

Reporting Procedure for Disclosure or Suspicion of Abuse or Mistreatment

Disclosure or Suspicion

If a child or youth discloses to you that they are being abused, are at risk of being abused or you have reasonable grounds to suspect that abuse is taking place; follow the steps below.

(Never be afraid to report. It is better to report and it be wrong, than to do nothing and be right)

Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Abuse of Children

Section 327 of the Victorian Crimes Act 1958 (amended 2014) states that any person 18 years of age or older who has information that leads them to belief that a **sexual offence** has been committed in Victoria against a child under the age of 16 years by another person 18 years or older must disclose that information to a police officer as soon as it is practicable to do so. Failure to Disclose is a criminal offense. Please refer to the fact sheet on the church website.

IMMEDIATE DANGER

If a child is in immediate danger of abuse (e.g. someone attempt to forcibly take them from church or they disclose a credible fear that they will be abused when they go home), immediately notify the on-site activity leader and the Safe Church Concerns Person, who will contact police and arrange support for the child.

Report to the Safe Church Concerns Person

The Safe Church Concerns Person (Elsie Loh), will be able to help you fill in one of two forms:

- A Safe Church Anecdotal Record or
- A Risk or Significant Harm Form.

The Safe Church Concerns Person will then be able to notify the appropriate Authorities and these forms will then be kept securely as a record. You no longer need to worry once you have reported to the SCCP.

Safe Church Concerns Person to Take Action

The Safe Church Concerns Person will then take appropriate action including any of the following:

- Seeking the advice of the BUV Professional Standards Worker.
- Completing online reporting to Government Child Protection Agencies.
- Contacting Police
- Initiating a workplace investigation.

Ongoing Support

For the Victim: It is important that as a church, we support them through the counselling and recovery if it turns out that abuse has taken place.

For the Alleged Offender: If someone has committed abuse they must face the consequences of their actions, but as a church, we must also support them towards repentance and recovery.

For You: Having abuse disclosed (or needing to report on someone you have trusted) can be extremely confronting and if you need to speak to a counsellor about it, we will be able to refer you and provide ongoing pastoral support.