



Buddhist Council of Victoria, Inc

ABN 13 436 635 535 Reg. No. A0033871C

MEMBER

17 September 2012

FEDERATION OF
AUSTRALIAN
BUDDHIST
COUNCILS

Executive Officer
Family and Community Development Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

MULTIFAITH
ADVISORY GROUP

Dear Committee,

We hereby provide this submission for the 'INQUIRY INTO THE HANDLING OF CHILD ABUSE BY RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS' to the Family and Community Development Committee.

FAITH
COMMUNITIES
COUNCIL OF
VICTORIA

We congratulate the Victorian Government and the Committee on its work to consider and report to the Parliament on the processes by which religious and other non-government organisations respond to the criminal abuse of children by personnel within their organisations.

In providing this submission, the Buddhist Council of Victoria Inc. acts in its role to serve as the representative organisation for Buddhist temples, groups and organisations in Victoria, to promote understanding of the diverse traditions and practices of Buddhism to the wider Victorian Community.

PRISON CHAPLAINS
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

This submission, includes the documents listed below and as attached, is specific to the Buddhist faith and religion and refers to Point 11. of the Submission Guide: Responses to Reports of Child Abuse – Religious and Other Organisations; to investigate the practices, policies and protocols in religious and other non-government organisations.

VICTORIAN POLICE
MULTIFAITH
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In canvassing inputs, Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan, Abbot of the Quang Minh Temple, Braybrook provided the following which cover some points of the inquiry.

- One incident which occurred around 20 years ago involved sexual abuse of children in a temple. However, due to a lack of evidence and family cover up the matter did not progress. The lack of knowledge of the Law around sexual abuse was also a factor. There has been no reported child abuse since.
- Quang Minh Temple is drafting a policy, which is also a condition of their Public Liability Insurance, which is also in the FPMTA (Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition in Australia) Insurance Policy.
- However, this requirement may not be common knowledge across all Buddhist Temples and Centres as some Temples with non-English speaking backgrounds are unaware that their overseas Monks and Nuns need a working with children check. Quang Minh Temple has these checks in place.

HEALTHCARE
CHAPLAINCY
COUNCIL OF
VICTORIA

- Of those interviewed for this submission it was found there was no awareness of formal /written protocols between Buddhist religious organisations and police.
- The need for dedicated liaison Police Officers to work with Temples and organisations was highlighted. Establishment of formal protocols with the Department of Health Services was also highlighted.
- Training of persons in dealing with child abuse issues was deemed as a priority, however a lack of resources means it is very hard to implement.

The religious rules of conduct applied to address matters of child abuse within Buddhist temples and organisations, are covered within the three main sets of rules of conduct, which are the:

- Refuge Precepts that cover all Buddhists, ordained person (Monks and Nuns) and lay practitioners, take the training precept of No Sexual Misconduct.*
- Vinaya rules (ordination vows) for all ordained Monks and Nuns; additionally in the Mahayana and Vajrayana tradition persons take Bodhisattva and Tantric vows, which apply to both monks and nuns and laypeople.
- The Vinaya rules are governed by senior Sangha Member (Buddhist clergy) and all Monks and Nuns are to confess transgressions on a regular basis.

**The meaning of No Sexual Misconduct, also termed 'The 3rd Mindfulness Training - Sexual Responsibility' has been defined as: 'Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I am committed to cultivating responsibility and learning ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families, and society. I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without love and a long term commitment. To preserve the happiness of myself and others, I am determined to respect my commitments and the commitments of others. I will do everything in my power to protect children from sexual abuse and to prevent couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct.'* by Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh. Reference: For A Future To be Possible 2nd Edition 2007.

Attached documents:

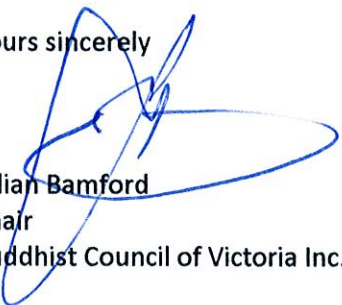
- Letter expressing views pertaining to Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhist temples.**
Dhamma Sarana Vihara, 329-335 Greens Road, Keysborough VIC 3173
Venerable N Vijitha Thero, Chief Monk.
**See appendix.
- FPMTA*** Child Protection Policy and Procedures
Tara Institute, 3 Mavis Street, Brighton VIC 3187
 - Draft Policy: FPMTA - Child Protection and Procedures
 - Draft Policy: FPMTA – Working with Children
 - FPMTA Working with Children Application Form.

***FPMTA - Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition in Australia.

Looking to the future, the Victorian Buddhist community welcomes practical guidelines and guidance in the formulation and implementation of practices, policies and protocols that will act to prevent and where necessary Respond to Reports of Child Abuse for Religious Organisations.

We hope this submission to the Inquiry will be added as a positive contribution to the Committee's considerations and reporting to Parliament, and will positively assist in the protection of children and be of benefit to all persons.

Yours sincerely



Julian Bamford
Chair
Buddhist Council of Victoria Inc.

APPENDIX

Letter expressing views pertaining to Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhist temples.**
Dhamma Sarana Vihara, 329-335 Greens Road, Keysborough VIC 3173
Venerable N Vijitha Thero, Chief Monk.

We wish to refer to letter from the Family and Community Development Committee of Victorian Government with regard to religious organizations' response to the criminal abuse of children within their organizations and give below our views pertaining to Sri Lankan Theravada temples.

1 We consider the Victorian Governments 'efforts in this direction as timely and appropriate as children according to the Buddhist teaching are precious and have to be nurtured carefully for them to reach the fullness of their lives without any mental or physical hindrance.

2 In Australia, within the Sri Lankan Theravada temples at present, there are no children ordained as members of the Sangha.

3 Since in our temples there are schools for teaching of Dhamma (the Buddhist doctrine) and also teaching of Sinhala language, we have to give consideration to the protection of the children who are accommodated in the temple premises during the time of their study.

4 At present, we follow the Victorian Government procedures such as obtaining the permission for working with children for the adult staff members.

5. Apart from the Govt legal provisions we also inculcate in the children as well as the staff members the importance of preventing harm according to Dhamma. We give below part of a relevant conversation between the Buddha and Rahul Thera which provides the Buddhist way to prevent harmful acts.

"What do you think, Rahula: What is a mirror for?"

"For reflection, sir."

"In the same way, Rahula, bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions are to be done with repeated reflection.

"Whenever you want to do a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I want to do — would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Would it be an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... it would be a skillful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then any bodily action of that sort is fit for you to do.

"While you are doing a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I am doing — is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

"Having done a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I have done — did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Was it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

6. In the Vinaya Pitaka (the code of conduct) there are number of stipulations for the members of Sangha to follow and the members of the Sangha are expected to meet periodically and discuss all acts of misconduct committed which enable them to purify and lead a restrained life.

7. However, with the complex challenges in the modern society it is opportune for the Buddhists to be aware of, educate themselves and be familiar with the laws and regulations pertaining to this subject so that they can implement systems within the temples to prevent child abuse and also to handle such incident lawfully.



FPMTA POLICY - CHILD PROTECTION AND PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy statement

FPMT (Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition) Australia Ltd is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its members, teachers and Sangha, and particularly to children.

FPMTA's policy and procedures aims to reduce the risk of abuse occurring and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should abuse occur.

1.2 Scope

The policy and procedures apply to:

- All centres, (see definition) projects, services and study groups authorized by or affiliated with FPMT Inc and under the umbrella of FPMTA Ltd in Australia, including ministries by those centres, study groups and services undertaken at premises owned or rented by the organisation or away from premises owned or rented by the organisation.
- All leaders (see definition) within the FPMTA or engaged by FPMT centres, projects, services and study groups in Australia.
- All staff, all contractors (consultants), all volunteers and interns, all board members.

1.3 Authority

All Australian centres, projects, services and study groups affiliated with FPMT Inc are members of FPMTA Ltd. These are the policy and procedures of FPMTA and were adopted by the Board of Directors of FPMTA on **(date)**

The Board of Directors of FPMTA and all teachers, Sangha and directors of FPMT centres, projects, services and study groups in Australia are committed to implementing the policy and procedures and training our leaders in

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its content and application.

1.4 Definitions

Centre: is used as the term for all centres, projects, services, study groups and outreach groups

Child: Any person under the age of 18

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

Physical abuse – any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as hitting, punching, kicking (marks from belt buckles, fingers); shaking (particularly babies); 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, terrorizing or chronic and extreme domestic violence in the child's presence.

Neglect – characterized by the failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardizes or impairs a person's development.

Religious organisation: The national office of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition Australia Ltd is registered at 9 Victoria Square NSW 2131.

Helpers: any unpaid person over the age of 16 who is invited by a leader to assist them in their work at an FPMT centre.

Leader: any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of members placed in their care whilst holding a formal position in a recognised FPMT centre. A leader could include but is not limited to:

- Tulkus, lamas and geshe (senior spiritual teachers)
- FPMT registered teachers and facilitators
- Sangha (all ordained persons)
- Religious practitioners
- Small group leaders
- Leaders of cultural activities
- Counselors

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FPMTA Policy – Child Protection

- Youth leaders
- Children’s Dharma group superintendants

Members: any person, including children, who attends or participates in activities in FPMT centres, projects and services.

Ministry: any organised activity that is authorized by an FPMT centre, project or service.

Ministry Leader: the person recognised and authorized by the FPMT centre, project or service as head of an activity.

2. EXTERNAL POLICIES

We acknowledge that some FPMT centres in Australia might have external associations with other organisations. These organisations will possibly have policies concerning governing the issues of member and/or child safety and abuse. FPMTA’s policy and procedures are not intended to replace or conflict with other policies, but instead to operate in conjunction with them.

3. POLICY REVIEW

FPMTA’s Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be reviewed every two years. FPMTA decision makers will inform the centres, projects and services involved when the date of review will occur. Any changes recommended by those centres should be submitted in writing to the decision makers for consideration one month before the review date.

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

4. OBLIGATIONS

4.1 Spiritual

The core beliefs of the Buddhist religion and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition require us to treat people with love and compassion and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

4.2 Legal

FPMTA Ltd and FPMT Ltd affiliated centres and their leaders are all subject to federal and state legislation in Australia and principles established through common law.

4.3 Ethical

Some actions may not be regarded as abuse but are unacceptable behaviour for leaders of FPMT centres. These include:

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- 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 (eg PG, M,MA, R or X rated material used with young children)
- Recording of filming without prior consent (See Appendix 3: Use of children's images)
- 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 acceptable or unacceptable behaviour is. FPMT leaders will ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

5. SELECTION AND SCREENING

5.1 Leaders

Leaders involved in children's ministry must be carefully selected and screened. Prior to leaders commencing child-related ministries the following precautions will be taken:

- Volunteer leaders will be members of the relevant centre and have regularly attended that centre for at least six months.
- Candidate leaders will complete an application form which requests details of relevant past experience, positions held, details of two referees and permission to contact them (Appendix 4: Application form and interview guide).
- Referees will be checked and spoken to using an agreed set of questions which have been drafted by FPMT A. The questions will seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the role or position and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.
- Short-listed candidate leaders will be interviewed by an experienced and responsible member of the FPMT centre prior to being accepted as a leader.
- A Police and/or Community Services and/or Working with Children Check which complies with the legislative requirements of each state in which FPMT centres operate will be requested and received prior to the leader commencing their proposed role.

Where the centre has identified that an applicant has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for child-related ministries.

These offences do not preclude the applicant from serving in other ministries and the FPMT centre, after careful consideration, might welcome the applicant's contribution in more appropriate areas.

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5.2 Helpers

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

Any helper who provides assistance in a children's ministry must be supervised by a leader at all times and will be accountable to that leader.

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

6. TRAINING

All leaders will be issued with a copy of this policy and training in:

- The content and application of the FPMTA's member protection policy and procedures
- Reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements

In addition leaders responsible for recruiting leaders for child-related ministries will undertake further education in child/member protection.

7. 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.

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

When transporting children leaders should never be alone with a child in a car. Where this is not practical leaders will take children directly to and from arranged venues and will not spontaneously detour or make additional arrangements.

All personal counseling 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 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 while either is changing.

Secret ceremonies are prohibited. All aspects of every child-related program will be open to observation by parents/guardians.

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

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8. DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

It is not the responsibility of FPMT centres or their leaders to discipline a child. If a child does not abide by the rules set down by the leader, or is an obstruction to the care of other children, or may cause harm to other children, the child will be removed and referred back to their parent or guardian.

At no time will a leader administer any form of physical, emotional or mental discipline.

9. REPORTING PROCEDURES

An independent person will be appointed by FPMTA with the specific duty of dealing with any allegations that arise. The name, address and contact telephone number will be freely available to all leaders.

Documented reporting and escalation procedures will be established by the FPMTA for handling allegations of abuse. (See FPMTA Grievance Procedure Policy)

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child has been or is suffering abuse, the police and the FPMTA's NCO and insurance broker will be contacted immediately.

The reporting procedure and contact details for each state is in Appendix 3

The phone number for FPMTA's insurance broker CPS General 1300 88 99 65 contact Lesley Brungs.

Reasonable grounds can be assumed when:

1. A child discloses that he or she has been abused and/or
2. Someone close to a child (eg. sibling, relative, close friend) discloses on behalf of the child.

The police will also be notified if a child discloses an incident of abuse that has occurred somewhere other than at an FPMT centre (eg. home or school).

If a disclosure of abuse is made the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate pastoral care to the one making the disclosure. This will include:

- Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimize its impact on the alleged victim. The matter should not be swept under the carpet.
- Not pushing the child to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation.
- Assuring the child that they are understood and that their disclosure is being taken seriously; that what has happened is not their fault and that they are correct in disclosing the incident.
- Reporting the abuse to the police and the organisation's NCO and insurance broker.
- Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator. If the leader is already providing counsel to the alleged perpetrator, it may be advisable for another person to assume this responsibility for the duration of the investigation.

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- If the alleged assault has taken place recently, clothing worn by the child should be retained and handed to the police for forensic examination.
- Maintaining confidentiality. Any disclosures by a child, reports of suspected abuse and all details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly and the documents will be held in a secure location where breach of privacy cannot occur.

Where an allegation is made the accused person will be removed from all children's ministry pending the outcome of all investigations.

10. ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs at any FPMT centre, or during an activity, is not to be allowed or condoned by any leader. Any child found to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is to be counseled and the parents/guardians contacted so the child can be returned home immediately.

Any child required to take prescription medication will provide a letter from their parents/guardians to the leader.

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APPENDIX 1 - Use of children's images

When photographing and filming a child for promotional purposes I must:

- Before photographing or filming a child, assess and endeavour to comply with their own cultural traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Before photographing or filming a child, obtain consent from the child or a parent or guardian of the child; explain to them how the photograph will be used.
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.
- Ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically.

I understand that the onus is on me, as a person engaged by (name of FPMT centre, study group or service) to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse when implementing FPMT ministry.

Print name and sign _____

Date _____

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APPENDIX 2 - Code of Conduct

I (insert name), engaged by (name of FPMT centre, study group or service), agree that while implementing FPMT activities I will:

- Treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Not engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, where under the law(s) applicable to the child (including Part IIIA of the *Australian Crimes Act 1914* (Cwth) as amended), the child is below the age of consent or the acts are an offence under relevant laws.
- Wherever possible ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children.
- Not invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- Not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission and ensure that another adult is present if possible.
- Use any computers, mobile phones or video and digital cameras appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium (see also Appendix 1: Use of children's images).
- Refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children (excluding my own children).
- Refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour.
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate proceedings.

Print name and sign _____

Date _____

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APPENDIX 3 - Legal obligations

Below is a précis of legislative requirements with respect to Child Abuse that apply in (Your State). 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.

1. QUEENSLAND

- **SUITABILITY NOTICE (BLUE CARD)**
- **WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK**

A blue card is issued by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. When a person applies for a blue card the Commission conducts a Working with Children Check which is a detailed national check of a person's criminal history, including any charges or convictions.

Also considered is disciplinary information held by certain professional organisations and police investigation information (into allegations of serious child-related sexual offences, even if no charges were laid because the child was unwilling or unable to proceed).

A person is disqualified if they:

- have been convicted of a disqualifying offence (including a child-related sex or pornography offence, or the murder of a child), or
- are a reportable offender with current reporting obligations under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004, or
- are subject to a child protection offender prohibition order, or
- are subject to a disqualification order prohibiting them from applying for or holding a blue card).

A disqualified person may apply to the Commission for an 'eligibility declaration' and in very limited and defined circumstances may be declared eligible to apply for a blue card.

A person whose application is approved is issued with a positive notice letter and a blue card.

If a person's application is refused, they are issued with a negative notice which prohibits them from carrying on a business or providing child-related activities in the categories regulated by the Commission's Act.

New obligations from 2 June 2008

All employers and education providers must:

- use only the latest blue card application forms (which include a new declaration that it's an offence for a disqualified person to apply for a blue card)
- warn every person applying for a blue card that it's an offence for a disqualified person to sign the application form. For example, *"I am legally obliged to warn you that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a blue card application form."*

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card application form.”

- sign the declaration on the application form stating you have warned the applicant
- check that the applicant has signed the declaration stating they are not a disqualified person before lodging an application on their behalf.

Risk management obligations

It is also mandatory for every organisation covered by the Commission’s Act to have a risk management strategy in place to keep children and young people safe. This means employers must develop and implement a written child protection risk management strategy and review it each year. The strategy should include a register of all paid and volunteer staff in your organisation that carry out regulated child-related activities. The Commission provides free risk management workshops around the state. For more information call the Commission on **3247 5518** or visit the website at www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/about/risk_management.html

Who Needs a Blue Card?

Anyone who proposes to work, in a paid or voluntary capacity in a child-related area regulated by the Commission’s Act will require a Blue Card.

Regulated employment activities include:

Both paid employees and volunteers may need a blue card if they fall under one of the following categories:

- residential facilities
- school boarding houses
- schools – employees other than teachers and parents
- child care
- churches, clubs and associations involving children
- health, counseling and support services
- private teaching, coaching or tutoring
- education programs conducted outside of schools
- child accommodation services, including homestays
- religious representatives
- sport and active recreation
- emergency services cadet programs, and
- school crossing supervisors
- care of children under the Child Protection Act 1999
- volunteers

A volunteer, unless exempt, must have a blue card before they start volunteering in one of the above categories, regardless of how often they come into contact with children and young people.

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Paid employees

Paid employees must apply for a blue card if they work, or are likely to work, in one of the above categories over 12 months, for at least:

- eight consecutive days; or
- once a week, each week, over four weeks; or
- once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks; or
- once a month, each month, over six months

Note: A paid employee can commence work pending the outcome of their blue card application.

Trainee students

A student, irrespective of their age, studying at a registered training organisation, university or TAFE, will require a blue card if they carry out work in one of the above categories as part of their study.

Note: A trainee student must have a blue card before they start volunteering in one of the above categories, regardless of how often they come into contact with children and young people.

Checking blue cards

When a new employee or volunteer starts work in your organisation, you should check the card holder's name and signature on their blue card with other signature or photo identification to satisfy yourself of their identity, then lodge an 'Authorisation to confirm a valid blue card' form. This will allow the Commission to validate the blue card produced and notify you of any change to their blue card status considered relevant to their child-related employment.

Don't forget to notify the Commission when:

an applicant or blue card holder stops working for your organisation, or the contact person for your organisation changes. To do this, an authorised person from your organisation should write to the Commission on official letterhead advising the name and contact details of the new contact person.

How long is the Check Valid?

The check is valid for 2 years unless there is a change in the person's criminal history.

Cost of the Blue Card

The cost is \$60.00 for paid and self-employed people and is free for volunteers and students. Replacement cards are \$10.

MANDATORY REPORTING

Legislation which specifies who is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting.

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FPMTA Policy – Child Protection

The people mandated to report in the State of Queensland are:

Doctors and nurses who become aware of or reasonably suspect a child has, is, or is *likely to suffer harm*.

Officers employed to implement the Act 1999: all staff of residential care services with reasonable suspicion of *abuse* or *neglect* to a child in residential care.

Educational staff (teaching and non-teaching staff in government and non- government schools) who become aware of or reasonably suspect *sexual abuse* of a child under 18 by an employee of the school.

REPORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO:

The Commission for Children and Young People
PO Box 12671
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4003
Telephone: (07) 3247 5525
Fax: (07) 3247 5507
Email: wmaster@ccypcg.qld.gov.au
Website: www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian –
<http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au>
Health Act 1937 s76k
The Criminal Code Act 1899
The Commission for Children & Young People Act 2004

2. NEW SOUTH WALES

PROHIBITED EMPLOYMENT DECLARATION

The *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* mandates the Department of Community Services with the responsibility for the care and protection of children and young people in NSW where there are concerns about their safety, welfare and wellbeing.

Who is a Prohibited Person?

All people working in, or seeking to work in, child-related employment must declare whether they are a prohibited person. This includes volunteers and students on placement. It is an offence for prohibited persons to apply for, undertake or remain in child-related employment.

A prohibited person is a person convicted of committing a serious sex offence, or a 'registrable person'. A 'registrable

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person' is someone who has been found guilty of the following offences:

- murder of a child
- child related personal violence offence
- serious sexual offences
- indecency offences (punishable by imprisonment of 12 months or more)
- kidnapping
- child prostitution
- child pornography (possession, distribution or publication)
- attempt, conspiracy or incitement to commit the above offences

What is Child Related Employment?

Child-related employment is any work (paid or unpaid) of the following kinds that involve direct and unsupervised contact with children in the following areas:

- pre-schools, kindergartens, child care centres (including residential child care centres)
- refuges used by children
- clubs, associations etc (including those of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature) which have a significant child membership
- religious organisations
- entertainment venues where the clientele is primarily children
- taxi services for the transport of children
- private tuition of children
- child health services
- counselling or other support services for children
- overnight camps for children
- babysitter or child minder arranged by a commercial agency
- in schools or other educational institutions (not being universities)
- on school buses
- fostering or other child care
- child protection services

All people in, or commencing, child-related employment must be asked by their employer if they are a prohibited person. Employers should clearly state in all information for child-related positions that Prohibited Persons are not

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eligible to apply. As an employer, the Working With Children Check requires that you:

- don't employ prohibited persons in child-related employment
- do Working With Children background checks
- report relevant employment proceedings
- keep records and protect confidentiality

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Background checks are conducted by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People and other Approved Screening Agencies.

Background checks are only mandatory for:

- preferred applicants for paid child-related employment
- a minister, priest, rabbi, mufti, or other like religious leader or spiritual official of a religion
- anyone seeking to provide foster care ('authorised care' to children)

Three specific checks are made for:

- relevant criminal records;
- relevant Apprehended Violence Orders;
- relevant employment proceedings.

Any relevant records arising out of the background check will be assessed in terms of risk of employing the person in a child-related position. An assessment report is then forwarded on to the employer. The decision whether to employ a person always remains the employers. Employers may conduct other criminal record checks as part of their employment screening process at their own discretion.

Cost of the Check

There is no charge for employers or applicants requesting a background check as part of the Working with Children Check.

MANDATORY REPORTING

A "mandatory reporter" is any person who delivers health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services or law enforcement wholly or partly to children (aged under 16) as part of their paid work and includes any person who directly manages or supervises such work.

If you are a mandatory reporter with current concerns that a child aged under 16 is at risk of harm, you are required to make a report to the Department of Community Services.

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This is a legal obligation, which carries a penalty if you fail to comply.

REPORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO:

Department of Community Services
4 – 6 Cavill Avenue
Ashfield, NSW 2131
Phone Number 9716 2222
24 hours: 132 111
URL: www.community.nsw.gov.au

SOURCES

NSW Commission for Children & Young People <http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/check/>
Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998
Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
Children (Care & Protection) Act 1987
Children (Care & Protection) Regulations 1996
Children & Young Persons (Care & Protection) Act 1998 s27
Ombudsman Act 1974 <http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/kids/check/employerguidelines.cfm>

3. AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

There is no legal requirement that requires people working with children to undergo a police check in the ACT. Criminal history check application forms are covered by the ACT Police Department.

MANDATORY REPORTING

The following people are legally required to report reasonable suspicions of abuse:

- Medical practitioners
- Dentists
- Nurses
- Teachers
- Law enforcement officers
- School counselors
- Child-care providers
- Public servants providing services relating to the health or wellbeing of children, young people or families, the community advocate, or the official visitor

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What should be notified?

A reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has suffered or is suffering *sexual abuse* or non-accidental *physical injury* arising during the course of the person's work.

For notification purposes in the Australian Capital Territory, a *Child* is any person under 12 years old.

A *Young Person* is 12 years or older but not yet an adult.

REPORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO:

Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services
Office for Children, Youth and Family Support
Address: GPO Box 158 Canberra City, ACT 2601
Enquiries: 132281
Fax: (02)62057187
Email: ocyfs@act.gov.au

SOURCES

National Child Protection Clearinghouse: Australian Institute of Family Studies –

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs3/rs3.html>

Mandatory Reporting - "Summary of Grounds & Contacts for Notification of Abuse"

Herbert Greer & Rundle (Lawyers),

Choose with Care (Childwise)

Children and Young People Act 1999 s159

4. VICTORIA

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

In 2006, the Victorian Government introduced a new checking system to help protect children under 18 years of age from physical or sexual harm. The Working with Children (WWC) Check creates a mandatory minimum checking standard across Victoria. The WWC Check helps to keep children safe by preventing those who pose a risk to the safety of children from working with them, in either paid or volunteer work.

If you work or volunteer with children you may need to apply for a WWC Check. Employers, volunteer organisations and agencies must ensure that any of their staff or volunteers who need a WWC Check have applied by the due date. The WWC Check is being phased in over five years. If you need a WWC Check, you must apply by the due date for your field of child-related work.

The Working with Children Check provides information regarding a person's criminal history for serious sexual, violence or drug offences and findings from professional disciplinary bodies. Persons wishing to work in child-related employment are required to apply for a Working with Children Check. Checks will begin to be phased in for different occupations from 2007 and fully implemented in 2012.

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Who Needs a Working With Children Check?

Employees and volunteers who work in child-related work must apply for a Working with Children Check. This work most commonly involves regular, direct contact with a child where that contact is not directly supervised.

Direct contact is defined as any contact with a child that involves any of the following:

- physical contact
- talking face to face
- physically being within eyeshot (this means you can physically see them)

Direct supervision must:

- be undertaken by a person who supervises child-related work;
- be immediate and personal.

For the purposes of the Working with Children's Act, child-related work includes the following occupation fields:

- child care or children's services (e.g. care for 5+ children under the age of 6yrs)
- educational institutions
- community services, youth residential centres or youth training centres.
- refuges and other residential facilities used by children
- paediatric wards of hospitals within the meaning of the Health Services Act 1988, or within private hospitals within the meaning of that Act
- clubs, associations or movements (including of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature) whose membership mainly comprises children
- religious organisations;
- baby-sitting or child-minding services arranged by a commercial agency
- fostering children
- providing a transport service specifically for children
- coaching or private tuition services of any kind for children
- counseling or other support services for children
- overnight camps for children
- school crossing services
- providing commercial entertainment or party services for children (not incidental to other business activities)
- providing commercial gym or play facilities for children (not incidental to other business activities)

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How long is the Check Valid?

The WWC Check is valid for five years and is transferable between different employers or volunteer organisations (except if moving from a volunteer to an employee position).

Cost of the Working for Children Check

The Check is free for volunteers and \$73.90 for employees.

MANDATORY REPORTING

The following people are legally required to report reasonable suspicions of abuse:

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Teachers
- Police
- School principals

REPORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO:

Department of Human Services
Children Youth and Families
Child Protection & Family Services
9/50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000
Phone: 1300 360 391
Phone Number: 131 278 - after hours emergency service
URL: www.cyf.vic.gov.au

SOURCES

Department of Justice
<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/CA25711C001EBB33/HomePage?OpenForm&1=Home~&2=~&3=~>
National Child Protection Clearinghouse <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/index.html>
Children & Young Persons Act 1989 s64
Children Services Act 1996
Children Services Regulations 1998 s27
Working with Children Act 2005

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5. TASMANIA

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

The Commissioner for Children Tasmania released a consultation paper in 2005 discussing proposals to introduce policies and procedures for Tasmanian organisations to screen individuals who seek to work with children in a voluntary or paid capacity. However, at present there are no legal requirements for people working with children to undergo a police check. Criminal history record checks can be obtained through the Tasmanian Police Department.

MANDATORY REPORTING

The following people are legally required to report reasonable suspicions of abuse:

- Medical practitioners, dentists, psychologists and nurses
- Teachers, school principals, kindergarten teachers, and child care workers
- Law enforcement officers and probation officers
- Child welfare officers
- Persons concerned in the management of a child care service
- People employed by, or volunteering in, government agencies or organisations funded by the Crown that provide health, welfare, education, residential services or care wholly or partly for children

REPORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO:

Department of Health and Human Services
Children and Families Division
Level 4, 34 Davey, Street
Hobart Tas, 7000
Phone Number: 1300 737 639
1800 001 219
URL: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au

SOURCES

Department of Health & Human Services – www.thelaw.tas.gov.au
Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997
Mandatory Reporting - "Summary of Grounds & Contacts for Notification of Abuse"
Herbert Greer & Rundle (Lawyers), Choose with Care (Childwise), National Child Protection Clearinghouse
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/index.html> www.childcomm.tas.gov.au

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6. SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

South Australia has not yet put forward specific legislation on the issue of police clearances and checks. A National Police Certificate Application Form is available on the website of the South Australia Police Department.

MANDATORY REPORTING

The following people are legally required to report reasonable suspicions of abuse:

- medical practitioners, dentists, enrolled nurses, social workers and pharmacists
- police and probation officers
- teachers
- voluntary workers providing children's services.

REPORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO:

Department of Human Services

Family & Youth Services

PO Box 39

Rundle Mall PO

Adelaide SA 5000

Phone Number: 131 478

URL: www.cyh.com.au

Child Abuse Report Line (24 hours every day) 131478

<http://www.childabuseprevention.com.au/reportabuse/sa.htm>

SOURCES

Mandatory Reporting - "Summary of Grounds & Contacts for Notification of Abuse"

Herbert Greer & Rundle (Lawyers), Choose with Care (Childwise),

Protection Clearinghouse <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/index.html>

Children's Protection Act 1993 s11

www.parliament.sa.gov.au (2004)

<http://www.jcs.act.gov.au/eLibrary/lrc/r07/Report7c1.html>

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7. WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

A Working with Children Check is a national criminal record check that will be compulsory for people who carry out child-related work in Western Australia.

Working with Children Checks are very different from a National Police Check conducted by the WA Police, which many employers may currently require of their employees or volunteers.

The Working with Children Check considers convictions for all offences, and charges for a limited range of serious offences, to see if an applicant has a criminal history that may place children at risk of harm. However, it is important to understand that a criminal history in itself will not necessarily prevent a person from working with children. When assessing an applicant's criminal history, the circumstances of any convictions or certain charges and their relevance to working with children will be considered.

The Working with Children Check commenced in 2006 and phasing-in of the Checks will occur until 2011 when the system will be fully operational. For details about the introduction dates for specific types of child related work please refer to the Working with Children website.

Any person undertaking child-related work in WA must have a Working with Children Check by the date required under the phasing-in arrangements.

Who Needs a Working with Children Check?

People employed in child-related employment including: paid employees; volunteers; unpaid people such as students doing practical training and people who carry on a child-related business e.g. self employed.

"Child-related work", is defined under Section 6 of the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*. Below is a summary of the key areas affected:

"Work is child-related work if the usual duties of the work involve, or are likely to involve, contact with a child in connection with:

- kindergartens and child care services
- an educational institution for children
- a coaching or private tuition, but not informal private arrangements
- accommodation or care of children but not including an informal arrangement made by a parent of the child concerned or accommodation or care provided by a relative of the child
- A placement arrangement under the Children and Community Services Act 2004
- The performance by an officer, as defined in the Children and Community Services Act 2004, section 3, of a function given to the officer under that Act
- a detention centre, as defined in the Young Offenders Act 1994 section 3
- a community child health service

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- a counseling or other support service
- a religious organisation
- a club, association or movement with a significant membership or involvement of children
- a ward of a hospital in which children are ordinarily patients
- an overnight camp, regardless of the type of accommodation or how many children are involved
- a transport service specifically for children
- a school crossing service
- a children's entertainment or party service
- any other work of a kind prescribed by the regulations

Who Is Exempt?

- volunteers under 18 years of age
- volunteer parents whose child participates in the activity (except for overnight camps)
- employers of children and people who work alongside children as fellow employees, unless otherwise doing child-related work
- short term visitors to WA, for 2 weeks after their arrival, and for no more than 2 weeks in a 12 month period are exempt from the Checks

What Are The Application Outcomes?

Applicants may be issued with either:

- An Assessment Notice in the form of a Working with Children Card that will include a photograph, signature and Assessment Number. The Card is valid for 3 years, subject to changes in a person's criminal history. During this time the person issued with the Notice may present their card to any employer as proof of a Working with Children Check.
- A Negative Notice or an Interim Negative Notice which prohibits a person from "child related work". Strict penalties apply to people who do not comply - a fine of up to \$60,000 and up to 5 years imprisonment.

How long is the Check Valid?

The card will be valid for three years and is transferable across different types of child-related work, whether volunteer or paid work.

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Cost of the check

The cost of a Working with Children Check is heavily subsidised for all applicants and is: \$50 for paid workers and self-employed people; \$10 for volunteers and other unpaid people, such as students on placement as part of their studies. These fees may be paid either by the workplace or the employee or volunteer.

MANDATORY REPORTING

There is no current legislation requiring the mandatory reporting of child abuse in Western Australia.

REPORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO:

Department for Child Protection
189 Royal Street
East Perth 6004
Phone Number 9222 2555
Freecall STD: 1800 622 258
Crisis Care Unit: 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008 (24 hours)
URL: www.community.wa.gov.au

SOURCES

Dept of Community Development <http://www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au/default.htm>
The Criminal Code Act 1899
The Commission for Children & Young People Act 2004
Protection Clearinghouse <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/index.html>

8. NORTHERN TERRITORY

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

The Northern Territory Government has released draft legislation for the creation of a screening scheme that stipulates minimum standards for broadly identified child-related occupations and activities. The Police Department provides information on criminal history checks.

At present there are no legal requirements for people working with children to undergo a police check, although individual organisations may have their own policy in this regard.

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MANDATORY REPORTING

The people mandated to report in the Northern Territory are Police; all other people who believe on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered or is suffering maltreatment (physical, sexual abuse or emotional abuse).

REPORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO:

Department of Health and Community Services
PO Box 40596
Casuarina NT 0811
Phone Number: 1800 700 250
URL: www.families.nt.gov.au

SOURCES

Mandatory Reporting - "Summary of Grounds & Contacts for Notification of Abuse"
Herbert Greer & Rundle (Lawyers),
Choose with Care (Childwise),
Community Welfare Act 1983
National Child Protection Clearinghouse <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/index.html>

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APPENDIX 4 - Application to work with children and interview questions

WORKING WITH CHILDREN APPLICATION FORM

Position Applied For: _____

Personal Details

Full Name: _____

Residential Address: _____

Home Ph.: _____ Mob Ph.: _____ Work Ph.: _____

Email Address: _____

Please list all *Places of Worship* that you have attended regularly in the last 3 years

Date (Approx.)	Place of Worship

Please list any *qualifications* you have that relate to working with Children

Date	Qualification	Institution

Please provide any *experience* you have had that relates to working with Children

Date	Organisation	Position

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References

Please provide details of two people we can contact, who can comment on your suitability for this position:

First Referee

Full Name: _____

Residential Address: _____

Home Ph.: _____ Mob Ph.: _____ Work Ph.: _____

Email Address: _____

Position & Organisation: _____

Second Referee

Full Name: _____

Residential Address: _____

Home Ph.: _____ Mob Ph.: _____ Work Ph.: _____

Email Address: _____

Position & Organisation: _____

Declarations

Have you:

- ⇒ Read and understood (*Church's Name) Child/Member Protection Policy & Code of Conduct? Yes / No
- ⇒ Ever been in serious breach of (*Church's Name) Child/Member Protection Policy & Code of Conduct? Yes / No
- ⇒ Had someone express concerns about your behaviour towards a child? Yes / No
- ⇒ Ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of an investigation relating to the abuse of a child or inappropriate sexual behaviour. Yes / No

I confirm that the information provided on this application form is true and correct.

I consent to a National Police Record check and the release to (*Church's Name) of any matters deemed to be relevant which are recorded against my name.

Applicants Signature

Date:

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WORKING WITH CHILDREN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The questions asked in this interview may make you feel uncomfortable but they are a necessary part of our child safety policy and must be answered. The answers you provide will be kept confidential where possible but may be divulged to other Leaders within the Church.

1. Why have you applied for this position and why do you feel you are suitable for the role?

2. Please describe any positive experiences you have had with children or young people

3. Please describe any negative experiences you have had with children or young people

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4. Have you ever been in a situation where you have disciplined a child or young person? If so, how did you handle this situation?

5. Have you ever been investigated for violent or sexually related offences? If so, what were the circumstances?

6. Is there any other information relating to your suitability for this position that we should be aware of?

END OF POLICY

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FPMTA POLICY - WORKING WITH CHILDREN

1. POLICY

Children have a right to be safe in all their associations with FPMT centres, projects and services. Directors and managers of all FPMT centres, projects and services will ensure that all employees and volunteers having contact with children have undergone the appropriate Working with Children Checks applicable in their state. The Check is a screening mechanism to reduce the likelihood that unsuitable people work with children and to assist in protecting children from sexual and physical harm.

2. LEGISLATION

The relevant legislation is as follows:

VIC - Working With Children Act 2005 (VIC)

In **Victoria** the **Working with Children Check** is administered by the Department of Justice. Application forms are available at Australia Post outlets or www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren

QLD - Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guidance Act 2000 (QLD)

In **Queensland** the **Working with Children Suitability Card**, or **Blue Card**, is administered by the Commission for Children and Young people and Child Guardian. Application forms can be downloaded from www.childcomm.qld.gov.au

NSW - Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 (NSW)

In **New South Wales** the Commission for Children and Young People oversees the check www.check.kids.nsw.gov.au

WA - Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)

In **Western Australia** applications forms for a **Working with Children Card** are available at Australia Post outlets. www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au

SA - Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)

In **South Australia** police check application forms can be obtained from www.sapolice.sa.gov.au/sapol/home.jsp

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NB There are NO Commonwealth Acts in TAS or the ACT and FPMT centres, projects and services should take advice from the police in those regions.

3. DEFINITIONS

Child: a person under eighteen years of age.

Contact: any form of physical contact; any form of oral contact whether face to face, by telephone or otherwise; any form of electronic communication.

4. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Sangha, teachers, employees and volunteers undertaking regular work that involves direct contact with children, where that contact is not directly supervised.

5. CHECK PROCEDURE

The WWC Check verifies a person's history to make sure they do not have any relevant criminal offences or findings from professional disciplinary bodies. It is more extensive than a regular Police Check and valid for a designated period during which the card-holder continues to be checked for new relevant offences or findings.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Responsibilities of Management

All FPMT centres, projects and services must:

- Identify positions which require a Working with Children Check
- Include notification of this requirement in the position description, advertisement and associated documentation
- Ensure existing staff members and volunteers are informed of the requirement to undergo the Check
- Ensure prospective staff members and volunteers have passed a WWC Check before commencement
- Check the card's validity on the Department of Justice webpage
- Place a photocopy of the candidate's WWC card and a completed WWC Check form in the person's personnel file

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FPMTA Policy – Working with Children

- Ensure suitable monitoring procedures are in place to ensure all relevant staff and volunteers hold valid WWC Check cards at all times

6.2 Responsibilities of applicants, staff members and volunteers

They must:

- Provide a successful Assessment Notice or WWC Check card prior to commencement
- Notify the Manager of the FPMT centre, project or service in writing within seven days if an Interim Negative Notice or a Negative Notice is received
- Inform the Manager of the FPMT centre, project or service if there has been a change in circumstances, such as if they have been charged or convicted of a new relevant offence
- Apply for a new WWC Check within three months of their card expiring

7. MONITORING EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The Centre Director, Centre Manager or nominee monitors the implementation of the Working with Children Check Policy. This includes review with appropriate stakeholders and reporting on compliance as required.

NB This policy is an adjunct to the Working with Children Check included in the FPMTA Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

END OF POLICY

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We wish to refer to letter from the Family and Community Development Committee of Victorian Government with regard to religious organizations' response to the criminal abuse of children within their organizations and give below our views pertaining to Sri Lankan Theravada temples.

1 We consider the Victorian Governments 'efforts in this direction as timely and appropriate as children according to the Buddhist teaching are precious and have to be nurtured carefully for them to reach the fullness of their lives without any mental or physical hindrance.

2 In Australia, within the Sri Lankan Therawada temples at present, there are no children ordained as members of the Sangha.

3 Since in our temples there are schools for teaching of Dhamma (the Buddhist doctrine) and also teaching of Sinhala language, we have to give consideration to the protection of the children who are accommodated in the temple premises during the time of their study.

4 At present, we follow the Victorian Government procedures such as obtaining the permission for working with children for the adult staff members.

5. Apart from the Govt legal provisions we also inculcate in the children as well at the staff members the importance of preventing harm according to Dhamma. We give below part of a relevant conversation between the Buddha and Rahul thera which provides the Buddhist way to prevent harmful acts.

"What do you think, Rahula: What is a mirror for?"

"For reflection, sir."

"In the same way, Rahula, bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions are to be done with repeated reflection.

"Whenever you want to do a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily actions I want to do — would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Would it be an unskilful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskilful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... it would be a skilful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then any bodily action of that sort is fit for you to do.

"While you are doing a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I am doing — is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskilful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

"Having done a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I have done — did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Was it an unskilful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskilful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skilful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skilful mental qualities.

6. In the Vinaya pitaka (the code of conduct) there are number of stipulations for the members of Sangha to follow and the members of the Sangah are expected to meet periodically and discuss all acts of misconduct committed which enable them to purify and lead a restrained life.

7. However, with the complex challenges in the modern society it is opportune for the Buddhists to be aware of, educate themselves and be familiar with the laws and regulations pertaining to this subject so that they can implement systems within the temples to prevent child abuse and also to handle such incident lawfully.