



**ANCHOR RE**

# Child Protection Policy

Policy number	006	Version	2.0
Approved by board	01-11-2021	Scheduled review date	01/11/2022

## INTRODUCTION

Anchor RE is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children, young adults, vulnerable people and people at risk. We have zero tolerance for any form of physical and /or sexual abuse.

Everyone working at Anchor RE is responsible for the care and protection of children, young adults, vulnerable people and people at risk, and reporting information about any form of physical and /or sexual abuse.

## POLICY STATEMENT

1. All people, regardless of their age, gender, race, religious beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
2. Anchor RE commits to promoting and protecting the welfare and human rights of people that interact with, or are affected by, our work - particularly those that may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
3. Anchor RE has no tolerance for abuse, neglect or exploitation.
4. All staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties of Anchor RE share responsibility for protecting everyone from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
5. Anchor RE has a process for managing incidents that must be followed when one arises.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To protect people who interact with, or are affected by Anchor RE.
2. To facilitate the prevention of physical and /or sexual abuse occurring within Anchor RE.
3. To support a positive and effective culture towards Safeguarding.
4. To set out and develop the way Anchor RE manages Safeguarding risks.
5. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for physical and /or sexual abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.



6. To provide guidance to staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation and provide assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

## SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

1. All staff of Anchor RE, volunteers, board members and any other person associated or working under contract with Anchor RE; and
2. All Anchor RE visitors, partners and contractors.

Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures may result in disciplinary action.

## SAFEGUARDING DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
<b>Abuse</b>	<p>All forms of physical and mental abuse, exploitation, coercion or ill-treatment. This might include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical abuse;</li> <li>• emotional abuse;</li> <li>• threats of, or actual violence, verbal, emotional or social abuse;</li> <li>• sexual harassment, bullying or abuse;</li> <li>• sexual criminal offences;</li> <li>• cultural or identity abuse, such as racial, sexual or gender-based discrimination or hate crime;</li> <li>• coercion and exploitation;</li> <li>• abuse of power; and</li> <li>• neglect</li> </ul>
<b>Child or young person</b>	A person under the age of 18 years.
<b>Child Safe Organisation</b>	<p>An organisation that consciously and systematically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children.</li> <li>• creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm.</li> <li>• responds appropriately to disclosures, allegations and suspicions of harm.</li> </ul>



<b>Person at Risk</b>	Person aged 18 years and over who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) has care and support needs;</li> <li>b) is being abused or neglected, or are at risk of abuse or neglect; and</li> <li>c) is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect because of their care and support needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Reasonable grounds for belief</b>	<p>A <i>situation</i> where a person has information that leads them to believe that abuse, neglect or exploitation has taken place, is taking place, or may take place.</p> <p>A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the person is in need of protection;</li> <li>• the person has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury; or</li> <li>• the parents or guardians are unable or unwilling to protect the person.</li> </ul>
<b>Reportable Conduct</b>	<p><i>a sexual offence</i>, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sexual touching of a person without consent;</li> <li>• a child grooming offence; or</li> <li>• production, dissemination or possession of child abuse material.</li> </ul> <p><i>Sexual misconduct</i>, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• descriptions of sexual acts without a legitimate reason to provide the descriptions;</li> <li>• sexual comments, conversations or communications; or</li> <li>• comments to a child, young person or vulnerable person that express a desire to act in a sexual manner towards that person or another person.</li> </ul> <p><i>Ill-treatment of a child, young person or vulnerable person</i>, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making excessive or degrading demands of a child, young person or vulnerable person;</li> <li>• a pattern of hostile or degrading comments or behaviour towards a child, young person or vulnerable person; or</li> <li>• using inappropriate forms of behaviour management towards a child, young person or vulnerable person.</li> </ul>



	<p><i>An assault against a child, young person or vulnerable person, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hitting, striking, kicking, punching or dragging a child, young person or vulnerable person; or</li> <li>• threatening to physically harm a child, young person or vulnerable person.</li> </ul> <p><i>Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child, young person or vulnerable person such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• displaying behaviour patterns that are out of character;</li> <li>• regressive behaviour; or</li> <li>• anxiety or self-harm.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding</b>	Protecting the welfare and human rights of people that are, in some way, connected with Anchor RE and its work – particularly people that may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
<b>Vulnerable person</b>	A child or a vulnerable adult aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.
<b>Whistle-blower</b>	Anyone who makes or attempts to make a report of Reportable Conduct under this Policy, and is, or has previously been, an employee, volunteer, contractor, third party, child, young person or vulnerable person in the care of Anchor RE or is a relative or dependent of such persons.
<b>Approved Provider</b>	<p>A religious persuasion that the NSW Minister for Education has approved to teach its specific beliefs and practices in NSW public schools, with responsibility to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recruit, train and authorise teachers of SRE;</li> <li>• ensure that all personnel over the age of 18 years have had a WWCC clearance;</li> <li>• ensure that all SRE teachers are provided with a name badge including the approved provider name that must always be worn on a school site;</li> <li>• have in place a system of authorised initial training, and regular ongoing training and support;</li> <li>• include training in child protection, classroom management, and how to implement the approved provider’s authorised curriculum sensitively and in an age-appropriate manner;</li> <li>• publish this information on the approved provider’s website.</li> </ul>



<b>Authorised Teacher</b>	<p>A person who has been appointed by an Approved Provider to teach their authorised curriculum in NSW schools, having been WWCC cleared, trained in child protection and classroom management, and provided with a name badge including the approved provider name that must always be worn on a school site.</p>
<b>Board</b>	<p>A board may assist Approved Providers and their authorised teachers but has no authority to enter schools, train and accredit teachers or develop curriculum. Examples of board activities may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• raising funds to employ authorised teachers to deliver the curriculum of their Authorised Provider in schools;</li> <li>• assisting employed teachers and volunteer teachers to meet their ongoing requirements for teacher training, child protection awareness, and accreditation through their Authorised Provider;</li> <li>• acting as the coordinator of a Combined SRE arrangement made between two or more Approved Provider religious persuasions.</li> </ul>

## SAFEGUARDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
<b>Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting all people that interact with, or are affected by Anchor RE.</li> <li>• Responsible for the detection and prevention of abuse to children, young people or vulnerable persons.</li> <li>• Responsible for ensuring appropriate Safeguarding governance, policies and procedures are in place.</li> <li>• Responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place.</li> <li>• Ensuring that Anchor RE observes all relevant laws and regulations relating to Safeguarding.</li> </ul>
<b>Chairperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with and investigating reports of abuse.</li> <li>• Ensuring that all staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• Ensuring that all Anchor RE staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of their obligation to report suspected abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable person in accordance with these policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Ensure Anchor RE has effective and appropriate ways to manage Safeguarding and legal compliance.</li> <li>• Ensure that reports to external parties are made where required.</li> </ul>

<b>Office Holders and Admin Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote a culture of safety for children, young persons and vulnerable people.</li> <li>• Implement this policy in their area of responsibility.</li> <li>• Assess the risk of abuse to children, young persons and vulnerable people within their area and ensure controls are in place to prevent, detect and respond to incidents.</li> <li>• Facilitate the reporting of any suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation.</li> <li>• Ensure that there is appropriate Safeguarding training in place for staff in their area of responsibility.</li> </ul>
<b>SRE Teachers - employees, volunteers and contractors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an environment that is supportive of all children, young persons and vulnerable people’s emotional and physical safety.</li> <li>• Familiarise themselves and adhere to Anchor RE’s policy, procedures, Code of Conduct and relevant laws in relation to Safeguarding protection.</li> <li>• Report any reasonable belief or incident that a child, young person or vulnerable person’s safety or welfare is at risk to the school principal, Anchor RE chairperson, or authorities (such as the police and/or the child protection service).</li> <li>• Fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters.</li> </ul>

## EMPLOYMENT OF NEW EMPLOYEES

### SAFE RECRUITMENT & SELECTION:

Anchor RE is committed to safe employment and recruitment practices that reduce the risk of harm to children, young adults and vulnerable people from people unsuitable to work with them or have contact with them.

Anchor RE requires all employees, volunteers and contractors to go through the organisation’s recruitment screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with Anchor RE.

Anchor RE will require applicants to provide the following before commencing with the organisation and at regular intervals during employment:

- A police check;
- Working with Children Check (WWCC), renewed every 5 years;
- Proof of current Safe Ministry training (ie Safeguarding children and vulnerable persons), renewed every 3 years;
- Proof of SRE Teacher Accreditation, renewed every 3 years.

Anchor RE will undertake thorough reference checking prior to commencement including at least two (2) previous managers, one of whom will be the applicant’s current church minister, to determine the applicant’s Safeguarding experience.



## **TRAINING AND AWARENESS:**

Anchor RE will ensure an appropriate level of Safeguarding training is available to its employees, volunteers, contractors and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it.

All staff, volunteer's contractors and third parties must undertake mandatory Safeguarding training as part of their induction.

For all employees who are working or volunteering with children, young persons or vulnerable persons, this requires as a minimum to have awareness that enables them to:

- Understand what Safeguarding is and their role in Safeguarding children, young person or vulnerable persons.
- Recognise a child, young person or vulnerable person potentially in need of Safeguarding and take action.
- The process of when and how to report:
  - an incident.
  - potential incident. or
  - if a child, young person or vulnerable person safety or welfare is at risk.

The NSW Department of Education requires that all SRE teachers maintain current SRE authorisation from an Approved Provider in order to enter school grounds. This includes annual professional development and child safety awareness courses at least every three years. Anchor RE supports our SRE teachers in meeting these requirement by reminding them to renew their training and accreditation through their Approved Provider prior to the expiry date.

If a teacher's accreditation is revoked or the teacher fails to renew it prior to the expiry date, the teacher is no longer authorised by the Department of Education or by their Approved Provider to enter any school grounds. In this situation the employee or volunteer teacher cannot continue to teach and must notify the Anchor RE chairperson immediately that they are prohibited from entering school grounds. Anchor RE will then make arrangements to provide a replacement authorised teacher.

## **MANAGING SAFEGUARDING RISK**

Anchor RE will ensure that safety of children, young people and vulnerable persons is a part of its overall risk management approach.

The Anchor RE board is committed to identifying and managing risks at Anchor RE. Risk and compliance committee members will receive regular training in relation to Safeguarding.

Anchor RE will manage the risk of Safeguarding by:

- Implementing policies, procedures and systems that introduce controls to reduce the likelihood and consequence of incidents;
- Maintaining two reporting processes: the confidential reporting process, and the overt reporting process;
- Having an incident response plan;



- Undertaking audits of staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties to ensure adherence to Anchor RE's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct; and
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of its Safeguarding program.

## **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

### ***Managing Safeguarding Incidents***

All staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties who have grounds to suspect abusive activity must report:

- Any suspicion that an incident has taken place.
- May be taking place.
- Could take place.

They may do this through:

- a. The School Principal.
- b. The Chairperson.

If a person believes that another person is at risk of immediate harm or the victim of a criminal offence, they must call the relevant authorities including police.

### ***Responding to Suspected Incidents***

All suspected, perceived, potential or actual incidents must also be reported and recorded in the organisations incident management system and will be managed through an incident response plan.

## **EXTERNAL REPORTING**

Any staff, volunteer's contractors or third parties who have grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the Anchor RE Chairperson and where necessary appropriate authorities including the School Principal and the police.

## **INVESTIGATING**

All incidents or suspected incidents will be investigated following the Anchor RE Incident Management procedure.

Incidents occurring within school grounds that meet the threshold for Department of Education involvement must be managed by the Department of Education as per its policies. Anchor RE has no authority to enter schools or conduct investigations within schools.

If appropriate authorities or the police decide to investigate a reported incident, all employees, volunteers and contractors must co-operate fully.

If it is decided that it will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, and the incident does not meet the threshold for mandatory handover to the Department of Education, the Chairperson will conduct an internal investigation. All staff, volunteers and contractors must co-operate fully.





Anchor RE will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

While an investigation is conducted Anchor RE reserves the right to:

- Report the matter to relevant authorities including the police.
- Stand the staff, volunteer or contractor down (with pay, where applicable).

At the conclusion of any investigation and where a breach of Anchor RE's policies or Code of Conduct has been identified Anchor RE reserves the right to:

- Take disciplinary action against those it believes are responsible, which may include dismissal.
- Dismiss employees or volunteers, or in other ways terminate their involvement with Anchor RE.
- Take legal action.

## **PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SHARING**

Anchor RE expects all employees, volunteers and contractors to maintain confidentiality. All personal information identified or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Anchor RE has policies and procedures to ensure any personal information is protected.

However, information will be shared with relevant authorities (including Police) if a child, young person or vulnerable person is deemed to be at risk of harm, in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.

## **WHISTLE-BLOWER PROTECTION**

It is important that people within Anchor RE have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they have any concerns or incidents of behaviour that contradicts any behaviour outlined in the Code of Conduct.

The Anchor RE Whistleblower Policy describes the protections available to whistle-blowers, what matters are reportable, how employees, volunteers and contractors can report concerns without fear of harm, and how Anchor RE will support and protect them.

## **RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTS**

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- The relevant laws of the Commonwealth or state or territory.
- The Safeguarding Code of Conduct.
- The Whistleblower Policy.
- The Privacy Policy



- The Organisations Employment Practices policy, Including induction and training procedures.
- Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures.
- Risk Management Policy.

## RESOURCES

### New South Wales Government

Department of Education – Special Religious Education (SRE) and Ethics  
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-across-the-curriculum/religion-and-ethics>

Department of Education – SRE Procedures  
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/associated-documents/REimplementproced.pdf>

OCG | Office of the Children's Guardian  
<https://www.ocg.nsw.gov.au/>

ACYP | Advocate for Children and Young People  
<https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme  
<https://www.ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/reportable-conduct-scheme>

### SRE Approved Provider

<https://youthworks.net/new-sre-teachers>

### Child Safe Organisations

<https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/tools-resources/links-resources>

<https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/tools-resources/practical-tools>

### Australian Charities and Not-For Profits Commission

<https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/governance-hub/governance-toolkit/governance-toolkit-safeguarding>

### Our Community

<https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/search/?q=child+protection>