



**GRACE COMMUNION**  
INTERNATIONAL



**June 2016**

## Table of Contents

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Other Definitions	2
Guidelines for Local Churches	4
Myths and Realities about Children and Safety	6
Stages of Development Chart	8
Child Safety Training Outline	10



## Other Definitions

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### General Definitions

There are a number of repeated terms throughout these guidelines that are important for us to define.

*Harm* Any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a child's wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused (Child Protection Act 1999). Harm may be caused by physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual or systems abuse, exploitation or neglect.

*Abuse* Child abuse is a type of 'Harm' that involves the misuse of power over children which endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development. It includes: physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual or systems abuse, exploitation or neglect. Within each type of abuse, there is a continuum from mild to life threatening depending on the type, intensity and duration. Child abuse is usually a pattern or cycle, not a one-off incident. (As distinct from the occasional verbal outburst in a generally loving home, abuse is a pattern of negative and harmful interactions that cause long-term damage unless there is intervention.) (Child Abuse Prevention Public Speakers Kit, 2000)

#### Types of abuse include:

*Physical* This refers to any act that results in non-accidental injury. It involves overt physical violence or excessive punishment inappropriate to the child's age or condition. Some forms of physical abuse include: punching, beating, slapping, shaking, inappropriate administration of drugs and burns.

*Emotional* This form of abuse includes acts that destroy the confidence, psychological and emotional development of a child. Examples of emotional abuse include: continued rejection and criticism, withholding praise and affection, scapegoating, teasing, humiliating and sustained verbal abuse.

*Spiritual* This involves using authority to manipulate a child to satisfy one's own needs or the agenda of a religious group. Spiritual abuse may include justifying inappropriate actions and harm, through to pressuring a child to do something based on religious grounds, e.g. "You will make God very happy if you...."

*Sexual* Sexual abuse is any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child. Forms of sexual abuse include: exposure, indecent phone calls, fondling, voyeurism (looking at sexual objects or situations), involvement with pornography, persistent intrusion of a child's privacy, penetration, rape, incest, child prostitution, suggestive behaviours or comments.

*Systems* Systems abuse is similar in many ways to neglect. It may be defined as preventable harm done to children in the context of programs that were initially designed to provide protection and care. A church or ministry rather than an individual would more likely perpetrate this form of abuse. It may come as the result of a congregation's ignorance by not bearing a child's needs in mind, or by not providing opportunities for a child to voice their concerns. One example could be captured in the phrase, "Children should be seen and not heard."

*Neglect* Neglect is any act or omission that, within the bounds of the child's culture, results in failing to meet a child's basic needs. This may include the need for adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter, safety, hygiene, medical care, education, love, affection, and failure to use available resources to meet those needs.

#### General definitions continued:

*Accident* Any unexpected happening which causes injury to someone, e.g. a child falling off a stage and breaking their arm.



<i>Accredited Pastor</i>	A person who has been approved for pastoral ministry by the Grace Communion International Ltd. These include: Student Minister, Minister Unordained and Minister Ordained, Pastoral Assistant, Evangelist and Missionary.
<i>Activity</i>	An activity is an easily definable part of an overall program that seeks to support and help achieve the desired outcomes of the program. Activities in a program may include: rock climbing; water-skiing; car wash; visit to the zoo or a particular youth study lesson.
<i>Applicant</i>	A person applying for service in Children's Ministry (either paid or as a volunteer).
<i>Child</i>	A child is a person under 18 years.
<i>Complainant</i>	The person bringing a complaint of harm towards a child. The complainant may be the victim of the alleged harm or a third party.
<i>Denomination</i>	The Grace Communion International Ltd, commonly known as GCI..
<i>Designated Person</i>	A nominated person to whom allegations or suspicions of harm are reported. The designated people will usually be a pastor and another person nominated by the church.
<i>Helper</i>	<p>A helper is a volunteer with limited responsibility who:</p> <p>Is under 18 years old and assists in the running of activities</p> <p>Is over 18 years old and assists in the running of activities less than once a week over a month, once a fortnight over two months or once a month over six months in a twelve month period</p>
<i>Incident</i>	An act that has a negative impact on someone or something, e.g. two children fighting where one bites another or a child who throws a stone and breaks a car window (regardless of intention).
<i>Leader</i>	A leader is a volunteer or paid employee with normal responsibilities who is accountable to the Team Leader. A Team Leader is a person who has responsibility for the overall program or ministry. They are involved in running activities at least once a week over one month, once a fortnight over two months or once a month over six months in a twelve month period.
<i>Ministry</i>	Ministry in these guidelines is used as an umbrella term to describe a group of programs that focus on a particular age group, e.g. a youth ministry may incorporate Friday night youth discussions in addition to monthly youth services.
<i>Misconduct</i>	Is the disgraceful or improper conduct of a leader in an official capacity or disgraceful or improper conduct of a leader in a private capacity that reflects seriously and adversely on Christianity.
<i>Offender</i>	The substantiated perpetrator of abuse
<i>Program</i>	A program is a regular group of activities that focuses on a particular style of ministry, e.g. a school lunchtime program, youth group or an after school kids club.
<i>Young Person/ Youth</i>	A person of High School age regardless of whether they are legally termed a child.

## Guidelines for Local Churches

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Adopt these protocols on safeguarding the welfare of children and young people, as well as the following guidelines:

- Appoint a Child Safety Officer who is aware of the ministry with children and young people in your church as well as safety procedures.
- Plan the work of the local church so as to minimise situations where the safety of children may be compromised.
- Make an annual safety check of buildings, grounds and gardens.
- Introduce a system where children and young people may talk with an appropriately trained independent person.
- The minimum age for a leader in a children's/young people's activity shall be 18 years.
- Apply agreed procedures for protecting children and young people to all staff (paid and volunteer). Have regular in-service training concerning these procedures.
- Give all who work with children or young people clear roles.
- Keep in contact with leaders—use supervision as a means of protecting children.
- Treat all would-be workers, paid and volunteer, as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.
- Obtain a reference from a person who has had experience of the applicant's work with children.
- Interview before appointment, exploring the applicants' experience of working or their contact with children or young people.
- Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children or young people.
- Make all appointments are conditional upon successful completion of a probationary period.
- Provide all workers, paid and volunteer, with guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.
- Institute a training program on the prevention of child abuse for all staff (paid and volunteer).
- Be aware of the normal health and development needs of all children and young people in regular church activities. Pay attention to a child's or young person's normal patterns and any sudden changes in behaviour.
- Make a regular safety check on children and young people's activities, checking:
  - Is the adult : child ratio appropriate for the activity in terms of the age and stage of development of the children and young people involved?
  - Is the venue safe?
  - Are the children and/or young people signed in and out as part of the parent/guardian drop-off and pick-up procedures?
  - Are the use and selection of curriculum material for worship, children's church and other children's/young people's programs appropriate?
  - Are leaders and assistant leaders a suitable age?

## Good Practice

Good practice minimises situations of abuse risk.

- As far as possible, an adult should never be left alone with a child or young person in a place or a room which cannot be easily observed by others.
- Ensure that all those who work with children and young people never meet a child or young person off the church property except in the presence of a parent or other adult.
- Never take a group off the premises with fewer than two adults.
- An attendance form should be signed when a parent/guardian drops off and picks up children and young people for an activity.
- Consider carefully the use of premises and access to buildings. Children and young people should not have to walk along a dark unsupervised path in order to enter or leave a church meeting place.
- Where children and young people have to be transported by car, minibus, etc., arrange to have more than one passenger in the vehicle.
- Remember that good practice is as much a benefit to the adult worker as it is to the child or young person. Wrongful allegations or misunderstandings on the part of children or others are by no means uncommon.

## Impact of Protocols on Small Churches

The impact of this policy and the guidelines may seem quite daunting for small churches. However, it is clear that the risks to children and young people are not limited to situations within larger churches. The responsibility of small churches is no less. They should do all within their power to follow the guidelines. In the same light, larger congregations cannot rest upon an established reputation or the belief that “it doesn’t happen here”. Prevention is the key to safety for all our children and young people.



## Myths and Realities about Children and Safety

### Myths and Realities about Children

- Myth: It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the safety of a child.  
Reality: It is the community's responsibility to ensure the safety of any child. Most parents indeed are very responsible, but this does not remove the requirement from the church to act responsibly.
- Myth: Children need to be disciplined to ensure they grow to be responsible adults.  
Reality: Children need love, support, affirmation and security to ensure that they grow to be responsible adults.
- Myth: Children should be seen and not heard.  
Reality: Children need to be encouraged to speak and express their views.
- Myth: Children are born wayward.  
Reality: Children are created in the image of God.
- Myth: Children should sit still and not move or make a noise in church.  
Reality: Children should be encouraged to participate within worship and learn to respect others.
- Myth: Children participating within a worship service should entertain adults.  
Reality: Children need to worship God.
- Myth: Children find worship "over their heads" or "boring".  
Reality: Children respond to being accepted in worship.
- Myth: Sunday School and church should be at the same time.  
Reality: Children need to learn to worship and belong to the local congregation through worship.
- Myth: Sunday School prepares children for worship and church attendance when they are older.  
Reality: There is no evidence that this is true. Children learn how to worship by worshipping.
- Myth: Little children can be cared for and taught by young teenagers.  
Reality: This is not true. Children need to be cared for by older people who understand their specific needs.

### Myths and Realities about Child Safety

- Myth: Sexual abuse only happens to girls.  
Reality: Statistics suggest that one in every three in four girls is assaulted before turning 18. At least one in every five boys will be abused during their youth.
- Myth: Child molesters are "dirty old men".  
Reality: This is an unfortunate stereotype. While the majority of offenders are male, women do also molest children. The greatest danger for children is in their own home. One survey suggests that 60% of all child-sexual assaults take place in the home of either the offender or the victim.
- Myth: Most perpetrators are mentally ill.  
Reality: Most do not have a prior criminal record and are seen as "good family men". The average perpetrator is average in intelligence and education.
- Myth: Sex offenders are homosexuals.  
Reality: Most are heterosexual males who typically state that they are repulsed by adult homosexual relationships but find young boys' feminine characteristics appealing.
- Myth: Victims of sexual abuse are most often adolescents.

Reality: One survey suggests that the average age of a sexually abused child is 8 years old, although abuse may begin at a much younger age.

Myth: Incest offenders only molest children in their own family.

Reality: Research indicates that up to 50% of incest offenders also molest children outside their families.

Myth: If we don't talk about **it**, the child will forget.

Reality: Children who are sexually victimised tend to suffer extreme levels of guilt and self-blame as they move into adulthood. Some children will re-experience the trauma, with symptoms of anxiety, fear, phobias, depression, suicide, substance abuse, self-destructive behaviour, nightmares. It is important to find ways to talk about it.

Myth: Children make up stories.

Reality: Statistics indicate that only 2 out of 200 children who claimed to be incest victims were lying. Children do not lie to get themselves into trouble. Children do not have the experience or vocabulary to describe adult sexual experience.

Myth: A lack of physical violence in child sexual abuse means the child is a willing sexual participant.

Reality: This idea puts the blame onto the victim. A child's behaviour is in no way an explanation for the abusive actions of an adult offender.

Myth: To try to implement these guidelines would lead to the resignation of all our teachers.

Reality: Teachers and leaders who genuinely care about children and young people in their care will willingly accept the need for the new procedures.

Myth: To make the necessary changes to the way we do things will be too costly.

Reality: To have a situation where a child is harmed would be infinitely more costly to the child, their parents and to the church staff responsible.



Stages of Development					
Age	Physical	Intellectual	Social	Moral/Spiritual	Helpful Hints
<b>0-5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rapid physical development (from stationary to crawling, walking to running)</li> <li>○ Creative</li> <li>○ Growth rate slows &amp; stabilises from 2-6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Very short attention span</li> <li>○ Little to no awareness of the difference between fantasy or imagination</li> <li>○ Thinks in concrete terms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Egocentric, immediate; spontaneous</li> <li>○ Copies adult behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bad is what gets punished, good is everything else. Little or no concept of 'sin' / 'salvation'</li> <li>○ Modelling of love &amp; acceptance give primary understanding of what God might be like.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teach by using the senses: hear, see, touch, smell &amp; taste</li> <li>○ Importance of presentation through use of voice, facial expressions &amp; body movement</li> <li>○ Mostly stories of Bible characters, especially Jesus (not miracles as they may be seen to equal magic)</li> <li>○ Emphasise that Jesus loves us &amp; wants us to love him</li> </ul>
<b>6-8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enjoys playing &amp; physical activity</li> <li>○ Energetic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Short attention span</li> <li>○ Asks questions</li> <li>○ Believes what they are told</li> <li>○ Deals with only one thing at a time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Life revolves around the home &amp; therefore problems at home have a major impact</li> <li>○ Needs encouragement as they grow in self confidence</li> <li>○ Heroes &amp; hero worship</li> <li>○ Unable to see other people's perspectives</li> <li>○ Increase of competitive behaviour in males</li> <li>○ Increase in relational behaviour in females</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Believes what they are told</li> <li>○ Beginnings in the development of a moral value system</li> <li>○ Behaviour is judged by consequences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keep programs short, sharp &amp; flowing transition from one activity to another</li> <li>○ Stretch their thinking</li> <li>○ Don't manipulate a response to the Gospel because their friend is responding</li> <li>○ We get to know Jesus better by reading our Bible &amp; praying</li> <li>○ Use illustrative books</li> <li>○ Encourage the children to set down rules of behaviour for the group</li> </ul>
<b>9-10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Becoming sexually aware</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Able to delve into past experiences</li> <li>○ Increasing ability to differentiate fact from fantasy</li> <li>○ Developing patience &amp; ability to gather more information before making a decision</li> <li>○ Still easily distracted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gender based social group</li> <li>○ Developing independence</li> <li>○ Best friends are very important and can be a source of problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ability to reason &amp; attribute fault</li> <li>○ Developing a sense of responsibility</li> <li>○ Strong sense of justice, right/wrong &amp; fair play</li> <li>○ Does the right thing to avoid punishment</li> <li>○ Does things to make God happy with them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus not on "God does not like it when you do that" to "Things that God does for us to be happy"</li> <li>○ Characters of the Bible &amp; Church History</li> <li>○ God answers prayers (yes, no &amp; wait)</li> <li>○ Jesus wants us to follow him &amp; live like him (not invite Jesus into your heart)</li> <li>○ Do not use threat of going to hell to motivate desired behaviour or response</li> </ul>

Age	Physical	Intellectual	Social	Moral/Spiritual	Helpful Hints
11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing awareness of opposite sex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing idealism &amp; ability to think critically</li> <li>Questions the accepted teaching from childhood</li> <li>Ability to consider cause &amp; affect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing importance of peer group &amp; acceptance of what they say to be true</li> <li>Parent's point of view is important one of many</li> <li>Increasing concern for acceptance of peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lives by double standards to suit one's situation</li> <li>Increasing ability to think in abstract terms</li> <li>Exploring commitments to person or a cause</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching must be relevant to their lives</li> <li>Impact of Jesus on one's lifestyle</li> <li>Beginning to understand the person &amp; work of the Holy Spirit</li> <li>Encourage them to role play to develop empathy</li> </ul>
13-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rapid physical change (not just growth)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begins to think abstractly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Switches from physical pleasure to social approval</li> <li>Mixed gender peer groups</li> <li>Possibly begin to experiment with dating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviour is judged by intention</li> <li>Increasing importance of doing one's duty in society</li> <li>Begins questioning the role and authority of the Church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage them to explore the Bible in light of the world, as they know it</li> <li>Important to have Christian peer group and models to guide them in their walk</li> </ul>
16-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Body takes on adults form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes initial career direction choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dating relationships become more mature but still in the context of peer group</li> <li>Some will divide into couples</li> <li>Spend more time with opposite sex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making up one's mind as to what is right and wrong</li> <li>Rules become more abstract and ethical (Golden Rule) rather than (Ten Commandments)</li> <li>Religious commitments are often made</li> <li>Possibly baptism and the taking of communion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage them to believe things for themselves, not because they are told to</li> <li>Be willing to upset their equilibrium so that they are encouraged to think outside the box</li> <li>Get them out of their comfort zone and engaging the world around them</li> </ul>

## Child Safety Training Outline

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### Local Church Training Events

#### 1. Welcome

#### 2. Prayer

- Give thanks for children generally, for the children to whom participants minister, for the ministry of children within the congregations represented and for God's protection.
- Pray for the ministry of the congregations represented with children, and for those who offer to do this task. Remember to include Religious Education in schools.
- Ask for guidance and for open hearts and minds as you meet together.
- **Scripture**
  - Read Luke 9:46-49.
  - Reflect together on what Jesus is saying *about* how we treat one another and especially the children.
  - Read I Corinthians 12:26.
  - Reflect together on the ways we are responsible to and for each other and how that happens in the congregations represented.

#### 4. Introduce the Church's Policy Statement

#### 5. Input on Issues

- Why is the church concerned about the safety of children and young people?
- What is child sexual abuse? Who abuses children?
- What is the obligation to report and how do you do it?
- What are the myths and realities about child abuse?
- What are the behavioural indicators of child sexual abuse?

#### 6. Safe Practices for a Child Safe Church

The church needs to operate safe practices in regard to:

- property;
- people; and
- programs.

As a group, *work* on these three areas, remembering that the aim is to:

- sensitise all workers and helpers;
- help them to look at the life of the local church through new eyes; and
- become familiar with what will be new procedures.

*Note the following practices with regards to:*

##### **Property**

- Regular audits preferably by someone not overly familiar with the property (as well as that carried out by the Property Committee).
- Procedures for handling emergent matters of safety.

## **People**

- Procedures for recruitment and appointment and for probation. Point out that there is no suggestion that past ways were wrong, it is just that there is a need for new approaches.
- Annual audit by a panel of teachers and leaders to consider, “How are we going?” (as well as an independent audit).

## **Programs**

- Evaluating programs from a safety perspective.

## **7. Good Practice**

*Summarise* what “good practice” will mean for the way things are done in congregations. In particular, identify changes that will be required (e.g. always having at least 2 adults with any group of children).

### **Outline (A) - Possible quarterly or mid year training event (1 1/2 hours)**

This session should cover the following topics:

- behaviour management techniques—dealing with bullying, handling conflict between class/group members;
- particular training to equip teachers/leaders for programs planned for the year and update skills; and
- reviewing the past year—what does it say for physical safety this year?

### **Outline (B) - Possible quarterly or mid year training event (1 1/2 hours)**

This session should cover the following topics:

- use of language with classes/groups;
- behaviour management techniques - correcting answers, regaining attention, affirming;
- responding to trauma in children/young people - death, separation, sickness, disability;
- racial/cultural issues; and
- responding to a child/young person’s disclosure of abuse.