an expression of our gratitude to God.

Nurture healthy relationships:

- treat others with respect;
- love and care for your family (including paying attention to the effect of ministry on them);
- be a team player;
- be accountable
- cooperate with other staff and volunteers
- treat every program participant fairly and equitably
- acknowledge when I am out of my depth, or do not possess the required skill set in difficult pastoral situations (such as helping a victim of abuse, or a person who needs professional counselling), and seek help from the Safe Church Team or a Pastor;

2. Staff and Volunteers commit to:

As a staff member/volunteer of the Church, I promise to:

- a) uphold, support and abide by the *Safe Church Policy*;
- b) respond to reasonable directions from the person with responsibility for the ministry I am involved in;
- c) communicate with integrity, including wise and accountable use of electronic communication, including in accordance with *Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People*
- d) not knowingly make false, misleading, or deceptive statements;
- e) not engage in bullying, harassment, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, of any person including my own family;
- f) not act violently or intentionally provoke violence;
- g) upholding confidentiality; not disclosing any confidential information without the consent of the person providing the information (the exception being where there is a legal obligation);
- h) report concerns about misconduct and/or abuse according to the Church's *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures;
- i) disclose all relevant information as part of completing the *Screening Check Questionnaire* if I have not already done so;
- j) disclose to the Church Leadership if I am investigated for any criminal offences or have any knowledge of serious unlawful activity within the church context.
- k) act with sexual purity, meaning I will:
 - ensure that romantic interactions are meaningfully consensual, with an aim to adhere to biblical principles;
 - give consideration to any power imbalances in intimate relationships.
- l) act with financial integrity, including:
 - not seeking personal advantage or financial gain from our position (other than in wages, recognised allowances and deductions).
- m) not take or use property belonging to others without express consent, including intellectual property (copyright);
- n) not use any prohibited substance and be responsible in my use of substances that may be addictive (eg. prescriptions, alcohol);
- o) avoid ongoing counselling of people with whom I have pastoral relationships; and
- p) make alternative arrangements for pastoral ministry for any person with whom I may develop a romantic or intimate relationship.

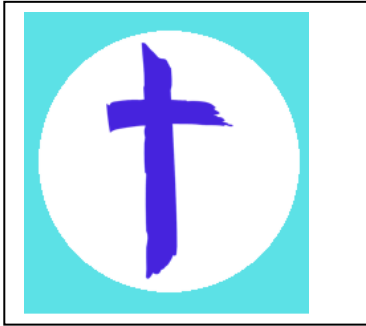
3. ***I understand that if there is a complaint against me relating to a breach of this Code of Conduct:***

- a) and it is a plausible complaint relating to Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct involving a child, the Church may ask me to step aside from my duties while the complaint is being considered; and/or
- b) if the complaint relates to serious misconduct and/or abuse (including Child Sexual Abuse) it will be reported to relevant government authorities in accordance with relevant legal requirements; and/or
- c) I agree to participate in any process initiated under *the Procedure for Resolving Conflict, Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers* and/or *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns* and agree to be bound by the outcomes of any such process, which may include termination of my employment/engagement as a staff member or volunteer with the Church.

I, _____ have read, and agree to be bound by and uphold, the Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers.

Signature	Date	
-----------	------	--

NOTE: the staff member or volunteer should receive a copy of this *Code of Conduct* and the Church should retain the signed and dated copy of the *Code of Conduct* for at least 45 years.



Safe Church Concerns Form

The completed form should be given to a member of your Safe Church Team who will follow the *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*.

This documentation is to be kept in a locked filing cabinet and/or in secure electronic format for at least 45 years from the date of completion.

Please do not discuss the concern with anyone other than the Safe Church Team or your Ministry Team Leader.

If there is immediate danger please contact police immediately.

Church Name: _____

DETAILS ABOUT PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM (either the victim, the person bringing a concern, or the safe church team)	
Name:	
Role:	
Relationship to the victim and/or the person allegedly causing harm:	
Address:	
Email	
Phone:	

DETAILS OF ALLEGED VICTIM (if applicable)		
Name:		
Date of Birth:	Age:	Gender:
Address:		
Parent/guardian name and contact phone number:		

DETAILS OF THE PERSON AGAINST WHOM THE ALLEGATION HAS BEEN MADE (if applicable)	
Name	
Date of birth if known otherwise approximate age:	
Home address:	
Email	
Phone:	
Position/title at time of allegation (if any):	
Is the person aware of the existence of the allegations? Yes / No	

NATURE OF THE ALLEGATION

Provide details of the allegations that were made known to you – what has been alleged, when it was alleged to have occurred, other relevant details (if necessary use additional page/s and attach to this form).

Are there additional pages attached to this form? Yes / No

Number of pages:

Names and contact details of any witness/es:

Have written accounts from witnesses been attached? Yes No If yes, number of pages
(written accounts should be received from each person who received a disclosure or observed a concern, however, do not start an investigation at this stage)

19. Who else knows about the alleged abuse?

Signature (of person bringing concern):

Date:

Sign

Part two - Safe Church Team to complete the following information

In NSW, Mandatory Reporter Guide completed? Yes / No
 If yes, please attach report printout

Other government agencies or departments involved:

Agency	Date	Reference/Event Number	Name of contact
Police			
DCJ (FaCS)/ CYPS			
OCG/Ombudsman			

Contact with HHCPT or FCC
 Date and time:

Emailed copy of Safe Church Concerns Form to Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust (welcome@hunhillcongs.org) & FCC (tim.foskett@fccaus.org) confidential email address

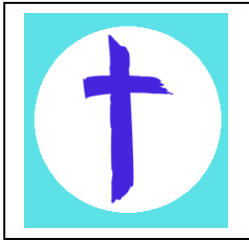
Date and time:

Safe Church Team provides feedback to the person bringing the concern about church response and any reports made. (include tick box and date and time) : Yes / No

Signature of Safe Church Team Member

Date:

Sign



Safe Ministry Screening Questionnaire

For staff and volunteers, aged 18 and over, in leadership or engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults

*Please Note: This is a **sensitive** document that must be stored in a confidential manner accessible only by a limited number of authorised persons.*

PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname:
 Given Names:.....
 Previous Name/s (if applicable):.....
 Date of Birth:/...../..... Male/Female
 Address:
 Phone: Email:
 WWCC Number (if required):
 Do you have any health conditions that we should know about?

Please circle either “YES” or “NO” for each of the following questions. If you answer “yes” to any of the following questions, please give details on a separate page or discuss with the Senior Pastor or the person holding an equivalent leadership role in your church. **A ‘yes’ answer will not automatically rule an applicant out of selection.**

Please note that, if you disclose any potentially criminal actions, the church may need to report this information to the police or other relevant government authorities.

For all staff and volunteers

1. Have you ever been charged with and/or convicted of a criminal offence?	Yes / No
2. As an adult (18+ years) have you ever engaged in any of the following conduct:	
• sexual contact with someone under your care other than your spouse (such as a parishioner, client, patient, student, employee or subordinate)	Yes / No
• use, possession, production or distribution of child abuse material?	Yes / No
• sexual contact with a person under the relevant age of consent	Yes / No
3. To your knowledge, has there ever been any allegations made against you regarding any abuse of a child, physical abuse or sexual misconduct?	Yes / No
4. Have you ever had an apprehended violence order, order for protection or the like issued against you as a result of allegations of violence, abuse, likely harm, harassment, stalking, etc?	Yes / No
5. Have you had a history of alcohol abuse or substance abuse (including prescription, over-the-counter, recreational or illegal drugs)?	Yes / No
6. (if the ministry role may involve driving) Has your driver’s licence ever been revoked or suspended?	Yes / No

For staff and volunteers in pastoral ministry, leadership or engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults

7. Have you ever had permission to undertake paid or voluntary work with children or other vulnerable people refused, suspended or withdrawn in Australia or any other country?	Yes / No
8. Has a child or dependent young person in your care ever been removed from your care by relevant authorities?	Yes / No

CHURCHES YOU HAVE ATTENDED REGULARLY IN THE PAST 3 YEARS

Name of church	Location	When (Month/Year)	Any positions held

REFEREES

Please provide details of two referees who are over eighteen years of age and able to give a verbal report on your character and suitability for ministry. Referees may be part of the church.

Referee 1

Name: Phone:

Referee 2

Name: Phone:

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK AND/OR NATIONAL POLICE CHECK

I consent to * verification of my WWCC number (in NSW, if required)
 * a National Police Check (for staff only)

CONSENT TO HOLD INFORMATION

I consent to the information contained in this application, including any subsequent pages, to be kept by our church. I understand that this information will be kept in a confidential file and used only for screening purposes.

DECLARATION

I,..... sincerely declare that:

- The information I have provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- I understand that if I provide false or misleading information or withhold relevant information from this questionnaire, the church leadership may determine that I am unsuitable to serve in any role in the church.
- I have received a copy of the *Code of Conduct* and am willing to uphold it.

Applicant's signature:Date:

Church Use Only

Safe Ministry Training (SMT) undertaken on: (date) _____

WWCC No. supplied Yes / NA Expiry date _____

WWCC verified by: (name) _____ On (date): _____

Code of Conduct signed on: (date) _____

Interview led by: (name) _____ On (date): _____

Referee Checks conducted by: (name) _____ On (date): _____

Induction led by (name) _____ On (date): _____

Full records of the above processes (including interview notes, referee check comments and induction content) should be kept in the relevant staff or volunteer admin file.



Safe Ministry Screening Questionnaire

For volunteers, aged under 18, engaged in child-related work or work with vulnerable adults

*Please Note: This is a **sensitive** document that must be stored in a confidential manner accessible only by a limited number of authorised persons.*

PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname:

Given Names:.....

Previous Names (if applicable)

Date of Birth:/...../..... Male/Female

Phone/s:

Address:

Email:

Do you have any health conditions that we should know about?

.....

.....

Name of at least one Parent/Guardian:

Contact Phone for Parent/Guardian:

Please circle either “YES” or “NO” for each of the following questions. If the answer to any of the following questions is “yes”, please give details on a separate page or discuss with the Senior Pastor or the person holding an equivalent leadership role in your church.

A ‘yes’ answer will not automatically rule an applicant out of selection.

Please note that, if you disclose any potentially criminal actions, the church may need to report this information to the police or other relevant government authorities.

1. Have you ever been charged with and/or convicted of a criminal offence?	Yes / No
2. Have you a history of alcohol abuse or a history of substance abuse including prescription, over-the-counter, recreational or illegal drugs?	Yes / No
3. To your knowledge, has there ever been any allegations made against you regarding any abuse of a child, physical abuse or sexual misconduct?	Yes / No

CHURCHES YOU HAVE ATTENDED REGULARLY IN THE PAST 3 YEARS

Name of church	Location	When (Month/Year)	Any positions held

REFEREES

Please provide details of two referees who are over eighteen years of age and able to give a verbal report on your character and suitability for ministry. Referees may be part of the church.

Referee 1

Name: Phone:

Referee 2

Name: Phone:

CONSENT TO HOLD INFORMATION

I consent to the information contained in this application, including any subsequent pages, to be kept by our church. I understand that this information will be kept in a confidential file and used only for screening purposes.

DECLARATION

I,..... sincerely declare that:

- The information I have provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- I understand that if I provide false or misleading information or withhold relevant information from this questionnaire, the church leadership may determine that I am unsuitable to serve in any role in the church.
- I have received a copy of the *Code of Conduct* and am willing to uphold it.

Applicant's signature: Date:

PARENT GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

Name of parent/guardian:

Signature: Date:.....

Church Use Only

Safe Ministry Training (SMT) undertaken on: (date) _____

Code of Conduct signed on: (date) _____

Interview led by: (name) _____ On (date): _____

Referee Checks conducted by: (name) _____ On (date): _____

Induction led by (name) _____ On (date): _____

Full records of the above processes (including interview notes, referee check comments and induction content) should be kept in the relevant volunteer admin file.

Safe Church Register

Narellan Community Congregational Church

The Church will maintain a register for all staff and volunteers with information as shown below. An updated version of the register will be produced every 6 months. Both the current as well as previous versions of the register will be kept available in the Church's records.

Safe Church Register NCCC 2021								
First Given Name	Family Name	Date of Birth	Email	Mobile	Position / Ministry Roles	Date of commencement (for new staff and volunteers)	Date Signed Screening Questionnaire	Date Signed Staff & Volunteer Code of Conduct
Chris	Sample	17/03/1988	chris.sample@mydomain.com	0448524438	Sunday School Leader	19/10/2021	12/10/2021	12/10/2021

WWCC						Safe Ministry Information:					
Works with Children?	WWCC Number	WWCC Expiry	WWCC Status Cleared / Barred	WWCC Date Verified	WWCC Type Volunteer / Employee	Safe Ministry Role	Awareness Course Status	Awareness Course Date	Leader Course Status	Leader Course Date	Supervisor Course Status
Yes	WWC0380846E	13/09/2023	CLEARED	15/10/2021	Volunteer	Supervisor	complete	11/09/2021	complete	11/09/2021	complete

Supervisor Course Date	Board Member Course Status	Board Member Course Date	For Pastoral Staff or WHS team only: Date WHS training completed	For Pastoral Staff only: Date signed the NCCC Code of Ethics and Conduct	Date National Police Criminal Record Check received	Notes
12/09/2021	not started	---	---	---	---	---



Ministry Information Form

Church name: Narellan Community Congregational Church

Program name: _____

GENERAL INFORMATION

Participant's name: _____ Date of birth: _____

Parent/guardian name/s: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Dietary issues: Is there anything your child can not eat and/or drink? Yes / No
(If yes, please indicate foods or beverages your child should not consume.)

Medical conditions: Please list any medical conditions or allergies, and any medication or special care they require. If your child is anaphylactic to any substance please provide information regarding EpiPen and management plan

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Emergency Contact 1 Name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Phone: (h)(w)(m) _____

Emergency contact 2: Name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Phone:

(h)(w)(m) _____

- I authorise the leader in charge to arrange for my child to receive such first aid and medical treatment as a trained first aid person may deem necessary.
- I authorise the use of calling an ambulance in an emergency.
- I accept responsibility for payment of all expenses associated with such treatment.

Please read the follow statement and tick the boxes from which you wish to preclude your children:

- I DO NOT give permission for my child to participate in activities outside of the normal meeting complex except where they are within reasonable walking distance.
- I DO NOT give permission for my child to be transported in private cars arranged by the leaders of the group.
- I DO NOT permit photos and video images taken of my child to be displayed in church publications, e.g. website, newsletters, brochures, facebook pages etc.

Transport authority: If I am unable to collect my child at the finishing time they may be transported home from the program with the following people:

Any Restrictions regarding pick up of participant: eg....Court orders. Custody issues: _____

Any other details we should be aware of: _____

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____



Safe Church Team Role Description

Adopted by Narellan Community Congregational Church on 19/10/2020

A person appointed as a Safe Church Team Member should be a mature Christian who has been recruited according to the Procedure for Staff and Volunteers, have a current WWCC clearance and have completed Safe Church Team training in the last 3 years. Close and direct liaison with the Senior Pastor / Senior leader and an ability to maintain confidentiality is essential.

The responsibilities of the Safe Church Team include:

- to provide oversight of the church's Safe Church program, including *Safe Church Policy* and procedures.
- to provide oversight of the management of Safe Church/Child Protection concerns/reports.

Specific Roles:

1. Oversight of Safe Church Policy and Procedures

- Preparing Safe Church Policy and Procedures for the church in line with legal responsibilities
- Implementing *Safe Church Policy* and procedures
- Promoting awareness of and adherence to *Safe Church Policy* and procedures (including ensuring that staff and volunteers have completed National Police Checks, WWCC clearances and Safe Church Team training)
- Maintaining records related to *Safe Church Policy* and procedures
- Report to the Ministry Team meetings as appropriate
- Reviewing *Safe Church Policy* and procedures annually or more often if required due to changing legislation
- Receiving feedback from church leaders, children, families and communities regarding *Safe Church Policy* and procedures
- Overseeing the completion of the 'Safe Church Health Check' every 3 years

2. Management of Safe Church/Child Protection Concerns and Incidents

- Receiving reports of child protection concerns from church staff, volunteers, ministry leaders and/or church members
- Providing support in following the procedure for responding to child protection concerns and incidents
- Making any reporting calls (to Police, Government agencies) as required
- Ensuring reporting in line with relevant Reportable Conduct Legislation
- Ensuring child protection concerns and subsequent responses have been appropriately documented
- Ensuring adequate follow-up and pastoral care of all persons involved in a child protection concern/incident
- Assisting with legal, procedural and risk management issues related to a child protection concern/incident

- Keeping records, filing complaints and reports of investigations in a secure file, in accordance with the record-keeping procedure



Model Work Health & Safety Team Role Description

Adopted by Narellan Community Congregational Church on 19/10/2020

To fulfil their duty of care, we recommend that each local church appoint a Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Team (ideally between 2-4 people). Each member of the WHS team and all paid pastoral staff should complete WHS training.

WHS teams should undertake the free online WHS training and are encouraged to make use of the many other resources provided by Baptist Insurance Services on their website to assist local churches in general risk management and church specific risk management.

The responsibility of the Work Health and Safety Team includes:

- To provide oversight of the church's Work Health and Safety program, including policy and procedures

Specific Roles:

- Develop and implement appropriate WHS policy and procedures including the following:
 - Evacuation and Emergency responses
 - Safe Manual Handling, Visual and Auditory Care
 - Risk Assessments
- Address health and safety concerns within one month of the concern being raised.
- Report to senior leadership team meetings regarding work health and safety and provide reports as appropriate
- Ensure Risk Assessments are completed for all church ministry programs (both onsite and offsite)
- Ensure incident report documents are completed and stored, and that serious or dangerous incidents are notified to Ansvar Insurance as required.
- Undertake a safe environment audit of the church site a least once a year, or more regularly for high-risk areas, ensuring that any concerns are appropriately rectified.
- Any other tasks as advised by Ansvar Insurance.

Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People

This document is provided to assist local churches as they make decisions about specific situations related to ministry with children and young people. In most instances, there are many variables to be considered and it would be inappropriate to formulate a single rule for application across our movement.

Please take the time to consider the underlying principles and consider the guidelines in light of those principles. Your church may choose to have a defined policy about some or all of the matters considered in these guidelines.

Principles

Risk management

It is not possible to eliminate all risk from activities. However, we have a responsibility to be aware of possible risks and to take appropriate action in response. This is what risk assessment involves. Identify possible risks and consider how likely they are, how serious they are and how difficult they are to avoid. For example, a risk of minor injury or inconvenience does not require as much precautionary action as a risk of serious injury.

Never alone

As a general rule, Church staff and volunteers should never be alone in private (outside of line of sight of another person) with any child or young person unless they are family members. This protects the child or young person from risk of harm, and it also protects the leader. This rule is applicable for Church programs and social contact outside of Church programs. Exception may be made for family or domestic arrangements which are distinct from any role at the Church, such as babysitting, if this is authorised by the parent or guardian responsible.

Accountability

Procedures and systems help staff and volunteers to avoid difficult situations with children and young people. This protects the children and young people and also protects the leaders. When making decisions about activities involving children and young people it is important to maintain accountability, this often takes place through visibility (for example clear panels in doors) and communication (for example documented reporting procedures). Documenting any potential incident as soon as possible provides both accountability and protection for those involved.

Awareness

Although your church will need to have procedures in place, it is important for everyone involved in ministry with children or young people to maintain an awareness of potential risks and issues.

Ministry with children and young people involves building relationships of trust, but staff and volunteers should also be aware of the potential for healthy relationships to be misunderstood as an inappropriate grooming relationship. Similarly, staff and volunteers should remain alert to potentially dangerous grooming behaviour by any other staff or volunteer.

Particular issues

Attendance, permission and roll keeping

The two main principles to be worked out are firstly, how you will get permission from parents or carers for children/young people to take part in programs and secondly how you will record who was present (including leaders) at an activity.

Permission could be gained by a registration process at the beginning of each year or when a child/young person joins the program and updated as needed. Additional permission can be requested for specific events. Alternatively, you could ask parents to sign their children into the program each week.

Attendance could be recorded by parents/ carers signing children/young people into an activity or program or where permission has already been given by the marking of a role by program leaders. The leaders who were present at an activity also need to be recorded. Some larger churches have the parents record that the child has arrived at the church service and then when the kid's program begins the children are gathered in the foyer and a role marked before they walk together to their program space.

Both permission/ registration forms and attendance records for every activity/event need to be held on file for at least 45 years.

It is also important to make clear to everyone (children, parents and leaders) the process for children re-joining parents/ carers. (Eg all children are returned to the auditorium at the end of the service, parents come and collect their children, parents need to sign their children out.) This procedure may vary according to the ages of the children. It is important to use a sign-in/ sign out process where there are legal orders around custody of children.

Leader / participant ratios

When determining how many leaders are required for an activity, you should begin by considering how many leaders are needed to build relationship and provide good discipling of children/young people. Once you have considered those factors, you can then go on to consider whether there is an adequate number of leaders to provide supervision and protect children/young people from harm. The exact number of leaders will depend on your setting. How old are the children/young people? What size is the group? What activities are part of the program? What is the layout of your space?

Enough leaders are needed to make sure a space is safe for both the leaders and the children/young people. As a general guideline, you will need a minimum of two fully screened and trained leaders on-site and participating in all programs. If you have more than 16 participants, you should have additional leaders to provide a minimum ratio of 1:8 (one leader for every eight participants). This is a starting point, you will definitely need to adapt this ratio to your specific context. You will need more leaders the younger the children are or if there are children with additional needs or if you are doing a lot of activities outside. For older teens, you may need less leaders depending on the activity/program.

There are other questions to ask as well, like 'how well do we know these children?', 'How familiar are the children with the space and the leaders?' For example a weekly kids club compared with a holiday kids club. For Sunday programs, where is the

room for the children's program in relation to where the adults are listening to the sermon? If one leader gets hurt and the other leader has to go for help, who will supervise the children? You may find you need a lot more than one leader per eight children.

These leadership ratios do not prevent breaking up into smaller discussion groups with one leader or assistant leader in each group, provided there are enough responsible people (who have been screened and trained) in the room to look out for each other, the leaders and the children/young people.

Junior leaders, those who are under 18 years old, can be a wonderful and key part of the team! Junior leaders can take responsibility for many facets of the program - opening the Bible with the kids, planning activities, and leading small groups. However, typically, leaders under 18 will be assistants and not count towards the ratio of leaders to participants. You may decide that a particular 16 or 17-year old has outstanding maturity and is able to take on full leadership responsibilities. In such instances, the individual should be screened and trained (including Creating Safe Spaces training) as though they were an adult volunteer (see the *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers*). Even if they are fully screened and trained, leaders aged 16 or 17 should not lead groups of their own peer group and there should always be at least one adult (over 18 years) leader involved in any program or activity.

Driving

Licences and Drivers

Your church should consider following a consistent policy regarding who may provide transport for church activities. You may wish to institute a 'No P Platers' policy or you may wish to require specific parental consent for travel with young and or P Plate drivers.

You should also be aware of the relevant restrictions on P Plate drivers, such as:

- Between 11 pm and 5 am, P Plate drivers may not have more than one passenger under 21
- detailed restrictions on the cars they are legally allowed to drive
- P Plate drivers may not use mobile phones while driving, **even if** the phone is connected via Bluetooth or a hands-free device
- Ministry leaders require parental consent to transport program participants in cars driven by P Plate drivers

Time alone in cars

No staff member or volunteer should be in a car alone with a child or young person (unless they are family members). Exception may be made for family or domestic arrangements which are distinct from any role at the Church, such as babysitting, if this is authorised by the parent or guardian responsible.

If there are extraordinary circumstances where no one else is available, and the child or young person may be at greater risk of harm if they were not transported in the car, then the time spent alone in the car should be minimized as far as possible and some additional measures may be taken, for example

- the staff member or volunteer receives express permission from the child's parent or carer for the specific occasion;
- a phone call is placed to another leader and maintained throughout the journey (where legal to do so)

If it has been necessary for a staff member or volunteer to spend time alone in a car with a child or young person then the situation and the circumstances giving rise to the situation should be recorded and the Safe Church Team and/or Ministry Leader should be notified.

Overnight activities

Where there are activities involving overnight accommodation, consideration should be given to some of the additional risk factors involved, including

- transport arrangements
- sleeping arrangements
- bathroom configuration
- safety and instruction on activities
- third parties involved
- physical safety of external locations

Decisions regarding these issues will depend on various contextual factors such as the physical location and facilities of the campsite. It is important that a thorough risk assessment, including consideration of the items listed, is conducted and recorded. The list of activities, leaders and sleeping arrangements should also be recorded. These records should be stored, along with permission and attendance records for the event, for a minimum of 45 years.

Social contact

In person communication outside Church programs

Fruitful Christian ministry with children and young people involves healthy, appropriate relationships. This can at times involve contacting them outside of Church programs and can include meeting in person. However, it is important that relationships between staff/volunteers and children/young people are transparent, and that parents, families and program leaders are appropriately informed and have given permission for this contact.

Staff and volunteers, when meeting with a child or young person, should:

- have parental or guardian consent, where practicable;
- meet with them in a public place (for example, a café) in line of sight of other people;
- not have children or young people alone in your home, or visit children or young people alone in their home when no other adult is present; and
- make a record of the time, location, duration and circumstances of any face to face meetings with any child or young person.

Telephone and online communication outside Church programs

For many Church programs, telephone and online communication are a useful tool for building community and pastoral care and support. However, telephone and online communication may be used by those seeking to harm children, young people and vulnerable people. Telephone and online communication may be used to test or step over relational boundaries. We need to be mindful of the positional power dynamic that exists between staff and volunteers and the children and young people under their care.

Contact with all children and young people

- where possible and practical, parents will be informed of any possible telephone or online communication with children and young people;
- staff and volunteer leaders must not engage in any telephone or online communication that:
 - constitutes unlawful discrimination;
 - is harassing, threatening or derogatory;
 - is obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic;
 - is inappropriately personal or intimate;
 - attempts to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else; or
 - is defamatory.

Contact with primary-aged children

- *Telephone contact:* staff and volunteers should first contact parents and then, if appropriate, speak with the child. If the child answers the phone the staff member or volunteer should ask to speak to the parent first and explain to the parent why they are calling. Staff and volunteers should never call a primary-aged child on their mobile phone (unless there is a serious emergency relating to the safety and wellbeing of the child).
- *SMS (or other messaging service) contact:* must be limited to conveying information about Church programs.
- *Online contact:* must be limited to conveying information about Church programs. Staff and volunteers should never communicate directly (privately or one-on-one) with primary-aged children on a social networking site.
- *Email contact:* must be limited to conveying information about Church programs. More significant conversations should be held in person.
- *In-person contact outside of programs:* It is never appropriate to meet primary-aged children socially without written or verbal permission from their parents or carer. It is also important to ensure that a leader is never alone with a child (see the principles above).

Contact with children in Years 7 and 8

- *Phone contact:* staff and volunteers should first contact the parents or carer of the child and then, if appropriate, speak with the child. If the child answers the phone the staff member or volunteer should ask to speak to the parent first and explain to the parent why they are calling. Staff and volunteers should never call a child in Year 7 to 8 on their mobile phone (unless there is a serious emergency relating to the safety and wellbeing of the child).
- *Email contact:* should be limited to conveying information about Church programs and basic encouragement. More significant conversations should be held in person.
- *In person contact outside of programs:* It is never appropriate to meet children in Years 7 & 8 socially without written or verbal permission from the parents and discussing it with your ministry supervisor first.
- Private video calls (skype/facetime) are not appropriate for children in years 7 & 8.
- *SMS (or other messaging service) contact:* must be limited to conveying information about Church programs.
- *Online contact:* Caution must be used when participating with children on social networking sites. You must maintain transparency and be accountable for what you say. You must also take care with the message you intend to communicate through both the words and images you use as it may be perceived differently by those who view it. Staff and volunteers should consider limiting social media contact with children in years 7 & 8, however, if social media contact is made with children in years 7 & 8 the following guidelines are recommended:
 - Limit contact to group discussions that can be read by others.
 - Consider gender dynamics. For example, you should never have a group discussion where the group of students are all of the opposite gender (for example a male leader should not have an online chat with four of the year 9-12 girls).
 - The history of the chat should be kept. Staff and volunteers should not communicate using social media which cannot be retained.
 - Consider privacy settings which prevent personal contacts from seeing or interacting with child contacts connected to your ministry.
 - Ensure any text is beyond reproach and cannot be misconstrued.

- Ensure all photos are beyond reproach and cannot be misconstrued.
- Private contact or conversations with children in years 7 & 8 should be limited to conveying information about Church programs and basic encouragement.

Contact with young people in years 9-12

- *Phone contact:* Phone contact is permissible.
- *SMS (or other messaging service) contact:* is permissible and can include conveying information about Church programs and encouragement (e.g. praying for you this week). Messages should be retained for accountability.
- *Email:* can include logistics and private conversations. If possible, more significant conversations should be held in person. Messages should be retained for accountability.
- *In person contact outside of programs:* Leaders may meet with same gender students or in mixed groups in public places (eg/ café). Parents and the relevant ministry leader should be informed of this meeting occurring ahead of time.
- Private video calls (skype/facetime) are not appropriate, however, group video calls may be appropriate in some circumstances (eg small group bible study context).
- *Online contact:* Caution must be used when participating with young people on social networking sites. You must maintain transparency and be accountable for what you say. You must also take care with the message you intend to communicate through both the words and images you use as it may be perceived differently by those who view it.:

If social media contact is made with young people in years 9 – 12 the following guidelines are recommended:

- Ideally, communicate through group discussions that can be read by multiple other people.
- Consider gender dynamics. For example, you should never have a group discussion where the group of students are all of the opposite gender (for example a male leader should not have an online chat with four of the year 8 girls).
- The history of any chat should be kept. Staff and volunteers should not communicate using social media which cannot be retained.
- Consider privacy settings which prevent personal contacts from seeing or interacting with child contacts connected to your ministry.
- Ensure any text is beyond reproach and cannot be misconstrued.
- Ensure all photos are beyond reproach and cannot be misconstrued.

Model letter to third party entities

Name
Organisation
Address
State Postcode

By email [email address]

Confidential

Dear [Salutation]

Child Safe Standards for Child Safe Organisations: Third Parties

Narellan Community Congregational Church is committed to the safety of all people who attend its activities and services, particularly children. We are interested in the approach to child safety taken by any entity that uses our premises or facilities.

The purpose of this letter is to seek your commitment to uphold the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The NSW Office of Children's Guardian (NSWOCG) has recently indicated that it will introduce legislation to make the Child Safe Standards mandatory for organisations that provide services to children. NSWOCG has indicated that compliance with the Child Safe Standards will be mandatory for any organisation where at least one worker is required to hold a Working with Children Check.

Please confirm your organisation's commitment to upholding the Child Safe Standards by completing the declaration attached.

We are available to discuss the implementation of the Child Safe Standards with you. We are thankful for the services you provide to the community and we look forward to connections between the church and your organisation.

Yours faithfully

[signatory]

Model paragraph to third party entities (alternative to letter)

Paragraph to insert in communication.

[Name of entity] is licenced to use the facilities of Narellan Community Congregational Church, so Narellan Community Congregational Church is interested in the approach [name of third party], takes to matters relating to child safety. We ask that [name of entity] commits to upholding the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Please confirm this commitment in writing. You may wish to use the attached declaration of commitment to the Child Safe Standards.

Please note that a commitment to upholding the Child Safe Standards will now be an essential term of all license or lease agreements regarding use of Narellan Community Congregational Church property or facilities.

Declaration of Commitment to Child Safe Standards

[Name of entity] commits to uphold the following Child Safe Standards*:

1. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved
4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken into account
5. People working with children are suitable and supported
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child-focused
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved
10. Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.

[Name of entity] understands and accepts that compliance with the Child Safe Standards is a condition of any lease or licence to occupy or otherwise use any property or facilities of Narellan Community Congregational Church.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

For more information about the Child Safe Standards please see

<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/become-a-child-safe-organisation/child-safe-standards>.

Model letter to affiliated entities

Name
Organisation
Address
State Postcode

By email

Confidential

Dear [Salutation]

Compliance with legislated child safe standards: Affiliated entities

Narellan Community Congregational Church is committed to the safety of all people who attend its activities and services, particularly children.

As an affiliated entity, we are interested in the approach you take to matters relating to child safety. The purpose of this letter is to draw your attention to:

- the enclosed recommendation 16.35 made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission);
- the enclosed Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission; and
- the proposal by the New South Wales Office of Children's Guardian (NSWOCG) to legislate the Child Safe Standards for all entities that provide services to children.

We ask that [name of entity] reports to Narellan Community Congregational Church on an annual basis regarding their compliance with the Child Safe Standards. This report should detail how the entity is complying with each of the Child Safe Standards. Where there are existing obligations to report to a Government authority about compliance with the Child Safe Standards, it will be sufficient to share this report with the Church.

We hope that shared reporting and responsibility for child safety will demonstrate to both members of the Church, the community, and the broader public that we are united in our efforts to create safe spaces for everyone, and particularly children.

Please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Gruar if you would like to discuss any aspect of this request.

Yours faithfully

[insert signatory name]

Model paragraph for communicating with affiliated entities

Paragraph to insert in communication (as an alternative to the letter to affiliated entities]

In accordance with the Royal Commission's recommendation, Narellan Community Congregational Church is advised to require all affiliated entities to report annually regarding compliance with the 10 Child Safe Standards.

Narellan Community Congregational Church requests that [name of affiliated entity] ensures that a report regarding compliance with the Child Safe Standards is included in their regular annual report to the Church. This report should detail how the entity is complying with each of the Child Safe Standards.

(Royal Commission) Recommendation 16.35

Religious institutions in highly regulated sectors, such as schools and out-of-home care service providers, should report their compliance with the Royal Commission's 10 Child Safe Standards, as monitored by the relevant sector regulator, to the religious organisation to which they are affiliated.

Recommendation 16.35

Religious institutions in highly regulated sectors, such as schools and out-of-home care service providers, should report their compliance with the Royal Commission's 10 Child Safe Standards, as monitored by the relevant sector regulator, to the religious organisation to which they are affiliated.

In responding to this recommendation in a Congregational context, the most appropriate process is for an 'affiliated entity' to report to the local church that it is affiliated with, rather than reporting to the denomination. Notwithstanding this, the local church should also report to the Fellowship of Congregational churches about child protection matters arising within entities affiliated with that local church.

For more information about the recommendations of the Royal Commission please see https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_recommendations.pdf p56

Child Safe Standards

The Royal Commission recommended 10 Child Safe Standards, drawing on its findings and extensive research and consultation about what makes institutions child safe:

1. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved
4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken into account
5. People working with children are suitable and supported
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved
10. Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.

For more information about the Child Safe Standards please see <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/become-a-child-safe-organisation/child-safe-standards>.

NSW Government statement of intent to legislate compliance with Child Safe Standards

The NSW Government has indicated that the Office of the Children's Guardian will have responsibility for the development of a regulatory scheme to make compliance with the Child Safe Standards mandatory for all organisations working with children and young people.

For more information, please see the discussion paper. <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/165/RegulatingChildSafeOrganisationsDiscussionPaper.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y>

Code of Ethics for FCC Ministers and Pastors (NCCC Rules)

In My Own Life:

I will always devote time to seeking the will of God through reading the Scriptures and prayer.

I will endeavour to keep myself physically and emotionally fit.

I will consider the needs of my family as a sacred obligation before God.

I will seek in all ways to be Christlike in my attitudes and actions.

In Relationship to the Church:

I will remember that I am called by the Lord to lead, but also to serve.

I will never violate a confidence given to me.

I will be diligent in my duties as Minister/Pastor, never lazy; but with God as my judge.

I will be Biblical in my preaching, presenting the whole counsel of God, and speaking the truth in love.

I will strive to introduce men and women to Christ, and as His partner, help to build His church.

I will consider my call to the church a sacred responsibility and stand by that decision.

I will seek the unity of the church and resist any attempts to divide.

In Relationship to Other Ministers:

I will be a brother in Christ to my fellow Ministers/Pastors.

I will not seek to build my church at the expense of another Minister/Pastor or church, nor my ego at the expense of another Minister/Pastor.

I will not speak disparagingly of either my predecessor nor my successor.

I will refrain from Pastoral contacts with former parishioners except with the knowledge of the present Minister/Pastor.

In Relationship to the Community:

I will seek to be responsible in my personal finances.

I will seek to build a positive relationship with the Community without sacrificing my ministry to the church.

In Relationship to the Fellowship of Congregational Churches:

I will recognise my duties to the larger fellowship of churches, and seek to support through prayer and action, its aims and objectives.

Code of Ethics for FCC Churches (NCCC Rules)

The Christian Church is the Body of Christ and is destined to be His Bride. Inasmuch as every local church is an expression of the whole body, it is needful for her to be committed to vigilance in all her relationships.

In Relationship to Christ:

Believing that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church:

We will honour and exalt Him in all our relationships and ministries.

We will keep ourselves free from all policies and practices which might tend to mar the beauty of the Bride of Christ.

In Relationship to Fellow Members:

Believing that the local Church is an expression of the Family of God:

We will promote unity among the members of the congregation, resisting all jealousy, rivalry, self-seeking and division which would disturb that unity.

We will "make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification."

(Romans 14:19).

In Relationship to Other Churches:

Believing that the Church is a universal body:

We will attempt to maintain honourable relationships with other churches in the community.

In Relationship to the Community:

Believing that the witness of the Church in the community affects the ministry of that church to the community and reflects on Christ, the Head of the Church:

We will endeavour to keep our dealings with agencies, businesses and individuals honest and above reproach.

In Relationship with the Fellowship of Congregational Churches:

Believing that our membership in the Fellowship of Congregational Churches is not only a privilege, but also a responsibility:

We will fulfil our fellowship, ministry and financial obligations to the best of our ability.

We will uphold the doctrines and principles of the Fellowship.

Guidelines for Prayer Ministry at NCCC

At Narellan Community Congregational Church we seek to create a safe environment for people to receive Prayer Ministry.

Here are some guidelines to ensure we are doing our best to provide this.

- When praying for someone in church please put on one of the prayer ministry lanyards as an identifier that you're a safe person to ask for prayer.
- Always have at least 2 people present when praying for someone.
- To the best of our ability try to have women praying for women and men praying for men. (there may be circumstances when some specifically asks the pastor to pray for them, this is ok)
- Always ask permission to pray for someone, and ask for permission if you feel you need to place a hand on them while you pray.
- Find a place that is private but still open to the public to pray for someone. Don't find a space where no one can find you or see you.
- Take time to listen well to what the person is saying to you
- Always keep confidential the people and things you pray for. The exceptions are when you have permission to share from the person you prayed for. If you feel you will need to report an incident you have prayed for the Pastor or the Police. Or if you feel you need to report something to child protection services.
- Prayer ministry is not counselling. If you feel the person you're praying for needs professional help refer them on to the right organisations.
- If you feel the person you are praying for could use more help in any other way try to refer them to the right organisations/people.
- Do your best to follow up with people you pray for to see if there's anymore need for prayer or help and to find out if the prayers have an answer
- If you are going to be available to pray for people under 18 you must have completed NCCCS child protection course and have a current working with children's check
- If you have any questions or anything you're unsure about anything please talk to the pastor

[Home](#) > [Child safe organisations](#) > [Training and resources](#) > [Child Safe Standards](#)

Child Safe Standards

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommended 10 child safe standards, drawing on its findings, research and consultation about what makes organisations child safe.

These standards come with core components to help your organisation implement each standard.

We have produced [a guide to the Child Safe Standards \(7.5MB\)](#) to support organisations working with children to create, maintain and improve their child safe practices.

[More guides and resources about the Child Safe Standards](#)

In 2020, we conducted a survey to find out how organisations were implementing the standards. **[The findings are available in the Child Safe Survey Summary. \(698KB\)](#)**

1. Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

close

Core components

- a. The organisation publicly commits to child safety and leaders champion a child safe culture
- b. Child safety is a shared responsibility at all levels of the organisation
- c. Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children
- d. Staff and volunteers comply with a code of conduct that sets clear behavioural standards towards children
- e. Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping

2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

close

Core components

- a. Children are able to express their views and are provided opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- b. The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, helping children feel safe and be less isolated
- c. Children can access abuse prevention programs and information
- d. Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns

3. Families and communities are informed and involved

close

Core components

- a. Families have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their child and participate in decisions affecting their child
- b. The organisation engages in open, two-way communication with families and communities about its child safety approach and relevant information is accessible
- c. Families and communities have a say in the organisation's policies and practices
- d. Families and communities are informed about the organisation's operations and governance

4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken in to account

close

Core components

- a. The organisation actively anticipates children's diverse circumstances and responds effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities
- b. All children have access to information, support and complaints processes
- c. The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

5. People working with children are suitable and supported

close

Core components

- a. Recruitment, including advertising and screening, emphasises child safety
- b. Relevant staff and volunteers have Working With Children Checks
- c. All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their child safety responsibilities, including reporting obligations
- d. Supervision and people management have a child safety focus

6. Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused

[close](#)

Core components

- a. The organisation has a child-focused complaint-handling system that is understood by children, staff, volunteers and families
- b. The organisation has an effective complaint-handling policy and procedure which clearly outline roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints and obligations to act and report
- c. Complaints are taken seriously, responded to promptly and thoroughly, and reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met

7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

[close](#)

Core components

- a. Relevant staff and volunteers receive training on the nature and indicators of child maltreatment, particularly organisational child abuse
- b. Staff and volunteers receive training on the organisation's child safe practices and child protection
- c. Relevant staff and volunteers are supported to develop practical skills in protecting children and responding to disclosures

8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

[close](#)

Core components

- a. Risks in the online and physical environments are identified and mitigated without compromising a child's right to privacy and healthy development
- b. The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's code of conduct and relevant policies

9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

close

Core components

- a. The organisation regularly reviews and improves child safe practices
- b. The organisation analyses complaints to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement

10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

close

Core components

- a. Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards
- b. Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand
- c. Best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development of policies and procedures
- d. Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures
- e. Staff understand and implement the policies and procedures

A principle-based approach

Each standard is principle-based and focused on the outcome that the organisation is seeking to achieve by implementing child safe strategies. This focus on outcomes allows flexibility in how the standards are applied in different organisational contexts. The standards work together to emphasise the importance of adopting multiple strategies to address child safety and avoiding an over-reliance on any one strategy.

The child safe standards encompass existing child safety requirements for individuals and organisations such as the Working with Children Check, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and requirements to report information to police and to the Department of Communities and Justice.

Providing support for organisations to understand how these requirements work together to support child safety will be important for implementing the child safe standards.

The child safe standards will help you achieve and maintain a child safe culture.

You can learn more about the Royal Commission's findings and recommendations for making organisations child safe in **Volume 6** of the **Final Report**. Also see our **Child Safe resources page**.

Child Safety Principles

ChildSafe is aligned with the Ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, drawn from the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2018. These Ten National Principles are considered better practice for all organisations working with children. These principles are below.

SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Facts

Child Safety Principles



Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Principle 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Principle 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Principle 6: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

and training.

Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Principle 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

The Principles focus is on harm from sexual abuse, but there are other ways that children can come to harm. ChildSafe has adopted the 10 Principles and extended their definition to help organisations keep the children in their care safe from all forms of potential harm.

Principle 1

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

children and other vulnerable people in their care are kept safe all the time.

The ChildSafe organisation takes a system approach to safety management by concentrating on the conditions under which individuals work and is proactive in identifying potential risks and planning ways to keep the children in their care, safe from harm.

A child safe culture is built through good governance that sees child safety as a priority from the board down, with board policies and procedures implemented throughout the organisation. Strong committed leadership is essential in building and sustaining this culture.

Principle 2

Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

It is important that any organisation working with children or other vulnerable people creates an environment where the participants are empowered to choose whether to participate in each activity and feel that

decisions and are informed about safety approaches.

Principle 3

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

An organisation seeks to involve families and community in its approach to child safety and well-being. This informs parents and carers about safeguarding children and vulnerable people and encourages their feedback and opinions about relevant policies and practices. This can provide further insight into issues and concerns.

Principle 4

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

An organisation should recognise children and vulnerable people's diverse circumstances, empowering children and vulnerable people to participate more effectively. This builds an organisational culture which embraces ALL children.

young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Recruitment and staff development policies, including appropriate screening, are a foundation of child safe organisations. This includes induction training, understanding child safety responsibilities, and appropriate supervision of staff and volunteers. Training and information sharing provide staff and volunteers with the relevant practice tools to better safeguard children and young people.

Principle 6

Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

Complaints processes should be responsive to, and understood by children and vulnerable people, families, staff and volunteers. Complaint processes should be linked to the ChildSafe Code of Conduct.

Principle 7

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and

way of providing staff and volunteers with the knowledge and skills needed to maintain the system of safety and care. It must provide information, ongoing education and training for staff and volunteers that supports child safety practice and prepares them for the role they are required to fulfil.

Principle 8

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

To keep children from harm, organisations need to plan to manage risk, as an important preventative mechanism to reduce the risk of harm in physical and online environments.

Risk management strategies clarify potential risks where adult-to-child or child-to-child interactions occur, or where the physical environment is unsafe.

Principle 9

as the organisation responds to changing conditions and learns from experience. A system of regular review of the organisation's ChildSafe practice ensures that continuous improvement happens.

Principle 10

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Organisations should have a clearly documented policy for child and vulnerable person safety and wellbeing. Thereby all stakeholders, including organisational staff and volunteers, children and vulnerable people and their families and carers, are aware of how the organisation is planning to create an environment that is safe. Documenting and communicating policies and procedures ensures consistent application of child safe practices across the organisation.

References:

Royal Commission, Creating child safe institutions (the 'ten standards'), Jul 2016

Royal Commission, Best practice principles in responding to complaints of child sexual abuse in institutional contexts, Mar 2016

Royal Commission Records and record-keeping practices, Sep 2016

Hear no evil, see no evil: Understanding failure to identify and report child sexual abuse in institutional contexts, Sep 2015

NSW Ombudsmen presentation to CCYP Victoria, Reportable Conduct seminar, Oct 2017

ISO 31000:2009 Risk management – Principles and guidelines

ChildSafe can support your organisation in being able to demonstrate these principles.

FIND OUT MORE

Contact Us

FIND
US

Name

of Users

PO Box

7127

Email

Message

Banyule

LPO,

VIC

Phone

3084

PHONE

Subject

03

9037

6415

MAIL

info@childsafef.org.au

SEND

Not sure what fields to fill?



SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT PROCEDURES:

RECRUITMENT OF PASTORS OR ANYONE ENGAGED IN CHILD RELATED WORK *(section 2, page 2)*

- Must agree to abide by and uphold code of conduct *(Section 6)*
- Must complete Screening Check Questionnaire *(Section 8)*
- Must undergo a National Police & Criminal Record check
- Must have a current WWCC Check
- Pastoral Staff must provide evidence of a relevant completed course

VOLUNTEERS *(section 2, page 4)*

- Elders, Leadership, Team Leaders, anyone engaged in Child related work or working with vulnerable adults
- Must complete the Screening Check Questionnaire *(Section 8)*
- Be interviewed by a Ministry Leader
- Must sign and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct *(Section 6)*
- Provide evidence of completed Creating Safe Spaces training in the last 3 years or agree to complete the online training
- Provide evidence of a WWCC (this needs to be verified prior to commencing role)
- Safe Church Team or Ministry Team Leader to provide induction
- *(See Section 2, page 6 if the volunteer is under 18 years of age)*

RESPONSIBILITY OF RECORD KEEPING

- Pastor and Safe Ministry Team (alongside Administration team)

BREACHES OF CODE OF CONDUCT *(Section 4)*

- Step 1 is to report the matter to the Pastor, Church Elders, Ministry Team, Safe Church Team
- If the matter should be reported to a Government Authority then the Head of Entity (typically Pastor or the Safe Ministry Team should notify the Office of the Children's Guardian within 7 days

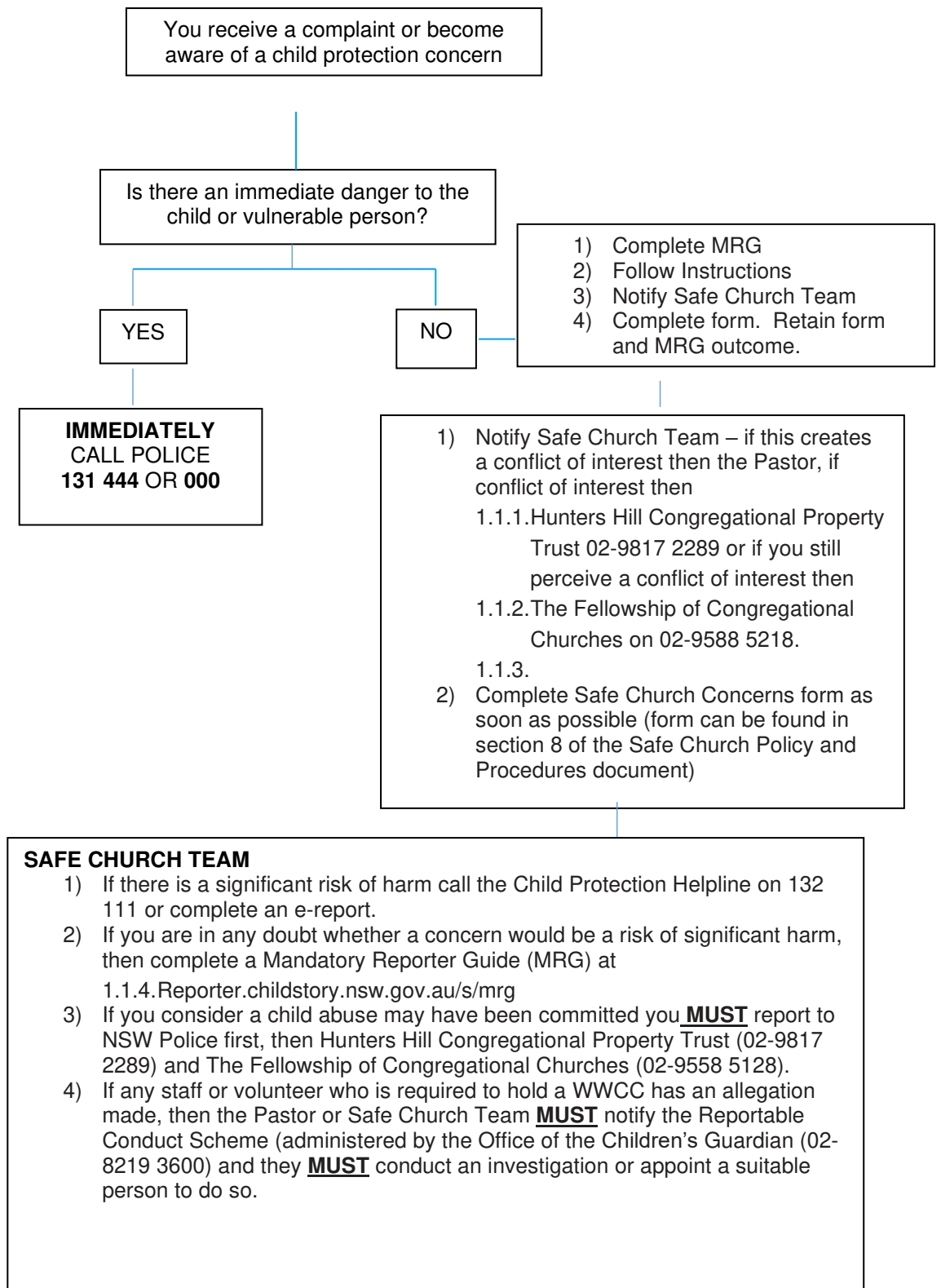
CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES *(Section 5)*

- Where there is immediate danger to a child call Police on 131 444 or 000.
- Safe Church Concerns form to be completed as soon as possible
- Notify Safe Church Team (if this creates a conflict of interest then Hunters Hill Congregational Property Trust on 02-9817 2289 or the Fellowship of Congregational Churches on 02 9588 5218).
- If you or the Safe Church Team determine there is a risk of significant harm they will report to the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111.
- If there is any doubt whether a concern would be a risk of significance then the Safe Church Team will complete a Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg. *(Do this in any case should an incident arise)*
- If the MRG results in Immediate report to Child Protection Helpline, then the report must be made immediately or as soon as practicably possible to the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 or by an e-report.

- If the Safe Ministry Team considers a child abuse offence may have been committed they MUST report to the NSW Police first, the HHCPT on 9817 2289 and the Fellowship of Congregational Churches on 02 9558 5128.
- If any staff or volunteer who is required to hold a WWCC has an allegation made, then the Pastor or Safe Ministry Team must notify the Reportable Conduct Scheme (administered by the Office of the Children's Guardian (02 8219 3600) and they MUST conduct an investigation or appoint a suitable person to do so.

SUMMARY FLOW CHART FOR CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES

See **Section 5** of the Safe Church Policy and Procedures Manual for more detailed information.





narellan community
congregational church

Safe Church Ministry Team Contact Information

Ian Forest-Jones	0408 580 673
Kirrilee Gale	0429 478 860
Lisa Gruar	0414 557 397
Alan Smith	0411 149 639

HELPFUL INFORMATION:

FELLOWSHIP OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

Contact: Margaret (Secretary) / Tim (General Sec)

Postal: PO Box 47s, Bexley South NSW 2207

Phone: (02) 9588 5128

Email: contact@fccaus.org

Confidential Email: tim.foskett@fcc.org

HUNTERS HILL CONGREGATIONAL PROPERTY TRUST

Contact: Helene (Secretary)

Postal: PO Box 132, Hunters Hill NSW 2110

Confidential email: welcome@hunhillcongs.org

P: 02 9817 2289

POLICE: 131 444 or 000

OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN (NSWOCG):

Address: 418A Elizabeth Street, Surrey Hills New South Wales 2010

Phone: 02 8219 3600

Email through website

REPORTING RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM: DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND JUSTICE (FORMERLY KNOWN AS FACS OR DOCS)

CHILD PROTECTION HOTLINE: 132 111

MANDATORY REPORTING GUIDE (MRG):

<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>

OMBUDSMAN:

Level 24

580 George Street

Sydney NSW 2000

Complaint enquiries 9am – 4pm Monday to Friday - Please call first to check your complaint is within our jurisdiction.

Reception hours 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday

Making a complaint

Use our **online complaint form** to submit complaints or refer to **other agencies** that maybe able to assist you.

Other enquiries

Email: **nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au**

Phone Numbers

02 9286 1000

1800 451 524 regional/charges may apply on mobile phones

Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS) 131 450

If you are deaf, have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service:

- Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 02 9286 1000.
- **NRS Internet relay** users connect then ask for 02 9286 1000.

SAFE MINISTRY TRAINING:

<https://narellancong.safeministrycheck.com.au/start/>

There are a number of courses available.

You will need 2 referees. One from Church and one external. You will need their names, email and phone numbers. These people will receive an email to which they can open and verify they know you and if they have no concerns or if they do, then a phone call will follow.

There are two selections on the first screen depending on your level of involvement.

- 1) I'm a volunteer/leader

This will take you through to the following Courses:

Safe Ministry Leaders Course (relevant to Team members, ie anyone working in any leading capacity, eg creche workers, Sunday school helpers, Youth workers)

Safe Ministry Supervisors Course (relevant to Team Leaders, ie Girls Zone, Hospitality, Crech, Youth Ministries)

Safe Ministry Board Members Course (relevant to Ministry Team, Elders, Paid Ministry Workers, Pastors)

Click on the relevant course and simply fill out your personal information to begin the course. You will be able to print a certificate at the end of the course and you will receive an email confirming you have completed the course.

- 2) I'm a member – (relevant to anyone who is a member or part of our congregation)

1.1.1.

1.1.2. This will take you through to the Safe Ministry Awareness Course. Simply fill out your personal information to begin the course. You will be able to print a

certificate at the end of the course and you will receive an email confirming you have completed the course.

1.1.3.

Click on the appropriate level for you to take you through to the relevant courses.



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congregational church

Safe Church Online Training Courses

These courses can be accessed through the following address:

<https://narellancong.safeministrycheck.com.au/start/>

You will be able to longon under the relevant tab

Sign in...

I'm a volunteer/leader
If you're involved in serving people at Narellan Community Congregational Church please login below as a leader...

Leader Login...

I'm a member
If you're not involved in serving people at Narellan Community Congregational Church please login below as a member...

Member Login...

You will be asked for the following information:

First Name

Middle Name

Surname

Mobile

Email

Date of Birth

The following available courses will show:

Members Awareness Course – this is for both Church members and for any of the congregation who are not members.

Leaders Course – This is for anyone who assists in ministry in any leading capacity. Ie..assistant in Girls Zone, Creche helper, Youth leader

Supervisors Course – This is for people who head up Ministries and are ultimately responsible for what happens in that ministry.

Board Members Course – This is for anyone on the Ministry Team or anyone who is an Elder.

Leader Screening – this one is for you if you have already completed a Safe Ministry Training Course elsewhere. You will need to provide the name of the course and the date or approximate date of when you completed it. Then proceed as directed.

narellan community congregational church

Making a difference, in us and through us, now and always!

CONGREGATIONAL RULES and PROCEDURES LEADERS

1. PASTOR

1. In the event of a vacancy in the Pastorate, the nomination of a candidate will be entrusted to the Elders Team and to such members of the church as they may request to act with them.
2. The selection process shall include a written application addressing the requirements of the Narellan Community Congregational Church (NCCC), the provision of appropriate references, an interview and then sermons and interaction at three worship services.
3. The Elders, having agreed upon a candidate, will provide notice of an extraordinary meeting for the purpose of calling a Pastor. This will be communicated at the worship services for 3 weeks prior to the meeting taking place. The election will be by secret ballot. The quorum will include absentee votes and consist of no fewer than 67% of members on the roll. 75% of the votes in favour of the nomination will be required to secure election. The final decision of the church respecting any one candidate will be made before another is introduced.
4. Absentee voting is permitted, provided the vote is submitted on a form which contains the text to be voted on and delivered to the chairperson of the meeting or emailed to the church office, 24 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting. An absentee vote is one cast by someone who is unable to attend the congregational meeting but is familiar with the content of the vote.
5. The key responsibilities for the Pastor are the implementation of vision, leadership and teaching. A comprehensive description is given in the separate '**Qualities and Responsibilities**' document.
6. The accountability structure for the Pastor is the Elders Team but also includes external supervision.
7. The Pastor's job is reviewed by the Elders and the Ministry Team after the first 6 months and then every 3 years from the date of initial employment. The standard review process involves an interview and opportunity for two way feedback. The Elders and Ministry Team will then take any necessary feedback to the congregational meeting.
8. The Pastor may resign by giving 1 to 3 months' notice in writing.

9. After consultation with the church at a congregational meeting, the Pastor's term of office may also be terminated by 1 to 3 months' notice, given in writing by the Elders Team (excluding the Pastor).

10. In the case where the Pastor has to step down due to moral failure or inability to perform the role, the Elders and Ministry Team will exercise discretion in determining the date of closure of ministry. This would include dispensing with the requirement of 1.9.

2. ELDERS

1. The Elders Team will consist of the Pastor and voting members of the congregation who are recognised as having pastoral and leadership gifts. Together they will have primary responsibility for the pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the congregation. There will be 2 to 10 people elected, with 6 as the optimum.

2. In the event that the position of the Pastor is vacant, the primary responsibility for leadership will devolve to the Elders' Team. In all decisions made, the Ministry Team will be regularly and directly consulted.

3. The key responsibility of the Elders Team is the discernment of where God is leading. They will keep the congregation heading towards its Vision and Mission. They will act in discerning the spiritual condition and pastoral needs of the church. The Elders Team and the Ministry Team will engage when needed in decision-making. A comprehensive description is given in the separate '**Qualities and Responsibilities**' document.

4. The term of election is for 3 years on a rotating schedule, ideally with 2 Elders' positions being reviewed each year. The review will occur in September of each year or another suitable time.

5. The election of voting members to the Elders Team will take place at a congregational meeting or at an extraordinary meeting specifically called for that purpose. Nominations for the Elders Team will be by the existing members of the team with the review team. Nominations will be communicated at the worship services for 3 weeks prior to the meeting taking place. The election will be by secret ballot. The quorum will include absentee votes and consist of no fewer than 67% of members on the roll. 75% of the votes in favour of the nomination will be required to secure election. The final decision of the church respecting the nominated candidates or candidates will be made before others are introduced.

6. Absentee voting is permitted, provided the vote is submitted on a form which contains the text to be voted on and delivered to the chairperson of the meeting or emailed to the church office 24 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting. An absentee vote is one cast by someone who is unable to attend the congregational meeting but is familiar with the content of the vote.

7. The review of an Elder's performance after 3 years will be carried out by the Pastor and the Review Team, as described in 2.4. Each Elder would have the opportunity to stand down, or seek re-election with the support of the Review Team.
8. When a position opens up, the Review Team will search for a new nominee Elder. Nominees would then be forwarded to the congregational meeting for voting. The standard review process involves an interview and opportunity for two way feedback.
9. Suggestions regarding nominations for the Elders Team will be welcomed from members of the congregation.
10. An Elder's term of office may be terminated by giving 1 month's notice in writing by the Elder. The Elder's term of office may also be terminated by 1 to 3 months' notice, given in writing by the Elders Team, after consultation with the church at a congregational meeting.
11. In the case where an Elder has to step down due to moral failure or inability to perform the role, the Elders and Ministry Team will exercise discretion in determining the notice period. This would include dispensing with the requirement of 2.10.

3. MINISTRY TEAM

1. The Ministry Team has primary responsibility for the facilitation and administration of the various organisations and ministries of the church. The Ministry Team is made up of voting members and is primarily responsible for the running of the church. They are responsible for budget, property, safety, Standard Operating Procedures, administration, Child Protection and other issues as required. The Elders Team and the Ministry Team will engage when needed in decision-making. A comprehensive description of the various roles is given in the separate '**Qualities and Responsibilities**' document.
2. The Ministry Team is not a representative team. The members of the Ministry Team will nominate a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer from Team members. The chairperson will have a vote on any issue. The Ministry Team will have the ability to co-opt people into teams eg. a finance team and a property team that report to the Ministry Team.
3. The Chairperson will not be the Pastor. The Chairperson is the person that church members can go to if there are serious personal, legal and spiritual issues with the Pastor or other staff.
4. The Pastor, where possible, will attend all meetings of the Ministry Team.
5. All Ministry Team actions are to be carried through with open communication, with reports to the congregation, as appropriate.

6. The Ministry Team will have no less than 6 and no more than 10 people. The Ministry Team is able to invite other people to meetings as needed.
7. The term of election is for 3 years on a rotating schedule, ideally with at least 2 Ministry positions being reviewed each year. The review will occur in September of each year or another suitable time.
8. The election of voting members to the Ministry Team will take place at a congregational meeting or at an extraordinary meeting specifically called for that purpose. Nominations for the Ministry Team will be by the existing members of the team with the Review Team. Nominations will be communicated at the worship services for 3 weeks prior to the meeting taking place. The election will be by secret ballot. The quorum will include absentee votes and consist of no fewer than 60% of the members on the roll. 75% of the votes in favour of the nomination will be required to secure election.
9. Absentee voting is permitted, provided the vote is submitted on a form which contains the text to be voted on and delivered to the chairperson of the meeting or emailed to the church office 24 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting. An absentee vote is one cast by someone who is unable to attend the congregational meeting but is familiar with the content of the vote.
10. The review of a Ministry Team member's performance after 3 years will be carried out by the Pastor and the Review Team, as described in 3.7. Each Ministry Team member would have the opportunity to stand down, or seek re-election with the support of the Review Team.
11. When a position opens up, the Review Team will search for a new nominee Ministry Team member. Nominees would then be forwarded to the congregational meeting for voting. The standard review process involves an interview and opportunity for two way feedback.
12. Suggestions regarding nominations for the Ministry Team will be welcomed from members of the congregation.
13. A Ministry Team member's term of office may be terminated by giving 1 month's notice in writing by the Ministry Team member. The Ministry Team member's term of office may also be terminated by 1 to 3 months' notice, given in writing by the Elders Team, after consultation with the church at a congregational meeting.
14. In the case where a Ministry Team member has to step down due to moral failure or inability to perform the role, the Elders and Ministry Team will exercise discretion in determining the notice period. This would include dispensing with the requirement of 3.13.

4. REVIEW TEAM

1. The Review Team will consist of the Pastor and 2 voting members from the congregation
2. The Elders Team will nominate 2 voting members, to be elected at the Annual General Meeting or a Congregational Meeting.
3. The term of election is for 1 year.
4. The Review Team will be responsible for nominations and reviews of the Elders, Ministry Team members and Congregational Representatives.

5. MINISTRY LEADERS

1. Ministry Leaders are those persons who lead or conduct any ministry within the church. Ministry Leaders will be supported by, report to and be accountable to the Pastor.

6. CONGREGATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES ON THE PROPERTY TRUST

1. Congregational Representatives are those persons elected to represent the congregation on the Property Trust (PT), according to the provisions of the *Hunters Hill Congregational Church Property Trust Act 2013 No 67*. Congregational Representatives are required to be voting members of the congregation.
2. Nominations for the election will be made by the Review Team, when needed, in the 2 month period directly preceding the Annual General Meeting, but not within the 3 weeks directly before the meeting.
3. The term of election is for 1 year. The review will occur in September of each year or another suitable time.
4. The review of a congregational representative's performance after 1 year will be carried out by the Pastor and the Review Team, as described in 3.3. Each Congregational Representative would have the opportunity to stand down, or seek re-election with the support of the Review Team.
5. Nominations will be communicated at the worship services for 3 weeks prior to the meeting taking place. The election will be by secret ballot.
6. Absentee voting is permitted, provided the vote is submitted on a form which contains the text to be voted on and delivered to the chairperson of the meeting or emailed to the church office 24 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting. An absentee vote is one cast by someone who is unable to attend the congregational meeting but is familiar with the content of the vote.

7. MINISTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS

1. All property belonging to the ministries and organisations will be deemed church property.
2. All ministries and organisations of the church, or any one bearing its name by agreement, will be directly accountable to it.
3. An audited annual financial report will be provided at the second congregational meeting each year. The budget for the forthcoming year will be presented at the Annual General Meeting.
4. The Pastor, or his nominee, will be an ex-officio member of all organisations and ministries connected with the church.
5. The assets and income of the Narellan Community Congregational Church shall be applied solely to the furtherance of its mission and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the organisation except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation.
6. In the event of the Narellan Community Congregational Church being dissolved, the amount that remains, after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, shall be transferred to the Hunters Hill Congregational Church Property Trust Board (PT), which likewise, is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members.

MEMBERSHIP

8. MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership of Narellan Community Congregational Church is open to all persons, at least 16 years of age, who are able to share their testimony in an appropriate way for them. They must believe in Jesus Christ, acknowledging him as their Lord and Saviour and profess to beliefs in harmony with the Narellan Community Congregational Church 'Statement of Faith' and 'Values' documents. Water baptism by full immersion is encouraged as a further outcome.
2. Accepting the 'Membership Commitment' confirms the commitment by the individual to the church in the areas of worship, service, fellowship and giving.

9. CANDIDATES

1. Candidates for membership apply to the Elders Team. Candidates will be subject to an interview and/or a waiting period as deemed necessary by the Elders Team.
2. Candidates will be required to meet with the Elders' Team and accept the Membership Commitment by signing.
3. New voting members will be formally welcomed into membership at

the next congregational meeting.

10. CHURCH ROLL

1. The names of all church members will be recorded on the Narellan Community Congregational Church roll. Applying for membership indicates acceptance of this condition. The Elders will amend the church roll with additions and deletions as necessary and once per year in September, or another suitable time for the Annual General Meeting.
2. As part of the church roll, a supplement will record church members who remain in membership without the ability to fulfill all membership responsibilities. The church members recorded in the supplement will not have voting privileges nor be included in quorum calculations.
3. A member may remain on the supplement roll for 12 months. They may then be removed at the Elders' discretion.

11. RESIGNATION

1. A resignation from membership will be provided to the Elders Team, where possible, in writing. The member's name will be deleted from the church roll.
2. Should a member not provide a letter within a year, that person will be removed from the Church Roll.

12. DISCIPLINE

1. Should any case of breach of membership responsibilities occur, the matter will be investigated by the Elders Team, seeking to restore the member by the application of Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1.
2. If this fails, the Elders Team will remove the member from membership. This will be communicated to the congregational meeting. The member's name will then be deleted from the church roll.

MEETINGS

13. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

1. The church members will meet together as the gathered body of Christ in a spirit of prayerfulness to determine the mind of Christ in matters appertaining to the work, worship and welfare of the church. Regular worshippers may also attend and observe proceedings.
2. The Annual General Meeting shall be held each year within the 2 month period directly preceding the Annual General Meeting of the PT. This meeting shall conduct the election of congregational representatives to the PT in addition to ordinary business.
3. The Ordinary congregational meetings shall be held quarterly or as otherwise arranged.
4. Notice of the Annual General Meeting and Ordinary congregational meetings will be communicated at the worship services for 3 weeks prior to the meeting taking place.
5. Unless otherwise stated in these congregational rules, the congregational meeting can only transact church business with a quorum that will include absentee votes **for nominated issues** and consist of no fewer than 50% of the members on the roll.
6. Unless otherwise stated in these congregational rules, a motion can only be passed if it gains at least 51% of the votes received.
7. Unless otherwise stated in these congregational rules, voting may be by the voices or by show of hands.
8. All fractions of whole numbers to be taken 'UP' to the next whole number.
9. Absentee voting is permitted, provided the vote is submitted on a form which contains the text to be voted on and delivered to the chairperson of the meeting or emailed to the church office 24 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting. An absentee vote is one cast by someone who is unable to attend the congregational meeting but is familiar with the content of the vote.

14. EXTRAORDINARY CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

1. The Elders Team may call an extraordinary congregational meeting at any time. No other business other than that stated shall be dealt with.
2. An extraordinary congregational meeting may be similarly called at the request of at least 4 voting members after stating the nature of the business in writing to the Elders, with no fewer than 3 weeks' notice.

15. BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED

1. A representative of the Elders or Ministry Team shall introduce the business to the congregational meeting.
2. Should members wish to introduce new business, they must give the Elders Team no less than 7 day's notice prior to the commencement of the meeting. Should any members at the meeting object to the member's business being discussed, eg. business of a controversial nature, it may, on vote, be held over till the next congregational meeting.
3. If a member of the congregation has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a matter being considered, or about to be considered, that member must, as soon as possible after the relevant facts have come to the member's knowledge, disclose the nature of the interest to the Elders. After disclosure, the member must not be present during any deliberations with respect to the matter, or take part in any decision or vote at the congregational meeting.
4. Minutes are to be kept of the proceedings of each meeting and must include at least; all motions put to the meeting; amendments to such motions; the names of the movers and seconders of those motions and amendments; and the resolutions passed by the meeting. Minutes may be released prior to request or will be issued on request.

16. ALTERATIONS TO THIS DOCUMENT

1. Alterations or additions to congregational rules can only be made at a congregational meeting.
2. Notice of any proposed change to congregational rules will be communicated at the worship services for 3 weeks prior to the meeting taking place. The quorum will include absentee votes and consist of no fewer than 67% of members on the roll. 75% of the votes in favour of the nomination will be required to secure acceptance.

17. ACCESS TO CONGREGATIONAL RULES

A copy of these Congregational Rules is to be available on the church website, according to the provision of section 47 of the HHCCPT Act.

47 (2) Without limiting the manner in which congregational rules must be made publicly available, a copy of the rules must be published on the website of the Church (see section 30 (g)).