

# *The Reformed Church of Newcastle*

## **Risk Management Policy**

**(Approved by Session 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025)**

# Risk Management

*The Reformed Church of Newcastle* will ensure that safety is a part of its overall approach to risk management. Session will act as the Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Committee (otherwise known Synodically, as the Safe Church Committee) for dealing with risk management and prevention of harm, unless a specific committee is formed at Session's direction.

Risk assessment and management practices are embedded in our procedures for all services, programs or activities authorised by the church. We use these practices to inform our planning and implementing of all aspects of operation at *The Reformed Church of Newcastle*.

*The Reformed Church of Newcastle's* OH&S Committee will be supported by a Risk and Compliance (R&C) Committee<sup>1</sup> committed solely to identifying and managing risks within *The Reformed Church of Newcastle* and its environment, and reporting these to the OH&S Committee. The Committee will be comprised of the Child Protection Officer (CPO, also called the Child Safety Officer/Childsafe Coordinator), the Church Safety Officer and at least one other person if the CPO and Church Safety Officer roles are filled by the same person. The R&C committee will report to the OH&S Committee (the Session) on a monthly basis as a standing Agenda Item, whether or not an issue is identified. If the R&C Committee identifies risks of child abuse or safety occurring in *The Reformed Church of Newcastle* or its environment, the committee will make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) that *The Reformed Church of Newcastle* will take to reduce or remove the risks (i.e. risk controls), communicating the details of those risks and the actions to be taken in a full report to the OH&S Committee (Session) at the earliest possible time.

As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the R&C Committee will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls, reporting this to the OH&S Committee (Session)

The **Child Protection Officer** will be appointed by Session, and, as well as being a member of the R&C Committee, is responsible for responding to complaints of abuse of children (those under 18yrs of age) or abuse of vulnerable people, whether made by staff, contractors, volunteers, children, members of the congregation or other attendees, or visitors to the church. As per our Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025, responding to complaints of child abuse is not restricted to abuse only occurring within *The Reformed Church of Newcastle*.

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<sup>1</sup> This may be a function of the Board or Committee of Management, rather than a separate group. If so, there should be a standard Agenda item re Risk Management in meetings.

The **Church Safety Officer** will be appointed by Session, and is a member of the R&C Committee, having the responsibility to record and bring to the attention of the R&C Committee any reported or observed incidents of harm that occur on church property or during church activities, not involving children (those under 18yrs of age) or vulnerable people of any age. Where children or vulnerable people are involved in an incident, the Church Safety Officer will initially pass on the report of the incident to the church's Child Protection Officer to determine if this falls within the definition of child abuse as outlined in the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

Where an incident involving children or vulnerable people **is not classified as child abuse**, and for all other incidents, then a completed Incident Form (see Appendix D) will be provided by the Church Safety Officer to the R&C Committee which will determine appropriate action and make a report to the OH& S Committee (Session) so that any risk in the future can be minimised and appropriate measures put in place.

Where an incident involving children or vulnerable people **is classified as child abuse**, then the Child Protection Officer will follow the procedures outlined in the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025, and the Church Safety Officer has no further responsibility in the matter apart from advising the R&C Committee that an incident has been handed on to the Child Protection Officer. A Complaint and Abuse Form should be completed (see Appendix C).

The Child Protection Officer and Church Safety Officer can be the same person or two separate individuals, and will be identified and their roles explained at appropriate times in the church year. When the same person is both the Child Protection Officer and the Church Safety Officer, the responsibilities and privacy requirements of the Child Protection Officer take precedence over Church Safety Officer reporting responsibilities to the R&C Committee (see Appendices A & B for job descriptions).

Guests, staff and volunteers are expected to use the **Complaint and Abuse Form** or **Incident Form** to note concerns arising from observations or experience (See instructions in Appendices C & D on which form to use, or Appendix 2 or 5 in the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025). These forms will be available at the church entrance and in the First Aid Box, or from the Child Protection Officer and the Church Safety Officer. They can be downloaded using this link:

[Reports, Documents and Forms – Christian Reformed Churches of Australia: Safe Church](#)

# Record Keeping

All reports of alleged harm, or risk thereof, must be recorded on a Complaint and Abuse Form or an Incident Form (see Appendices C & D) by either the Church Safety Officer or Child Protection Officer according to the nature of the report (If abuse – the Child Protection Officer, otherwise the Church Safety Officer). Reports by the Church Safety Officer to the R&C Committee must be provided by the subcommittee to the OH&S Committee and securely stored by the Head of Entity, with a scanned copy kept in the Session's records or a report made in Childsafe's Safety Management Online. As well the insurer will be notified of any significant incident by the OH&S Committee (Session).

Reports related to Child Abuse or abuse of vulnerable people will be securely stored by the Child Protection Officer as outlined in the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

## Privacy and Confidentiality

*The Reformed Church of Newcastle* will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information of the person making a report of harm in accordance with relevant privacy legislation (see *The Reformed Church of Newcastle's* Privacy Policy).

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Appendices follow, beginning on next page.

Ctrl+click underlined links to download form.

**APPENDIX A. [Job Description Church Safety Officer](#)**

**APPENDIX B. [Job Description Child Protection Officer](#)**

**APPENDIX C. [Instructions and link for Complaint and Abuse Report Form](#)**

**APPENDIX D. [Instructions and link for Incident Report Form](#)**

## **APPENDIX A. Job Description Church Safety Officer** *The Reformed Church of Newcastle*

- Appointed by Session and reports to the Risk & Compliance (R&C) Committee.
- Name and contact details of the Church Safety Officer will be advertised on a poster in the church.
- It is expected that all reports, whether accidents, near misses or emotional responses brought on by a church activity, will be reported to the Church Safety Officer, along with completion of an Incident Form (See Appendix D, or Appendix 5 in the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025) provided no child (a person under 18yrs of age) or vulnerable person is involved.
- Where a report involves a child or a vulnerable person, the Church Safety Officer will refer this to the Child Protection Officer for completion of the Complaint and Abuse Form, and determination as to whether it should be classified as “child abuse or abuse of a vulnerable person”. If the Church Safety Officer and the Child Protection Officer are the same person, then, as it were, the Church Safety Officer changes to the role of Child Protection Officer.
- If the report is classified as “abuse”, then the Church Safety Officer notifies the R&C Committee that a referral has been made to the Child Protection Officer, without divulging personal information to the R&C Committee, and no further action is required by the Church Safety Officer for this incident.
- If the report relates to a person over 18yrs old, not being abuse of a vulnerable person, or the Child Protection Officer makes the decision that the report is not one of abuse of a child or vulnerable person, then the Church Safety Officer is responsible for completion of the Incident Form as per Record Keeping and bringing it to the attention of the R&C Committee for action.
- Reports by the Church Safety Officer to the R&C Committee must be provided by the subcommittee to the OH&S Committee and securely stored by the Head of Entity, with a scanned copy kept in the Session’s records or a report made in Childsafe’s Safety Management Online, but it is the responsibility of the OH&S Committee (Session) to notify the insurer of any significant incident.

## **APPENDIX B. Job Description Child Protection Officer** *The Reformed Church of Newcastle*

- Appointed by Session for responding to complaints of abuse made by staff, contractors, volunteers, children or other attendees and members of the congregation.
- Name and contact details of the Child Protection Officer (also called the Child Safety Officer/Childsafe Coordinator) will be advertised on a poster in the church.
- Reports to the Head of Entity concerning any complaints of abuse (in the event that a complaint of abuse is made against the Head of Entity, then the report should be made to the Alternate Head of Entity), as well as to Police and Child Protection Services (In NSW: Department of Communities and Justice - DCJ), following the procedures outlined in the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025, Appendix 1, 1A & 1B according to nature of the complaint.
- This person needs to be mature, experienced and readily accessible during those times children are on site, but does not usually directly work with children. The Child Protection Officer should not be the Head of Entity. The Child Protection Officer has to be able to access the Complaints and Incident Forms and to be familiar with the legal requirements applying to the reporting of abuse against children (outlined in the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025).
- The Church Safety Officer and the Child Protection Officer can be the same person, but the responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer take precedence over the Church Safety Officer.
- All reports of alleged abuse or harm, or risk thereof, must be recorded in the form of a Complaint (see Appendix C) or Incident Report (see Appendix D), following the directions. Reports must be securely stored by the Child Protection Officer.
- The Child Protection Officer is required to be familiar with the reporting of child abuse as outlined in the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025, and is expected (and legally required) to follow Reporting Procedures 1 or 2 in Appendix 1/1A/1B of that policy.
- Where only allegations of abuse have been made and the Child Protection Officer has notified the Police and the Department of Communities and Justice, it may still be appropriate for *The Reformed Church of Newcastle* to undertake its own investigation within the limits outlined in the Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025. This is not the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer. Rather Session will engage someone from outside the local congregation who is experienced in these matters to investigate on Session's behalf.
- It is Session's responsibility and not the Child Protection Officer's to implement appropriate responses to an allegation or proven abuse event. The Child Protection Officer's role is completed when notification is made to all authorities listed above, reports collated and stored, though support of the victim may need to be on-going.

## APPENDIX C. Complaint and Abuse Form

Please use the Form to report a Formal Complaint or Abuse of any kind towards yourself or another person, including a child. **Please read the Code of Conduct Document before using this form.**

### When should this report be completed?

This report must be completed if:

1. There is an alleged illegal act, a participant sent home, serious leader dispute, damage or loss of property.
2. The situation relates to Child Protection (disclosure of abuse, allegation of abuse, or report based on reasonable grounds).
3. You have a grievance about anything relating to the activities or buildings/physical environment of the church.
4. Other situations will require judgement and consultation with your organisation. In situations where doubt exists about the use of this report, complete a report.

### What do I do with this report after I have completed it?

1. Check that all information is correct to the best of your knowledge.
2. Check that the appropriate signatures are given.
3. The Team Leader forwards the form to your Coordinator as soon as possible. More severe complaints require immediate reporting, while other reports should be submitted within seven days.

The **Complaint and Abuse Report Form** can be downloaded using this link:

<https://safechurch.crca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/CSE3-IRC-Complant-Report.docx>

## **APPENDIX D. Incident Form**

Please use the Form to report an Incident.

**Please read the Code of Conduct Document in the Child and Vulnerable People Protection policy before using this form.**

### **When should this report be completed?**

This report must be completed if:

1. An outside emergency service is contacted (Police, Ambulance, State Emergency Service etc.).
2. An individual is taken to hospital, doctor's surgery, emergency dental surgery, or other medical professional.
3. An injury results in a participant being unable to participate for 24 hours.
4. There is an alleged illegal act, a participant sent home, serious leader dispute, damage or loss of property.
5. Other situations will require judgement and consultation with your organisation. In situations where doubt exists about the use of this report, complete a report.

### **How do I complete this report:**

- Sections A, B & D must be completed in all situations.
- Section C is to be completed where there is an injury to an individual.

### **What do I do with this report after I have completed it?**

1. Check that all information is correct to the best of your knowledge.
2. Check that the appropriate signatures are given.
3. The Team Leader forwards the form to your Coordinator as soon as possible. More severe incidents require immediate reporting, while other reports should be submitted within seven days.

The **Incident Form** can be downloaded using this link:

<https://safechurch.crca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/CSE4-IR-Incident-Report.doc>