



# **Child Protection Policy & Procedures**

**Cornerstone Church Trust  
2018**

Approved 12 March 2018



# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Children & Youth Policy Statement**

Cornerstone Church Trust is required to have policies on children and youth work for the following reasons:

1. To protect children and young people from abuse and harm.
2. To protect the organisation and its people against liability.

This policy document has been developed to ensure that these two governing criteria are met.

### **Cornerstone Church Trust is committed to the following principles:**

- Acting at all times in the best interests of the children and young people to whom it provides a service.
- Dealing with abuse, suspected abuse or disclosure of abuse in a timely fashion.
- Valuing the family's role in caring for and protecting the child/youth, whilst prioritising the child/youth's safety.
- Ongoing open communication and transparency with parents.
- Providing appropriate support for families in cases of suspected child abuse.
- Ensuring any disclosures about alleged abuse are acknowledged, investigated and appropriate action taken to ensure the safety of the child/youth.
- Complying with all relevant legislation.
- Ensuring children, young people and staff have access to appropriate medical, psychological and legal services and support.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers involved in children and youth work within the organisation undergo a robust orientation and training programme, including policy and child safety.

# **2. Children & Youth Work Policies and Procedures**

## **2.1 Policy Introduction**

The above principles will be enacted through the policies that follow.

This policy document applies to all children and young people who are served by this organisation as well as staff and volunteers who come into contact with children and young people at Cornerstone in the course of their ministry.

This policy document will be managed by the Senior Pastor of Cornerstone Church Trust or by his delegated authority.

## 2.2 Scope

The Policy and Procedures contained herein apply to:

- All ministries authorised by or under the control of Cornerstone, including those ministries undertaken at the church's premises or away from the church's premises.
- All leaders within the church or engaged by the church.

## 2.3 Authority

These are the Policy and Procedures of Cornerstone Church Trust and were first adopted for use by the Cornerstone Executive on 25 March 2013.

The Cornerstone Executive is committed to implementing the Policy and Procedures and training our leaders in its content and application.

## 2.4 Definitions

**Child** Any person under the age of 18

**Youth/  
Young Person** Any person aged 9-18 years old

**Abuse** Can consist of one or more but is not restricted to the following:

**Physical abuse** – Any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as:

- Hitting, punching, kicking
- Shaking (particularly infants)
- Burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair
- Alcohol or other drug administration

**Sexual abuse** – Any sexual act or threat to perform such upon another person. It occurs when a person uses their power and authority to take advantage of another's trust to involve them in sexual activity. It does not necessarily involve genital contact but is any act which erodes the sexual boundary between two persons. It may appear consensual but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential.

**Emotional abuse** – The chronic attitude or behaviour of one person which is directed at another person or the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a child's development, self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include: devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising or chronic and extreme domestic violence in the child's presence.

**Neglect** – Characterised by the failure to provide for the child’s basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a child’s development.

<b>Executive</b>	The committee responsible for oversight of the financial and legal obligations of Cornerstone Church Trust. It consists of elected members, Trustees and the Senior Pastor.
<b>Helper</b>	Any unpaid person over the age of 16 who is invited by a leader to assist them in their ministry on an ad hoc basis. A helper might, for example, be a parent who is assisting a leader due to the unavailability of enough leaders for a given week.
<b>Leader</b>	Any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is directly responsible for the control and safety of children placed in their care whilst holding a formal position in a recognised children or youth ministry of the church. A Leader could include, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creche leaders</li><li>• Kids leaders</li><li>• Youth leaders</li></ul>
<b>Member</b>	Any person, including children, who attends or participates in Cornerstone Church ministries.
<b>Ministry</b>	Any organised activity that is authorised by Cornerstone Church
<b>Ministry Coordinator</b>	The person recognised and authorised by the church as head of an area of children’s ministry.
<b>Ministry Supervisor</b>	The Leader who has oversight and responsibility for a particular group of children, young people, Leaders and Helpers on a particular day.
<b>Children’s Worker</b>	Any person working with children or youth.

### 3. Policy Review

The Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually. The Cornerstone Executive will inform the ministries involved when the date of review will occur. Changes recommended by the ministries should be submitted in writing to the Executive for consideration one month before the review date.

Any proposed changes will be submitted to the Executive for approval before being implemented.

## **4. Selection and Screening of Children & Youth Workers**

### **4.1 Leaders**

#### **4.1.1 Application Process**

Leaders will be required to complete a Working with Children's application form, provide relevant referees and experience as well as consent to relevant checks.

#### **4.1.2 Police Vetting**

All Children & Youth Workers must be vetted through Cornerstone Church Trust by the New Zealand Police. For the worker to be approved the vetting must provide a result suitable for the nature of the work being undertaken.

#### **4.1.3 Referees**

All child workers will have 2 referees checked and must provide a result suitable for the nature of the work being undertaken.

#### **4.1.4 Training**

Within 3-6 months of commencing, all Children and Youth Workers must undertake training to become familiar with the Child Protection Policy and Procedures as well as reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements.

#### **4.1.5 Agreement to Guidelines for Children & Youth Ministries at Cornerstone**

All Children and Youth Workers must sign and date that they have read and understood the "Guidelines for Children & Youth Ministries at Cornerstone" relevant to the ministries they will be involved in and agree to abide by the policies therein. The Ministry Coordinator will need to receive a signed copy of this before the Worker may commence ministry.

#### **4.1.6 Approval Given**

Approval to undertake children or youth work is only to be given on the basis of the above conditions being met.

Approval is to be given verbally and indicated publicly by a lanyard to be worn by the Children or Youth Worker while undertaking children or youth work or as directed by the Ministry Coordinator. A list of approved Children & Youth Workers will be kept on file by Cornerstone Church.

#### **4.1.7 Reference Documents**

At all times full records are to be kept of signed and relevant documents. This includes: key role descriptions, incident registers, Police check forms and induction/training records.

## **4.2 Helpers**

Helpers are expected to have an awareness of the content of the Child Protection Policies and Procedures of the church and be prepared to work within them.

Any Helper who provides assistance in a children or youth ministry must be supervised by a Leader and will be accountable to that Leader.

Leaders who accept the assistance of a Helper must be satisfied of the Helper's maturity and the suitability for children's ministry.

Child work approval must be obtained if:

- they are rostered more than four times a year OR
- their task involves being alone or unsupervised for more than just a very brief time.

## **4.3 Discipline of Leaders**

In the event of a Children or Youth Worker being found to have acted in an inappropriate manner (not regarded as abuse) while working with children or young people, Cornerstone Church will take appropriate measures to help prevent repeat behaviour by the said Children or Youth Worker.

## 5. Safe Environment

Incidents of abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons, two Leaders will always be present when working with or supervising children or youth.

Leaders will not visit children or youth in their homes unless a parent is present or another Leader accompanies them.

When transporting children and youth, every effort should be made for Leaders not to be alone with a child or youth in a car. Where this is not practical, Leaders will take children and youth directly to and from arranged venues without deviating.

At all times, appropriate levels of privacy and confidentiality must be maintained in line with the Privacy Act.

All personal counselling is to be carried out within sight of another Leader.

Leaders will respect a member's feelings and privacy when engaging in physical contact of any kind.

Adults, youth and children are expected to respect each other's privacy during activities that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes. Leaders will set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations. No Leader will be alone in a room with a child or youth while either is changing.

All aspects of every child- and youth-related program will be open to observation by parents/guardians.

Leaders have a right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at child- or youth-related activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request.



## **6. Obligations**

### **6.1 Spiritual**

The core beliefs of Cornerstone Church require us to treat all people with love and dignity and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

### **6.2 Legal**

The Church and its Leaders are subject to New Zealand legislation and principles established through common law. See Appendix 2 for an outline of legal obligations.

### **6.3 Ethical**

Some actions may not be regarded as Abuse but are nonetheless unacceptable behaviour for church leaders. These include:

- Inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature.
- Coarse language, especially that of a sexual nature.
- Suggestive gestures or remarks.
- Jokes of a sexual nature.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Inappropriate literature (e.g. PG, M, MA, R or X rated material used with young children).
- Recording or filming without prior consent.
- Acts of violence committed by a Leader in the course of an activity.

The age of individuals is recognised as one of the determinants in deciding what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. Ministry Supervisors will ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

## **7. Risk Management**

### **7.1 Guidelines for Specific Children & Youth Ministries**

Safe practice policies for Children & Youth Workers undertaking children's work are to be found in the written guidelines relevant to each ministry. This will include information on the policies and protocols which govern the children and youth work including safe toileting, communication with parents and the managing of complaints.

### **7.2 Publicity**

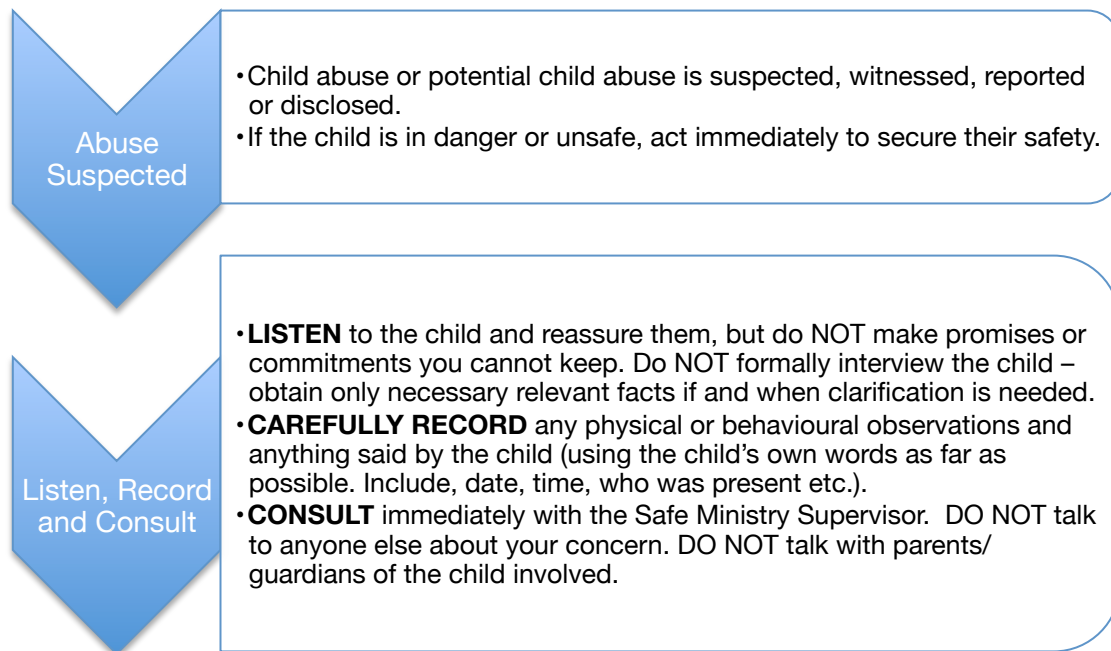
#### **7.2.1 Photography**

From time to time, photos will be taken of children and youth during Church activities. These will not be used publicly without parental consent.

### 7.3 Responding to Allegations of Abuse

This section applies to all allegations of abuse, whether against Children & Youth Workers, staff, parents, or other parties.

Anyone who suspects child abuse (whether involved in children's ministry or not) should follow the following steps:

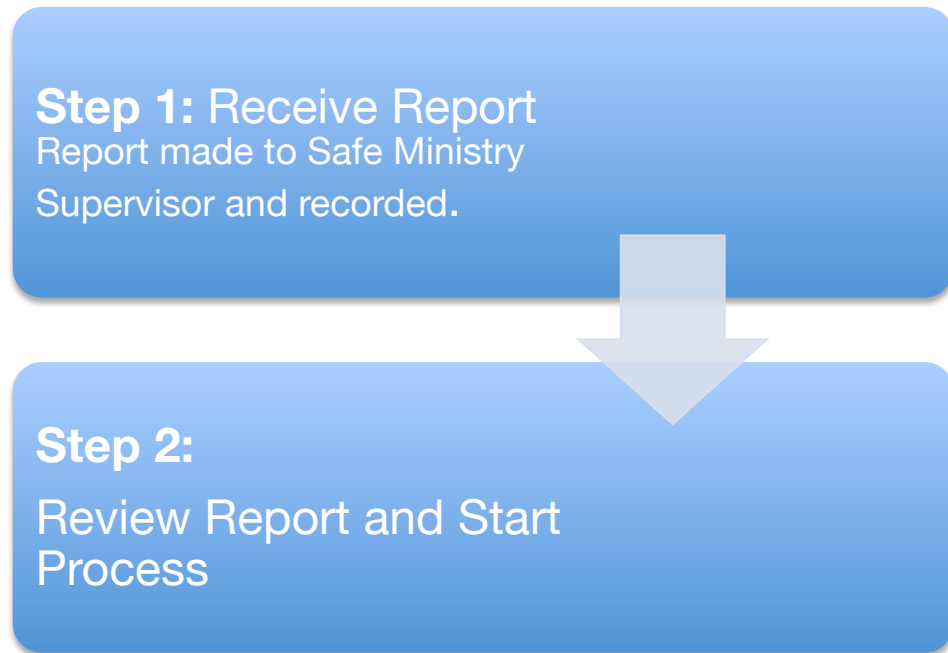


If one of the Safe Ministry Supervisors<sup>1</sup> receives a report that someone shows signs of abuse, and/or a report of inappropriate behaviour by someone at Cornerstone, the Safe Ministry Supervisor will listen to the report and be responsible for carrying out the process in Appendix 1 depending on the incident and claim.

At all times appropriate levels of confidentiality must be maintained as per the relevant legislation.

<sup>1</sup> A Safe Ministry Supervisor must understand and agree with the policies and procedures outlined in this document. There should be two Safe Ministry Supervisors at any time. They are to be known as the people to report concerns relating to child safety to. Proposed Safe Ministry Supervisors are to be recommended to the church executive by the Children's Ministry Coordinator and ratified at the AGM by more than 50% of the votes. One of the Safe Ministry Supervisors should be a regular attender of Cornerstone Church, the other may or may not be external to Cornerstone Church. A Safe Ministry Supervisor will be referred to as a "SMS" in Appendix 1. Should a Safe Ministry Supervisor wish to retire from their position, the church executive will appoint a temporary supervisor until the Safe Ministry Supervisor can be ratified at the next AGM by more than 50% of the votes.

## APPENDIX 1



### **Step 1: Receive and Record Incident Details (and take immediate action if needed)**

When a SMS is contacted with a report of possible abuse, or inappropriate volunteer/leader behaviour, they will:

1. In the event of an emergency, **contact emergency services** (Child, Youth and Family (0508 326 459) or the Police immediately.
2. **Write a record** of the report.
3. **Share** the report with the other SMS(s). Note: details of those reporting abuse will be kept private and confidential by the organisation.
4. Continue to Step 2.

### **Step 2: Review and determine the risk of significant harm and/or inappropriate leader behaviour.**

Once all SMSs have received the report, they will assess the claim initially. This allows SMSs to dismiss overzealous observations as signs of abuse (e.g. a child with a runny nose, a boy who loves climbing trees has everyday

bruises on his legs, a case of clear misunderstandings between people are all signs that could be reported to a SMS but should not go any further to avoid undue stress on individuals or the organisation). The following table can be used:

	If <b>ANY</b> Safe Ministry Supervisor considers the report to include a <b>LEADER</b> who engaged in inappropriate behaviour:	If <b>ALL</b> Safe Ministry Supervisors consider the report does NOT include a Leader who engaged in inappropriate behavior:
If <b>ANY</b> Safe Ministry Supervisor considers the report includes a victim at risk of <b>SIGNIFICANT HARM</b> :	<b>Process A:</b> Appoint an Independent Ministry Investigator	<b>Process B:</b> Inform leadership and appropriate authorities
If <b>ALL</b> Safe Ministry Supervisors consider the report does NOT include a victim at risk of significant harm:	<b>Process C:</b> Safe Ministry Supervisor to perform Internal Review and Response	<b>Process D:</b> Inform the person who reported

The SMSs will **independently assess** if there is or was:

1. An **alleged victim** at risk of significant harm

A person was at risk of significant harm if the circumstances that are causing concern for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of person were present to a significant extent. What is meant by "significant" in the phrase "to a significant extent" is that which is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority, irrespective of a family's consent. What is significant is not minor or trivial, and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the person's safety, welfare, or wellbeing.

2. An **accused leader** who engaged in inappropriate leader behaviour

Inappropriate leader behaviour is any action or communication from a leader (or volunteer) that would not be inline with the appropriate leader behaviours as set out in the Cornerstone Church Trust Child Protection Policies and Procedures. An Accused Leader can include a person who was representing Cornerstone Church in a voluntary capacity.

NOTE:

- A) If the person accused **was not** acting on behalf Cornerstone Church as a volunteer, leader or staff member in the alleged incident, they are not considered an accused leader.
- B) The accused leader should be informed as soon as practically possible and removed from their responsibilities until the SMS or Independent Ministry Investigator have determined the appropriate response.

**3. One of the SMSs will take the lead and proceed with the appropriate process (A-D).**

**Process A. In the case where there is a Victim who was deemed to be at risk of significant harm AND an Accused Leader**

If there is an Alleged Victim and an Accused Leader the SMS and the Senior Leadership of Cornerstone Church will...

1. **Appoint** an Independent Ministry Investigator (IMI) to examine allegations. An appropriate IMI will be;

- 1. Independent (they should not attend Cornerstone Church).
- 2. Experienced (they should have appropriate skills to perform the task and have some level of understanding of the processes and consequences)

2. Once an IMI has been appointed,

**a) the SMS will...**

- i. **Inform** the Alleged Victim (or Victim's guardians if a child) and the Accused Leader that an IMI has been appointed.
- ii. **Provide** the IMI with contact details for both the Alleged Victim (or Victim's guardians if a child) and the Accused Leader.

**b) The IMI will...**

- i. if authorities have been contacted, liaise with and submit to the authority's direction.
- ii. contact both the Alleged Victim (or Victim's guardians if a child) and the Accused Leader to clarify the incident and the circumstances in which it allegedly happened. (The IMI may

determine that there was no serious incident). NOTE: It is not the job of the SMS or the IMI to counsel either the Alleged Victim or Accused Leader, the SMS and IMI are a liaison and referrer 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.

- iii. present a formal report to the Senior Leadership of Cornerstone Church with
  - 1. An opinion on the validity and severity of the alleged incident.
  - 2. Recommendations (if any) on:
    - a. How to avoid such an incident in the future.
    - b. What steps should be taken for the Accused (and associates).
    - c. What steps should be taken for the Victim (and associated).

**c. The Senior Leadership will:**

- i. Determine what actions they will implement. Note: If an employee is found guilty of committing significant harm (either by internal investigation or by New Zealand authorities) they will be automatically terminated and required to cease all roles at Cornerstone Church.
  - ii. Provide a report to the Insurance Provider.
- d. This will be the end of the process for this incident.

**Process B. In the case where the Accused was not in a volunteer or leadership role (and there is a Victim who was deemed to be at risk of significant harm)**

If the Accused was not acting on behalf of Cornerstone Church in the alleged incident, the SMS will:

1. **Share** the report with the appropriate Senior Leaders of Cornerstone Church and, with them, determine appropriate steps to take on a case by case basis. This may include contacting external services (e.g. Police).
2. This will be the end of the process for this incident.

**Process C. In the case where there is an Accused Leader but no Alleged Victim who was deemed to be at risk of significant harm**

If there is an Accused Leader, but no Victim at risk of significant harm, the SMSs will;

1. **Examine and record** the details of the claim of alleged behaviour (including whether the behaviour occurred or not).
2. **Determine** the seriousness of the risk of the behaviour according to the Behaviour and Action Steps Table below and,
3. **Carry out** the related steps (outlined below). If a Leader has been accused twice or more in the space of 6 months, the SMS Action Steps will be determined by the sum of the seriousness of each case in that time span (rather than by the individual case). For example, if Bob behaved with Seriousness of “1” in March and then with seriousness “2” in May, the SMS would impose the step described in seriousness “3” (1+2).
4. This will be the end of the process for this incident.

## Behaviour and Action Steps Table

Seriousness of behaviour	Explanation of seriousness	Action steps
1. Minor	The alleged inappropriate behavior is minor when the behaviour is obviously without malice and there was little to no risk of severe injury or abuse.	The SMS will remind the Accused Leader of the appropriate behavior policy.
2. Mild	The alleged inappropriate behavior is mild when the Leader thought there were reasonable grounds for the behaviour and some caution was taken, even if it was not due practice.	The SMS will remind the Accused Leader of the appropriate behavior policy and discuss with them other options to take if the circumstances arise again.
3. Substantial	The alleged inappropriate behaviour is substantial when the behavior was known to be inappropriate but obviously done without reasonable thought or in haste.	The SMS will remind the Accused Leader of the appropriate behavior policy and warn them about their behaviour.
4. Severe	<p>The alleged inappropriate behaviour is severe when the behavior was;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- known to be inappropriate</li> <li>- and done intentionally, or with malice or hostility.</li> </ul>	The SMS will arrange (with the Church leaders) to immediately remove the Accused Leader from their role until they are able to show reasonable grounds for their reappointment.



**Process D: In the case where there is no Accused Leader and there is no Alleged Victim at risk of significant harm**

If there is no Accused Leader and there is no Alleged Victim at risk of significant harm, the SMS will...

1. Contact the person who reported the incident.
2. Explain why they have come to the conclusion that no action should be taken.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Legal Obligations**

Below is a précis of legislative requirements with respect to Child Abuse that apply in New Zealand. Every attempt has been made to ensure this information is accurate. However a review should be undertaken regularly to ensure the information remains correct and current.

#### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

##### **Legal definition**

Child Abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.

The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act became law in 1989. In January 1995, more than forty changes were made to that Act with the passing of the Amendment Act. Probably one of the most significant changes of concern to the public dealt with the issue of the mandatory reporting of child abuse. After much debate, an alternative option to mandatory reporting was decided by Government, with an emphasis on education and voluntary reporting. The changes made to section 7(2) of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act reflect that emphasis.

The amendments placed new duties on the Director General of Social Welfare (and since on the Chief Executive of Child, Youth and Family) which include raising public awareness of child abuse and its unacceptability, looking at ways to prevent abuse and developing guidelines on how to report abuse.

##### **Legislation**

Full copies of relevant legislation should be obtained and legal advice sought by anyone who has need for detailed information. The following Acts are those most commonly referred to.

- Adoption Act 1955 and the Adult Adoption Information Act 1985
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Amendment Act 1995
- Crimes Act 1961
- Guardianship Act 1968
- Summary Offences Act 1981

##### **Police Clearance Certificate**

The Ministry of Justice is frequently asked to provide a 'Police Certificate' or a 'Police Clearance', sometimes from organisations wishing to appoint an employee or volunteer in a child-related work position.

In New Zealand, there is no such document. However, you can apply for a copy of your own conviction records (which you can then show to another party if you wish).

## Reporting

Anyone who is over 18 and who is aware of child abuse occurring in a household they live in, or are a member of, must take reasonable steps to protect that child from death, serious harm or sexual assault. Practically, this means they must report child abuse that is very serious. The law also applies to staff members of hospitals, institutions or residences where a child is living. Further, guardians have a duty to protect children in their care from injury.

People are not legally required to report less serious suspected child abuse.

Reporting should be made to:

Ministry for Vulnerable Children  
Phone Number: 0508 326 459  
URL: <https://www.mvcot.govt.nz/>

## Sources

- Ministry of Justice: <http://www.justice.govt.nz/privacy>
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Amendment Act 1995

## Revisions

<b>Date</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comment</b>
12 March 2018	Approved	Addition made to SMS rules
21 August 2017	Approved	Minor clarifications and updates
1 August 2016	Approved	Changes approved as proposed below
27 June 2016	Proposed	Clarifications, and change to definition of Safe Ministry Supervisor from that introduced 23 May 2016.
23 May 2016	Approved	7.3 and Appendix 1 improved
23 March 2015	Approved	Minor changes made
23 February 2015	Approved	Full policy revision, Appendix 2 added
29 April 2013	Approved	Internal abuse reporting procedures
25 March 2013	Approved	New document