



CHILD PROTECTION MANUAL

CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

21 SEPTEMBER 2022
CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
3 SORBY ADAMS DRIVE SINGAPORE 357690

Biblical Mandate to Protect the Children

Chapel of The Holy Spirit (CHS) is blessed with many children (below 14 years old) and youth (14 to 18 years old) in our care. This is a trust that we cannot take for granted. While we prayerfully hope that the church is a safe place for children, the reality is we need to begin equipping ourselves to respond faithfully. We need to take pro-active steps in creating a safe environment for our children.

Children are special in God's sight. They are precious and made in God's own image (Gen 1:27). Children are viewed as a heritage and a precious gift from God (Psalm 127:3). In Mark 10:13- 14, as people were bringing children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, the disciples rebuked and tried to stop them, but Jesus instead said,

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. - Mark 10:14

As Christian adults, we need to establish a safe and secure environment for our children, where their faith can be nurtured. Often, when there is an imbalance of power, the stronger will usually take advantage of the weaker. But our God is a God who loves justice (Isaiah 61 :8) and hates oppression (Psalm 10). He commands the protection of widows and the fatherless (Exodus 22), the weak and the vulnerable (Deuteronomy 24:17). He requires of us:

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8, NIV)

To "act justly" is to be responsible toward those under our care; to "love mercy" is to stand up for vulnerable children we may come across in our ministries; to "walk humbly" is to leave no room for complacency that child abuse will not happen in our churches.

Children are considered vulnerable because they are still in a stage and process of development (spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally). They often cannot protect themselves from threats against their own well-being. Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse continues to be a serious problem in our society with detrimental results to the children.

In Scripture, God reserves very harsh words for those who cause the little children to stumble.

"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea." - Matthew 18:5-6

Caring for our children and youth then is a sacred trust and responsibility.

Reasons for a Child Protection Policy

POLICY

1. Chapel of The Holy Spirit (CHS) is blessed to be entrusted with the care of children and youth in our church, St. Andrew's Secondary School (SASS) and community services.
2. The Biblical mandate to let children come to Jesus unhindered (Matt 19:14) and without stumbling (Matt 19:6 NASB), as well as the teaching to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before God (Micah 6:8) requires us to do all we can to protect children under our care from all forms of abuse that will affect their healthy growth and development.

Policy Statement

POLICY

3. Chapel of The Holy Spirit shall respect all the laws of the Republic of Singapore, including the Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA).
4. Chapel of The Holy Spirit is committed to a five-point Child Protection Policy:
 - 4.1 We will not tolerate any form of child abuse in our ministries for children.
 - 4.2 We will not permit any person with any record of child abuse, or who admits to having committed sexual abuse on a child, or who is known to have a propensity to act inappropriately toward children, to serve with our children or youth ministries.
 - 4.3 We will play our part in the community effort to advocate for and protect children from abuse at home and other places of care.
 - 4.4 We will support the recovery of both victims and perpetrators of abuse.
 - 4.5 We will always act in the best interest of the child in all our decision-making.

*Sections of this Manual labelled "Policy" are extracted from the CHS Child Protection Policy

Definitions

POLICY

5. The Child Protection Policy defines child abuse as follows:
 - 5.1 **Physical Abuse:** Any act that causes physical injury, which is not accidental in nature, to a child. It includes deliberately causing bruises, burns, cuts, and broken bones by a range of actions such as beating, shaking and excessive discipline.
 - 5.2 **Emotional and Psychological Abuse:** Any act that harms a child emotionally or psychologically. The acts can be repeated or be an isolated extreme incident.
 - 5.3 **Neglect:** Neglect occurs when a child is harmed because a parent or caregiver fails to provide adequate supervision, food, medical care and/or clothing appropriate to the child's age and level of development. It may include situations when the parent or caregiver exposes the child to unsafe and/or unhygienic living conditions.
 - 5.4 **Sexual Abuse:** Any act where a child is used for sexual pleasure or is taken advantage of sexually. It also includes exposing a child to sexual acts or pornography. Sexual grooming is any act whereby a person gets close with a child to gain their confidence and trust, such as private text messaging of an inappropriate nature, spending private time alone with a child, etc, setting

Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse may include but is not limited to patterns of abusive behaviour that involve misuse of scripture and scriptural principles to create fear and control or manipulate a child, to protect the offender, or to manage the child for the convenience of the adults. Aspects of spiritual abuse are evident in most cases of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

Applicability

POLICY

6. The Child Protection Policy shall cover the conduct of church employees and volunteers working with young people up to the age of 18 because we have a duty to care for the moral, emotional, and spiritual development of our young people.
7. This Child Protection Policy covers all Ministries of the Chapel of The Holy Spirit. These include youth organisations, school chaplaincies, church-run co-curricular activities, and community services.
8. Where there is a difference in the definitions and standards of Child Protection between this Policy and the policy of Partner Organisation, St. Andrew's Secondary School, the more stringent standard in the best interest of the child shall apply.
9. When in doubt as to whether a reported act is considered an act of abuse, advice should be sought from the Chapel of The Holy Spirit.

Responsibility and Accountability Structure

POLICY

10. The Child Protection Policy adopted at the Synod of the Diocese of Singapore shall be implemented at Diocesan and Parish levels.

At Diocesan Level

POLICY

- 11.1 The Diocesan Bishop shall appoint a clergyman to be the **Child Protection Coordinator (CPC)**. He shall: **The Archdeacon of Singapore and the Mission Deans** shall be responsible to:
- (a) Report to the Diocesan Bishop any occurrences of child abuse;
 - (b) Oversee their Ministries to implement their Child Protection Procedures;
 - (c) Ensure that the Ministries comply with the Diocese's Child Protection Policy and their respective Child Protection Procedures.
- 11.2 The **Archdeacon of Singapore and the Mission Deans** shall be responsible to:
- (a) Report to the Diocesan Bishop any occurrences of child abuse;
 - (b) Oversee their Ministries to implement their Child Protection Procedures;
 - (c) Ensure that the Ministries comply with the Diocese's Child Protection Policy and their respective Child Protection Procedures.
- 11.3 **The Chancellor, Secretary of Synod and Registrar** shall provide legal advice for the development of this policy as well as for Incident Management as required.

12.1 **The Vicar** is responsible to:

- (a) Provide leadership to implement the **Diocesan Child Protection Policy** for the whole parish;
- (b) Adopt **Parish-specific Child Protection Procedures** in accordance with the guidelines of the Diocesan Child Protection Policy and the Child Protection Manual; these procedures shall be adapted to the nature and conditions of each ministry of each parish;
- (c) Ensure that all personnel involved in ministry to children and youth comply with these procedures.

12.2 The Parochial Church Council (PCC) shall annually appoint a lay leader to be the **Child Protection Representative (CPR)** who shall:

- (a) Serve as the **point of contact** between the Parish and the Diocesan Child Protection Team
- (b) Assist the Vicar in the design and implementation of the Parish-specific Child Protection Procedures at the ground level;
- (c) Assist the Vicar and Church Wardens in the investigation and follow-up actions in the event of a complaint or report of suspected child abuse in the parish.

12.3 The respective Ministry Leaders for children and youth ministries shall:

- (a) Ensure that all personnel involved in ministry to children and youth in the parish understand and comply with the Diocese Child Protection Policy and the Parish-specific Child Protection Procedures;
- (b) Provide feedback and suggestions to the Child Protection Representative for the ongoing improvement;
- (c) Be the first point of contact for any complaint or report of suspected child abuse in the ministry.

Child Protection Procedures

POLICY

13. CHS shall implement operational Procedures addressing the following areas:

- 13.1 Screening of Personnel
- 13.2 Child-Safe Practices
- 13.3 Vigilance in Child Protection
- 13.4 Incident Management
- 13.5 Recovery and Rehabilitation

Policy for the Screening

POLICY

- 14.1 Volunteers shall pass a continuous six (6)-month period of active attendance with interactions with ministry leadership before being approved to serve with children and youth.
- 14.2 Each staff and volunteer working with children and youth shall be registered with the church office, with their personal particulars and two (2) character references who vouch for their suitability to care for and work with children and youth.
- 14.3 Each staff and volunteer shall complete a self-declaration. They shall indicate truthfully whether they had ever sexually abused a child, been accused, or convicted in a court of law for any inappropriate conduct toward children or displayed any propensity for the same.
- 14.4 The declaration should also indicate if the candidate had previously served in another parish in the Diocese, to facilitate due diligence checks as necessary.

The screening of staff and volunteers is an important step in preventing abuse in the Parish. Face-to-face interviews as well as reference checks are necessary.

The rationale for the six-month active attendance is to enable the church to know the volunteers better before ascertaining their suitability to work with children or youths. As such, the two-character references should be members of the same parish. **Annex C** details some suggested Character Reference Questions that can be posed to the referees.

A sample of the Staff and Volunteer Self-Declaration form can be found in the **Annex B**. This declaration is confidential when completed and must be filed in a locked cabinet.

If the staff or volunteer indicates YES to either of the first two questions:

1. Have you sexually abused a child before?
2. Have you ever been convicted in a court of law for any appropriate conduct toward children?

Then by policy, we will NOT allow them to serve with our children or youths.

If the staff or volunteer answers YES to the third question:

3. Have you ever been warned, accused or cautioned in relation to the matter of harming children?

Then due discretion for acceptance can be given to the Parish with each decision made on a case-by-case basis. Parishes are advised to err on the side of caution in the best interest of the children.

If the staff or volunteer indicates YES to the fourth question:

4. Have you served or worked in another Church or Parish before?

Then the Parish is to exercise due diligence in checking with the respective churches or parishes as far as possible on the suitability of the applicant in working with children and youths.

Policy for Child-Safe Practices

POLICY

- 15.1. Child-safe practices, including appropriate touch, toilet assistance, responsibility of supervisors, etc, may be found in the Child Protection Manual.
- 15.2 CHS shall consider the nature of its children ministry or ministries and incorporate in its Child Protection Procedure appropriate practices that ensure the protection of the children and youth participating in activities both on-site and off-site (e.g., outings, camps).

This list of non-exhaustive practices helps children and adults feel safe in ministry and help in the early detection of problems before they turn into an incident of abuse. Parishes can adapt and add to this list of Child-Safe Practices by being very specific in their context.

It is encouraged that Parishes make widely available this list of Child-Safe Practices on Notice Boards etc. This will encourage members to follow and report any behaviour that is out of line with the generally accepted Practice.

Visibility

As much as possible, ministry with children and youth ought to occur in highly visible areas. Observability is a key factor in minimising the risk of abuse. This means utilising open spaces, classrooms with big windows, and avoiding isolated areas.

Minimizing One Adult-One Child Situations

Most abuse happens in one adult-one child situations. We strive to minimise all these situations because they are such high risk. As a guideline, it is preferable for a minimum of two unrelated adult workers to be in attendance when children are being supervised. This does not mean there cannot be any private conversation between an adult and a child. However, these conversations need to take place in an open and observable area.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Touch

By God's design, appropriate touch is an important way for us to understand that we are loved. Appropriate touch is observable by other adults. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors. Touch should be welcomed by the child.

Any resistance by the child should be immediately respected. Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children, but unhealthy touch is abusive, the following guidelines apply:

- Touch shall be open rather than secretive
- Touch should show care for the child rather than meet a need in the adult.
- Touch should be age- and developmentally appropriate.
- Touch should normally be initiated by the child rather than the adult.
- Touch should always communicate respect for the child.
- Touch should immediately cease if the child is in any way uncomfortable.

Adults and other youth or children should not hit, slap, pinch, push, hold against their will, or otherwise assault children. The following signs of affection are considered appropriate:

- Verbal praise
- Side hugs and shoulder to shoulder hugs
- High fives and fist bumps
- Pats on the shoulder, back, or head (when culturally appropriate)

For smaller children, the following are generally appropriate with other adults around and within the guidelines above:

- Touching hands, shoulders, and arms
- Hugs
- Holding them when others are present

The following behaviours between employees or volunteers and children are inappropriate, or they may at least be perceived as inappropriate. Please refrain from:

- Touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs
- Full body hugs
- Kissing
- Tickling
- Showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child
- Sleeping in bed with a child
- Inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development
- Flirtatious or seductive looks
- Showing sexually suggestive content or playing sexually suggestive games
- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child
- Any behaviour that could be interpreted as sexual in nature

Adults shall monitor each other, youth, and older children in the area of physical contact, helping each other follow these guidelines and pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Speech

Words are a wonderful way to build one another up. Words can give encouragement and impart grace to the hearer (Ephesians 4:29). We must speak words that give life, such as praise, positive reinforcement, and speaking the truth in love. At the same time, we must avoid words that harm. We will all commit to refrain from inappropriate verbal interaction such as: shaming, belittling, name calling, using harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate a child, cursing, or making derogatory remarks about a child. Inappropriate verbal interaction also includes telling off-colour or sexual jokes, making sexually suggestive comments, telling inappropriate secrets, or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with children.

Discipline

Discipline ought to be corrective and not punitive. We do not permit anyone other than a parent to administer corporal punishment to a child. Furthermore, discipline should never include yelling, shaming, or in any way belittling a child. If there is a serious incident that requires discipline, it is always wise to involve the parent.

Technology

Any employee or volunteer working with children or youth is responsible to ensure that any technology is used appropriately. We must monitor any use of phones, social media, the internet, TV, and movies when children are in our care. Technology can quickly be turned from a proper use into something that is used for exploitation.

All pornography and any other sexually explicit or suggestive content is strictly prohibited. Any bullying, online or otherwise, will not be tolerated and should be reported to parents and appropriate staff. Adults should refrain from developing a relationship with a child or youth **primarily** over electronic media (text, IM, etc.), since this is not open and observable. Any sexual conversation between an adult and a child over electronic media is abusive and is strictly prohibited.

It is preferable that all communication with children 12 years and below should be directed to their parent or guardian first.

Rules Specific to Bathroom Use

Young children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) A same-aged-peer buddy system may also be used.

If a child is potty training, an adult should ensure the bathroom is safe before allowing such a small child to enter alone. Encourage the child to go on their own. If the child needs assistance in bathrooms, the stall door is to be left partially opened. When assisting, allow for accountability while respecting the privacy of the child as much as possible.

Rules Specific to the Nursery

Small children are extremely vulnerable. We must ensure there is good visibility and adequate staff and volunteers to supervise the nursery. We encourage women to change diapers unless the man is the father of the child. When changing diapers, inform another nursery worker, and change the diaper quickly and with respect for the child. Diapers should only be changed in designated areas where we can maintain the boundaries of openness and observability.

Medication

We should not administer either prescription or non-prescription medication to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Exceptions may be granted to parents of children with chronic conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions) on a case-by-case basis.

Supervision

Regular supervision helps reduce risk. Every activity is interruptible, and we are all accountable to one another. Program supervisors shall frequently and randomly stop in to observe the nursery, classrooms, and other areas where children and adults are together.

Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

When anyone has reason to suspect or has knowledge of child abuse within the scope of the church's ministry, he or she must report it to vicar immediately.

Policy for Vigilance

POLICY

- 16.1 All employees and volunteers shall be given a copy of this **Child Protection Policy** and the **Child Protection Procedures** upon joining the ministry.
- 16.2 They shall **read and sign** on a register to indicate they are familiar with the current Policy and Procedures whenever these are updated.
- 16.3 All employees and volunteers working with children shall attend periodic update **briefings and training sessions** on Child Protection conducted by the Child Protection Representative and/or the Diocesan Child Protection Team.

A Sample of the Child Protection Consent Form can be found in **Annex A**. Staff and Volunteers working with children must read and agree to abide by both the Diocesan Child Protection Policy and the CHS Child Protection Policy.

It is a good practice that Parishes brief all staff and volunteers on Child Protection matters at least once a year. The briefing should cover:

- Parish Child-Safe Practices so that all staff and volunteers are familiar with them. This meeting can also gather feedback to improve and update on the Parish Child-Safe Practices.
- Recognizing the different types of Abuse
- Procedures for reporting a possible Child Abuse

Policy for Incident Management

POLICY

- 17.1 Upon receipt of a complaint or report of alleged child abuse, a **Child Protection Review Team (CPRT)** shall be formed comprising the Vicar, the Church Wardens, the Child Protection Representative and the Ministry Leader concerned. Other suitable persons may also be co-opted into the CPRT.
- 17.2 All complaints and reports of alleged child abuse shall be taken seriously by the Child Protection Review Team.
- 17.3 The Child Protection Review Team shall collate the pertinent facts as soon as possible and take the appropriate steps accordingly.
- 17.4 All substantiated complaints or reports shall be reported to the Archdeacon or the respective Mission Dean in an **initial incident report** as soon as possible. The Archdeacon/Mission Dean shall oversee the management of the incident and participate in it as he deems fit.

The Child Protection Review Team should keep notes of all conversations with all relevant parties in the Review. The form "Initial Report of Child Abuse" in **Annex D** is to be submitted by the vicar to the Archdeacon within 72 hours of the complaint. It is accepted that the form is filled only with the information that is known at the time a report is received. It is understood that there will be blanks or missing information and that is alright.

Confidentiality

All allegations must be kept strictly confidential and only those directly involved will be given information as deemed necessary, on a "need to know basis". This confidentiality is imperative for the safety and protection of the victim(s) and the accused. The victims' identities must be protected when an application for a gag order is made in court.

Responding to the child victim

Here are some general guidelines in responding to a child victim.

- If possible, ask a staff member, trained volunteer, or other responsible adult to join in the listening to the child's account.
- Keep calm, listen, and avoid expressing shock or outrage.
- Let the child know that he/she is believed. And assure him/her that it is not his/her fault.
- Child victims are often vague in their initial disclosure. This is alright.
- Avoid planting ideas (or using leading questions) that could tint the child's recollection and account.

POLICY

17.5 If the alleged abuse is **sexual in nature**, the parish shall refrain from conducting any further interviews or investigations. The case shall be promptly reported to the Police or the relevant authorities.

All allegations of sexual misconduct must be treated seriously and regarded as criminal in nature. Studies have shown that less than 5% of all allegations of sexual abuse turn out to be false.

The Parish should not investigate before they report when there is reasonable cause to believe child sexual abuse has occurred. Not reporting interferes with and delays a forensic investigation by civil authorities, those trained and called by God to do so. This delay can thwart the cause of justice. For example, a delay for an internal investigation can lead to a loss of physical evidence (which must be collected by a professional in a timely fashion) and it can alert the alleged offender, so he destroys evidence, takes other abusive actions, or flees to avoid arrest.

Under Section 86 of the Child and Young Persons Act, no suit or legal proceedings shall lie personally against any person acting under the direction for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done in the enforcement or purported enforcement of the Act.

However, there may be situations where there is suspicion of "sexual abuse" where the person making the report is uncertain if the abuse actually happened. In this situation, leaders must act in the best interest of the child and err on the side of caution. Advice can and should be sought from the Diocesan Child Protection Coordinator or Child Protection and Welfare Services.

POLICY

17.6 If the alleged abuse, regardless of its nature, **took place at home**, the Child Protection Review Team shall assess whether the safety of the child at home is at risk due to the incapacity of both parents to provide adequate protection. If the child is deemed to be at risk at home, the case shall be referred to the Child Protection Services or relevant agencies for advice and necessary follow-up.

When the alleged abuse took place at home, the primary concern is the safety of the child. If the nature of the abuse is sexual, Child Protection Services should be called in.

If abuse is non-sexual in nature and if the child is not at risk, the Parish can continue to monitor the situation and provide counselling for the family. If at any time during counselling, it is deemed that the child is at risk Child Protection Services must be called and advice sought from them.

POLICY

17.7 If the alleged abuse, regardless of its nature, involves a church staff member or a volunteer, that person shall be suspended from any further ministry involvement until he/she is exonerated. Paragraphs 17.4 and 17.5 remain applicable.

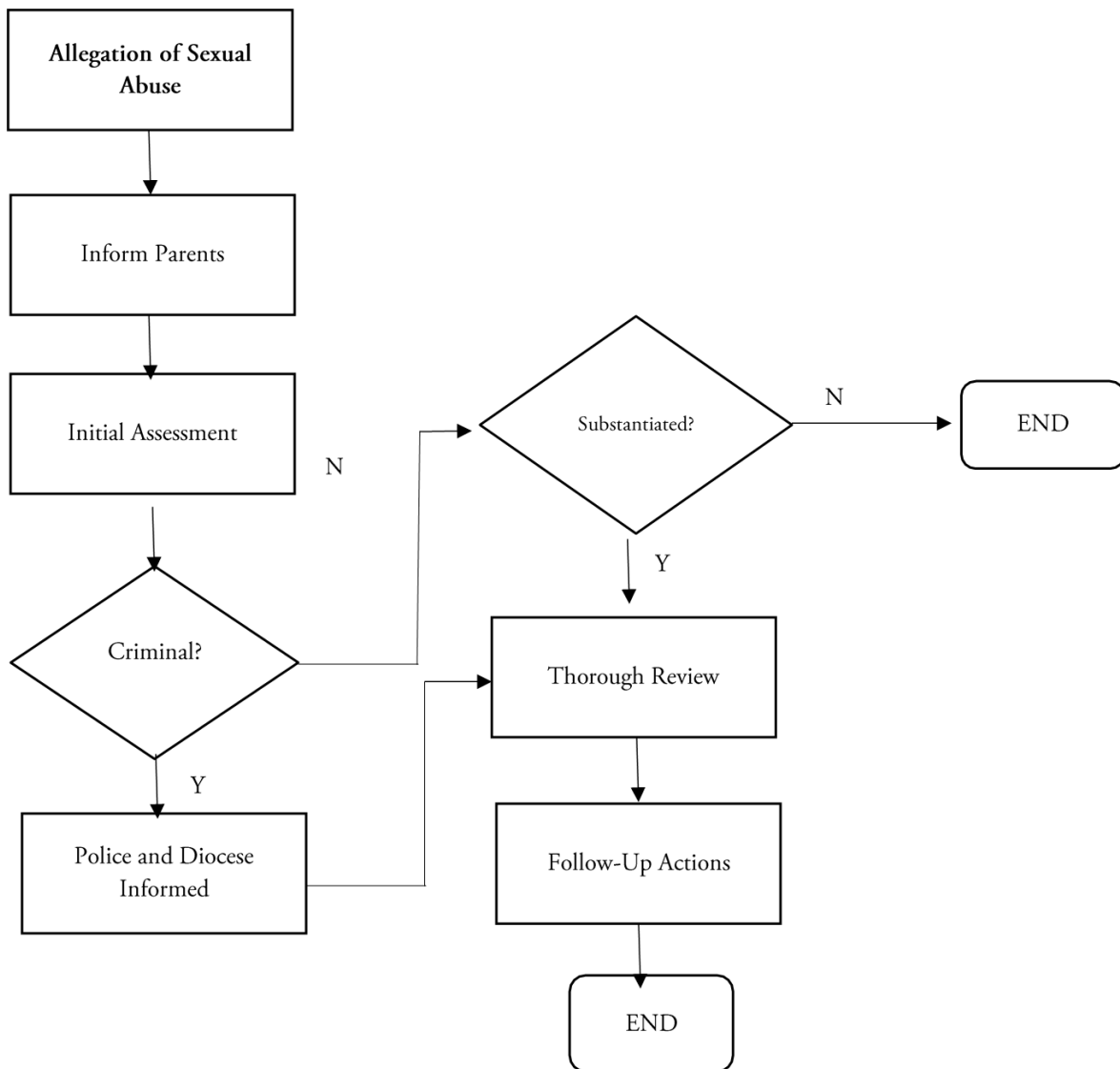
The rationale for the suspension is consistent with acting in the best interest of the child and other children. While the staff or volunteer is suspended, pastoral support must still be rendered. This also underscores the need for the CPRT to act with urgency.

- 17.8 If the alleged abuse is **non-sexual in nature and involves a church staff member or a volunteer**, and the parents are deemed capable of protecting the child, the Vicar shall encourage the parents, in the best interest of the child, to find an appropriate conclusion to the incident. Regardless of the parents' decision, the Vicar and the Wardens shall determine what disciplinary measures are appropriate for the person responsible.
- 17.9 A **management review** shall be carried out by the Child Protection Representative and the Ministry Leader under the supervision of the Vicar and Church Wardens to ascertain if any remedial and preventive follow-up actions are needed in the Child Protection Procedures of the parish.
- 17.10 At the end of the whole process, a **final incident report** shall be submitted by the Vicar to the Diocesan Bishop through the Archdeacon or Mission Dean as appropriate.

Scenario 1 - Allegation is Sexual in Nature (in place of ministry)

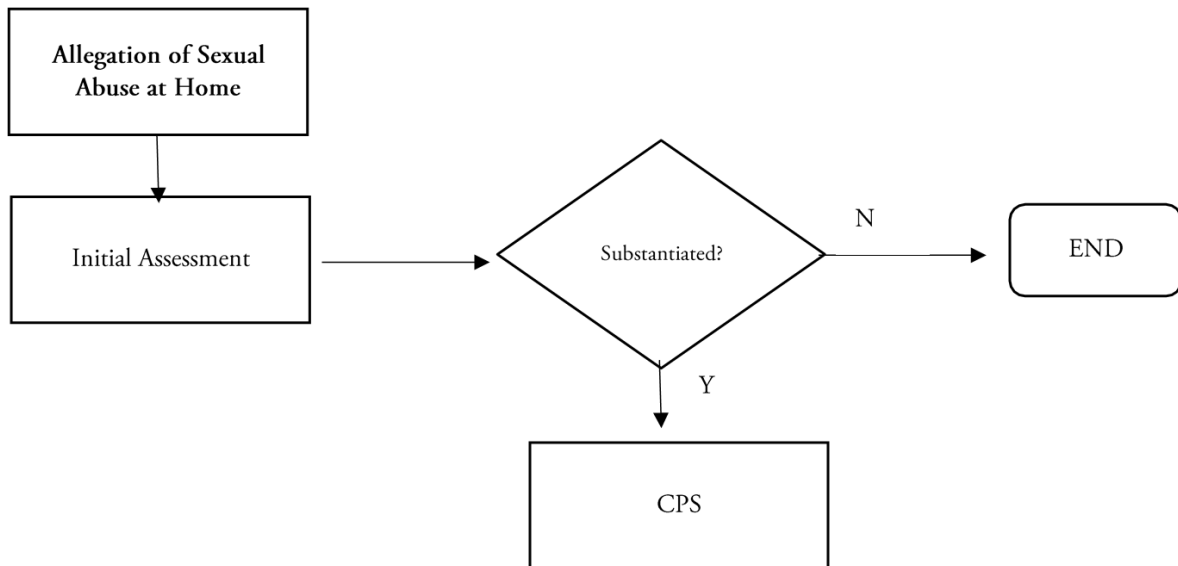
If the alleged abuse is sexual in nature and deemed substantiated the parish shall refrain from conducting any interviews or investigations. The case shall be reported to the police. At the same time, a thorough review will be carried out to strengthen the current internal processes.

If the alleged abuse involves a church staff member or a volunteer, in the best interest of the child, that person may be suspended from any further ministry involvement (upon the advice of the police).



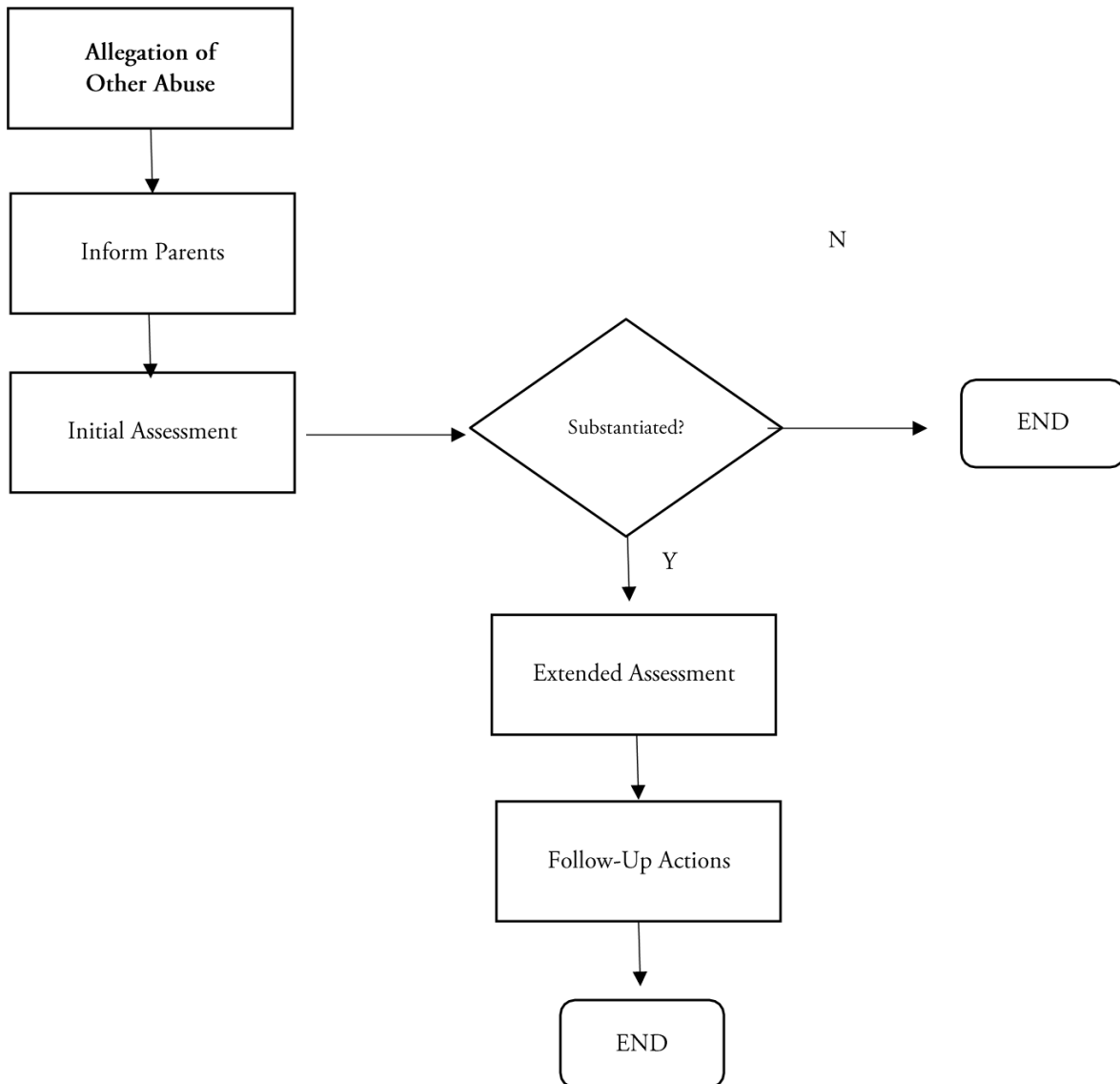
Scenario 2 - Allegation is Sexual in Nature (in the home)

If the alleged sexual abuse, took place at home, and deemed to be substantiated, the Child Protection Review Team shall refer the case to the Child Protection Services for advice and necessary follow-up.



Scenario 3 - Allegation is non-Sexual in Nature (in place of ministry)

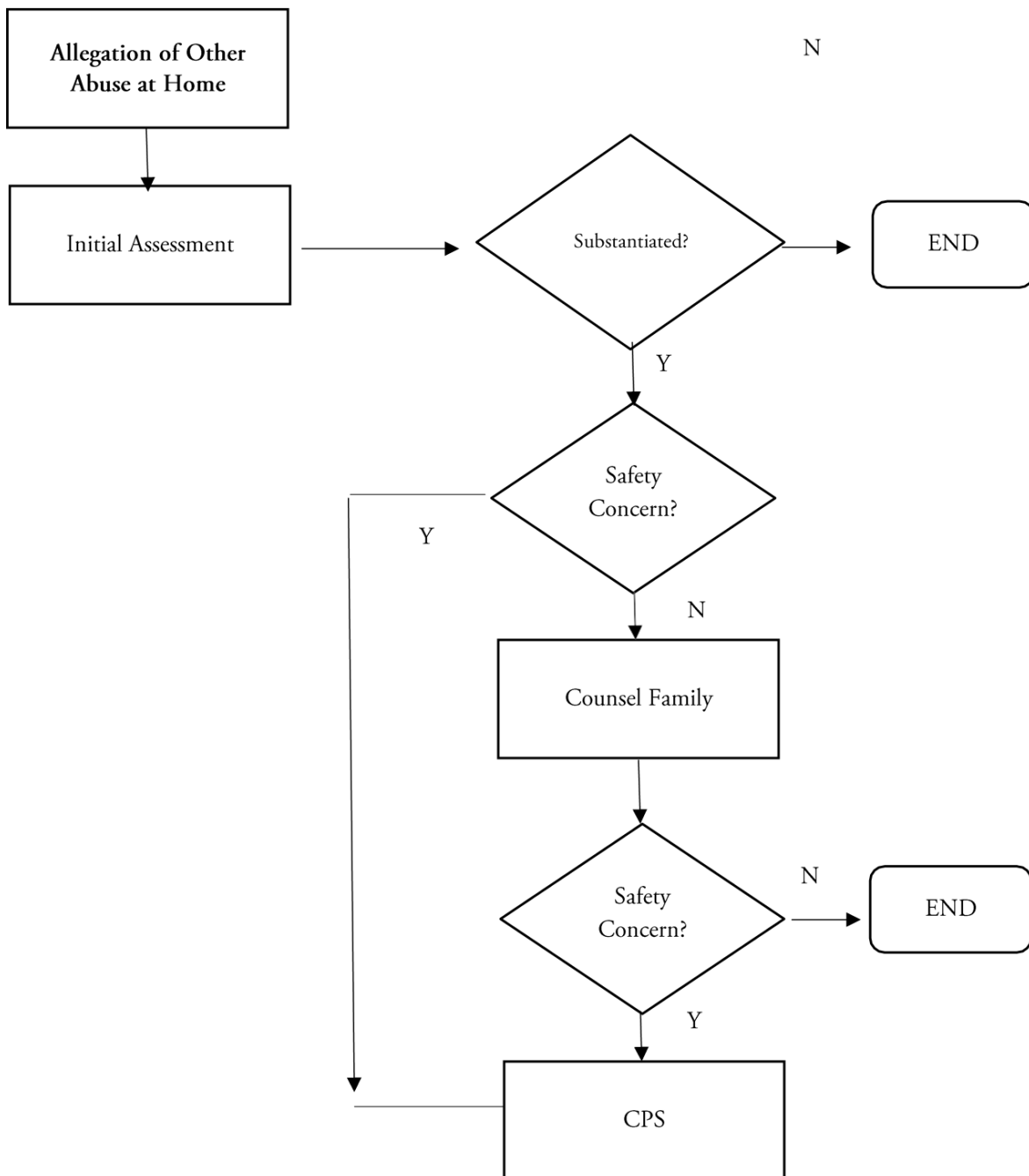
If the alleged abuse is non-sexual in nature and involves a church staff member or a volunteer, and the parents are deemed capable of protecting the child, the Vicar shall encourage the parents, in the best interest of the child, to find an appropriate conclusion to the incident. Regardless of the parents' decision, the Vicar and the Wardens shall determine what disciplinary measures are appropriate for the person responsible.



Scenario 4 - Allegation is non-Sexual in Nature (in the home)

If the alleged non-sexual abuse, took place at home, the Child Protection Review Team shall assess whether the safety of the child at home is at risk due to the incapacity of both parents to provide adequate protection.

If the child is deemed to be at risk at home, the case shall be referred to the Child Protection Services for advice and necessary follow-up. Otherwise, the parish can continue to provide counselling and help for the family as they continually monitor the safety of the child.



Release of Information¹

Identify a single person to respond to all inquiries (media or otherwise), such as a specially trained management person, and instruct all other workers politely to direct all inquiries to that person. Use an approved, prepared statement to answer media inquiries and to convey news to members of the church. Don't release any information until the church has solidly confirmed its factual content. Safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved by not releasing names or other identifying information, especially that concerning minors.

Possible Outcomes and Follow-Up Action

The following may be possible outcomes of the Review Team or external investigation.

1. False Accusation

If it is determined that the accusations are false, the accused may return to ministry. The responsible authorities will apologize in writing to the accused person for the distress caused by the unfounded accusation and assist the accused person to clear his/her name if necessary.

In such a case appropriate counselling and/or disciplinary measures will be provided to the accuser if it is deemed that the accusation was not done in good faith.

2. Never Determined Guilty (Unclear Outcome)

If the accused is never determined guilty while the alleged victim's testimony continues unchanged, a safety action plan will be put in place for the accused and the alleged victim. This may include but not limited to:

- Ongoing close supervision by the Vicar
- Restrictions on ministry to children (e.g., Never be alone with someone under the age of 18 years)
- Accused provided with counselling or a mentor to help them deal with feelings of unfairness, anger, bitterness, etc, if innocent
- Counselling for the alleged victim
- Ensuring the alleged victim is in a safe environment
- Training of children, young people on practices for keeping safe
- Training of members, staff regarding child safety

¹ These helpful guidelines are adapted from: Diocese of Mid-Atlantic Policy Manual for the Protection of Children.

3. Child Abuse Determined

If the alleged offender is deemed to be guilty of the offence, the following administrative actions will be followed:

a If there is Confirmation of Sexual abuse:

Anyone who is known or determined to have committed sexual abuse of a child under the age of 18 at any time during his/her adult life is not eligible for service with the Diocese of Singapore.

If such a person is presently serving, s/he will have his/her employment with the Diocese terminated immediately. Volunteers will be asked to step down from ministry. The relevant authorities will be notified.

Anyone who committed sexual abuse of a child before the age of 18 will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering such factors as age, seriousness of the offence, acknowledgement of responsibility and effective treatment.

b If there is Physical and emotional abuse and neglect

Appropriate administrative actions, up to and including termination of relationship with the Diocese will be taken for anyone who is known or determined to have committed physical or emotional abuse or neglect of a child. Mitigating circumstances may allow lesser discipline than termination or if the relationship is terminated, later reapplication and restoration to service in an assignment not related to children.

c If there is inappropriate behaviour by an adult

If the Review identifies behaviours that do not meet our definition of abuse, but do constitute behaviours that are harmful to children, an outcome of inappropriate behaviour will be reached. An appropriate action plan will be put in place to provide accountability, mentoring, and counselling to overcome both the behaviour and its causes.

There is a distinction between one-time inappropriate behaviour, which needs to be addressed to prevent recurrence and repeated action which meets the definition of abuse. An action plan for inappropriate behaviour may include but not be limited to: Removal from leadership responsibilities, restriction of ministry activities, counselling in the appropriate area, mentoring by an experienced mature person, boundaries set up regarding activities, etc.

Policy for Recovery and Rehabilitation

POLICY

- 18.1 In the aftermath of an abuse incident, the Vicar and his team shall provide **pastoral care and support** to the victim, the perpetrator, and their families, with referral to professional counselling agencies as required.
- 18.2 The Diocesan Child Protection Team will maintain in the Child Protection Manual an updated resource list of **recovery and rehabilitation services**.

Conclusion

POLICY

19. This Child Protection Policy states the commitment of the whole Diocese to provide a safe and trusted environment in which we will minister to child and youth in Singapore and the Mission Deaneries.
20. It provides the framework for Parishes to develop their respective Child Protection Procedures in tandem with Diocesan agencies.
21. This Policy will be updated as required for continual improvement.

ANNEX A

Child Protection Consent Form

I acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of Chapel of The Holy Spirit Child Protection Policy. I understand the document and agree to abide by them. Furthermore, I agree to hold others accountable to follow them.

Signature	
Full Name	
NRIC	
Date	

ANNEX B

Self-Declaration Form

(CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED)

All applicants for paid or voluntary posts working with children must complete this form and return it to the Vicar of CHS in a sealed envelope.

Have you abused a child before?	Yes / No (If Yes, please supply details)
Have you ever been convicted in a court of law for any inappropriate conduct toward children?	Yes / No (If Yes, please supply details)
Have you ever been warned, accused, or cautioned in relation to the matter of harming children?	Yes / No (If Yes, please supply details)
Have you served or worked in another Church or Parish before?	Yes / No (If Yes, please supply name of the Church/Parish)

I confirm that the information contained on this form is true and accurate.

After I've been appointed as a volunteer or staff, I agree to inform the CHS if I am charged, cautioned, or convicted of any offence that may affect my suitability to continue to undertake regulated work with children.

I understand that if I withhold any relevant information, or present false or inaccurate information in this declaration, CHS reserves the right to terminate my employment with immediate effect.

Signature	
Name	
NRIC	
Date	

ANNEX C

Character Reference Questions

1. What is your relationship with the applicant?
2. How long have you known the applicant?
3. In what capacity have you seen the applicant working with children (or students)?
4. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to children (or students)?
5. What do you think are the applicant's strengths in working with children?
6. What are areas where could improve as he/she interacts with children?
7. When interacting with children, does he/she know and respect the boundaries (or policies) for your organisation (family, etc.) around children? If not, please explain.
8. Do you know of any characteristics that would negatively affect the applicant's ability to work with children?
9. Would you recommend that the applicant work with children in CHS?

ANNEX D

Initial Report of Suspected Child Abuse

(CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED)

Please fill this form out with only the information that is known at the time a report is received, without interviewing the victim(s) and/or alleged offender(s). It is understood that there will be blanks or missing information and that is alright. This form is to be sent out the CPC and the Archdeacon of Singapore.

Please do provide support, care and safety to the victim(s), the alleged offender(s) and their families.

Date of Report: _____ Name of Person making report: _____

Parish making report: Chapel of The Holy Spirit Date Abuse Occurred: _____

Information regarding the Person suspected of Child Abuse

Name of suspected abuser: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

Address: _____ Tel: _____

Relationship to the CHS (if any): _____

Information regarding suspected Victim:

Name of suspected victim: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

Address: _____ Tel: _____

Relationship to the CHS (if any): _____

Report:

Describe what occurred specifically, including where, when, specific actions, number of times it occurred, any threats, etc.	
What led you to suspect/become aware of the abuse/neglect?	
Date, time and setting in which you became aware of the suspected abuse/neglect:	
Date, time and setting of incident (if known):	
Anecdotal records that support suspicion of abuse/neglect?	

Previous Reports:

Are you aware if the perpetrator has been accused or convicted of other abuse/neglect in the past? If so, please describe:	
Are you aware if the child/victim has experienced other abuse/neglect in the past? If so, please describe:	

Other Victims:

Who might be potential other victims? (Classmates, siblings, others who were in the same location, attended the same event, etc.):	
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Actions Taken:

Describe any arrangements that have already been made for counselling, and/or support for the family.	
Describe the arrangements that have been made to ensure the child's safety (both from the alleged offender and to protect the child from repeating the sexual behaviour with other children).	

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some signs and symptoms of Child Abuse?²

The following signs and symptoms may indicate that the child could have been harmed. They could also indicate other problems that the child may be facing, for example, the death of a loved one. Parents, caregivers, and professionals should encourage children to share openly on the problems they are facing.

Signs of Physical Abuse:

- Multiple injuries on the child at various stages of healing
- Burns
- Fractures
- Aggression or Withdrawal
- Fear of parents or caregivers and avoids contact with them

Signs of Emotional and Psychological Abuse:

- Stunted Growth
- Low self-esteem and self-worth
- Depression
- Sleeping and eating problems

Signs of Neglect:

- Poor Hygiene
- Child left unattended for extended periods of time, inappropriate to the age and needs of the child
- Medical needs not attended to
- Begging, hiding, stealing food
- Constant Tiredness

Signs of Sexual Abuse:

- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Pain or itching in genital area
- Bruises or bleeding in private areas
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual matters, unsuitable to the age of the child

² Taken from "Family Violence Destroys Lives" pamphlet published by Ministry of Social and Family Development

How do sexual offenders operate? ³

- Offenders tend to be excellent at disguising themselves and blending in with the crowd.
- Offenders are good at creating opportunities to be alone with children, and parents as well as children tend to trust them because they are able to create a sense of normalcy.
- Offenders are skilled at using communication that will draw children in.
- A child molester forms strong relationships with children, often using a reward system for behaviours the offender wants to encourage in the child.
- Most abusers tend to spend a lot more time with one child, and they often make exceptions from general rules for the children they are targeting for abuse.
- Sometimes offenders use fear and deception to keep children afraid or confused so that they will not tell what is going on.
- A person who sexually abuses children establishes trust and gradually "grooms" a child to do what he or she wants the child to do, making the child think he or she had some choice in the abuse.
- The three things a molester needs in order to abuse a child are: access to children, privacy, and control.

Do children tell the truth about abuse? ⁴

- Less than 5% of all allegations of sexual abuse turn out to be false.
- Most children tell the truth about what has happened to them.
- Less than 16% of sexual abuse victims ever tell about the abuse they have suffered.

Why is it important not to be silent or "hush" things up when abuse has occurred? ⁵

The consequences of the child abuse are devastating. Many victims leave the church for good, often struggling deeply with feelings of worthlessness because they have been so ill-used. And yet for many, the most damage is done by the inaction of those they go to within the church for help.

In her important and heart-breaking book, *This Little Light*, Christa Brown recounts her pastor's words to her when she courageously disclosed her abuse at the hands of another pastor on staff: "It'll be better if you don't tell anyone else just leave it in God's hands."

³ Taken from "Safeguarding God's Children", The Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee's Policies and Procedures, January 2011, page 13.

⁴ Taken from "Safeguarding God's Children", The Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee's Policies and Procedures, January 2011, page 13.

⁵ Taken from Beth Hart and Mike Sloan, Faithful Protection, Doulos Resources

This attitude toward the oppression of a child is indefensible from the shepherds who are charged with protecting the sheep (Ezekiel 34:1-10; cf. Job 29:17). There is no doubt that it takes courage and uncomfortable action to respond faithfully, especially because the abuser is usually someone we know. We must prepare ourselves for the cost. Above all we must remember the exponentially higher cost of silence to present and future children.

Judith Herman puts it well: "It is very tempting to take the side of the perpetrator. All the perpetrator asks is that the bystander do nothing. He appeals to the universal desire to see, hear, and speak no evil. The victim, on the contrary, asks the bystander to share the burden of pain. The victim demands action, engagement, and remembering."

Reporting the crime is best for the victim and the offender. Reporting enables repentance and reconciliation to begin. Truth is what matters in the sight of God far more than human reputations. Sin is far worse than losing your reputation among men, and the reality is that if someone has molested or raped children then their good reputation is a lie. Reporting also allows us to uncover other potential victims who need care. Silence is a devastating alternative to reporting.

A Christian expert on child sexual abuse in the church, Dr. Lynette Frantzen, makes the point:

Silence deprives a victim of the opportunity to move from being a victim of sexual abuse to a survivor and, eventually, to someone who thrives. At the same time, silence perpetuates the destructive cycle of perpetrators and denies them the opportunity for healing. The perpetrator needs to realize that there are consequences. Because of the shame and embarrassment, most sex offenders are unlikely to reach out for help on their own. The perpetrator benefits when sexual abuse is reported. Reporting a perpetrator lets him or her know that sexual abuse is not tolerated, that there are consequences for such behaviour, and provides him or her with mandated and specialized help to avoid offending again.

Ministering to victims of Child Sexual Abuse ⁶

The church can play a vital role in the healing of child sexual abuse survivors. When child sexual abuse is perpetrated in a church, by someone who names the name of Jesus, the spiritual damage is devastating. And yet, the only hope for rescue and hope is through the gospel of Jesus that is proclaimed and lived out in the local church. Pastors and counsellors must realize the opportunity they have to bring this light of hope into a very dark place.

Ministry to survivors begins by preaching the hope of the gospel for sinners and for those who are sinned against.

⁶ Taken from Beth Hart and Mike Sloan, *Faithful Protection*, Doulos Resources, 26-27.

The Bible certainly addresses our sin without flinching. While the Bible offers good news because of our sin, it offers good news to those who have been trampled on by the wicked and powerful (Luke 4:18). When we speak about the abuse of power and the other dynamics of abuse from the Bible, when we speak about child sexual abuse in a compassionate way, people will see us as a safe person. There are people in your church who have been sexually abused as children, even if you don't know who they are.

The church must become a safe place for victims. Healing for survivors often starts with a leader who speaks out with courage and compassion for the victim of abuse.

It is critical that we have a good grasp of the trauma inflicted by child sexual abuse.

In the woods near where we grew up, there was a large tree where the trunk turned sharply and ran parallel to the ground for several feet before turning sharply again and continuing up. As a child I (Mike) wondered what had happened to that tree. As I grew up I realized that another tree had fallen on that tree when it was very young. The trauma of that fall had warped the growth of the tree. The tree still grew, but the trauma had distorted its growth.

In the same way, children who are traumatized while they are developing have normal development interrupted and distorted. As ministers, counsellors, and fellow members of the body, we must understand with compassion that the trauma of abuse affects the person physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and relationally. We will be helpful to learn about the effect of this trauma as you seek to minister to a survivor. You also might need to help them find a counsellor. Look for a Christian counsellor who has specific training and experience working with survivors of child sexual abuse.

For victims, the trauma of abuse warps their view of God, self, and relationships. It is important for pastors, counsellors, and friends to understand something of these dynamics. These will help us to relate to victims in a compassionate way that does not seek to treat their wounds lightly (Jeremiah 8:11).

- **Warped View of God** – Many victims of abuse struggle mightily in their relationship with God. Victims often see God as either distant, capricious, or cruel. This is understandable given the horror they have experienced. How could God let this happen? While avoiding platitudes, the hope of the gospel is needed, the hope of a God who willingly entered our dark world of pain and joined us in our suffering to defeat evil forever. Abuse is a work of the devil. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). We must understand that for some, the very precious truths of God's love have been used in an abusive way. In her book, *This Little Light*, Christa Brown recounts how a friend reached out to her and sought to comfort her by reminding her of God's love and God's will. ³⁶ This was re-traumatizing to her because these were the very words her pastor abuser used to manipulate her. She says imagine if you had always been abused while the abuser played Beethoven.

What would happen if you were walking around the mall and heard Beethoven play? You would have a physiological response because the music would take you right back to the experience of your abuse. We must understand that for some the very truths of the gospel can have this type of response. We must be compassionate and wise. This means first listening to each victim and their unique story.

- **Warped View of Self** – Victims have been preyed upon and used as a disposable commodity by their abusers. Therefore, they naturally struggle with seeing themselves as disposable, because this is what the abuse taught them as pliable children. Victims also struggle with blaming themselves. As children they don't have much else in their limited experience to explain why it would have happened otherwise. And of course, many abusers have sowed this lie as well. The result is abuse has deeply ingrained in victims a belief that they are worthless and unlovable. This makes believing the gospel difficult. How could God love them if they are so deeply flawed? Even if they believe Christ died for others it is often difficult for them to accept that Jesus died for them.
- **Warped View of Relationships** – As malleable children, victims learn when they are abused that relationships are for using other people. What is right and wrong in a relationship is all mixed up. They have also learned that deception and relationships go hand in hand. Certainly, you can never really trust another person. Why would you? If you can't trust, you must protect yourself from harm by trying to stay in control at all costs. All of this makes relationships difficult. Also, understandably, forgiveness is often very difficult for victims. Just like repentance for the perpetrator, forgiveness for the victim is a long-term process. Don't be insensitive by insisting that it is easy or that it must happen immediately. Many victims have been further shamed by having Jesus' words about forgiveness pushed upon them as if granting forgiveness to your abuser is like turning on a light (Matthew 18:21-22). For victims of trauma, forgiveness is not a switch they can just flip. God expects that we would apply biblical teaching on forgiveness with wisdom and sensitivity. Forgiveness is an extremely costly and ongoing action and compassion demands that we empathize with victims of trauma.

Where can I find further information or resources for Child Abuse?

- Child Protective Service Helpline: 1800-777 0000
(Monday to Friday, 8.30am-5.30pm and Saturday, 8.30am-1pm)
Child Protective Service
SLF Podium
#01-01 to #01-09
512A Thomson Road Singapore 298137
- Child Protection Specialist Centres
HEART@Fei Yue
☎ 6819 9170
<http://www.fycs.org/>
Monday- Friday 9.30am - 5.30pm
- Big Love Child Protection Specialist Centre
☎ 6445 0400
<http://www.biglove.org.sg/>
contact@biglove.org.sg
Monday- Friday 9.00am - 6.00pm
- PAVE Child Protection Specialist Centre
☎ 62660171
<http://www.pave.org.sg>
admin@pave.org.sg
Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays 9.00am - 6.00pm
Wednesdays 9.00am - 6.00pm, 6.30pm - 9.30pm (by appointment only)