

**DUTY of CARE POLICY
AND GUIDELINES**



BOOKLET 3

**CRC STANDARD
PROCEDURES FOR
RUNNING A CHILD
OR YOUTH
PROGRAM**

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CRC Standard Procedures for Running a Children's or Youth Program:

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To provide a safe environment for children and young people it is necessary to have a safe standard of care at all times and in all places. Procedures need to be in place to receive and deal with complaints or reports of unsafe practices.

Team Leaders should be aware of and adhere to first aid requirements, fire safety, electrical safety issues, transportation safety issues and other safety issues relevant to the activity.

All the forms referred to in this booklet are able to be downloaded from the CRC Churches website and used or altered as needed. Navigate to crcchurches.org/docresources to view all available documents.

Where unsafe practices are noted an **Accident & Incident Form** needs to be completed and forwarded to the Ministry Leader that gives oversight to that specific program.

Where first aid treatment is administered, a **First Aid Treatment Form** needs to be completed and forwarded to the Ministry Leader that gives oversight to that specific program.

Required documentation from all children / youth (under 18yrs) participating in a children or youth program:

1. **Medical Information Form**
2. **Consent to Photograph Form**
3. **Youth Program Only: Annual Off-Site Activity Consent Form**

*Note – Both the **Annual Off-Site Activity Consent Form** and the **Consent to Photograph Form** are to be completed annually by Parents / Carers of program participants, and stored securely at the relevant church where the program is operating. For privacy reasons it is recommended this information be safely destroyed at the end of each year and new consent forms completed for all participants. However, **Medical Information Forms** do not need to be completed annually; only if there is a change to any medical / emergency contact information details.

The following statement should be included in documentation provided to parents / carers at the beginning of each year, and on all advertised / online programmes:

“Please be aware that in accordance with our Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy, children are not to be left unsupervised on the church property. Parents / Carers are responsible for the supervision of their children outside of the church’s children’s or youth programs.”

Required Information to be provided to Parents / Carers (annually):

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1. **Information regarding your church website(s) / social media page** (if you have one): with clear instruction on how to access and obtain information regarding specific planned activities at upcoming youth events

OR

Emailed / Printed Youth Programme with specific planned activities and how Parents / Carers will be notified beforehand if any changes are made to activities scheduled on the programme

2. **Team Leader or Contact Person information** - for Parents / Carers who may need to reach their child during planned activities (and updates if this contact information changes at any time).
3. **Grievance procedure** - an outline of procedure to be taken in the event there are concerns that need to be expressed, i.e. who is the first person to contact and then who to contact if concerns are not resolved.

Demonstrating Reasonable Care

- A Team Leader assuming responsibility for a group accepts a '*Duty to take Reasonable Care*'. This duty may generally be described as the standard of care that a responsible person would exercise in all circumstances.
- A Team Leader cannot completely transfer their duty of care to any outside service provider i.e. Camp manager.
- A Team Leader has a duty to be reasonably informed as to the safety or danger of any activities undertaken and to assess the risks involved.
- Some activities are potentially more dangerous than others and require that Team Members facilitating these activities have a higher level of skill and experience. Team Members involved in adventure or water activities must be appropriately qualified in that particular activity or use the expertise of someone who is.
- It is the responsibility of Team Leaders to contact their Ministry Leader and confirm if activities are appropriately covered by insurance, before scheduling them into programs / events.
- All Team Members need to be aware of safety issues involving children and young people and should adhere to them. A breach of safety standards could mean a failure to carry out duty of care.
- For all off-site activities, Team Leaders need to carefully plan activities, have an emergency system in place, (i.e. list of emergency numbers, first aid facilities), inform Parents / Carers of any proposed activities, arrange a contact person for Parents / Carers to contact and keep with them accurate emergency contact details for each of the participants in the activity. Use the **Sample Emergency Contact Details Form**.

Prior to Camps / Off-Site Activities

- Before children and young people attend camps and outings, each participant must have a current **Medical Information Form** in place providing medical information, emergency contact details and photo consent and return a signed **Off-site Notice and Activity Consent Form**. Both forms must be returned / provided to the Team Leader before the camp commences. This information needs to be stored securely and then safely destroyed at the end of each year.
- Prior to helping with any sort of leadership role or volunteer / service role at camps or on mission trips, Team Members need to be briefly trained on their responsibility to report suspected abuse or neglect, the pathway of support should they need help with making a report to their relevant Reporting Authority, and expectations in relating and responding to children and young people under their care.
- Camp or Outreach Team Leaders should also take time to express to children or youth involved in these events about which adults they can talk with if needed. This will ensure an environment of safety and support exists should a child or young person choose to disclose abuse to someone they trust.
- A Team Leader has a duty to be reasonably informed as to the safety or danger of any activities undertaken and to assess the risks involved.
- Some activities are potentially more dangerous than others and require that Team Members facilitating these activities have a higher level of skill and experience. Team Members involved in adventure activities must be competent in that particular activity or use the expertise of someone who is.
- It is the responsibility of Team Leaders to contact their Ministry Leader and confirm if activities are appropriately covered by insurance, before scheduling them into camps or preparing off-site activities.
- All Team Members need to be aware of safety issues involving children and young people and should adhere to them. A breach of safety standards could mean a failure to carry out duty of care.
- A first aid kit needs to be supplied by the church & checked prior to camps / off site activities to ensure that it is appropriately stocked
- For all off-site activities, Team Leaders are to:
 - Carefully plan activities
 - Inform Parents / Carers of any proposed activities
 - Arrange a Team Contact Person for Parents / Carers to make contact with if needed
 - Provide the Team Contact Person with an itinerary and the proposed route of the activity
 - Ensure the appropriate ratio of adult Team Members to participants is in place for any activity (This Booklet, page 11)
 - Ensure participants and Team Members are aware of potential fire hazards
 - Have a clear evacuation plan, and ensure that any group or individuals are aware of what to do in the case of an emergency

- Keep with them accurate emergency contact details & medical information for each of the participants in the activity.
- Have an emergency plan in place (i.e. list of emergency numbers, first aid facilities)
- For camps:
 - Have a list of all people sleeping in the location, with emergency numbers and contact information
 - Ensure that hard wired smoke detectors are fitted to sleeping areas (unless camping outdoors)

First Aid for Camps & Offsite Activities

- At least one person with a group must have a current First Aid certificate. This person (or another person with a current First Aid Certificate) is to function as the First Aider in Charge.
- The First Aider in Charge must keep the First Aid Kit close at hand and is responsible for ensuring the First Aid Kit travels with the group for whatever activities are undertaken.
- Team Members need to be aware of the medical services available in the area where the activities will be held. These include:
 - Doctor
 - Hospital – outpatients / emergency
 - Ambulance services
- The Team Leader, First Aider in Charge and Group Leader (if the whole group is split into groups for any activity) need to carry a mobile phone
- When children / young people are injured or become ill, the Team Leader will contact the parents / carers. If it is an emergency, an ambulance will be called before the parents. Parents are to be kept informed.
- No medication is to be administered by a Team Member unless it is the prescribed medication of the child / young person and consent has been given by the parent.
- Only people with a current First Aid Certificate; medical doctors or registered nurses are to administer First Aid.
- A suitable, safe vehicle and designated driver should be identified so if the need arises to transport a child / young person to hospital all Team Members are aware of the first steps required.
- Outside medical treatment should be sought where a suitably trained person is not available to administer First Aid and in the case of an emergency, an ambulance called.
- A **First Aid Treatment Form** or an **Accident / Incident Report** is to be completed for any injury / treatment given or sustained during an activity.

Transporting Participants

- Children or young people are not to be driven home alone with a Team Member, and not to be visited alone
- If activities will involve children / young people walking to locations nearby the church premises at least two adult Team Leaders must accompany them
- In the event that a vehicle is used to transport a child/ young person it must be driven by a responsible **fully licensed** adult, who has been screened and endorsed by the church
- For activities that involve transportation of groups to varied locations (i.e. amazing race type group activities), there will be two Team Members per car with each group at all times.
- For activities that involve transporting all participants to a common location it is possible to travel as a caravan with several vehicles, some of which may have only one Team Member or Team Leader driving a *group* of participants. However in this case, each vehicle will remain visible to another Team Member or Team Leader and no young person will travel as the sole passenger in any vehicle
- At all times children are to be appropriately supervised

Private Motor Vehicles

- All passengers including the driver must wear seat belts
- The Team Leader should make it their responsibility to determine that the private vehicle used is registered; the driver holds a current Driver's Licence and is a responsible driver, and that the vehicle is roadworthy.
- Team Leaders are to ensure the suitability & safety of vehicles being used to transport any children or young people. It is advisable for your church to develop a Driver Declaration Form and Vehicle Registration Summary Sheet so Team Leaders can document how they have exercised due care in selecting drivers and roadworthy vehicles. Use **Sample Driver and Vehicle Registration Form**.
- In addition, the vehicle used needs to be insured, i.e., at least hold a third party property insurance policy.
- No learner or probationary drivers should transport children or youth to activities.

Public transport

Team Leaders are to ensure they take with them accurate names and medical and emergency contact information for participants to pass on to emergency services if required.

Bus Safety

- If a bus is hired or used by a group, it is the Team Leader's responsibility to ensure safety on the bus
- Standing in buses is not to be allowed
- If fitted, seat belts must be worn. It is the Team Leader's responsibility to ensure that the seat belts are worn

- It is the responsibility of the Team leader to determine that the Bus Driver has the correct and current licence for the vehicle that is being driven
- Driving on dirt, gravel, sandy, wet or icy roads requires additional driving skill and caution. Experience in driving under these conditions is required before transporting participants in these sorts of conditions.
- Be aware that young people may become bored through long trips especially when on buses. It is recommended that Team Leaders provide for plenty of '*stretch the legs*' stops (at least every 90 –120 mins).¹
- Team Leaders are to ensure they take with them accurate names and medical and emergency contact information for all participants
- Team Leaders are to:²
 - Brief the passengers beforehand on acceptable behaviours during transport.
 - Deal with disruptive behaviour early.
 - Have a supervising adult other than the driver to manage behaviour.
 - Check the routes and directions before joining traffic.
 - On long trips (2 hours or more), allow for sufficient rest and preferably changing of drivers along the way. *Note: Statistically, the most dangerous time for accidents is on the return journey at the end of a program when drivers are tired and keen to complete the trip.*
 - Plan the '*stretch the legs*' breaks and let the passengers know

Insurance

Each Local Church must hold insurance cover as follows:

- Public & product liability insurance
- Voluntary workers
- Professional indemnity

This insurance covers personal injury or loss of property. All paid and voluntary leaders / workers are covered under this insurance. Team Leaders are to check with Insurance cover for any activity or program that differs from general programs e.g. Extreme sports and Swimming.

First Aid

- The church needs to provide First Aid Supplies and Equipment.
- The location of the First Aid facilities need be made known to all Team Members and Team Leaders
- At least one Team Member present needs to have a current First Aid Certificate, and should be designated by the Team Leader, **First Aider in Charge**. It is recommended that all Team Members have some knowledge of basic first aid.
- Only people with a current First Aid Certificate, Medical Doctors or Registered Nurses are to administer First Aid.

¹ Team Members Guide, ChildSafe SP3 Safety Management System including Safety Management Online (SMO)

² Team Members Guide, ChildSafe SP3 Safety Management System including Safety Management Online (SMO)

- No medication for headaches or mild ailments should be administered without the prior consent of Parents / Carers. If required the First Aider in Charge can seek caregiver consent via phone but should take care to document the relevant details.
- Outside medical treatment should be sought where a suitably trained person is not available to administer First Aid and in the case of an emergency, an ambulance called
- A suitable, safe vehicle and a screened **fully licensed** driver should be designated should the need arise to transport a child / young person to hospital.
- A **First Aid Treatment Form** or an **Accident / Incident Report** is to be completed for any injury / treatment given or sustained during an activity.

In An Emergency

- Remain calm
- **Call 000** (obtain the necessary emergency services assistance)
- If trained, deal immediately with any injuries
- Ensure the well being of the rest of the group
- Contact members of the rest of the group (if appropriate)
- Team Leaders to contact the Parents/Carers as appropriate

Anaphylaxis (Severe Allergic Reaction)

Anaphylaxis is a **severe allergic reaction** that can produce shock and be life-threatening.

Reactions can be caused by: peanuts, kiwifruit, bee stings, pollen, latex and penicillin as well as other insect venoms, certain foods and drugs.

Symptoms can include: hives, swelling of the eyes or lips, swelling of the inside of the throat causing difficulty in breathing, dizziness, confusion, abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea.

Peanuts are a noted and increasingly common cause of Anaphylaxis.

Peanuts and all peanut related foods are to be excluded from children or youth ministry programs (including peanut laced snacks, chocolate bars, ice-creams, peanut butter, peanut oil, cereals with peanuts in them, and peanut products in recipes).

If any person seems to be experiencing Anaphylaxis, don't delay:

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Call emergency services immediately – Ph: 000**Check for special medications** that the person might need to treat an allergic attack such as an EpiPen. Administer as directed.**Have the person lie still on their back** with their feet higher than their head**Loosen tight clothing and cover** the person with a blanket.**Do not give anything to drink.**If there is vomiting or bleeding from the mouth, **turn the person on their side to prevent choking.**If there are **no signs of circulation** (breathing, coughing or movement) **begin CPR****Antibody Status / Immunisation**

- By law, anyone who is HIV positive is not required to reveal his or her status to the church. Regardless of the person's antibody status, they should receive the same treatment as any other person.
- All Team Members need to be made aware of the risk of contracting blood borne diseases, and take appropriate precautions against this risk. This information can be obtained from a Health Centre.
- Team Members and children should not attend when infected by any communicable disease or if a child or young person is not fully up to date with their immunizations for their age
- Team Leaders are to advise Parents / Carers they will be required to promptly withdraw their child from the program should Team Members become aware of any '*Communicable Disease*' to which a child may have unknowingly been exposed.

Health & Medication Needs

- If a Team Member or participant becomes sick or injured during a program, the Team Leader must be informed immediately and will assume responsibility along with the First Aider in Charge.
- The First Aider in Charge needs to be informed of conditions affecting child / youth participants within the care of Team Members as part of a specific church program / ministry. This includes medical conditions and need for medications.
- Some medications are self-administered (i.e. Ventolin puffers for asthma). Team Members may need to be briefed by the First Aider in Charge on which medications participants are taking and whether they are permitted to administer these themselves.
- Only the First Aider in Charge is to be responsible for administering or managing prescribed medications and only where a participant has current medical information form with clear instructions and signed consent from Parents / Carers.
- The administration of pain relief (such as Panadol or Aspirin) for headaches and minor ailments is to be avoided as these non-prescription medications can have complications for some people. Always check with the First Aider in Charge who will have access to each

participants' **Medical Information Form** and can also make contact with parents and receive permission via phone if required.

- In every instance, all medication is to be administered in accordance with the directions stated, by the First Aider in Charge, and witnessed by another adult Team Member.
- The First Aider in Charge should document on the **First Aid Treatment Form** parental consent, date, time and dosage amount given, along with the name and signature of the other Team Member who witnessed medication being administered. The First Aider in Charge should also have the Parent / Carer read and sign this **First Aid Treatment Form** upon collection of their child from the program.

Sign In / Sign Out

- A **Sign in / Sign out sheet** is required for all ministry activities involving primary school participants.
- Primary school children are to remain under the supervision of an endorsed Team Members *until* their Parent/Carer or nominated adult collects them from a program or activity.
- Children in these programs will not be permitted to leave the area alone and can only be released to those individuals authorized to collect them.
- Note - some churches include 11 & 12 year olds (school year 6 & 7) participants as part of their Youth Program. Primary school participants of these youth programs are not required to be signed in / out.

Team Member Ratios

- In all activities involving children or young people the two Team Member rule is to apply. This means that no child or young person is permitted to be alone with a Team Member. There should be at least one Team Member of the same gender as those in the group.
- Adequate Team Member staffing is required to provide supervision of all activities. For all programs at least two Team Members should be present for each activity, but some higher-risk activities may require increased staffing.
- For preschool programs the Team Member to child ratios are as follows;
 - For 0-2 years the required ratio is one (1) Team Member for every three (3) children.
 - For 2-5 years it is one (1) Team Member for every five (5) children.

Staffing of preschool programs need to reflect these ratios at all times.

- For primary school aged children and youth the recommended ratio is;
 - One (1) Team Member for every eight (8) participants.

Variations to this recommendation require the demonstration of a higher level of competency for each adult Team Member (i.e. 2 adult registered teachers) and should not exceed teacher / student ratio required by your relevant State/Territory legislation.

- If there are not adequate Team Member volunteers to fulfill ratio requirements consider asking all / or an appropriate number of parents of registered children / youth to apply to become endorsed Team Members.

Monitoring Access to Programs

- Only Ministry Leaders / Team Leaders or Team Members who have been endorsed, Parents / Carers monitoring their children's progress, invited guests and the children or youth participants are to be present at children's or youth activities.
- Parents / Carers, Scheduled Service Operators or Visitors unknown to the leaders / workers, are to produce ID. They are wear a visitor's badge and must not be left alone with children.
- Other people entering the Children's Ministry area are to be asked: "Can I help?" and if they are not endorsed to be present they need to be instructed that this is a restricted area.
- Parents / Carers are to be advised of the policies and procedures and if requested, provided with a copy of your church's Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy.

Inspection of Toilet Areas

- When children request to visit the toilet, it is the Team Members responsibility to inspect the toilet area before the child enters, then stand outside the toilet area while the child goes to the toilet.
- Where a child requires assistance, two Team Members should give assistance. During Sunday services it may be necessary for Team Members to enlist the help of screened & endorsed church security monitors to provide supervision over the toilet areas and to ensure that people are not loitering in or around the toilets. Abuse often occurs in toilets. People who appear to be loitering need to be asked to return to their seats or appropriate area.
- Particular attention needs to be given to keeping toilets clean, disinfected before and after a program and ensuring children wash their hands adequately after toilet use.

Supervision Outside Of Program Hours

- Children are not to be left unsupervised on the church property. Parents / Carers are responsible for the supervision of their children outside of your church's organised children's or youth programs.
- The following statement should be included in documentation provided to parents / carers at the beginning of each year, and on all advertised/online programmes: *"Please be aware that in accordance with our Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy, children are not to be left unsupervised on the church property. Parents / Carers are responsible for the supervision of their children outside of the church's Children's or Youth programs."*

Films, Computer & Video Entertainment Ratings

- The Team Leader will note the ages of the children and will abide by the Censorship Standards provided for all entertainment ratings.

Water Safety / Swimming Activities ³

Swimming presents special risks to young people. Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death in children ages 14 and under. The majority of drowning and near-drowning incidents occur in home swimming pools and in open water.

- Globally, drowning death rates are highest in children aged less than five years (source WHO) and in Australia the greatest risk is home pools.
- Of those 5-14 years who drowned in Australia 32% did so in natural bodies of water such as lakes, ponds, streams and rivers (source Royal Life Saving research 2002-2011). A similar figure is reported for drowning deaths in those 15-24 years of age.
- With young children, a risk of drowning can be present during any water-based activity, even when swimming is not involved.
- A risk of drowning may also be present for participants in situations where swimming is unplanned, such as when fishing or walking along a river bank. These guidelines can be applied to such situations.

For the purpose of providing appropriate supervision the environment where swimming takes place may be categorised as either Closed or Open:

- Closed water is a controlled water environment that is still or slow moving, such as a swimming pool, sheltered coastal inlet or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.
- Open water is uncontrolled and may be fast moving or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, or tidal coastal waters.

Swimming requires adequate supervision, and must be permitted by Team Leaders only when this is available. The **Team-Member-In-Charge** of swimming activities should hold an appropriate qualification for supervising swimming in that environment or have recognised competencies to the same level (additional Team Members may assist with supervision).

In Australia:

- The Royal Life Saving Society Bronze Medallion is a suitable qualification for closed water supervision of swimming.
- The Surf Life Saving Surf Rescue Certificate is a suitable qualification for open water supervision of swimming.

Ratios for Qualified Supervisors when undertaking swimming activities:

For Closed Water

- A minimum of one (1) Qualified Supervisor for each thirty-two (32) participants
- A minimum of one (1) Supervisor for each twelve (12) participants. The Qualified Supervisor may be counted as one (1) of the Supervisors.
- At least half of the Supervisors must be adults.

³ Team Members Module on Swimming, ChildSafe SP3 Safety Management System including Safety Management Online (SMO)

For Open Water

- A minimum of one (1) Qualified Supervisor for each sixteen (16) participants
- A minimum of one (1) Supervisor for each eight (8) participants. The Qualified Supervisor may be counted as one of the Supervisors.
- At least half of the Supervisors must be adults.

Food Handling

- Any Team Member who is feeling sick – specifically with a cold, bowel trouble or a skin infection – should not participate in food preparation or other kitchen duties and should inform their Team Leader.
- Food, even snacks, prepared using poor hygiene, or with unsafe food practices can result in the transfer of bacteria and people getting sick.
- Animals and pets are not permitted in the food areas
- There should be no smoking near any food preparation or eating areas
- Team Members should know where the nearest fire blanket / extinguisher is located and how to use it. A first aid kit should also be easily accessible.
- Appropriate clothing and footwear are to be worn and long hair is to be tied up
- Wash hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap and running water before handling food, after putting something in the rubbish bin, after blowing your nose, and after handling money. In other words wash hands often.
- Ensure any cuts are completely covered with a water proof dressing and use appropriate utensils for serving.
- Move away to cough, or sneeze, and remember to wash your hands afterwards
- Dishes should be washed in very hot water and water should be regularly changed if washing a lot of dishes. Tea towels should be washed after each use.
- All equipment and surfaces should be kept clean at all times in the space where you are preparing food. All utensils should be washed thoroughly with hot water and detergent between uses.
- Rented, hired or borrowed kitchen facilities often have protocols and expectations displayed and may require a certain level of food handling training / qualification for any person preparing food at their venue. The Team Leader is responsible to ensure they know and adhere to these protocols when using these facilities.
- Team Leaders are to familiarise themselves and adhere to any relevant State / Territory legislation or Local Council requirements in regards to Team Members food handling and preparation, safe food hygiene (including storage and serving of food) and disposal of rubbish.

Social Media

- The use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter can pose danger to participants, Team Members and organisations.
- Online contact with participants should only occur within strict guidelines set by the church oversight.
- Team Members are to advise their Team Leader which participants are friends on their personal sites (just as you they would advise them who they are keeping in contact with out of regular program hours).
- Rather than individual Team Members '*friending*' participants under 18, it is advisable to set up an authorised site / '*group*' page which can be used to keep in touch with participants
- Team Members & children / youth must be informed of the potential minefield associated with taking photos / digital footage of other participants on their smart phone and then storing it, uploading it online or reproducing it without consent from Parent / Carers.
- Understanding that what each participant of a program chooses to post or communicate via their own social media sites is beyond your church's control, care must be taken to inform all participants of expected behaviours in regards to sharing images and information they have obtained while taking part
- It is recommended that each program has one or two people designated 'official' photographers who are endorsed to take photos / digital footage of participants during the program in view of other Team Members. Any digital images or video footage must not be stored for personal use but only stored / used for your church's promotional media or online forums if signed consent is given by Parents / Carers.
- Encourage team members and participants to write only encouraging things on sites like Facebook and Twitter and to avoid the potential for defamation which could result in legal action

Electrical safety

- Ensure that you have your electrical appliances tested and tagged by a licensed '*Tester and Tagger*' on an annual basis. At all times ensure all mains operated equipment must be tagged with the annual safety check date, properly connected and correctly operated.
- Malfunctions must be reported promptly.
- All radiant heaters will have a suitable guard to protect from burns.
- All buildings should have Safety Switches as per Australian standards and the church's State / Territory legislation
- Power points that are accessible by children should have safety plugs in them at all times

Poisons

- All household, gardening, and handyman products are to be kept out of reach of children and stored in a locked cupboard / storeroom
- Clearly displayed on the telephone should be the phone number to the Poisons Information Centre in your State / Territory

Playground Equipment

- All playground equipment, installation of equipment and soft fill under playground equipment should be checked regularly and comply with Australian Safety Standards and the church's relevant State / Territory legislation.
- Playground equipment should be cleaned regularly and undergo routine maintenance as specified by the manufacturer
- To ensure good hygiene and reduce the spread of any infections or communicable diseases socks should be worn on all indoor playground equipment and hands washed before and after use

Fire Safety

There are a range of factors that can cause fire to break out in buildings ranging from faulty wiring, unattended cooking, candles or children playing with matches. Whatever the cause, if a fire takes hold, the consequences can be devastating.

- All appropriate safety equipment is to be installed & maintained according to the church's State / Territory legislation including:
 - Ensuring that fire extinguishers are checked annually
 - Removing appliances with frayed or faulty wiring
 - Having a fire blanket accessible in kitchen areas
 - Ensuring flammable liquids, matches or stove top igniters are out of reach of children / young people and stored in a locked cupboard
 - Not leaving ovens or candles burning unsupervised
- A fire response and evacuation plan should be formalized by the church and all Team Members and children / young people regularly made aware of it. An annual fire drill should be conducted to ensure procedures are effective.
- Team Members should be familiar with the layout of the building and the location of exits and fire extinguishers, and know how to evacuate the premises should they be required to do so.
- In the case of a fire, Team Leaders should move people away from immediate danger and notify the fire brigade.

Work Health Safety

All Australian Work Health Safety (WHS) Legislation is to be adhered to as per the church's WHS plan including:

- Equipment is to be checked to ensure that it is functional and safe for its intended use
- Children should never be asked to carry heavy objects
- Hazardous materials (including cleaning chemicals) are to be clearly identified and stored in a locked cupboard / storeroom out of reach of children / young people
- Suitable clothing and footwear is to be worn for each activity
- All mishaps or incidents are to be reported to Team Leaders and an **Accident & Incident Form** is to be completed

Venue safety

- Team Leaders are to be familiar with any venue used prior to any activity so that they are aware of any potential hazards
- The Team leader in charge is to be aware of the location of First Aid / Medical Services in the area. Similarly, other emergency services contact numbers such as Police, CFS (Country Fire Service), etc. should be known.

Church Schools

Every Church School is to have its own Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy in place. All Staff & Volunteers are to be screened, and endorsed to work with or have access to children or young people. They should also receive ongoing Mandatory Notification training as required for their role.

Home Fellowship Meetings

- All Home Fellowship / Small Group Leaders or Facilitators are to be informed of the Church's Duty of Care and Child Protection Policy
- No adult other than a child / children's Parent/Guardian is permitted to be alone with a child in any bedroom or any other room of the home, e.g., toilet, bathroom
- Small Group or Home Fellowship Team Leaders / Facilitators that have families with children / youth attending are required to undergo the church's screening process (see Booklet 5, page 3)

Deacons & Foyer Greeters

- All Church building exits are to be monitored during services
- Foyer area and toilets are to be monitored closely. Abuse often occurs in toilets. People who appear to be loitering near toilets are to be asked to return to their seats or the appropriate area
- Children are not to be left unsupervised in the foyer or outside the church or any other part of the church venue where they cannot be supervised

Receiving and Reporting Complaints / Concerns

Receiving Complaints / Concerns

If a child / young person or a parent / caregiver informs a Team Member that they have witnessed or become aware of an incident having occurred (where a child / young person has been subjected to inappropriate discipline, unsafe practices, or a dangerous environment), the Ministry Leader of that specific program needs to be informed as soon as possible so they can support and facilitate a follow up process.

It's vital that this Ministry Leader:

- Ensures the immediate safety and protection of the child / young person
- Enquires into the circumstances surrounding the complaint / concern

- Documents steps taken to follow up complaint / concern
- Lists any additional witnesses to the incident
- In the absence of allegations of abuse: addresses the issue with the person(s) / Team Member(s) involved and refers to a more Senior Leader if assistance is required
- Communicates with the child / young person and / or parent / caregiver that a follow up process has occurred / is underway and any relevant details on how / when the issue will be resolved

In the event that the complaint / concern received involves the Ministry Leader's direct Line Manager, then the incident is to be referred to another Senior Leadership Team Member for prompt follow up. If the matter is considered by the Oversight to be of a minor nature and the incident is believed not to affect the ability of the Team Member to be able to provide responsible care for children / young people, immediate rectification of the issue will suffice.

Reporting Suspected Abuse / Neglect

If the matter is of a serious nature (reasonable grounds of suspicion of Child Abuse / Neglect) the Ministry Leader and/or Senior Minister must:

- Report suspected abuse to Relevant State /Territory Authority (Booklet 4, pages 9 and 10)
- Ensure that the initial Team Member (who received the complaint or disclosure) reports suspected abuse
- Ensure that any other Team Member (who is mandated by law / CRC Best Practice to notify) reports suspected abuse

The Church Oversight will:

- Collect all related documentation from initial enquiry and begin documenting all further follow up / action taken
- Immediately initiate your church's Critical Incident Response Plan (Booklet 7, page 18)