

2020 Australian Christadelphian Conference

CHILD & VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

May 2019

Policy managed in accordance with the requirements of the Conference sponsor,
the Adelaide Christadelphian Ecclesia

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
1.1.	Policy Statement	3
1.2.	Scope	3
1.3.	Child Safe Standards	3
1.4.	Authority	4
1.5.	Definitions	4
2.	External Policies	6
3.	Policy Review	7
4.	Obligations	8
4.1.	Spiritual	8
4.2.	Legal	8
4.3.	Ethical	8
5.	Selection and Training	9
5.1	Leaders	9
5.2	Helpers	9
6.	Training	11
7.	A Safe Environment	12
8.	Disciplining Children	13
9.	Reporting Procedures	14
10.	Alcohol and Drugs	16
	Appendix 1 Legal Obligations and contact information	17
	Appendix 2 Declaration for Conference Positions in relation to Activities which may involve Children or Vulnerable Adults	18

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. Policy Statement

The Adelaide Christadelphian Ecclesia is the Sponsoring Ecclesia of the 2020 Australian Christadelphian Conference (the Conference). This policy and procedures are congruent the Adelaide Christadelphian Ecclesia's own Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection policy and procedures.

The Conference is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its Attendees and particularly Children and Vulnerable Adults who attend Conference activities.

This policy and procedures aim to reduce the risk of Abuse occurring, and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should Abuse occur. They provide guidance for Attendees engaged in any Activity conducted by the Conference where Children and Vulnerable Adults are involved.

This policy acknowledges the findings, and seeks to comply with, the recommendations of the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse 2018. This policy endorses the Child Safe Standards.

1.2. Scope

This policy and procedures apply to:

- o All Activities authorised by or under the control of the Conference, including those activities undertaken at the Conference venue or away from the Conference venue; and
- o All Conference committee members.

1.3. Child Safe Standards

The child safe standards are:

1. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
5. People working with children are suitable and supported
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused

7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved
10. Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.

1.4. Authority

These are the policy and procedures of the 2020 Australian Christadelphian Conference and were adopted for use by the Conference Committee on 30 May 2019.

The Conference Committee is committed to implementing the policy and procedures and training our Leaders in its content and application.

1.5. Definitions

Abuse:	<p>Can consist of one or more of but is not restricted to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Abuse – Any non-accidental physical injury. • Sexual Abuse – Any sexual act or threat to perform such act upon another person. It occurs when a person uses their power and authority to take advantage of another’s trust to involve them in sexual activity. It does not necessarily involve genital contact but is any act which erodes the sexual boundary between two persons. It may appear consensual but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential. • Emotional Abuse – The chronic attitude or behaviour of one person which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which is detrimental to a person’s development. • Neglect – Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person’s development.
Activity:	Any organised event that is authorised by the Conference Committee.
Activity Leader:	The person recognised and authorised by the Conference as the lead for an Activity.
Attendee:	Any person who has registered for and been admitted to the Conference.

Child:	Any person under the age of 18, as defined in the Children's Protection Act 1993.
Children:	Plural of Child.
Conference:	The 2020 Australian Christadelphian Conference.
Conference Committee:	The governing (executive) and arranging (main) committees of Conference consisting of Christadelphians from various South Australian Christadelphian Ecclesiae.
Helpers:	Any person over the age of 16 who is invited by a Leader to assist in their Activity but is not a Conference Committee (or subcommittee) member.
Leader:	Any Conference Committee or subcommittee member over the age of 18 who is or will be responsible for the control and safety of Attendees placed in their care during an Activity of the Conference.
Sponsoring Ecclesia:	The Adelaide Christadelphian Ecclesia Incorporated located at 105 Halifax Street, Adelaide, 5000, South Australia
Vulnerable Adult:	Any person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against harm or exploitation by another person.

2. External Policies

We acknowledge that some Activities of the Conference might have external affiliation with other organisations. These organisations will possibly have their own policies governing Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection. The Conference's policy & procedures are not intended to replace or conflict with the other policies, but instead to operate in conjunction with them.

3. Policy Review

The Conference Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection policy & procedures are not scheduled for formal review prior to the Conference in April 2020. Any changes that are recommended by the Conference Committee will be considered by the governing committee in consultation with the Sponsoring Ecclesia.

4. Obligations

4.1. Spiritual

Abuse is ungodly and violates the principles of our God and our faith.

The core belief system of the Conference requires us to treat all people with love, dignity and care, especially those who are less powerful or in the need of nurture and protection.

The safety, welfare and wellbeing of the Child and the Vulnerable Adult are paramount. The Ecclesia has a special duty of care for Children and Vulnerable Adults. They are God's gift to us.

4.2. Legal

The Conference and the Leaders are subject to Federal and State legislation and principles established through common law.

Christadelphians do not support or condone criminal behaviour. We recognise that Abuse of a Child or Vulnerable Adult is criminal behaviour.

4.3. Ethical

Some actions may not be regarded as Abuse, but are unacceptable behaviour for Leaders. These include, but are not limited to, any form of:

- Inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature;
- Coarse language, especially that of a sexual nature;
- Suggestive gestures or remarks;
- Jokes of a sexual nature;
- Inappropriate literature;
- Acts of violence committed by a Leader in the course of an Activity;
- Cyber-bullying and
- Inappropriate physical contact.

The age of individuals is recognised as one of the determinants in deciding acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Leaders will ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

5. Selection and Training

5.1 Leaders

Leaders involved in Children's Activities and those where Vulnerable Adults are in attendance and not in the care of their parent or legal guardian must be carefully selected and screened.

Prior to Leaders commencing involvement with Child-related Activities, the candidate Leader will be required to:

- complete a declaration form (refer to Appendix 2);
- obtain a Police and/or Community Services check compliant with the legislative requirements of South Australia;
- attend a full day training session on abuse and mandated notification or undertake refresher training if training has been completed previously;
- become registered in a training register maintained by the Conference; and
- obtain a copy of this CVAP policy and procedures.

The Sponsoring Ecclesia will:

- Nominate two (2) members of the Conference Committee to review the declaration form of a candidate Leader.

The Conference Committee will

- Maintain a training and clearance register; and
- Provide a copy of this CVAP policy and procedures to all Leaders

Where training around the specific protection of Vulnerable Adults is not available in South Australia, appropriate training courses concerning protection of Children will be deemed as sufficient to satisfy the training requirements under this policy.

Where the Conference Committee identifies that an applicant has previously committed any type of Abuse, neglect, violence or a sexual related offence towards any person, they cannot, under any circumstance, be considered for Child-related Activities. Eligibility for other Conference roles will be considered by the Conference governing committee as required.

5.2 Helpers

Helpers are expected to have an awareness of the content of this CVAP policy and procedures and be prepared to work with them.

Any Helper who provides assistance in a Children's Activity must be supervised by a Leader at all times and will be accountable to that Leader.

Leaders who accept the assistance of a Helper must be satisfied of the Helper's maturity and their suitability for Children's Activity.

Where the Conference Committee identifies that a Helper has previously committed any type of Abuse, neglect, violence or a sexual related offence towards any person, being an Adult or Child, they cannot, under any circumstance, be involved in Child-related Activities.

6. Training

All Leaders will be issued with a copy of this policy and procedures.

All Leaders will attend training and/or refresher training in abuse and mandatory notification which includes the legal requirements for notification.

A record of training will be kept and certificates of attendance issued.

Training will be updated at least every three (3) years.

7. A Safe Environment

Incidents of Abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of witness/es can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons two (2) Leaders will always be present when working with or supervising Children or Vulnerable Adults, when a parent or legal guardian is not present.

Leaders will not visit Children in their homes unless a parent, or legal guardian is present or another Leader accompanies them.

When transporting Children or Vulnerable Adults, Leaders should never be alone with a Child or Vulnerable Adult in a car. The transport of Children and/or Vulnerable Adult outside of the Activity time needs to be coordinated and approved with the Child's or Vulnerable Adult's relevant parent or legal guardian.

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

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

Adults and Children are expected to respect each other's privacy when engaging in physical contact of any kind.

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

Initiations and secret ceremonies are prohibited. All aspects of every Child related programme will be open to observation by parents/guardians.

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

8. Disciplining Children

It is not the responsibility of the Conference or its Leaders to discipline a Child. If a Child does not abide by the rules set down by the Leader, or is an obstruction to the care of other Children or may cause harm to other Children, the Child will be removed and referred back to their parent or legal guardian.

At no time will a Leader administer any form of physical, emotional or mental discipline.

9. Reporting Procedures

The Conference Committee will be responsible to the Arranging Committee of the Sponsoring Ecclesia for the implementation of this policy relating to the protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults as it relates to any Activity under their respective control. This will include the implementation of approved guidelines for the conduct of all activities. The Conference Committee will also be responsible for ensuring compliance in the training of people involved in the care and supervision of Children and Vulnerable Adults engaged in activities organised by them.

If there are *reasonable grounds* to suspect a Child or Vulnerable Adult has been or is suffering Abuse, the relevant authority must be notified immediately. In the case of a Child, the relevant authority will be the Government Agency responsible for the protection of Children. In the case of a Vulnerable Adult the relevant authority will be the Police, unless specific legislation is enacted in South Australia that specifies an authority responsible for the protection of Vulnerable Adults.

If a report is made by an Attendee or a member of a Conference Committee to the relevant authority then the Conference governing committee must be made aware of the reporting (not the details of). The Conference Secretary will then advise the Sponsoring Ecclesia's Arranging Committee so that the insurance company can be notified.

The phone numbers for the relevant authorities are located in Appendix 1.

The phone number for the Conference Secretary and the insurance company information is located in Appendix 1.

Investigation of concerns about Abuse and neglect must be left to those with the statutory responsibility for investigation and to people with specific expertise in the relevant authority.

Reasonable grounds can be assumed when:

1. Child or Vulnerable Adult discloses that he or she has been Abused; and/or
2. Someone close to a Child or Vulnerable Adult (e.g. sibling, relative, close friend) discloses on behalf of that Child or Vulnerable Adult; and/or
3. An observable change in the Child's or Vulnerable Adult's normal behaviour raises the suspicion that Abuse may have occurred.

The relevant authority must also be notified if a Child or Vulnerable Adult discloses an incident of Abuse that has occurred somewhere other than at a Conference Activity.

If a disclosure of Abuse is made, the Leader who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate pastoral care to the one making the disclosure. This will include:

- treating the allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise its impact on the alleged victim;

- not pushing the Child or Vulnerable Adult to disclose details of the assault or attempting to investigate the allegation;
- assuring the Child or Vulnerable Adult that they are understood, that their disclosure is being taken seriously, that what has happened is not their fault, and that they are correct in disclosing the incident;
- reporting the Abuse to the relevant authority, Police and the Conference Secretary;
- not making contact with the alleged perpetrator;
- retaining and handing over to the police any clothing worn by the Child or Vulnerable Adult for forensic examination if the alleged assault has taken place recently; and
- maintaining confidentiality.
- if the Leader is already providing counsel to the alleged perpetrator, it may be advisable for another person to assume this responsibility for the duration of the investigation.

Any disclosures by a Child or Vulnerable Adult and all the details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly and the documents held in a secure location where a breach of privacy cannot occur.

Where an allegation is made that involves a Leader, he/she will be removed without prejudice from all Activities for Children or Vulnerable Adults pending the outcome of all investigations.

10. Alcohol and Drugs

The consumption of alcohol (other than wine for a memorial meeting) or illegal drugs on Conference grounds or during an Activity is not condoned by the Conference. Any Child or Vulnerable Adult found to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is to be counselled and the parents/guardians contacted so the Child or Vulnerable Adult can be returned home immediately.

Any Child or Vulnerable Adult required to take prescription medication will provide a letter from the parents/guardians to the Leader.

Appendix 1 Legal Obligations and contact information

Below is a list of the legislative requirements with respect to Child Abuse that apply in South Australia.

Registration: There is no specific legislation requiring Leaders to be registered with a government department.

Police Checks: There is no specific legislation requiring a Leader to have a Police Check

Reporting Abuse: Under section 11(1) and (2) of the Children's Protection Act 1993 the following people are obliged by law to notify the relevant authority if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a Child/young person has been or is being Abused and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person's work (whether paid or voluntary) or carrying out official duties.

The person must notify the relevant authority of the suspicion as soon as practical after he or she forms the suspicion.

Persons to whom section 11(1) and (2) applies include:

- Ministers of religion
- A person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, an organisation formed for religious or spiritual purposes.

Reports should be made to:

Families SA (<http://www.families.sa.gov.au/>) or
Child Abuse Report Line: 131 478 or
SA Police: 131 444

Conference Secretary:

Michael Scerri
0458 576 621

Appendix 2 Declaration for Conference Positions in relation to Activities which may involve Children or Vulnerable Adults

Applicant Details					
Full Name					
Residential Address					Postcode:
Home Phone		Mob Ph:		Work Ph:	
Email Address					

What is your role and why do you feel you are suitable for this role?

Please describe any positive experiences you have had with Children and young people?

Have you ever been in a situation where you have disciplined a Child or young person, if so how have you handled it?

Have you ever been investigated for violent or sex related offences? If so, what were the circumstances?

Is there any other information relating to your suitability for this position of which we should be aware?

I have:	
➤ Read and understood 2020 Australian Christadelphian Conference Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy and Procedures	Agree / Disagree
➤ Never been in breach of 2020 Australian Christadelphian Conference Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy and Procedures	Agree / Disagree
➤ Never had allegations concerning my behaviour towards a Child or Vulnerable Adult	Agree / Disagree
➤ Never been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of an investigation relating to Abuse or inappropriate sexual behaviour	Agree / Disagree
➤ Supplied a National Police and/or Community Services Certification	Agree / Disagree

I confirm that the information provided on this declaration is true and correct

Applicant’s Signature:

We certify that this Declaration was signed by the Candidate in our presence.

Adelaide Christadelphian Ecclesia Arranging Committee representatives:

Signature 1.....

Signature 2.....

Date:/...../.....