

city on a hill

EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Children's Policy Statement

City On A Hill Evangelical Church Trust is required to have policies on children's work for the following reasons:

1. To protect children from abuse and harm.
2. To protect the organisation and its people against liability.

This policy document has been developed to ensure that these two governing criteria are met.

City On A Hill is committed to the following principles:

- Acting at all times in the best interests of the children to whom it provides a service.
- Dealing with abuse, suspected abuse or disclosure of abuse in a timely fashion.
- Valuing the family's role in caring for and protecting the child, whilst prioritising the child's safety.
- Ongoing open communication and transparency with parents.
- Providing appropriate support for families in cases of suspected child abuse.
- Ensuring any disclosures about alleged abuse are acknowledged, investigated and appropriate action taken to ensure the safety of the child.
- Complying with all relevant legislation.
- Ensuring children and staff have access to appropriate medical, psychological and legal services and support.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers involved in children's work within the organisation undergo a robust orientation and training programme, including policy and child safety.

2. Children's Work Policies and Procedures

2.1 Policy Introduction

The above principles will be enacted through the policies that follow.

This policy document applies to all children who are served by this organisation as well as staff and volunteers who come into contact with children at City On A Hill in the course of their ministry.

This policy document will be managed by the Senior Pastor of City On A Hill or by his delegated authority.

2.2 Scope

The Policy and Procedures contained herein apply to:

- All ministries authorised by or under the control of City On A Hill, including those ministries undertaken at the church's premises or away from the church's premises.
- All leaders within the church or engaged by the church.

2.3 Authority

These are the Policy and Procedures of City On A Hill and were first adopted for use by the City On A Hill Administration Team on May 28th 2016.

The City On A Hill Administration Team is committed to implementing the Policy and Procedures and training our leaders in its content and application.

2.4 Definitions

Child Any person under the age of 18

Abuse Can consist of one or more but is not restricted to the following:

Physical abuse – Any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as:

- Hitting, punching, kicking
- Shaking (particularly infants)
- Burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair
- Alcohol or other drug administration

Sexual abuse – Any sexual act or threat to perform such upon another person. It occurs when a person uses their power and authority to take advantage of another's trust to involve them in sexual activity. It does not necessarily involve genital contact but is any act which erodes the sexual boundary between two persons. It may appear consensual but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential.

Emotional abuse – The chronic attitude or behaviour of one person which is directed at another person or the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a child's development, self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include: devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising or chronic and extreme domestic violence in the child's presence.

Spiritual Abuse - The abuse of positions of 'spiritual authority'. When power or control is exercised beyond the appropriate boundaries of such authority. This can happen when spiritual authority is

misused to manipulate peoples' emotional responses (such as fear, guilt or shame) or loyalty, for the benefit of the church, institution or of another individual. Spiritual abuse may also include or underlie other forms of abuse such as sexual, physical, verbal, psychological or emotional abuse when these take place within the context of a religious organisation.

Neglect – Characterised by the failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a child's development.

Administration Team The committee responsible for oversight of the financial and legal obligations of City On A Hill Evangelical Church Trust. It consists of elected members, Trustees and the Senior Pastor.

Helper Any unpaid person over the age of 16 who is invited by a leader to assist them in their ministry on an ad hoc basis. A helper might, for example, be a parent who is assisting a leader due to the unavailability of enough leaders for a given week.

Leader Any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is directly responsible for the control and safety of children placed in their care whilst holding a formal position in a recognised children's ministry of the church. A Leader could include, but is not limited to:

- Youth group leaders
- Sunday School teachers (Kids church)
- Crèche Supervisors
- Kid's club leaders

Member Any person, including children, who attends or participates in City On A Hill ministries.

Ministry Any organised activity that is authorised by City On A Hill Church.

Ministry Coordinator The person recognised and authorised by the church as head of an area of children's ministry.

Ministry Supervisor The Leader who has oversight and responsibility for a particular group of children, Leaders and Helpers on a particular day.

Children's Worker Any person working with children.

Child Advocate One of these people must be informed of any accusations of abuse as soon as possible. These people are Andrew Southerton, Senior Pastor, Erin Robinson, Ministry Coordinator, or Shona Bellringer, Trustee of City on a Hill Evangelical Church Trust.

3. Policy Review

The Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually. The City On A Hill Administration Team will inform the ministries involved when the date of review will occur. Changes recommended by the ministries should be submitted in writing to the Executive for consideration one month before the review date.

Any proposed changes will be submitted to the Executive for approval before being implemented.

4. Selection and Screening of Children's Workers

4.1 Leaders

4.1.1 Application Process

Leaders will be required to provide relevant referees and experience as well as consent to relevant checks.

4.1.2 Police Vetting

All Children's Workers must be vetted through City On A Hill by the New Zealand Police. For the worker to be approved the vetting must provide a result suitable for the nature of the work being undertaken.

4.1.3 Training

Within 3-6 months of commencing, all Children's Workers must undertake training to become familiar with the Child Protection Policy and Procedures as well as reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements.

4.1.4 Agreement to Guidelines for Children's Ministries at City On A Hill

All Children's Workers must sign and date that they have read and understood Appendix 1 and 3 at the end of this document. The Ministry Coordinator will need to receive a signed copy of this before the Worker may commence ministry.

4.1.5 Approval Given

Approval to undertake children's work is only to be given on the basis of the above conditions being met.

Approval is to be given verbally and indicated publicly by a t-shirt to be worn by the Children's Worker while undertaking children's work or as directed by the Ministry Coordinator. A list of approved Children's Workers will be kept on file by City On A Hill.

4.1.6 Reference Documents

At all times full records are to be kept of signed and relevant documents. This includes: key role descriptions, incident registers, Police check forms and induction/training records.

4.2 Helpers

Helpers are expected to have an awareness of the content of the Child Protection Policies and Procedures of the church and be prepared to work within them.

Any Helper who provides assistance in a children's ministry must be supervised by a Leader and will be accountable to that Leader.

Leaders who accept the assistance of a Helper must be satisfied of the Helper's maturity and the suitability for children's ministry.

4.3 Discipline of Leaders

In the event of a Children's Worker being found to have acted in an inappropriate manner (not regarded as abuse) while working with children, City On A Hill will take appropriate measures to help prevent repeat behaviour by the said Children's Worker.

5. Safe Environment

Incidents of abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons, two Leaders will always be present when working with or supervising children.

Leaders will not visit children in their homes unless a parent is present or another Leader accompanies them.

When transporting children, every effort should be made for Leaders not to be alone with a child in a car. Where this is not practical, Leaders will take children directly to and from arranged venues without deviating.

All personal counseling is to be carried out within sight of another Leader.

Leaders will respect a member's feelings and privacy when engaging in physical contact of any kind.

Adults and children are expected to respect each other's privacy during activities that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes. Leaders will set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations. No Leader will be alone in a room with a child while either is changing.

All aspects of every child-related program will be open to observation by parents/guardians.

Leaders have a right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at child-related activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request.

6. Obligations

6.1 Spiritual

The core beliefs of City On A Hill require us to treat all people with love and dignity and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

6.2 Legal

The Church and its Leaders are subject to New Zealand legislation and principles established through common law. See Appendix 2 for an outline of legal obligations.

6.3 Ethical

Some actions may not be regarded as Abuse but are nonetheless unacceptable behaviour for church leaders. These include:

- Inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature.
- Coarse language, especially that of a sexual nature.
- Suggestive gestures or remarks.
- Jokes of a sexual nature.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Inappropriate literature (e.g. PG, M, MA, R or X rated material used with young children).
- Recording or filming without prior consent.
- Acts of violence committed by a Leader in the course of an activity.

The age of individuals is recognised as one of the determinants in deciding what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. Ministry Supervisors will ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

7. Risk Management

7.1 Guidelines for Specific Children's Ministries

Safe practice policies for Children's Workers undertaking children's work are to be found in the appendices relevant to each ministry. This includes information on the policies and protocols which govern the children's work including safe toileting, communication with parents and the managing of complaints.

7.2 Publicity

7.2.1 Photography

From time to time, photos will be taken of children during Church activities. These will not be used publicly without parental consent.

7.3 Responding to Allegations of Abuse

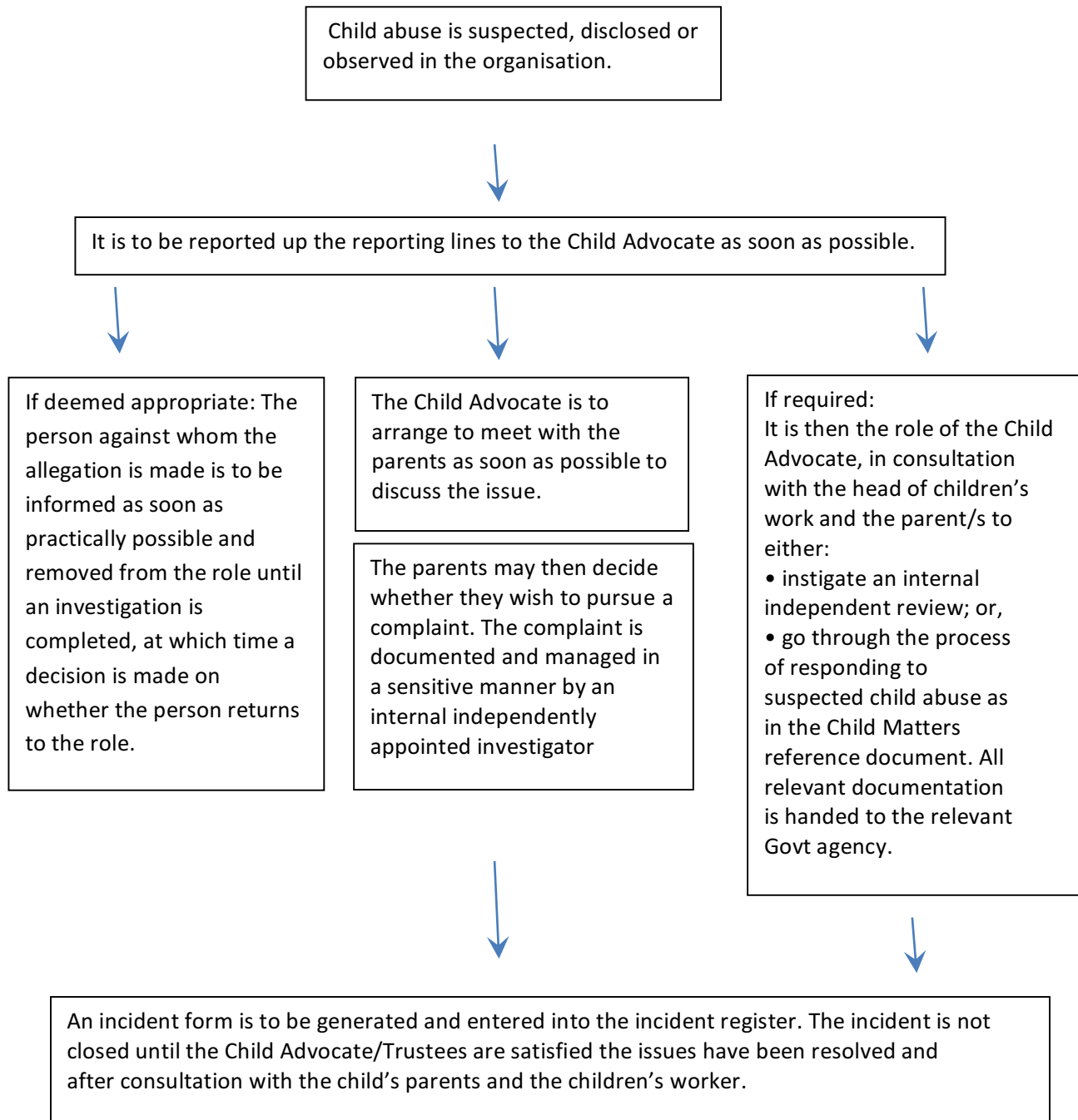
This section applies to all allegations of abuse, whether against Children's Workers, staff, parents, or other parties.

The external process for reporting is the "Child Matters Sample Process for Responding to Suspected Child Abuse". The internal process will be as per the City On A Hill Evangelical Church Trust Internal Abuse Reporting Procedures flowchart (see Appendix 1).

At all times appropriate levels of confidentiality must be maintained as per the relevant legislation.

APPENDIX 1

City on a Hill Church Trust Internal Abuse Reporting Procedures



APPENDIX 2

Legal Obligations

Below is a précis of legislative requirements with respect to Child Abuse that apply in New Zealand. Every attempt has been made to ensure this information is accurate. However a review should be undertaken regularly to ensure the information remains correct and current.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Legal definition

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

The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act became law in 1989. In January 1995, more than forty changes were made to that Act with the passing of the Amendment Act. Probably one of the most significant changes of concern to the public dealt with the issue of the mandatory reporting of child abuse. After much debate, an alternative option to mandatory reporting was decided by Government, with an emphasis on education and voluntary reporting. The changes made to section 7(2) of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act reflects that emphasis.

The amendments placed new duties on the Director General of Social Welfare (and since on the Chief Executive of Child, Youth and Family) which include raising public awareness of child abuse and its unacceptability, looking at ways to prevent abuse and developing guidelines on how to report abuse.

Legislation

Full copies of relevant legislation should be obtained and legal advice sought by anyone who has need for detailed information. The following Acts are those most commonly referred to.

- Adoption Act 1955 and the Adult Adoption Information Act 1985
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Amendment Act 1995
- Crimes Act 1961
- Guardianship Act 1968
- Summary Offences Act 1981

Police Clearance Certificate

The Ministry of Justice is frequently asked to provide a 'Police Certificate' or a 'Police Clearance', sometimes from organizations wishing to appoint an employee or volunteer in a child-related work position.

In New Zealand, there is no such document. However, you can apply for a copy of your own conviction records (which you can then show to another party if you wish).

Mandatory Reporting

Legislation which specifies who is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting.

There is currently no mandatory child abuse reporting law in New Zealand.

Reporting should be made to:

Department of Child, Youth and Family

Phone Number: 0508 326 459

URL: www.cyf.govt.nz

Sources

- Ministry of Justice: <http://www.justice.govt.nz/privacy>
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Amendment Act 1995

Appendix 3

Guidelines for Children's Ministries at City on a Hill Evangelical Church for Kids' Church and Crèche on Sunday.

1. Introduction

What follows is a specific set of guidelines for the running of the children's programmers on Sundays at City on a Hill.

This appendix provides further specifics on how to run Kids' Church and Crèche, with the goal of protecting children and volunteers whilst running great ministries for children and allowing parents/guardians to benefit from the church's teaching.

All people involved in this ministry on a regular basis will be required to have signed that they have read the following information before commencing work.

2. Description of Ministry and Leaders

2.1 Description

Kids Church is for children aged 5 -12 years old. Kids' Church is not split further into age groups. Kids church meets in a side room off the entrance to the hall where the church service is held. They also use outside playground space if weather permits.

Crèche is for children from 1-4 years old. This is held in the church foyer on the opposite side of the driveway to the hall where the church service is held.

2.2 Leaders

- Ministry Coordinator – responsible for all children's work policies and scheduling of volunteers
- Ministry Supervisor – responsible for individual sessions and has oversight over the children, Leaders and Helpers. One for Kids Church and one for Crèche per week.
- Leaders - All Leaders must be approved before commencing work. They will wear red t-shirts with 'kids church' and the City on a Hill logo on to indicate this.

Other adults may visit the classes to observe but will not be left alone with children without an approved Leader being present.

2.3 Ratios

One Children's Worker is needed for every 5 children in Kids Church, and one for every 4 children in Crèche, with a minimum of 2 needed at all times.

In the case of using more than one room for the programme there will always be a minimum of two Children's Workers in each room.

2.4 Use of Helpers

It is understood that for practical purposes it will be necessary from time to time to have help from other people to fill in for absentees at late notice or, for example, provide extra assistance on a busy day.

These people will be working either in the presence of or under the direct supervision of a Kids Church supervisor so they will not be expected to have undergone Police Vetting.

Children's Work approval must be obtained if:

- they are rostered more than four times in a year OR
- their task involves being alone or unsupervised for more than just a very brief time

3. General Guidelines

Apart from unforeseen emergencies, Leaders should not be alone with a child. If this occurs it should be logged in the Incident Register by the Crèche Supervisor or Kids Church Supervisor.

There should always be at least two adults present at all times. Careful planning needs to ensure this. If needed, Leaders are to contact other Leaders for more help. This can make things difficult at times but it is necessary for the safety of children, Leaders and Helpers.

Children's Workers will keep their physical contact with the children to an appropriate level.

4. Bathroom policy

Kids Church:

As the age group for this ministry is from 5 to 12 years old most will be able to use the bathroom unaided. There is a bathroom off the room Kids Church meets in, so children can use this rather than needing to be accompanied to the main bathroom.

Crèche:

As the age group for this ministry is under 4 years old these children will need at least to be guided to the bathroom. They are to use the disabled toilet adjacent to the creche area. Toileting procedures will be at the discretion of the Crèche Supervisor in accordance with safe practice principles.

Nappies are to be changed by the child's parents or in the crèche room for similar accountability.

Toileting procedures will be at the discretion of the Ministry Supervisors in accordance with safe practice principles.

5. Communication with Parents

Children will be the responsibility of those running Kids Church from the time they leave the service until the end of the service. Any communication needing to be made with the parent/guardian will be done by a Leader being sent to talk to the parent/guardian directly, as they are within the same building.

6. Behaviour Management in Crèche

If there are issues with the behaviour of a child the Crèche Supervisor shall be involved. If persistent issues arise it will be at the discretion of the Crèche Supervisor as to whether to use timeout for the child or to call the parent/guardian. If there are discipline issues they should be logged in the Incident Register.

7. Managing of Complaints

Any complaints received in relation to the programme or the Children's Workers are to be referred to the Ministry Coordinator as soon as possible. In situations where it is inappropriate to refer to the Ministry Coordinator (if the complaint is against them), refer to the Andrew Southerton (Senior Pastor), or Shona Bellringer (trustee). If it pertains to abuse, then the Internal Abuse Reporting Procedure will be followed.

8. Responding to Incidents

All incidents are to be recorded in the Incident Register and the Ministry Coordinator will be informed. City on a Hill will ensure there is a first aid kit on site. First aid will be administered by an adult with a current first

aid certificate. At the direction of the Ministry Coordinator parents will be informed of any incidents in a timely fashion appropriate to the severity of the incident.

If the fire alarm sounds at any point everyone will evacuate the building and assemble at the dedicated assembly point for the venue. The Ministry Supervisor or appointed Leader will bring the child register to mark off that all children are present.

9. Recognising and Reporting Health Concerns

If a Leader has any significant concerns about the health of a child, including suspected abuse, this will be referred to the Ministry Coordinator as soon as possible.

10. Confidentiality

At all times, appropriate levels of privacy and confidentiality will be maintained in line with the Privacy Act.