

Safety in Children's Ministry



 Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

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INTRODUCTION:

It is both a legal requirement (General Assembly 2004) and our responsibility as **Kids Friendly Churches** to ensure the safety of *OUR CHILDREN and OURSELVES, AS EMPLOYED LEADERS OR VOLUNTEERS*, in children's ministry. This booklet contains guidelines, strategies and sample policies to keep your children and leaders safe physically, psychologically and sexually including:

CONTENTS:

1. Legislation and Procedure Chart
2. Keys to Safe Practice:
 - Appointment process
 - Safety and Protection Policy
 - Education
3. Developing Policy:
 - Physical Safety
 - Psychological Safety
 - Sexual Safety
4. Sample Policies, Procedures and Forms
5. Sample Policies Table

Safety guidelines and policies should be **clear and consistent and revised and communicated regularly.**

If you are unclear about a situation or procedure, ask your minister, supervisor, or contact us at Kids Friendly.

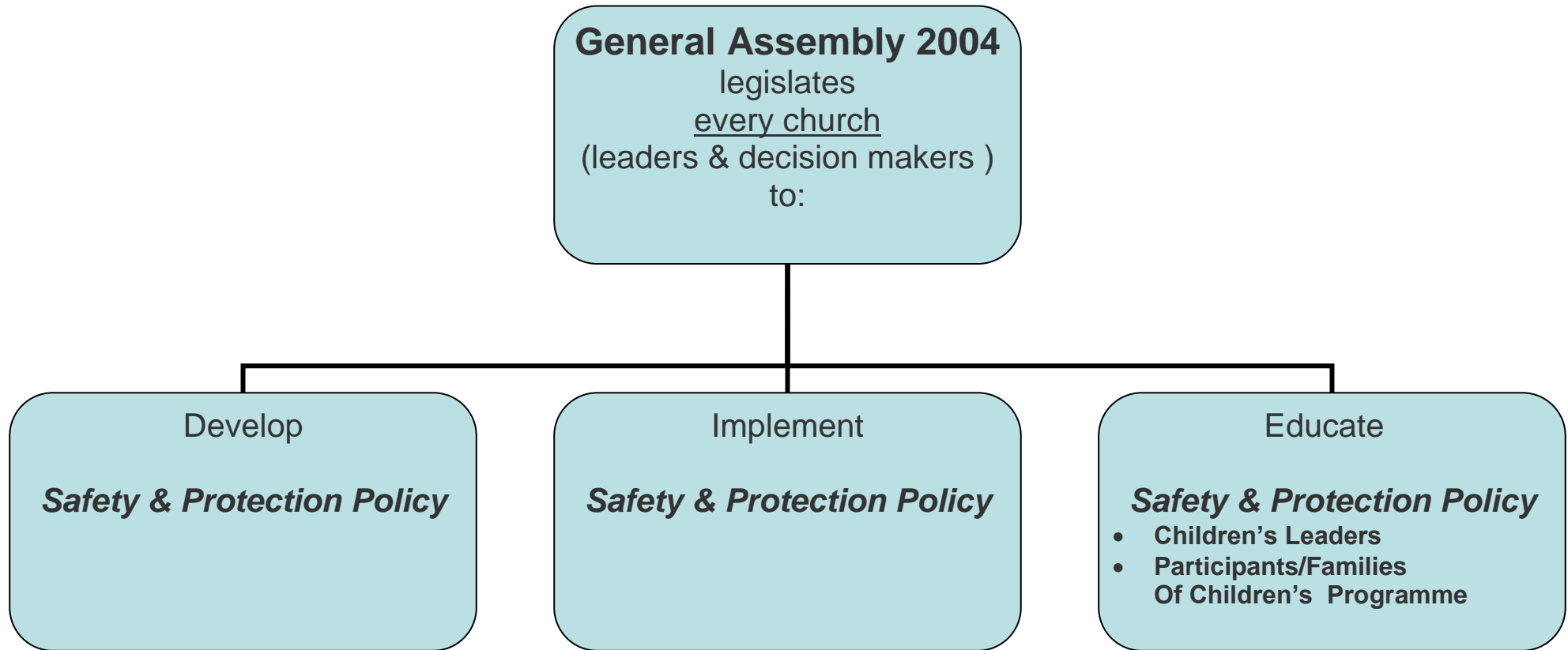
CONTACT:



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SAFETY AND PROTECTION LEGISLATION AND PROCEDURE



Three keys to safe practice:

1. Appointment process

All workers should be:

- reference checked
- interviewed
- police checked (not compulsory for volunteers but recommended)

All workers should have a:

- job description
- contract (if paid)
- code of conduct
- signed criminal declaration and staff/volunteers details form

2. Safety and Protection Policy outlining:

- Safety and Protection Mission Statement
- Recruitment and Appointment Policy
- Protective Boundaries Policy
- Policies to ensure Physical, Psychological and Sexual Safety

3. Education:

- **For leaders:**

Those working with children and families should have a clear understanding of policy involving their programmes and be accountable for implementing and following it.

- **For children, parents, church members:**

Children and families participating in church programmes should be assured and informed of policies in place to protect them.



Developing Policy to ensure Physical, Psychological and Sexual Safety

There are three main areas of safety to be considered in children's ministry:

1. Physical Safety

Anything that causes physical pain or injury, whether accidental or intentional, cause by people or the environment.

2. Psychological Safety

Anything that causes mental anguish, including feelings of fear, shame, humiliation, indignity, powerlessness e.g. verbal intimidation and humiliation, shouting or screaming, threats of physical harm, favouritism and belittling another's culture (including racism) or appearance, silent abuse (allowing the misuse of power by other people, by doing nothing).

3. Sexual Safety

Any sexual behaviour, whether implied or actual, which is inappropriate or offensive. e.g. deliberate and unwelcome physical or sexual touching, suggestively sexual comments, requests for sexual favours, obscene exposure and the display of pornographic material.



PHYSICAL SAFETY

Definition:

Anything that causes physical pain or injury, whether accidental or intentional, by people or the environment.

Prevention Guidelines:

There are two important areas that need managing to prevent physical injury in your children's ministry:

1. Keep your buildings/environment/equipment safe

- Identify and remove obvious physical hazards on church property on a regular basis – e.g. broken fittings, rubbish, broken glass, poisonous or spiky vegetation.
- Repair damaged electrical cords or appliances.
- Fire and smoke alarms installed.
- Adequate lighting both interior and exterior.
- Lights secure – guarded if in an area where balls are going to be flying.
- Regularly check sports and other equipment. Discard any that are worn.
- Keep a log of when/where/by whom equipment was bought.
- Keep equipment in secure storage to prevent misuse.

Sample Policies/Risk Management Strategies to prevent physical accidents:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Hazard checklist



PHYSICAL SAFETY

2. Keep your activities safe

- Evacuation drill practised regularly.
- First Aid kit available and checked/replenished regularly.
- Adequate supervision of activities.
- Training leaders – First Aid courses, Risk Management courses.
- Transport children safely.
- Registration forms (with pertinent information) and rolls used for all children participating in our programmes.
- Procedures are in place for responding to incidents and accidents.
- Incidents and Accidents are recorded and reviewed to prevent future occurrence.

Sample Policies/Risk Management Strategies to prevent physical accidents:

- Emergency Response Plan
- First Aid Procedures Policy
- First Aid Checklist
- Medication Consent Form and Administering of Medication Policy
- Leader to Children Ratio Policy
- Staff Training Policy and Training Record
- Risk Assessment and Management Strategy (RAMS)
- RAMS forms
- Transporting Children Policy
- Permission forms
- Programme Enrolment Forms
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Accident and Incident Procedure
- Accident and Incident Forms



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Definition:

Anything that causes mental anguish, including feelings or fear, shame, humiliation, indignity, powerlessness.

e.g. verbal intimidation and humiliation, shouting or screaming, threats of physical harm, favouritism and belittling another's culture (including racism) or appearance, silent abuse (allowing the misuse of power by other people, by doing nothing).

Prevention Guidelines:

To prevent or minimise any of the above from happening, behaviour guidelines for both our CHILDREN'S LEADERS and our CHILDREN need to be set up.

- Our leaders should sign, own and understand a code of conduct for working with children.
- We should have appropriate behaviour management guidelines in place for our leaders.
- We should have boundaries and consequences in place for our children .regarding unacceptable behaviour.
- Children are clear about behaviour expectations at our programmes.
- We should train and encourage professional development in behaviour management procedures.
- Children and parents are encouraged to voice their concerns.

Sample Policies/Risk Management Strategies to promote psychological safety:

- Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Protecting Children from Other Children Policy
- Professional Development Policy
- Complaints Procedure Policy



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SEXUAL SAFETY

Definition:

Any sexual behaviour, whether implied or actual, which is inappropriate or offensive. e.g. Deliberate and unwelcome physical or sexual touching, suggestively sexual comments, requests for sexual favours, obscene exposure and the display of pornographic material.

Prevention Guidelines:

- We set clear boundaries for people working with children regarding appropriate and inappropriate touching.
- Our children's leaders are reference checked
- Our children's leaders are police checked
- Our children's leaders sign a declaration of criminal conviction
- Our children's leaders are trained in recognising the symptoms of child abuse
- Our children's leaders are aware of the importance of reporting suspected child abuse

Sample Policies/Risk Management Strategies to promote psychological safety:

- Protecting Children from Inappropriate Adult Behaviour
- Protecting Adults working with Children
- Recruitment Policy
- Police Check Form
- Staff Details and Declaration Form
- Complaints Procedure Policy
- Reporting Suspected Child Abuse Policy



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SAMPLE POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS

Draft

SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY of _____ Presbyterian Church

This policy exists to ensure the safety and well being of all the children and youth in our care. The policy is also designed to protect leaders, of activities and programmes involving children and youth, from allegations that can arise from careless and unwise behaviour.

Safety and Protection Mission Statement:

“We will seek to ensure that children and youth in our care are nurtured and cared for in a safe environment and are protected from any potential harm.”

This church is committed to keeping the law and will therefore operate in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health requirements, the Human Rights Act and the Privacy Act and other relevant legislation. This church is also committed to being an agent of healing and justice and to prevention of abuse: spiritual, emotional (psychological), physical and sexual abuse.

Recruitment and appointment process:

This applies equally to “volunteers” as to any paid worker:

All those who want to work with children through this church will undergo a suitable screening process including an interview process and reference checks.

A condition of appointment will be that applicants must respond to questions about whether they have ever committed or been accused of any acts of child molestation or abuse.

No-one who has sexually abused a child will ever be appointed.

Appointees must sign a declaration of commitment that divulges any criminal conviction (or pending) and acknowledges willingness to adhere to the Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct for those working with children and young people.

Appointees must provide personal contact details.

Appointees will be given a job description.

It is compulsory for paid employees to be police checked every three years.

It is recommended that volunteers working with children be police checked.

Protective boundaries for leaders, children, parents and the church, endorsed and implemented by this church:

- Leaders will abide by the requirements of the leadership of this church including acceptance of the principles of the **Code of Ethics for Pastoral Care** and the **Code of Conduct for those working with children and young people**
- Protective strategies are in place to protect children and young people including:
 - “Teaching” in an open environment to which parents and other teachers have free access.*
 - Preventing visitors from accessing children without the supervision of an approved leader.*
 - Supervising children at all times and preventing them from playing in dangerous places.*
 - Avoiding being alone with one child unless they are within sight of others.*
 - Not touching children on any part of their body that would normally be covered by swimming togs.*
 - Not kissing or tickling a child or doing anything that is potentially sexual.*

Keeping parents fully informed about church programmes including starting and finishing times.

Being aware of and following the church process and procedures for reporting any suspected abuse to the appropriate legal authority

[i.e. Child, Youth and Family or Police]

Maintaining sensitivity and confidentiality in disclosing sexual abuse.

- **Strategies, policies and procedures are in place to ensure physical, psychological, sexual and spiritual safety of children and youth. Staff and volunteers are aware of these and receive training in ensuring safety.**

CODE OF ETHICS

A Code of Ethics is not about practical guidelines for behaviour. It's a set of values, principles, important standards that can not be taken for granted.

Ethical guidelines for Children's workers

A. How we conduct ourselves towards those in our care

1. I will deal truthfully with others. I will encourage open discussion and respect others.
2. I will refrain from using 'bad' language (swearing) when associating with children.
3. I will respect other people's privacy. Anything shared in confidence will remain confidential unless there is a clear danger to someone. I will let people know about these limits.
4. I will recognise that all people are made in God's image. Everyone is special to God and I will not discriminate between them for any reason.
5. I will not take advantage of people, either for my own benefit or for the benefit of others.
6. I will not become emotionally dependent or intimately involved with anyone that is in my care. I will not abuse, harass or exploit anyone.
7. I see that I can't do everything. I won't try to do things such as formal counselling until I have proven competence in that area. I will refer people to those who do.

B. Accountability to our employer

1. I will take a professional approach to my job, always seeking to do the best I can do.
2. I will be responsible about the time I spend in ministry, spending neither too much nor too little.

C. Responsibilities to our colleagues

1. I will be helpful to other church workers. I will treat them with respect, courtesy and good faith.
2. I will appreciate what other people are doing in ministry by remembering them in prayer and encouraging them. I will respect the fact they are busy too and have commitments in other areas.
3. If conflicts do occur, I will deal with them sensibly and do something about them. I will ask the appropriate people to help sort things out and seek reconciliation.
4. I will do something about colleagues who are not doing their jobs or who are behaving in an unethical way. I will use the appropriate channels to do this.

D. How we take care of ourselves

1. I will make sure I eat properly, get enough sleep and stay reasonably fit.
2. I will make sure I am always accountable to someone in ministry.
3. I will make sure I have a support network in place.
4. I will make sure I participate in opportunities for spiritual growth.
5. I will make sure I participate in opportunities for in-service training.
6. I will make sure I have times of recreation, refreshment and renewal.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN

A code of conduct gives practical guidelines for those working with children.

Leader's responsibilities towards children

1. Ensure the safety and well being of all children in your care.
2. Make certain that all activities are undertaken with sufficient suitably qualified staff and approved resources.
3. Treat all children as individuals, with dignity and sensitivity, avoiding favouritism, respecting their culture, their home background, their age and their physical and mental abilities.
4. Neglect, harassment, bullying, sarcasm, and bad language are unacceptable, as is any degree of physical, emotional, mental or spiritual abuse,
5. Respect children's privacy at all times, particularly where activities include sleeping, changing of clothing, bathing and ablutions.
6. Remain in sight of others, even if out of hearing, when dealing with an individual child. Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities and inappropriate physical contact.

Leader's responsibilities towards parents/guardians

1. Take the time to know all parents/guardians.
2. Keep parents/guardians informed, inviting them to participate in or observe the programmes being provided.
3. Find out if children have any special needs or medical requirements.
4. Obtain written consent from parents/guardians prior to undertaking activities off centre premises.

Leader's responsibilities to the Church

1. Conduct yourself in a manner in keeping with Christian principles and ethics.
2. Be a healthy role model.
3. Be educated in the recognition of the warning signs and symptoms of abuse.

Leader's responsibilities to self

1. Keep contact with the Minister or person in charge for support and advice
2. Avoid placing yourself and your co-workers in compromising situations and protect yourself from actions that may be misconstrued.
3. Support your colleagues, and develop good relationships with them.
4. Report to the Minister or person in charge any anxieties you have regarding questionable behaviour of any person participating in children's programmes. This is to safeguard the integrity of leaders from potential accusations of abuse.



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POLICE CHECK POLICY

1. Police checks for lay workers in paid positions with pastoral responsibilities are now mandatory.
2. This requirement applies to all new appointments from 1 March 2003 onwards.
3. The rationale for this mandatory requirement for a police check for lay workers in positions with pastoral responsibilities is that it is one way in which the Church can minimise, though not necessarily eliminate, the likelihood of more vulnerable members of society being put at risk by individuals whose behaviour may be detrimental to others' safety and wellbeing.
4. The requirement for police checks to be done does not exempt Sessions/Parish Councils and Presbyteries/UDCs from working through thorough recruitment and appointment processes.
5. Sessions/Parish Councils and Presbyteries/UDCs should, as part of the application process, obtain appropriate consents and declarations from all prospective appointees. (*See "Sample declaration form for prospective lay workers"*). If applicants are not willing to sign this form then they should not be interviewed or appointed.
6. Applicants should be asked to supply the names and contact details of 2-3 people who may be approached as confidential referees. Sample questions for referees and further information is available from the Presbyterian website: www.presbyterian.org.nz under employment.
7. Following an interview, the successful applicant should be asked to fill in an official consent form for police check, photocopied onto your church letterhead. The consent form (*See "Consent to disclosure of information"*) should be sent to the Assembly Office, with the application form (*See "Police check application form"*.) from the Session/Parish Council Clerk or Presbytery/UDC Clerk.
8. Care must be taken to explain to the applicant the reasons for the police check and to outline the process.
9. The police check process takes time: a month needs to be allowed from the date of mailing the application and consent forms. It may be done more quickly but your time frame must allow the month.
10. If an offer of appointment is made prior to the results of the police check being known the offer can only be conditional and is subject to the result of the police check.
11. If the police check does reveal that a person has criminal convictions that need not automatically preclude the person being appointed.
12. The operative regulations in the Book of Order are 86A and 86B, as amended by the 2002 General Assembly.



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POLICE CHECK PROCEDURE

1. Make sure that you are familiar with all the details of the requirements so that the process works smoothly.
2. The person designated to manage the police check process on behalf of the congregation or presbytery should complete an application form (*See "Police check application form".*)
3. . This would normally be the Session or Parish Clerk or Minister in the case of a parish, or the Presbytery Clerk in the case of a presbytery. The application form can be used for more than one police check request.
4. Ask the prospective lay worker(s) to complete an official consent form (*See "Consent to disclosure of information"*) This should be photocopied onto your church letterhead before they complete it. This must be filled in by hand and signed by the person concerned. You should use one form per person. The **original** must be forwarded to the Assembly Office for passing on to the NZ Police Vetting Service. **Only originals NOT copies will be processed.**
5. Fill in a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of the completed police check.
6. Mail to: Clare Morrison
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ
PO Box 9049
Wellington

Include:
 - the application form
 - the consent form(s)
 - the stamped, self-addressed envelope
7. The NZ Police require up to 20 working days to process requests for police checks. Please allow 30 working days to elapse from the date you mailed the police check request to the Assembly Office. You may get a response more quickly but allow the full time quota in your planning.
8. If you have not had a response after 30 days you can contact the Assembly Office to enquire as to progress. Do not contact the NZ Police directly as they have asked that all communication between the police and the Presbyterian Church be through the Assembly Office.
9. In order to meet the obligations of the Privacy Act and to safeguard the integrity of the process police check information will be dealt with by mail not email or fax. Email and fax may be used for general enquiries about process but not for specific information about people.
10. Police checks for prospective paid lay workers can be sent individually. Applications for police checks will be sent, once a week, to the NZ Police vetting service. If you require police checks for volunteers please arrange to do all the checks in one batch.
11. For further information contact Clare Morrison at PCANZ: Ph (04) 801 6000
Email: clare@presbyterian.org.nz



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POLICE CHECK APPLICATION FORM

To be completed by the designated person asking for the police check

Name: (please print) _____

Address: (postal) _____

Official position: _____

Parish: _____

Presbytery: _____

Please arrange for a police check to be done for the following person(s):

being considered for the following position:

Consent form(s) attached.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

OSCAR PROGRAMME: If this is an OSCAR police check and you require originals back please tick the box.

Because of the need to meet the obligations of the Privacy Act, applications must be sent by mail. Faxes and e-mails will not be used, except for providing general information about the process.

CONSENT TO DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Photocopy this form onto your
Church letterhead, complete it (print clearly),
sign it and send it to:

Assembly Office, PCR
PO Box 9049
WELLINGTON

This form will be sent by the
Assembly Office to the
Licensing & Vetting Service Centre

I,
(Surname) (Fore Names)

.....
(Maiden or any other names used)

Date and place of birth

Sex(M/F) Nationality

Residential Address

Suburb City

NZ Drivers Licence number

hereby consent to the disclosure by the New Zealand Police of any information they may have pursuant to this application, to the **Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand**. I understand that any record of criminal convictions I might have will automatically be concealed if I meet the eligibility criteria stipulated in Section 7 of the criminal records (Clean Slate) Act 2004.

Signed Date

COMMENTS OF THE NEW ZEALAND POLICE

A stamped, self-addressed envelope must accompany all requests.



Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

DECLARATION FORM FOR PROSPECTIVE LAY WORKERS

Affirmations and acknowledgements

Working for the Christian church places a person in a position of trust. As part of your application you are required to make the following affirmations and give consents.

1. If appointed I will accept the authority and discipline of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, as exercised through the Presbytery within whose bounds I work, and will uphold the polity, teaching and doctrine of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand while I hold the position.
2. I have/have not been convicted of any criminal offence involving violence or sexual abuse.

Comment: _____

3. I have/have not been disciplined by any church for any unethical or unprofessional behaviour.

Comment: _____

4. *I consent to the Presbyterian Church seeking verbal or written information about me from the referees whose names I have supplied and from representatives of employing bodies with whom I have worked and authorise the information sought to be released. (The applicant will be advised of any approaches made to any such referees/representatives who have not been named in this application form before any approach is made.)*
5. *I consent to the Presbyterian Church undertaking a police check here in New Zealand and in any country where I have lived/worked.*

To the best of my knowledge the statements given are correct and I understand that if any false or misleading information is given or material fact suppressed my application will not be processed or if appointment my appointment may be terminated.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

SAMPLE SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICIES All these are SAMPLE policies that can be adapted to meet the unique needs of your church's programmes	AUTHOR	ACTION
SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
PHYSICAL SAFETY –ENVIRONMENT, BUILDINGS, EQUIPMENT		
Health and Safety Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Hazard Checklist	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
PHYSICAL SAFETY - ACTIVITIES		
Emergency Response Plan	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY
First Aid Procedures Policy First Aid Checklist	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Administering Medication Policy Medication Consent Form Record of Medication Administered	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Accident and Incident Procedure Accident and Incident Report Form	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Permission Slips Form	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Enrolment Policy Enrolment Form	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Staff Training Policy Training Record	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Leader to Children Ratio Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Risk Assessment and Management Strategy (RAMS) RAMS Form	PYM	RECOMMENDED
Excursion Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Transporting Children Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
INFORMATION POLICIES		
Complaints Procedure	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Information Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SEXUAL SAFETY		
Code of Conduct	PCANZ	RECOMMENDED
Code of Ethics	PCANZ	RECOMMENDED
Recruitment Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Police Check Policy Police Check Procedure and Application Form	PCANZ	RECOMMENDED for volunteers COMPULSORY for paid staff
Professional Development Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Staff form and criminal conviction declaration	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
CHILD MANAGEMENT POLICIES		
Child Behaviour Management Policy	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Protecting children from inappropriate adult behaviour	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Protecting children from other children	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Protecting adults working with children	KIDS FRIENDLY	RECOMMENDED
Reporting suspected child abuse	KIDS FRIENDLY	COMPULSORY

To receive copies of specific sample policies, please contact:

Jill Kayser
 Kids Friendly Coach
 100 St Heliers Bay Road
 Auckland 1071
 Tel: 09-5850959, 027-2103784
 Email: jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz



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Kids Friendly Resource Feedback Form

Please return completed form to:

Kids Friendly, c/o St Heliers Presbyterian Church, 100 St Heliers Bay Road, Auckland or
email your comments to kidsfriendlyjill@sthelierschurch.org.nz

The name of your church:

The Kids Friendly Resource you are responding to:

Who made use of this resource:

Name	Designation

What did you find helpful about this resource?

Is there any information you require that this resource did not provide?

For further information contact:

Jill Kayser, Kids Friendly Coach
100 St Heliers Bay Road, Auckland 1071
Tel: 09-585-0959; 027-2103784, Fax:09-575-4827
Email: jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz

