

**Noarlunga Church of Christ Community Care Inc.
(CareWorks Noarlunga)
Child Safety Policies and Procedures**

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Originator	
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Section One. Preamble

The purpose of this document is to provide a guide for Noarlunga Church of Christ Community Care Inc and programs run under its auspices.

Churches and agencies affiliated with Churches of Christ in South Australia and Northern Territory are required by law to implement Child Safety Policy and Procedures, in compliance with the Children’s Protection Act 1993.¹

1. Fostering communities where children flourish

The State Board of Churches of Christ in SA & NT has established a **Child Safe Work Group** to provide resources and practical support for congregations and agencies as they work to ensure their ministry with children is conducted in the safest and healthiest environment possible.

Sadly, our churches and agencies have not always been safe places for children, or places in which children have flourished.

This is not just about *sexual* abuse or exploitation. It’s also about:

- ✓ Not placing children in situations that may cause them to feel pressured or anxious.
- ✓ Not allowing children to participate in activities when there is risk of injury, coercion or social isolation.
- ✓ Building solid ‘risk management’ practices into all children’s activities, programs and facilities.

The long-term damage done to children who are abused, neglected or mistreated by adults is widely acknowledged. So too is the harm that occurs when these children are **re-abused** by ‘authorities’ who fail to act appropriately, or collude to protect the reputation of their organisations.

2. Definitions

¹ Children’s Protection Act 1993 section 8C (1)

CareWorks Noarlunga	Noarlunga Church of Christ Community Care Inc., operating under the name of CareWorks Noarlunga
COCSANT	Churches of Christ in South Australia and Northern Territory
Child	In line with current South Australian legislation, a child/ young person is a person under the age of 18 years.
C.A.R.L.	Child Abuse Report Line
Leaders	Leaders are those who have oversight, supervision or key leadership responsibilities. They can be paid employees or volunteers.
Volunteers	Volunteers are the helpers and assistants in programs who are not paid.
Employees	Employees refers to those who are paid by the church.
Abuse	<p>Child abuse is not usually a single act but takes place over time. The Children’s Protection Act 1993 (SA) defines and identifies four categories of child abuse:</p> <p>Physical –a situation where a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by another person. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be an inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or aggression.</p> <p>Sexual – a situation in which a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity.</p> <p>Emotional – a situation in which a person repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child and creates an emotional environment which significantly damages the child’s physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.</p> <p>Neglect – a situation in which an adult fails to provide the child with the basic necessities of life to the extent that the child’s health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.</p> <p>In addition, CareWorks Noarlunga recognises spiritual abuse – a situation in which a person misuses their power, leadership or influence to control, coerce or manipulate a child for seemingly religious purposes. It includes intentional and unwitting abuse in both formal and casual situations. Spiritual abuse includes enticements, threats of rejection, evoking fear, emotional appeals, accusation of demon possession and involving children in spiritual activity against their will.</p>
Bullying	Bullying is a form of persistent harassment that demeans, threatens, humiliates, or intimidates a person.
Cyber-bullying	Cyber-bullying uses e-technology as a means of victimising others. It is the use of an internet service or mobile technologies - such as e-mail, chat room, discussion groups, instant messaging, web pages or SMS (text

messaging) - with the intention of harming another person. Examples include communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down or humiliate the recipient.

Duty of Care Duty of care means the moral and legal responsibility that CareWorks Noarlunga has to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those who participate in its activities and services.

Section Two: Child Safety Policy

3 Policy Objectives

- 3.1 To protect children by minimising the risk of abuse or harm within, programs or activities associated with CareWorks Noarlunga.
- 3.2 To enable children and young people to flourish in, programs and activities provided by CareWorks Noarlunga.
- 3.3 To ensure that all Federal and State legislation pertaining to child protection is strictly adhered to in the, programs and activities involving children in CareWorks Noarlunga.

4. Responsibility

- 4.1 The CareWorks Noarlunga Board acknowledges it has moral and legal responsibility to ensure all children involved in any CareWorks Noarlunga, programs and activities are safe.

5. Leaders, Volunteers and Employees Conduct

- 5.1 Children in CareWorks Noarlunga's care are entitled to be safe and feel safe at all times.
- 5.2 Every person involved at CareWorks Noarlunga must treat the safety and care of children as paramount.
- 5.3 As leaders, volunteers and employees are placed in a position of trust and responsibility, they will make every reasonable effort to avoid acting, or failing to act, in a way that compromises a child's sense of physical, emotional or spiritual safety and wellbeing.
- 5.4 In particular, CareWorks Noarlunga has adopted a Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct. Every volunteer, leader and employee involved in ministry at CareWorks Noarlunga must comply with the Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct. Failure to do so will result in discipline.

6. Leaders, Volunteers and Employees Screening

- 6.1 Leaders, volunteers and employees must be screened and appointed in line with measures and best practice standards, which accord with the requirements in the *Children's Protection Act 1993*.
- 6.2 A leader, volunteer or employee must agree to abide by the Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct before becoming involved in ministry in CareWorks Noarlunga.
- 6.3 CareWorks Noarlunga must ensure that relevant history assessment information is managed securely and confidentially.

7. Support & training program

- 7.1 Leaders, volunteers and employees must receive child-safety training before becoming involved in at CareWorks Noarlunga, including (without limitation) training on how to recognise and respond to abuse and neglect of children.
- 7.2 The training provider and/or content must be approved by CareWorks Noarlunga Board.
- 7.3 CareWorks Noarlunga is committed to the ongoing improvement and development of it as a child safe and child friendly organisation. So:
 - It is necessary for training to be provided on an ongoing basis, at least every three years; and
 - The following matters will be taken into account when conducting employee performance reviews:
 - Status of training.
 - Awareness of this Policy and associated procedures (including the Code of Conduct), and compliance with it.

8. Reporting and responding to abuse and neglect

- 8.1 CareWorks Noarlunga acknowledges that any act that endangers a child's physical or emotional health or development is serious and must be reported and responded to seriously. Children are to be believed.
- 8.2 **External reporting:** Employees, volunteers and leaders must report suspected abuse or neglect to external authorities in accordance with the steps outlined, which reflects the requirements of the *Children's Protection Act 1993*.
- 8.3 **Internal reporting:** In addition to any external reporting obligations, employees, volunteers and leaders must report any:
 - alleged breach of the Code of Conduct;
 - suspected abuse or neglect of a child; and
 - any complaint or concern raised by a parent or member of the CareWorks Noarlunga community regarding child safety

to the Board Chair in accordance with the steps outlined.

8.4 Where a report is made to the Board Chair, he or she must ensure that appropriate steps are taken in response to the report to ensure the ongoing and future safety of children within CareWorks Noarlunga. This may include:

- Arranging for an investigation to be carried out and suspending the person whose conduct is the subject of the report from involvement at CareWorks Noarlunga while the investigation is carried out.
- Ensuring that the information has been securely and confidentially recorded.
- Ensuring, where applicable, external authorities have been notified.
- Advising CareWorks Noarlunga Board.
- Ensuring that the child, and the person making the report, are aware of the services available to support them.

9. Bullying

9.1 Bullying of or by a leader or participant, in any program, is always unacceptable. Please refer to Bullying and Sexual Harassment free workplace Policy.

10. Safe Environments

10.1 CareWorks Noarlunga believes that every measure should be taken to ensure that all programs planned and conducted in a safe manner. Please refer to Work Health and Safety Policy.

11. Child Volunteering in Programs

11.1 All children volunteering in CareWorks Noarlunga programs will be advised to speak to the Board Chair, Minister or Program Manager if they feel unsafe, threatened or scared of the situation in which they find themselves.

12. Programs

CareWorks Noarlunga intends that this policy will extend all programs run by CareWorks Noarlunga. These services may include; financial counselling, emergency relief and the Op Shop.

13. Records

Personal information will be collected and stored privately and securely in accordance with CareWorks Noarlunga' Privacy Policy.

14. Review

This policy must be reviewed and updated every three years. The person responsible for this is the Director.

14. Procedures

The following procedures are relevant to the implementation of this Policy:

- The Code of Conduct
- Work Place Health and Safety

- Bulling and Sexual Harassment

This policy was adopted by resolution of the Board of CareWorks Noarlunga on

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Signature of Chair or Secretary

Section Three: Child Safety Procedures

1. Procedure for Screening of Leaders and Volunteers

Step 1 People wishing to be engaged programs where they may come in contact with children, will be subject to a 3 month probation period.

Step 2 All people working with children must obtain and produce as required a current National Police Certificate or other prescribed evidence of a person's criminal history² which has been issued within the three months prior to starting in any role. The date of the National Police Check must be stated on the documents for it to be suitable qualifying evidence.

Step 3 Approved leaders, volunteers and employees working with children will undertake appropriate training such as **ChildSafe™**.

Step 4 Approved leaders, volunteers and employees will agree to the designated code of conduct as provided by CareWorks Noarlunga.

[Steps 1-4 must be completed before leaders, volunteers and employees are able to participate in programs/ activities for children and young people.]

Step 6 CareWorks Noarlunga should refer to its grievance procedures if there are any concerns or complaints regarding a leader, volunteer or employee.

Step 7 Training in **ChildSafe™** or the equivalent should be undertaken every three years. National Police Certificates should also be renewed every three years.

² Children's Protection Regulations 2010 – Regulation 6

2. Procedure for Reporting Abuse

2.1 Reporting/Response Procedures.

- Step 1** Report known or suspected abuse immediately to the 24 hour C.A.R.L. on 131478. The Indigenous Response Unit (Yaitya Tirramangkotti) has the same phone number 131478)
- Step 2** Inform the Chair of the Board as soon as possible.
- Step 3** The Chair must brief the Board if not yet aware.
- Step 4** Any notes will be kept of all conversations/interactions with the parties.
- Step 5** The Board will meet in order to develop and implement response management and support strategies.
- Step 6** In matters of suspected criminal offences, **AT NO TIME** should an alleged perpetrator be confronted or advised of the allegations and subsequent report. In these matters, the notifier / board should strictly follow the specific directions of either the C.A.R.L. or the police.
- Step 7** At an appropriate time, having regard to the investigation process and the need to prevent contamination of evidence, if the alleged perpetrator is a paid employee, that person will be stood down with pay, pending the outcome of the investigation. If the perpetrator is not a paid employee, that person will be relieved of their ministry role and responsibility, pending the outcome of the investigation.

Appendix A. Mandatory Reporting Legislation SA

Section 6 of the Children's Protection Act 1993 outlines the extent of abuse and neglect that the state has the authority to intervene in.

A child is at risk if—

(a) there is a significant risk that the child will suffer serious harm to his or her physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing against which he or she should have, but does not have, proper protection

Or

(b) the child has been, or is being, abused or neglected

Under Section 11, the following people are obliged by law to notify C.A.R.L.

(a) If a person to whom this section applies suspects on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected; and

(b) The suspicion is formed in the course of the person's work (whether paid or voluntary) or of carrying out official duties, the person must notify the Department of that suspicion as soon as practicable after he or she forms the suspicion.

Maximum penalty: \$10 000.

(2) This section applies to the following persons:

(a) A medical practitioner;

b) A pharmacist;

(b) A registered or enrolled nurse;

(c) A dentist;

(d) A psychologist;

(e) A police officer;

(f) A community corrections officer (an officer or employee of an administrative unit of the Public Service whose duties include the supervision of young or adult offenders in the community);

(g) A social worker;

(h) A minister of religion;

(i) A person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, an organisation formed for religious or spiritual purposes;

(h) A teacher in an educational institution (including a kindergarten);

(i) An approved family day care provider

(j) Any other person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, a government or non-government organisation that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children, being a person who—

(i) is engaged in the actual delivery of those services to children; or

(ii) holds a management position in the relevant organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of the provision of those services to children.