

[Church Name] Incident Response Process

Safe Ministry Supervisors should follow this process step-by-step when someone makes a report to them about specific incidents, general suspicions or a person of concern.

Note: The details of those reporting abuse should be kept private and confidential, only made known to those in leadership and to individuals and organisations who are legally required to know those details.

Incident Response Process Decision Table

Does the report allege an incident of ABUSE or a CHILD AT RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM ?				
NO		YES		
Is the report about an INJURY?	Is the report is about a PERSON OF CONCERN?	Is the report is about a CHILD (a person under 18) experiencing abuse or at risk of significant harm?	Did the alleged abuse (or risk of significant harm) occur in the context of a church program or while the suspected offender was acting on behalf of the church?	
YES Follow the <u>Injury Response Process</u>	YES Follow the <u>Person of Concern Response Process</u>	YES Follow the <u>Suspected Child Abuse Response Process</u>	NO Follow the <u>External Incident Response Process</u>	YES Follow the <u>Church Incident Response Process</u>

INJURY RESPONSE PROCESS

This process should be used in the event of an injury in the context of a church program. (If the injury occurred outside of a church context, it should still be recorded if it was treated within a church context. Otherwise it is beyond the scope of this process).

The Safe Ministry Supervisor(s) should print out this Process and keep as a record of the steps and actions taken.

Steps	Checkbox
1. Get the reporter to fill in an <u>Accident Report Form</u> and attach it to this Process Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Together with the other Safe Ministry Supervisors, review the Accident Report and determine if any further action should be taken to reduce the risk of similar incidents. Notes (include decisions, action steps and persons appointed responsible to enact those changes):	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. If the injury is serious, forward a copy of this report to the Church leadership and the Insurance Provider.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. This will end the Incident Response Process	

PERSON OF CONCERN RESPONSE PROCESS

Use this process when a report is made (or a regulation check has been returned) suggesting a person may be a Person of Concern.

The Safe Ministry Supervisor(s) should print out this Process and keep as a record of the steps and actions taken.

Steps	Checkbox
1. Write a record of the suspected Person of Concern report with as much detail as possible and attach to this Process Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. Is the Person of Concern associated with the church ministry or its programs? Yes - Go to step 3. No - Continue below... If the Person of Concern is not associated with the church ministry or its programs (e.g. an uncle of a church member who has never been to church himself), they are outside the scope of the Church response process. However it is worth completing the following:</p>	
<p>2.1 Review if any State, Federal or other organisation needs to be notified of the Person of Concern Notes:</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2.2 Help the person making the reporting to direct their report to those agencies. Notes:</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2.3 Decide if the Church Leadership should be informed of the report for them to address any pastoral/care issues. Notes: (e.g. Church Leader who was informed)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4 This will end the Response Process.	

3. If the Person of Concern is associated with the church ministry or its programs, depending on the circumstances, decide together with the other Safe Ministry Supervisors to do one of the following...	
3.1 <u>Continue to monitor the person with no other action</u> If the report does not present a substantial risk, continue to monitor the person of interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 <u>Discuss and (re)establish appropriate behaviours</u> If the Person of Concern presents a medium risk to general members; Appoint a Safe Ministry Supervisor (or other appropriate person) to discuss with the person what constitutes appropriate behaviour and establish an appropriate code of conduct for them to commit to following.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 <u>Discuss and set an agreed boundary on behaviour and involvement</u> If the Person of Concern is considered a significant risk to people, Appoint a Safe Ministry Supervisor (or other appropriate persons) to discuss with the Person of Concern that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● they are a person of significant concern, and ● there are appropriate (and potentially legal or insurance) boundaries that they need to remain within (including certain roles and responsibilities they are not permitted to act in), and ● there are appropriate behaviours they should commit to following, and ● the church leadership (pastor and board) as the insurance provider will be made aware of these decisions. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4 Attach a copy of the agreed behaviour and boundaries to this Response Process Sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5. Discuss with the person who made the report (with appropriate level of privacy) the determined process.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. This ends the Incident Response Process	

Note 1: Where, arising out of due diligence checks related to recruitment, it is discovered that a person has pleaded guilty to, been convicted of, or admitted to a sexual criminal offence, or has been found to have sexually offended, the person is not permitted by law to work with children, and may not be covered by insurance if they are appointed to a position of leadership over adults.

Note 2: A person who has a history of sexual offences may be required by law to stay away from certain situations in the community. You should discuss this with the person of concern and their legal representative.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE RESPONSE PROCESS

The Safe Ministry Supervisors should print this process and keep as a record of the actions taken.

Step	Check box
1. Write a record of the suspected abuse with as much detail as possible and attach to this Process Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Use the NSW Government Online Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) and attach a record of the choices and the advised response from the MRG to this Process Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the MRG recommend any further action be taken with the Victim and/or the Accused? (Other than continued observation). If NO, go to step 4. If YES, continue below...	YES / NO
<p>If the MRG recommends further actions, carry out the steps advised by the MRG.</p> <p>Note: This may include contacting police, the Department of Family and Community Services or other organisations. There may also be need for the person who made the initial report to provide statements to authorities.</p> <p>Attach any notes from discussions with external agencies to this Response Process Sheet.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Contact the NSW State Ombudsman to inquire about the suspected incident. Does the Ombudsman recommend making a formal notification of a reportable incident? If NO, go to step 5. If YES, continue below...	YES / NO
<p>If the Ombudsman recommends making a formal notification, carry out the steps advised by the Ombudsman.</p> <p>Attach any notes from discussions with external agencies to this Response Process Sheet.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Did either the MRG or the Ombudsman require further action (apart from continued observation)? If NO, this will end the Incident Response Process. If Yes, continue below...	End Process / Continue process

6. Did the alleged abuse (or risk of significant harm) occur in the context of a church program or while the suspected offender was acting on behalf of the church?

If NO, follow the [External Incident Response Process](#)

If YES, follow the [Church Incident Response Process](#)

YES / NO

EXTERNAL INCIDENT RESPONSE PROCESS

This is the process to follow when there has been a suspected case of abuse (or a child put at risk of significant harm), but it DID NOT occur in the context of a church program or while the suspected offender was acting on behalf of the church.

If the suspected incident occurred in the context of a church program or while the suspected offender was acting on behalf of the church, follow the Church Incident Response Process.

Step	Check box
1. Write a record of the suspected abuse with as much detail as possible and attach to this Process Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Review if any State, Federal or other organisation need to be notified of the abuse. (E.g. Abuse of someone who lives in an aged care home, contact the Complaints Investigation Scheme. etc.) Notes:	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is the suspected offender associated with the church (regular attender or member)? NOTE: If the suspected abuse occurred within a church program and the suspected offender was acting as a leader or on behalf of the church, you should be using the <u>Church Incident Response Process</u> rather than this process. If No, go to step 4. If Yes, continue below...	YES / NO
3.1. Initiate a <u>Person of Concern Response Process</u> .	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 Do not continue this External Incident Response Process.	END
4. Decide if the Church Leadership should be informed of the report for them to address any pastoral/care issues. Notes: (e.g. Church Leader who was informed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. This is the end of the Incident Response Process	

CHURCH INCIDENT RESPONSE PROCESS

This is the process to follow when there has been a suspected case of abuse (or a child put at risk of significant harm), which occurred in the context of a church program or while the suspected offender was acting on behalf of the church.

If the suspected incident DID NOT occur in the context of a church program or while the suspected offender was acting on behalf of the church, follow the External Incident Response Process.

Step	Checkbox
1. Write (or have the reporter write) a record of the suspected abuse with as much detail as possible. Attach the record to this Process Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Together with the other Safe Ministry Supervisors, assess the written report. If there is full consensus that the report is either inadequate, overzealous, unsubstantiated, or does not constitute abuse or risk of significant harm, then this will end the Incident Response Process (attach notes with reasons to this Process Sheet).	End Process / Continue process
3. The SMSs will	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.1 inform the Church Leadership that a suspected incident of abuse has been reported (and if any any external agencies have requested the church to take particular actions)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 if the matter regards a form of suspected sexual abuse, inform the suspected offender that they will be suspended from their responsibilities at the church until the matter is properly investigated.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The SMSs will inform the Insurance Provider that a suspected incident of abuse has been reported	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Unless otherwise informed by external agencies (e.g FACS, Police, Ombudsman, etc.) the Church Leadership and the SMSs will...	
5.1 Appoint an Independent Ministry Investigator (IMI) to examine the suspected incident. An appropriate IMI will; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be independent (they should not attend the Church). ● Be qualified (they should have appropriate skills to perform the task). ● Be experienced (they should have some level of understanding of the processes and consequences) ● Liaise with and submit to the any external authority's instructions 	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2 The SMS will inform the suspected Victim (or Victim's guardians if a child) and the suspected offender that an IMI has been appointed to investigate the incident.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3 The SMS will Provide the IMI with contact details for both the suspected Victim (or Victim's guardians if a child) and the suspected	<input type="checkbox"/>

offender.	
5.4 The IMI will contact both the suspected Victim (or Victim's guardians if a child) and the suspected offender to clarify the incident and the circumstances in which it allegedly happened.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5 The IMI will present a formal report to the Church Leadership with a judgement on the validity and severity of the alleged incident, and recommendations (if any) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to avoid such an incident in the future. • What steps should be taken for the suspected offender. • What steps should be taken for the suspected victim. Attach the IMI's report to this Process Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.6 The Senior Leadership will review the IMI's report and determine what actions they will implement. NOTE: If a person is found guilty of committing sexual abuse (either by an internal investigation or by a court) their employment/involvement will be terminated. Attach the Leadership's decisions and plans to this Process Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.7 These decisions will be provided to the Insurance Provider and any other external organisation which require them (E.g. State Ombudsman, Office of the Children's Guardian, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. This is the end of the Incident Response Process	

Note: It is not the job of the SMS or the IMI to counsel either the suspected Victim or suspected offender, the SMS and IMI are for liaison and referral purposes only. Either party has a right at all times to have a support person present. A responsible parent/guardian must be present when speaking to someone under 18.

Accident Report Form

Reporter's Full Name	
Date of report	
Injured person's full name	
Date, time and location injury occurred	Date: Time: Location:
Describe how the injury occurred	
Describe what steps were taken to aid the person	
Do you have reason to suspect the injury was caused by mistreatment or abuse?	Y / N