

Dear Senior Pastor & Church Board,

As you are aware, as part of our national ACC Safer Churches Policy, all ACC churches have a process to follow to report concerns involving children and young people

Alongside ACC organisational reporting, NSW ACC churches must comply with NSW legislation as follows:

1. As part of our legal reporting obligations in NSW, ACC churches are reporting bodies to the Office of the Children's Guardian and are required to report all outcomes (findings) of church disciplinary processes in relation to sexual misconduct and serious physical assault involving children by a child-related worker.

http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/183/Reporting_certain_misconduct_involving_children_April2014.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y

2. Additionally, some ACC churches also fit the NSW Ombudsman definition of providing "Substitute Residential Care" The Ombudsman defines "Substitute Residential Care" as an event that is *"3 nights or more, in fixed accommodation, where children or young people are supervised by adults (not their regular caregivers), and food and support is provided."* This would include church camps or an ongoing commitment to missions trips or internship events if they involve children or young people.

If your church has an event that fits this definition it is important to understand you are **also** required to report to the Ombudsman all alleged sexual offences and sexual misconduct, physical assault, ill treatment, neglect, and behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child, in relation to a child related worker.

While reports to the Office of the Children's Guardian are those of 'findings', reports to the Ombudsman occur at the **early stage** of allegation so the Ombudsman can both assist and ensure that due process of investigations are followed.

Reports to the Ombudsman must be made within 30 days of an allegation and **extend to this type of allegations, in all church ministries, not just the event that falls under the definition of "substitute residential care"**. <https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/news-and-publications/publications/fact-sheets/child-protection>

It is important that all ACC people follow reporting processes associated with our National Child Protection Policy, including being aware of their obligations to follow the above legislated

requirements.

Remember you can also call the free-call National Safer Churches Helpline for more information on 1800 070 511.

Warmest regards,

Allyson Parker
Safer Churches officer ACC NSW
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