

CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING POLICY & PROCEDURES

<p>Purpose</p>	<p>Psalm 127:3 reminds us that “children are a heritage from the Lord.” The Lord is our Heavenly Father who entrusts children into the care of parents to protect, nurture and “bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). As a church community we support parents in their role to children. That is why the Lord Jesus warns, “if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin (the idea of causing them to stumble), it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matthew 18:6). The Lord Jesus also rebuked His disciples when they hindered the little children from coming to Him” (Matthew 19:13-15).</p> <p>The Christian Chapel – Lygon Street Church of Christ Inc (“LSCC”) takes its responsibilities to the children in its care extremely seriously. We are delighted that many members of the LSCC community are willing to give their time and skills to helping our children develop their Christian faith. It is our goal to create a safe and loving environment in which the children who are entrusted to our care are able to learn about God, discover Bible truths, and learn what it means to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. It is our desire that our children, being precious and created in the image of God, grow in the love and delight of God in a safe environment.</p> <p>This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy & Procedures document (“Policy & Procedures”) demonstrates the strong commitment of LSCC to child safety and wellbeing, and how LSCC keeps children safe from harm, including child abuse. We wish to uphold a preventative approach to child safety and wellbeing that includes compliance with the 11 updated Victorian Child Safe Standards created under the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic) and administered by the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People (“CCYP”).</p>
<p>Scope</p>	<p>The Policy & Procedures must be followed by all staff and volunteers involved in ministry to children at LSCC.</p> <p>It applies to all activities at LSCC which involve, result in or relate to contact with children.</p>
<p>Definitions</p>	<p>Child means a child or young person up to the age of 18 years.</p> <p>Child abuse means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sexual offence committed against a child; • an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic), such as grooming;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical violence against a child; • causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child; or • serious neglect of a child. <p>Harm is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.</p>
Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The People Responsible <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The LSCC board (“Board”) accepts ultimate responsibility for ensuring that LSCC is child-safe. b. The Board has the responsibility of appointing Risk Management Officers (“RMOs”), with at least two being appointed at any given time. The RMOs are responsible for overseeing the integration of child safety compliance into LSCC as a whole, and reporting quarterly to the Board. c. The Board has the responsibility of appointing a Child Safety Coordinator who is responsible for the administration of the Policy & Procedures (including the administration and record-keeping of screening checks, volunteer forms and training attendance). d. Team Leaders are the people at LSCC who hold recognised positions in, or who are responsible for, Team Members and participants in children’s ministries. They are also appointed in consultation with the Board. 2. General Rules for Conduct <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Every person involved in ministry at LSCC must treat the safety and care of children as paramount. b. Each person involved in ministry at LSCC including every Team Member, Team Leader and RMO, must comply with the LSCC Child Safe Code of Conduct (“Code of Conduct”). Failure to do so will result in discipline, in accordance with the Policy & Procedures and LSCC’s Church Rules (“Church Rules”). c. The only person authorised to speak to the media in relation to any Church ministry is one who is appointed by the Board. 3. Children’s Empowerment and Participation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. We are a child-centered organisation, and will seek to include children’s views and ideas in organisational planning and delivery of services. b. We want children to develop new friends at LSCC and encourage children to be supportive of each other. We do not tolerate bullying or abusive behaviour between children and will take action if this occurs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. We actively seek to understand what makes children feel safe at LSCC, and communicate with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. Information provided will be made suitable for different age groups and the diversity of the children. We have age-appropriate lesson plans that raise discussion with children regarding child safety. These will be reviewed and presented annually. d. We value the voice of children and will act on safety concerns raised by children or their families. <p>4. Families and Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We recognise the important role of families and will involve parents or carers when making significant decisions about their child. Some families are represented on the Board and leadership. b. We provide information to families and community about our child safe policies and practices including through publishing the Code of Conduct and Policy & Procedures on our website. c. Parents or carers will be invited to participate in child safe training and provide feedback on LSCC's policies, procedures and practices on child safety and wellbeing, if they desire. d. Parents, families and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time and are encouraged to raise any concerns they have with us. e. We take the feedback and involvement of families and communities seriously and take their views into account. <p>5. Valuing Diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. LSCC is a 'multi-cultural' community that will provide access to its children's ministries to all children, including any who are particularly vulnerable because of cultural and social backgrounds or disability. b. We value diversity and equity for all children, and are committed to providing a child-safe and child-friendly environment regardless of, without limitation, race, gender, disability, cultural background or socio-economic status. c. We have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and will take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified. d. We are committed to creating environments where Aboriginal children and families are welcomed and included. This includes consulting with families to identify opportunities for Aboriginal children to share their cultural identity and express their culture, in line with God's Word. <p>6. Recruitment and Screening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The child safety and wellbeing requirements of each role are assessed before recruitment of new staff and volunteers. These include qualifications, experience, attributes required, duties and responsibilities
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	<p>with children, and measures required to manage any child abuse or harm risks including screening, training and supervision requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. A person must have a valid Working with Children Check (“WWCC”), be screened (including reference-checked) and sign a completed Volunteer Form before serving in any children’s ministry position. c. Paid workers including pastors are required to undergo a WWCC, a National Police Check and a follow-up with their referees. Some volunteer roles may require a National Police Check, as determined by the Board. d. Victorian Institute of Teaching (“VIT”) registered teachers are not required to undergo a WWCC but can provide their VIT Registration Number to the Child Safety Coordinator instead. A person under the age of 18 volunteering to work with children does not require a WWCC but they must work under a fully screened and approved Team Leader or Team Member. e. A person who has been charged with a violent or sexually-related offence (whether convicted or not) cannot be involved in child-related programs or work in immediate proximity to child-related programs. f. The Child Safety Coordinator is responsible for maintaining the personal information obtained from and about paid workers and all volunteers, and notify persons who require screening or whose approval is out of date and what they are required to do. g. There will be supervision and people management including regular reviews to check whether the Code of Conduct and Policy & Procedures are followed. <p>7. Induction and Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All staff and volunteers involved in children’s ministries will be required to undertake appropriate induction training to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to child safety and wellbeing. b. Training will include the Code of Conduct, Policy & Procedures, recognising signs of harm or abuse, responding to children who disclose abuse, the complaints process, external reporting (including mandatory reporting) and privacy obligations, creating culturally safe environments, and supporting their engagement with children. c. Completion of training modules will be recorded in a training register. Refresher training must be held at least once every 2 years. <p>8. Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No one is accountable to themselves. Everyone is accountable to someone else. b. Staff and volunteers will receive supervision to support their engagement with children and for compliance with the Code of Conduct and the Policy & Procedures.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Issues or concerns about behaviour with children will be raised immediately and addressed in line with the Code of Conduct, Policy & Procedures and Church Rules. d. A Team Member or Team Leader cannot go ahead with an activity outside the approved curriculum or framework, unless prior permission has been granted by the RMO in writing. This is a critical, foundational principle for all ministries at LSCC. <p>9. Complaints Handling and Incident Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Allegations of abuse are very serious and require a high degree of care in handling the allegation. Children should be believed. b. Incidents must be investigated (where applicable) and reported in accordance with the law (which includes mandatory reporting requirements, employment law and privacy obligations). c. Steps must be taken to ensure the safety of children while an investigation is underway. d. The RMOs will be introduced to children so they know and understand who the appointed officers are, and how and when they may contact them. e. If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to a RMO, they may report their concern to an Elder from the Board. f. A person who discloses harm or risk to children must be supported. g. The following processes must be followed (where applicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the LSCC Incident Reporting Chart outlined in Appendix 1; ○ the LSCC Reportable Conduct Response Chart outlined in Appendix 2, with “reportable conduct” being defined in Appendix 3; ○ the LSCC Complaints Handling Procedure outlined in Appendix 4. <p>10. Record keeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We are committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns. b. All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system. c. Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint. d. The outcome of any investigations and the resolution of any complaints will be recorded and kept. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.
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	<p>e. Records, information and documents that contain personal information must be stored confidentially and securely in accordance with the LSCC Privacy Policy (“Privacy Policy”). This includes, without limitation, records about child safety complaints and incidents, personal information about participants of LSCC children’s ministries and personal information collected from the screening process of paid workers and volunteers.</p> <p>11. Information sharing</p> <p>a. We may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests.</p> <p>b. We will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety.</p> <p>c. We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety.</p> <p>12. Risk management</p> <p>a. We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse in the physical and online environments operated by LSCC.</p> <p>b. We conduct regular risk assessments and have a risk management plan to address the risk of child abuse and harm at LSCC. The risk management plan will be developed in consultation with our staff, volunteers, parent representatives and children.</p> <p>c. We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the benefits of participating at LSCC. The Board is responsible for approving the risk management plan.</p> <p>d. Any contractors or other providers of services will always be supervised by a member of the Board, Child Safety Coordinator, RMO or Team Leader while working with us to ensure child safety.</p> <p>13. Code of Conduct and non-compliance</p> <p>a. All staff and volunteers involved in children’s ministry at LSCC must sign a completed Volunteer Form which requires them to agree to abide by the Code of Conduct. They must comply with the Code of Conduct at all times.</p> <p>b. We will enforce the Code of Conduct and Policy & Procedures.</p> <p>c. Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action.</p>
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Review	<p>We will review all child safe practices and policies at least every two (2) years. Reviews are overseen by the Board and will be informed by consultation with children, families, staff and volunteers.</p> <p>We also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Findings from reviews will be reported to the people involved at LSCC (where appropriate and in accordance with law). We will regularly analyse complaints, incidents and concerns in order to identify causes or systemic weaknesses and implement improvements.</p>
Current officers appointed by the Board	<p>Risk Management Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alethea Ashby • Ping Han Chia • Swee Yue Tan <p>Child Safety Coordinators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alethea Ashby • Nathavut Wongvilaikul
Supporting Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSCC Child Safe Code of Conduct • LSCC Privacy Policy
Supporting Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic) (including Child Safe Standards) • <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i> (Vic) (including reporting to Child Protection) • <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences) • <i>Wrongs Act 1958</i> (Vic) (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse)

Updated 11 Sept 2023

Review

- This Policy & Procedures will be reviewed by 01 July 2024.
- This Policy & Procedures was adopted by resolution of the Board on 05 September 2022.

Signature of **Risk Management Officer**:



Name of **Risk Management Officer (under the delegation of the Board)**: Ping Han Chia

APPENDIX 1: INCIDENT RESPONSE CHART

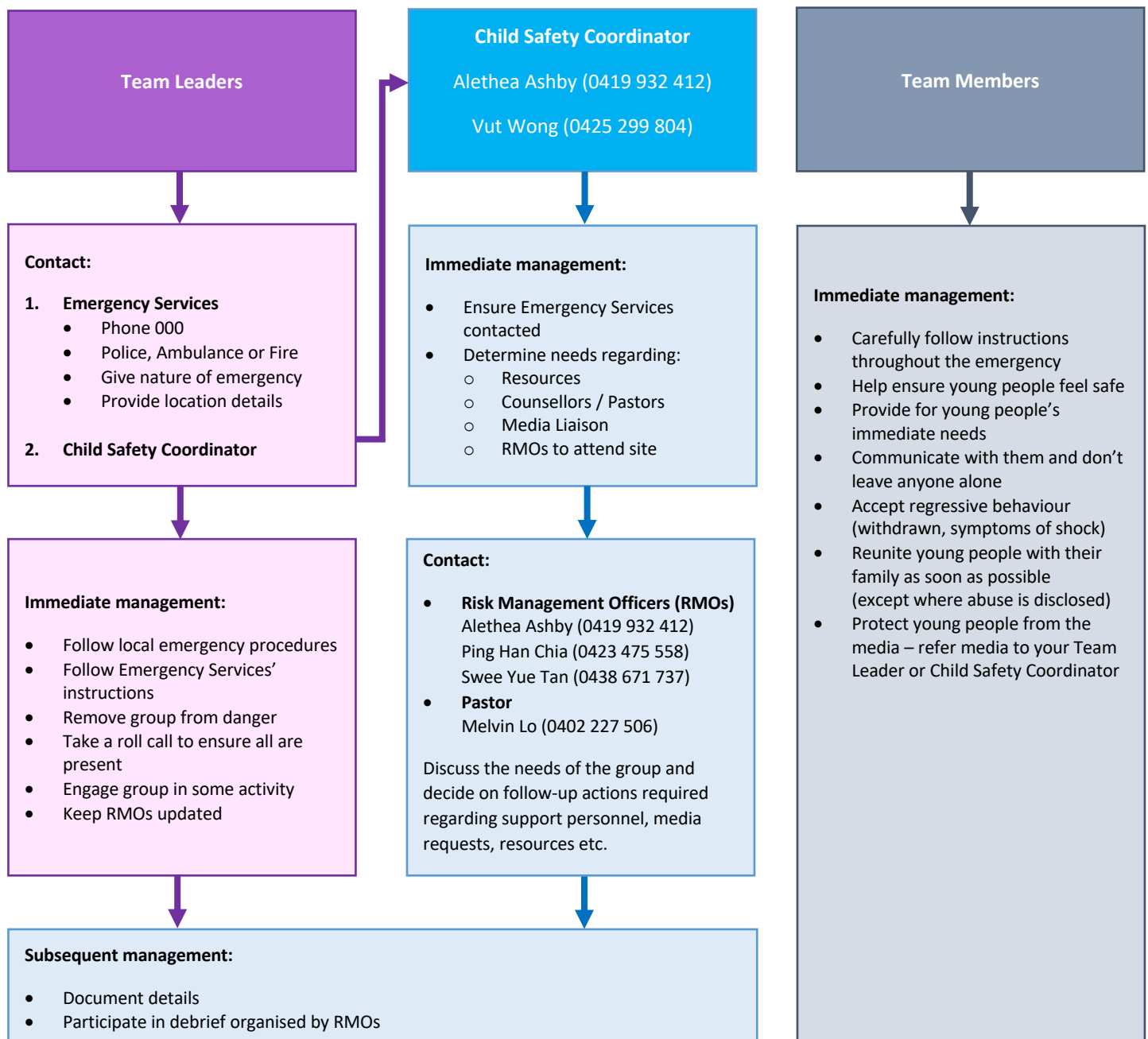
LSCC Incident Response Chart



Critical Incident

For example:

- Death
- Serious injury
- Natural tragedy
- Significant violence
- Self-harm
- Suicide



APPENDIX 2: REPORTABLE CONDUCT RESPONSE CHART

LSCC Reportable Conduct Response Chart



5 types of Reportable Conduct

(Outlined by the Commission for Children and Young People – the Commission)

- Sexual offences
- Sexual misconduct
- Physical violence
- Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm
- Significant neglect

Call Victoria Police on 000 if there are immediate concerns for a child's safety or possible criminal offence.

Failure to notify Victoria Police that an adult may have committed a **sexual offence** against a child is a criminal offence.

RMO to notify the Commission
(Within 3 business days)

Notify Risk Management Officers (RMO):

1. Alethea Ashby
2. Ping Han Chia
3. Swee Yue Tan

RMO to notify the LSCC Board of Management

RMO to initiate a fair and thorough investigation
(If clearance provided by Victoria Police)

RMO to update the Commission of progress within 30 calendar days

The investigation will make or recommend findings, and report findings to the Commission

If allegations involve the RMO, anyone can notify the LSCC Board of Management
and/or,
notify Victoria Police
and/or,
notify the Commission



COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Phone: 1300 782 978 | Email: contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au | Website: ccyp.vic.gov.au

APPENDIX 3: WHAT IS REPORTABLE CONDUCT UNDER THE REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/RCSInfoSheetUpdates/Information-Sheet-2-What-is-reportable-conduct.pdf>

APPENDIX 4: COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

Our approach

We take complaints and feedback seriously. All complaints will be handled by one of our Risk Management Officers unless it is inappropriate for him or her to do so, e.g. due to absence or a lack of independence, in which case another senior member of staff or a Board member will handle it. In matters of great significance, we may outsource the handling of a complaint to an external adviser or consultant, to whom we will give complete cooperation as much as we legally can.

All complaints will be investigated by a staff member or Board member who is not personally involved in the issues. Each complaint will be assessed on its own merits. As far as possible confidentiality and privacy will be maintained and we will be transparent in reporting back results to you as quickly as reasonably possible. Any anonymous complainants will have their anonymity respected.

It is our aim to resolve all complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible. For example, if they can be resolved over the phone at the time they are made, we will do so.

We will not victimise or treat any person negatively because they have made a complaint. If you have special needs (e.g. non English speaking background or a physical impairment), please let us know and we will do our best to assist you.

You may initiate a complaint or feedback by email, letter or telephone call - see the contact details below. If you wish to make your complaint or provide feedback anonymously, it will still receive our genuine attention, although of course we will be unable to report back or seek further information which may be able to assist us in dealing with any issue. We are happy to deal directly with you, or through a parent, carer, friend or adviser.

The process we undertake

Our standard complaint handling procedures are as follows (although we reserve the right to approach a complaint more flexibly if we think it will achieve a more just and efficient outcome):

1. We will acknowledge each complaint promptly and give you the contact details of the person handling the complaint, ideally within 2 business days. If we have not finalised your complaint within 14 days after that, we will contact you to report our progress.
2. We will assess the complaint and assign it priority.
3. If investigation is required, we will plan how the investigation is to be carried out.
4. We will investigate all relevant factual issues and then review the complaint in light of those facts. We will then consider options for complaint resolution.
5. We will contact you to discuss the complaint. In doing so we will inform you of the relevant facts we have identified and ask you to comment and/or give us any other relevant information you may have. We will then discuss with you how we propose to resolve the complaint. If we were wrong or have acted inappropriately, we will apologise.
6. If you are not satisfied with the proposed resolution, the Board will review the position, and we will contact you appropriately. If you are still not satisfied, and we believe that there are genuine issues involved, we may suggest an externally facilitated mediation. Alternatively, you may pursue any other action which you believe is appropriate.

7. We will act on any systemic issues that are identified as a result of the complaint or feedback.

(Note – if we reasonably believe that a complaint is vexatious, trivial or not genuine we will inform you accordingly as soon as we form that view. If you wish to take matters further, you may pursue any other action which you believe is appropriate.)

We will work to make the future better

We appreciate that complaints and feedback can provide an insight into our programs and services, and may show that they are not working as well as they might. We will use information brought to light by any complaints and feedback to improve our service to our stakeholders by:

- highlighting service failings that need to be remedied; and
- revealing problems and trends that can be acted on by management.

We will address at Board level any significant issues which are revealed by our complaints handling and feedback procedures.

Our contact details

LSCC Risk Management Officers:

Alethea Ashby: alethea.ashby@outlook.com, 0419 932 412

Ping Han Chia: pinghanchia@gmail.com, 0423 475 558

Swee Yue Tan: sweeyuetan@gmail.com, 0438 671 737

Address: 54 Lygon Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

Email: info@lsc.org.au

Ph: 03 9663 5706