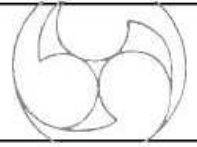




Presbyterian Youth Ministry  
MAKING JESUS CHRIST KNOWN



# **SAFETY**

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## ***in Youth Ministry***

revised edition: July 2005

# INTRODUCTION

It is our responsibility to ensure the safety of OUR YOUNG PEOPLE and OURSELVES, AS YOUTH LEADERS, in youth ministry. This booklet contains guidelines that will set you up to do this.

There are four main areas of safety to be considered in youth 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 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)*

## **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.*

## **4. Spiritual Safety**

*Placing ourselves at the centre of young people's lives, instead of Jesus Christ. e.g. Misusing our ability to influence the emotions of young people, spiritual manipulation, brainwashing*

This booklet contains PREVENTION GUIDELINES and CRISIS MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES to keep your youth ministry safe in these four areas.

As well as ensuring that young people and youth leaders are safe, it is important to remember that young people learn from demonstrated behaviours. At all times, youth leaders are role models for the people under their care. Safety guidelines should be clear and consistent and revised on a regular basis by those advocating them.

If you are unclear about a situation or procedure, ask your co-workers, supervisor or contact us at the Presbyterian Youth Ministry Office.

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July 2005

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# PHYSICAL SAFETY

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## **Definition:**

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

## **Prevention Guidelines:**

There are three things you can do to prevent physical injury in your youth ministry:

### **1. Keep your buildings/environment safe**

- Identify and remove obvious physical hazards on church property on a regular basis – e.g. broken fittings, rubbish, glass, 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

### **2. Keep your equipment safe**

- 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

### **3. 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
- We should also have appropriate boundaries and consequences in place for our young people regarding physical violence.

To prevent physical accidents from taking place, we can implement Risk Management Strategies like:

- RAMS forms [See page 6-9]
- Driving Policies [See page 10]
- Permission forms [See page 11]

## **Crisis Management Guidelines:**

When accidents happen, it's good to know what to do. There are two procedures you should have in place in your youth ministry:

### **1. Accident and Emergency Procedure [See page 11]**

*Why? – People can freeze and/or react badly in the case of an emergency. If they've had a procedure drummed into them, it may prevent more damage than is necessary in the case of an accident or emergency*

### **2. Incident form filled out and filed [see page 12]**

*Why? – If similar accidents keep occurring, it will indicate that a change of practice or procedure, and/or further training is required for the people leading your youth ministry*

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY**

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### **Definition:**

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)*

### **Prevention Guidelines:**

To prevent or minimise any of the above from happening, behaviour guidelines for both your YOUTH LEADERS and your YOUNG PEOPLE need to be set up.

#### **• YOUTH LEADERS:**

Youth leaders should know and be reminded of the behaviour guidelines they should practice in their role. These guidelines are outlined in the documents listed below.

Any person working with young people should:

- Sign a Code of Ethics *[see page 13]*
- Sign a Code of Conduct *[see page 14]*
- Perform Police Checks *[see page 15-18]*
- Be provided with training so that they understand and are encouraged to practice good safety practices in youth ministry
- Be provided with an accountability procedure (*e.g. Regular supervision & regular team meetings with opportunities for debriefing*)

#### **• YOUNG PEOPLE:**

Like wise, young people need to know what are acceptable ways of treating people and what are not. For your young people, you need to:

- Establish clear boundaries and consequences
- Provide avenues for young people to voice any concerns they have for their/other peoples' safety

And remember!  
Unless you're trained in counselling...  
**YOU'RE NOT QUALIFIED TO PRESCRIBE ADVICE, BUT YOU ARE FULLY QUALIFIED TO CARE!**

### **Crisis Management Guidelines:**

If a complaint is made, you need to have a clear complaint procedure *[see page 19]*

## SEXUAL SAFETY

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### **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:**

It's important to establish clear boundaries in your youth ministry regarding appropriate and inappropriate touching. Any person working with young people should:

- Sign a Code of Ethics [see page 13]
- Sign a Code of Conduct [see page 14]
- Perform Police Checks [see page 15-18]
- Be provided with training
- Be provided with an accountability procedure (*e.g. Regular supervision*)

### **Crisis Management Guidelines:**

If a complaint is made, you need to have a clear complaint procedure [see page 19]

## SPIRITUAL SAFETY

---

### **Definition:**

Placing ourselves at the centre of young people's lives, instead of Jesus Christ

*e.g. Misusing our ability to influence the emotions of young people, spiritual manipulation, brainwashing*

### **Prevention Guidelines:**

Any person working with young people should:

- Sign a Code of Ethics [see page 13]
- Sign a Code of Conduct [see page 14]
- Be provided with an accountability procedure (*e.g. Regular supervision*)

### **Crisis Management Guidelines:**

If a complaint is made, you need to have a clear complaint procedure [see page 19]

# RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

We want our programmes to be safe for the sake of our young people, but we also need to be aware of the legal requirements to do so, as there can be consequences if our programmes are unsafe.

As youth workers, we need to know what the risks are, have strategies in place to deal with them and have documentation on hand in case proof is ever needed.

**Risk Assessment and Management Strategy (RAMS) forms are an easy way to do this. [pages 6,7]**

## **What is a RAMS form?**

A RAMS form is a sheet that is filled out before an event or programme by the event co-ordinator. It identifies all the potential risks and what might cause them, establishes strategies to minimise these risks, and gives an emergency management plan.

## **When would I fill in a RAMS form?**

- Trips away (camps, tramps)
- Individual nights if there could be risks involved (Beach swimming, 'Bus pull' activity etc.)
- Have a few generic forms in your files for general events, vehicle use etc. [page 8]

## **How do I fill in a RAMS form?**

- **Risk:** These are the end result of any mishap, e.g. physical injury (minor/moderate/major), emotional stress  
*Ask: What is the worst thing that could happen during this activity?*
- **Causes:** These are listed under three categories: people, equipment, environment  
*Ask: What factors could cause these incidents?*
- **Management:** Establish strategies to deal with each of these specific causes  
*Ask: What can I reasonably do to stop these incidents from happening?*
- **Emergency Management:** Establish a plan to deal with incidents if they do happen  
*Ask: What can I put in place now so that I could deal with an emergency effectively?*

While filling in the form, be realistic but cover your bases. Think of *all* possibilities.

## **What do I do with the RAMS form once it's filled out?**

Keep the form in your files in case it needs referring to at a later date by yourself or OSH...  
On the night - be aware of the factors you've listed - you've got the plan, so follow it!

## RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (RAMS)

ACTIVITY: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME (TRIP LEADER): \_\_\_\_\_

RISKS	CAUSE	MANAGEMENT	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
	PEOPLE		
	EQUIPMENT		
	ENVIRONMENT		

## RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (RAMS) *example*

ACTIVITY: tramp

DATE: 07/07/07

NAME (TRIP LEADER): Joe Presbyterian

RISKS	CAUSE	MANAGEMENT	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
Physical injury - Minor (cuts, scrapes) - Moderate (broken bones, sprains) - Major (hypothermia)  Getting Lost  Emotional Trauma	PEOPLE		Take 1 <sup>st</sup> Aid Kit Person trained in First Aid to participate in the walk  Adequate leaders in case one needs to walk out to get help
	- Leader could negotiate track incorrectly  - Young person could wander from the main group	- Take and refer to map - Leader walk track prior to trip  - Set clear boundaries beforehand - Have leaders dispersed through group - Count young people when stopped for breaks	
	EQUIPMENT		
	- Lack of adequate clothing and footwear	- Issue comprehensive gear list - Check gear before leaving	
ENVIRONMENT			
	- Weather could turn bad	- Check weather forecast beforehand, cancel trip if forecast looks bad - All participants take warm/wet weather gear	

# RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

**Name:** St Presby's Presbyterian Church  
**Date:** January 2003  
**Activity/Location:** All

## Generic Risk Assessment and Management Strategy (example)

The following are the hazards a supervisor is expected to identify and manage regardless of the activity. This will proceed all other RAMS sheets.

### **UNDESIRED EVENT(S): Accident, injury, other forms of damage**

Death  
 Injury  
 Psychological or emotional damage to student  
 Programme fails to reach student expectations  
 Student has unsatisfactory experience

### **CASUAL FACTORS**

PEOPLE	EQUIPMENT	ENVIRONMENT
Fitness/Health	Inappropriate resources	Weather
Emotional state/anxiety level	Poorly managed equipment	Hazards of environment that activity takes place in (natural or unnatural)
Size of group	Insufficient equipment for the enjoyment and safety of the group	
Individual size	Condition of the First Aid Kit	
Experience level of the group		
Skill level of individual		
Cultural & Gender issues		
Background of individual and/or group		
Receptivity to follow instructions		

### **RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES – NORMAL OPERATION**

#### PEOPLE

1. Effort to be made to ascertain health and fitness of students. Check medical forms before activities.
2. to 8. Assessment of these factors should be made and programme adapted where felt necessary.
2. and 7. Empathetic approach to concerns of students.
9. Ensure students have a clear understanding and reinforce if necessary

#### EQUIPMENT

1. to 3. Maintain sufficient appropriate equipment for activity
4. Ensure First Aid Kits are adequately supplied and regularly maintained.

#### ENVIRONMENT

1. Supervisor and/or Instructor to have general understanding of weather and be aware of local conditions and changes that may affect the safety of a programme. The programme may be altered if necessary.
2. Identify hazards and manage accordingly. Ensure student clothing is appropriate for weather and conditions.

### **EMERGENCY**

Injury or any need for First Aid is to be carried out by Supervisor and/or Instructor and emergency backup called in if necessary. If emergency backup is required, the [Youth Pastor/Minister] will be informed, who will inform and liaise with next of kin, Police or other services depending on the extent of the emergency. The Supervisor and/or instructor must ensure the safety of the remaining group.

# DRIVING POLICY (example)

## PRINCIPLES:

1. The lives of our young people and leaders are extremely valuable and must be protected by the highest standard of driving. Driving competently and safely is essential for all St Presby's Youth Group activities.
2. Drivers must be a good example to young people of how to drive responsibly
3. Drivers must take full responsibility for their own actions

## POLICY:

1. Any driver for St Presby's Youth Group must hold a **full drivers licence**
2. All drivers must first have driven with **the youth worker as a passenger** before transporting youth
3. Any driver without experience of driving vans must have a **van driving lesson** with the youth worker before driving vans for St Presby's Youth Group
4. A **police check** is required to inform the St Presby's Youth Worker of any driving convictions. Anyone with a history of **criminal driving convictions** must follow the following steps before driving for St Presby's Youth Group:
  1. Complete a defensive driving course
  2. Drive with only the youth worker as a passenger once after this
  3. Drive with the youth worker as a passenger while transporting youth for the first 2 occasions with St Presby's Youth Group
5. Drivers must adhere to the **road code**
6. All **accidents, near misses** (incidents), **or irresponsible driving** must be reported to the Youth Worker/Minister immediately after travelling. If the incident was the result of **inexperience** the driver must receive some instruction before driving again. In the case of **deliberate recklessness** the driver will be stood down from driving for a period of time determined by the Youth Worker/Minister.  
Reckless driving includes:
  1. Speeding
  2. Fast cornering
  3. Unnecessary passing
  4. Close tailing of other vehicles
  5. Any games with other vehicles on the road
  6. Permitting youth to put their heads or hands out of the windows
  7. Permitting youths to not wear seatbelts
7. All St Presby's and leaders vehicles must be worthy with a current **WOF, Registration and Seatbelts**
8. St Presby's will pay the excess on insurance for any genuine accident involving a St Presby's vehicle. However, the driver will be required to pay the **excess on insurance** for any accident resulting from reckless driving.

[thanks to Youth For Christ for their model driving policy]

# PERMISSION SLIPS

## Things to include...

Special Medical Needs (eg Asthma, Diabetes etc)

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Special Dietary requirements (vegetarian, allergies etc.)

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Parent/ Caregiver Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

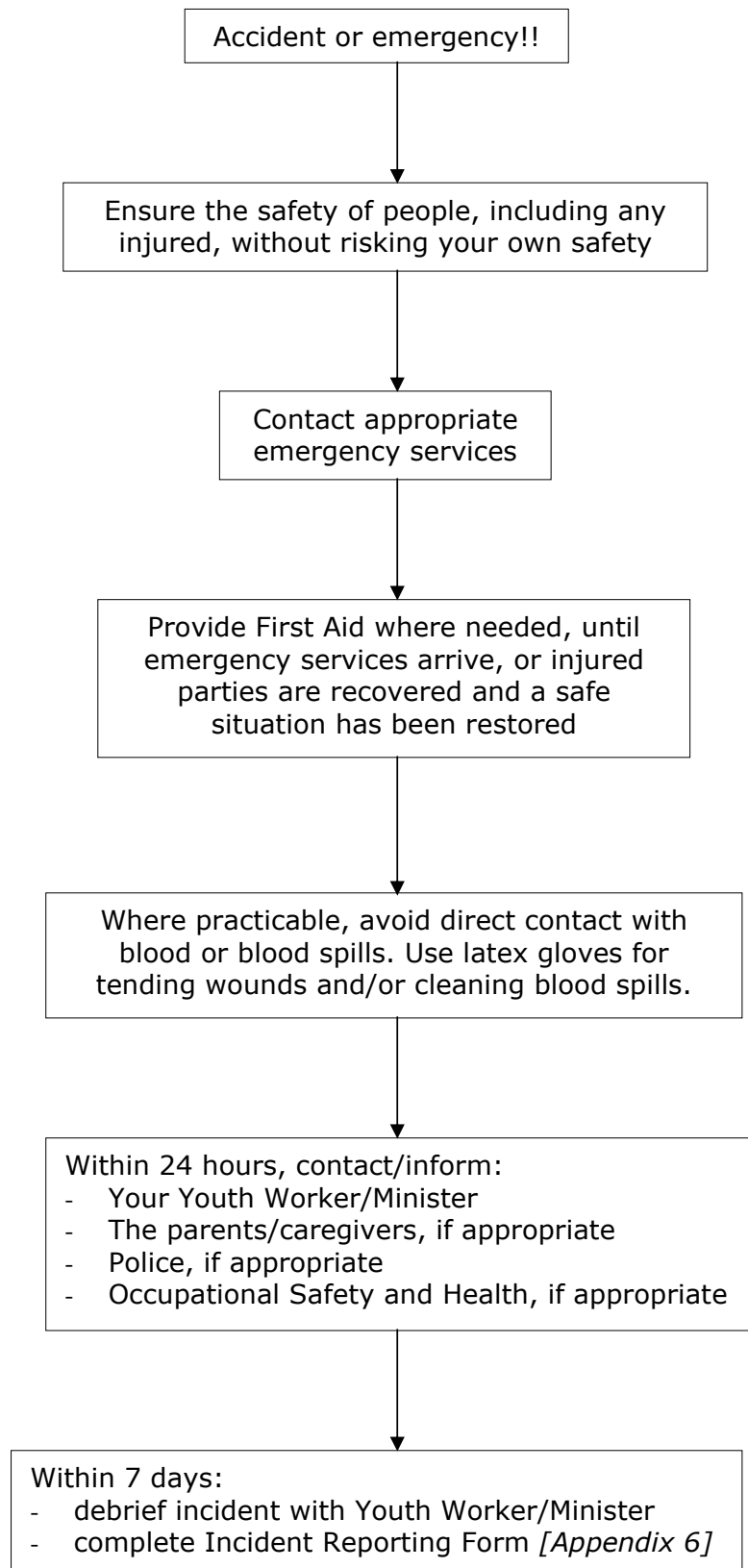
Declaration:

I (Parent/Care Giver) hereby give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to go on this trip and empower the St Presby's Youth Group leaders to be able to give permission for any medical procedures to be done should an emergency arise and I can't be contacted above at the alternate/emergency number.

Signed Parent/Caregiver \_\_\_\_\_

*In the event of an emergency I give permission for the youth leader to act in the safety interests of my child. I understand that every attempt will be made to contact me first before any decision is made regarding treatment or medication.*

# ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURE



[thanks to Youth For Christ for their model Accident and Emergency Procedure]  
*Safety in Youth Ministry, Presbyterian Youth Ministry - PO Box 9049, Wellington*

# INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

An incident that requires reporting is any event which involves any of the following: accident; moderate or serious injuries; moderate or significant damage to property or equipment; 'near misses' which may have caused any of the above; serious or ongoing breach by St Presby's Youth Group leaders of St Presby's Code of Conduct; criminal activity of leaders or programme participants (while in a St Presby's Youth Group programme); behaviour or circumstances which threaten the safety of St Presby's youth leaders or programme participants; complaints; unresolved disputes; allegations of misconduct or abuse by St Presby's leaders.

*Incidents should be reported within seven days*

**Name of leader** reporting incident: \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Youth Worker/Minister** receiving report: \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of incident (circle)**

Accident                      Personal Injury                      Safety Concerns  
Complaint                      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Date/s of incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Incident/issue description:**

**Action/s taken:**

**Outcome/s (if known):**

**Analysis (circle)**

Is this type of incident	New or Old?	One-off or Ongoing?
Has this type of incident been increasing?	Yes	No
Have appropriate steps been taken to address this incident?	Yes	No
If "no", what needs to be done?		

Names and contact details of affected parties (if relevant):

# SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY

of.....church

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

## **Safety and Protection Mission Statement:**

*"We will seek to ensure that children and young people 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, 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 and young people through this church will undergo a suitable screening process that includes collection of information from referees. 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 acknowledges willingness to adhere to the Code of Ethics for Pastoral Care and the Code of Conduct for those working with children and young people.

## **Protective boundaries endorsed and implemented by this church:**

1. 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.
2. Parents and care-givers will be given all pertinent information about church programmes for their children and young people, including starting and finishing times.
3. Leaders will co-operate with parents to ensure that children and young people are taken home safely.
4. "Teaching" will be done in an open environment to which parents and other teachers have free access. Visitors will not be allowed access to children and young people without the supervision of an approved leader.
5. While under the care of the church, children and young people will be supervised and will not be allowed to play in dangerous places.
6. Leaders will not be alone with one child or young person unless they are within sight of others.
7. Leaders are not permitted to touch children or young people on any part of their body that would normally be covered by swimming togs.
8. Leaders are not permitted to kiss or tickle a child or young person or do anything that is potentially sexual.
9. This church has a process for reporting any suspected abuse to the appropriate legal authority.

# CODE OF ETHICS FOR PASTORAL CARE

For Clergy and Lay Leaders, Educators and Pastoral Carers, both paid and voluntary

This code is a statement of how the Negotiating Partners in the Co-operative Ventures in Aotearoa New Zealand understand the standards of conduct by those members (both clergy and lay) who undertake the work of Pastoral care, in the name of the church and as part of the Body of Christ.

The church is a community bound together by faith, hope and love. We all share responsibility for its mission, to be a sign and instrument of the communion of human kind with God and with one another.

Our rule of life is the inseparable two-fold commandment of Jesus: love God and love your neighbour as you love yourself. We are committed to living by this law of love as professional ministers and lay leaders, accountable for our ministry whatever its setting. This accountability is expressed in a minimal way through the acceptance of the responsibilities of this code of ethics.

The responsibility for adhering to the code rests with us. It has no official standing in the church, and no official body exists to enforce it and there are no sanctions against those who do not follow it. The code is offered to enhance the dignity of pastoral care and to give the public greater confidence that we are committed to standards of excellence and to a high quality of service.

The code is not to be taken as legal advice. When in doubt about the appropriateness of one's actions, ethically or legally, consultation with experts in related fields is always wise.

This code is not a substitute for the codes or standards of practice of the Negotiating Partners but is intended to stand alongside them.

## With God's help,

1. I will keep spiritually and emotionally healthy by following a regular discipline of spiritual growth and adequate personal recreation and self care.
2. I will act with integrity, dealing openly and honestly with those under pastoral care, maintaining a safe environment and upholding their best interests, rights and well-being, rather than my own.
3. I will respect the privacy of individuals and confidentiality of information. The only exception is where there is clear and imminent danger to the person or others, at which time he/she will be informed of those limits.
4. I will affirm the dignity and worth of each person and will ensure pastoral care is available for them without discrimination on grounds of their age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religious belief, economic status or physical or mental abilities.
5. I will acknowledge that people in pastoral care come from *different* ethnic and cultural backgrounds and will act therefore with awareness, sensitivity and responsibility.
6. I will recognise that it is my responsibility, whose role and status gives me greater power, to maintain personal and professional boundaries in Pastoral relationships.
7. I will not abuse the relative power of my position by taking advantage of people for personal, financial institutional or spiritual gain.
8. I will not subject anyone to sexual exploitation, harassment or abuse, and recognise that any sexual intimacy in the pastoral situation is totally unacceptable.
9. I will recognise that there are limits to my competence and will refer people to others better qualified when this proves necessary or desirable. I will not attempt clinical counselling without appropriate training.
10. I will use regular professional supervision, where appropriate, or some similar process, to ensure accountability, good time management, appropriate theological reflection and a high standard of pastoral care.

Signed: ..... Dates (at time of appointment) .....  
Witnessed: .....

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THOSE WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

As a person working in ministry with children in the Presbyterian and partner churches you are involved in a five-way interaction between the children, the children's parents or guardians, your co-workers in children's ministry, the Church and yourself. Primarily, you are accountable to the session or parish council of the congregation in which you are working.

### **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 supervision 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 get 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 church premises. Request their involvement in transport and other arrangements.

### **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. In providing instruction in the Christian faith, teaching and training should follow theology and resources approved by session/parish council.
4. Report regularly on ministry with children to the session/parish council.
5. Be educated in the recognition of the warning signs and symptoms of abuse.
6. All activities away from church premises need to be reported in advance to the session/parish clerk and clergy to check that procedures are followed.

### **Leader's responsibilities to self and co-workers**

1. Use resources approved by session/parish council. Be well prepared for all events and activities and attend training and planning meetings.
2. Keep contact with session/parish council or subgroup (e.g. Christian Education Committee) to support you, and overview children's ministry in the parish.
3. Avoid placing yourself and your co-workers in compromising situations and protect yourself from actions that may be misconstrued.
4. Support your colleagues, and develop good relationships with them.
5. Report to session/parish council any anxieties you have regarding questionable behaviour of any person participating in children's ministry. This is to safeguard the integrity of leaders from potential accusations of abuse.

## **POLICE CHECKS – GENERAL INFORMATION**

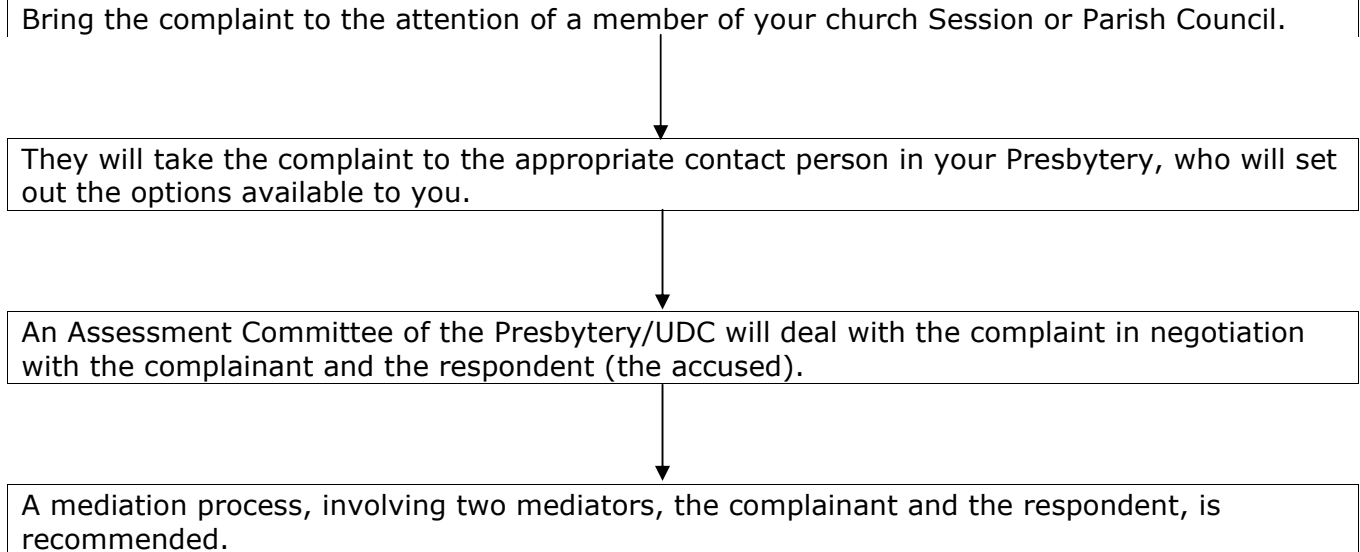
1. Police checks for lay workers in paid positions with pastoral responsibilities are now mandatory. Police checks for voluntary positions are strongly recommended.
2. This requirement applies to all new appointments from 1 March 2003 onwards.
3. The rationale for this mandatory requirement for a police 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 Appendix 11 for a sample declaration form.* 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](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz) under employment.
7. Following an interview, the successful applicant should be asked to fill in an official consent form for a police check to be done and the consent form should be forwarded to the Assembly Office, with the application form from the Session/Parish Council Clerk or Presbytery/UDC Clerk. *See Appendix 9 for details about the process.* Care must be taken to explain the reasons for the police check and to outline the process.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. If the police check does reveal that a person has criminal convictions that need not automatically preclude the person being appointed.
11. The operative regulations in the Book of Order are 86A and 86B, as amended by the 2002 General Assembly.

## **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 [*Appendix 10*]. 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. These forms are available from the Assembly Office.
3. Ask the prospective lay worker(s) to complete an official consent form. 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. Copies will not be processed. Consent forms can be obtained on request from the Assembly Office.
4. Fill in a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of the completed police check.
5. Mail to:
  - Assembly Office, PCR
  - PO Box 9049
  - Wellington
  - the application form
  - the consent form(s)
  - the stamped, self-addressed envelope
6. The NZ Police require up to 20 days to process requests for police checks. Please allow 30 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.
7. 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.
8. 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 e-mail or fax. E-mail and fax may be used for general enquiries about process but not for specific information about people.
9. 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.
10. For further information contact Fiona Stenhouse at the National Office:
  - Ph: (04) 801 6000, Email: [fionas@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:fionas@presbyterian.org.nz)

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A full outline of Complaint Investigation Guidelines is provided in the Presbyterian Book of Order, in Appendix E-9.



## **OTHER RESOURCES to assist in keeping our young people safe**

Check out the 'Safety and Ethics' section in the Presbyterian Youth Ministry Library Catalogue...  
on our website: [www.presbyterian.org.nz/youth/library](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/youth/library)  
by phone: 04 381 8299  
by email: [mo.mansill@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:mo.mansill@presbyterian.org.nz)

Methodist Church of New Zealand, 2000. ***Being safe, keeping safe: protocols for the safety of all involved in children and young people's programmes.***

***Keeping Trust*** – an excellent video for church leaders and all involved in pastoral care. Available from Anne Douglas, Educational Programmes, 30 Dryden Street, Grey Lynn, Auckland, ph. 09 376 5217.

David Goodwin           ***Child Abuse in the Church***, third edition, Kidsreach, 2000.

Kids in Crisis           ***Christian Counselling for Children***, Kidsreach, Waikanae, 1995.

***Kids in Crisis – Christian Counselling for Children***, Kidsreach, Waikanae, 1995.

***Empowering Children***, second edition, Kidsreach, 2002.

***Safety and Protection Training*** Video, Kidsreach, 2002.

Rachel Heathfield       ***Who Cares?*** Effective pastoral care of under-11s in church based groups, CPAS, Warwick, UK, 1998.

Child Alert Trust       ***Feeling Safe: protecting small children from sexual abuse***, [a kit containing books, posters, OHP masters, videos, song tapes] from the Child Alert Trust, PO Box 223, Wellington.

CYPFS                   (now Child, Youth and Family) ***Breaking the cycle: an interagency guide to child abuse***, Wellington, 1996.

CYPS                   (now Child, Youth and Family) ***Parenting without hitting***, a video to help parents, Private Bag 21, Wellington. (\$7) - This video is also available in Maori and Samoan

**Freephone number for contacting Child, Youth and Family ... 0508 FAMILY.**