

3. RESOURCES SECTION

FACT SHEETS

1. What is child abuse and neglect?
2. Reporting child abuse and/or neglect – legal obligations
3. Procedures for notifying suspected child abuse and/or neglect
4. Code of conduct



South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Policy for the
**Care, Wellbeing and Protection
of Children and Young People**

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

The *Children's Protection Act 1993, (SA)* defines the extent of abuse or neglect in which the State has the authority to intervene on behalf of the child or young person.

6 (1) 'Abuse or neglect', in relation to a child, means:

- (a) Sexual abuse of the child or
- (b) Physical or emotional abuse of the child, or neglect of the child, to the extent that either:
 - the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological injury detrimental to the child's wellbeing; OR
 - the child's physical or psychological development is in jeopardy.

The following definitions of abuse are taken from *Child Safe Environments – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect – Guidelines for Mandated Notifiers* (Department for Families and Communities, October 2009).

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

This tends to be a chronic behavioural pattern directed at a child so that a child's self esteem and social competence is undermined or eroded over time. It can include:

- devaluing;
- ignoring;
- rejecting;
- corrupting;
- isolating;
- terrorising;
- chronic or extreme spousal abuse in the child's presence.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Commonly characterised by physical injury resulting from:

- biting;
- pulling out hair;
- burns (eg. irons, cigarettes);
- hitting, punching, kicking (eg. marks from belt buckles, fingers);
- shaking (particularly young babies);
- the administration of alcohol or other drugs.

SEXUAL ABUSE

This occurs when someone in a position of power to the child uses that power to involve the child in sexual activity. It can include:

- using sexual suggestion;
- engaging in exhibitionism, mutual masturbation, oral sex;
- showing pornographic material, eg. DVDs, internet;
- using children in the production of pornographic material;
- using penile or other penetration of the genital or anal region;
- engaging in child prostitution.

NEGLECT

This is characterised by the failure to provide for the child's basic needs. It may include:

- inadequate supervision of young children for long periods of time;
- failure to provide adequate nutrition, clothing or personal hygiene;
- failure to provide needed or appropriate health care/medical treatment;
- disregard for potential hazards in the home;
- forcing the child to leave home early;
- allowing children to engage in chronic truancy.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED OR NEGLECTED?

You may form a suspicion that child abuse or neglect is taking place, and you form that suspicion because:

- a child/young person tells you he or she has been abused;
- your own observation of a particular child/young person's behaviour and/or injuries, or your knowledge of children/young people generally leads you to suspect that abuse is occurring;
- a child/young person tells you he or she knows someone who has been abused (a child/young person could possibly be referring to himself or herself); or
- someone else (perhaps a relative, friend, neighbour or sibling of the child/young person) who is in a position to provide reliable information, tells you.

If you are concerned about the care and wellbeing of a child or young person, you should contact the:

CHILD ABUSE REPORT LINE (CARL) ON 13 14 78

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

from Families SA website (Protecting children link):

<http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/>

Certain groups of people are required by law to report to Families SA if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child is being abused and/or neglected and this suspicion is formed in the course of their work. This is a legal obligation which carries a penalty for failing to comply. These people are known as mandated notifiers.

In South Australia under amendments to the *Children's Protection Act 1993, (SA)*, proclaimed in 2006, the following persons are mandated notifiers: medical practitioners; nurses; dentists; pharmacists; psychologists; police; probation officers; social workers; ministers of religion; employees and volunteers of religious/spiritual organisations; teachers; family day care providers; and employees of, or volunteers in, government departments, agencies or local government or non-government agencies that provide health, welfare, education, childcare, sporting and recreational or residential services wholly or partly for children.

The Act does not require a priest to divulge information communicated in the course of a confession made in accordance with the rules and usages of the relevant religion.

Information about notifying abuse and/or neglect is provided to participants who attend child-safe Environments – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect (Mandatory Reporting) Training sessions, and information sessions for volunteers.

If you are unsure about reporting, consult with a social worker by calling: **CHILD ABUSE REPORT LINE ON 13 14 78**

Mandated notifiers must make a report to Families SA if they have current concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child.

All reasonable suspicions of abuse or neglect should be reported without delay. Mandatory reporters need to be aware that:

- It is your personal responsibility to report suspected child abuse and neglect – it is not the responsibility of your supervisor, principal or employer;
- You do not have to prove that abuse has occurred;
- You must accompany your notification with a statement of the observations, information and opinions on which the suspicions are based;
- You are immune from civil liability for reporting your suspicions in good faith.

It is the role of Families SA to assess the notification and determine whether action is warranted. It is important to remember that child protection is everyone's responsibility, and that even if you have made a report, you may still have a role in supporting the child or young person.

PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFYING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

The following diagram outlines the procedures that Church personnel and any Church community member must follow if they suspect that a child or young person has been, or is being abused and/or neglected.

Disclosure of abuse by a child or young person or Church personnel may form a suspicion of abuse and/or neglect based on reasonable grounds.



Personnel report the suspected abuse or neglect as soon as possible to
CHILD ABUSE REPORT LINE 13 14 78 (24 HOURS)

Personnel can discuss their suspicions confidentially with their supervisor/manager or community leader who may assist in making report if needed.
Personnel are not required to have permission from their supervisor/manager or community leader to make a report.



Families SA may respond by:

- Assessing the information provided and determining how to respond to the matters.
- Providing support to the family through parenting programs or other assistance.

CODES OF CONDUCT

Catholic Church agencies and communities are bound by the principles and behavioural standards set out in *Integrity in Ministry* and *Integrity in the Service of the Church* published by the National Committee for Professional Standards.

These documents are codes of conduct, and as such, provide advice to members regarding the establishment of caring and respectful relationships that protect everyone from misunderstanding or violation of pastoral/professional relationships.

Integrity in Ministry and *Integrity in Service of the Church* provide the standards of pastoral and professional practice for persons involved in the service of the Catholic Church in Australia. They also form the basis for Church communities to make a statement of commitment reflecting the specific context of their ministry, if they choose to do so.

The Department for Families and Communities requires organisations that provide services to children to maintain codes of conduct. A code of conduct sets clear benchmarks of acceptable standards of care and conduct and promotes safe, positive and encouraging environments for children and young people.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Principles from: the South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council *Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People*. (December 2009)

The Catholic Church in South Australia recognises the dignity of all children and young people before God and the significant role that the Catholic Church community plays in promoting environments that nurture and protect the wellbeing of children, young people and their families.

We support the rights of children and young people and will act to make sure a safe and caring environment is maintained at all times. We also support the rights and wellbeing of employees and volunteers. We encourage the active participation of employees and volunteers in creating and maintaining a respectful and secure environment for all members of the Catholic Church community.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TO:

- Respect the children and young people who have been given into your care by God, and care for them in every way you can
- Fulfil to the best of your ability specific roles and tasks given to you, and maintain clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour with children and young people
- Build appropriate relationships with children, young people and their families in a transparent manner so you are a positive role model and representative of the Catholic Church in South Australia
- Treat everyone with respect and conduct yourself at all times in a way that is a positive example to the children and young people with whom you interact so that your attitude and language sustains dignity and self worth
- Protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people with whom you come into contact through your role
- Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78)
- Raise any concerns, issues and problems about child protection with your supervisor or the Child Protection Office as soon as possible
- Refrain from any form of verbal, emotional, sexual, or physical abuse
- Refrain from making sexually suggestive comments to children/young people or in their presence, even as a joke.

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may mean that you will be asked to withdraw from working with children and young people.

I accept the above Code of Conduct and agree to follow respectful practices with children and young people as outlined in the *Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People*, and the Implementation Procedures.

Signed:

Name in full:

Role:

Date: / /20

Signature of witness:

Name of witness:

4. GLOSSARY



South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Policy for the
**Care, Wellbeing and Protection
of Children and Young People**

Child or young person

Includes a person from conception to 18 years of age. It includes young adults with disabilities.

Child-safe contact person

An individual nominated by each Church community with responsibility for maintaining current knowledge of child protection initiatives, promoting these within the Church community, and fulfilling a liaison role between the Church community and the Diocese.

Child-safe environment

The focus of a child-safe environment is about building and maintaining an environment where children and young people feel respected and valued, and encouraged to reach their full potential. It is much broader than creating a zone free from risk or danger.

Child-safe working party

A group established in each Catholic Church community and which is responsible for implementing child-safe environments as outlined in the *Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People*, and *Implementation Procedures*. This may become an additional function of an existing group in the Church community.

Church body

Includes a diocese, religious institute and any other juridical person, body corporate, organisation or association, including autonomous lay organisations that exercise pastoral ministry within, or on behalf of, the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Adelaide or the Diocese of Port Pirie.

Church community/communities

A Church community refers to individual parishes, schools and agencies which comprise the membership of the Catholic Church in South Australia.

Church personnel

Church personnel includes any cleric, member of religious institute or other persons employed or engaged by a Church body, or appointed by a Church body to voluntary positions, in which they work with or are in close proximity to children or young people, or are engaged in other forms of pastoral care.

Duty of care

Duty of care is a legal obligation imposed on an individual which requires that she or he follow a standard of reasonable care in anticipating and avoiding foreseeable harm or minimising harm when it occurs for those who are in the care of the Church.

Family

Includes units consisting of parents, care-givers, young people and children. Parents may be biological, adoptive or foster. The units may consist of blended and extended families, single parent families, families with children or young people in respite or foster care or relatives with the care of children or young people.

Mandatory notifier

A mandated notifier is obliged by law to notify Families SA of suspected abuse or neglect when the suspicion 'is formed in the course of the person's work (whether paid or voluntary) or in carrying out official duties.' (Section 11(1) & (2) *Children's Protection Act, 1993* (SA).)

Under the amendments to the Act in 2006 people defined as notifiers include a minister of religion and a person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, an organisation formed for religious or spiritual purposes.

Mandatory report

A mandatory report refers to the legal requirement to report reasonable suspicions of neglect and/or abuse of children or young people.

Police check/Criminal history assessment

A police check is also known as a criminal history record check. It involves identifying and releasing any criminal history information subject to relevant spent convictions/non-disclosure legislation and/or information release policies. A police check enables an organisation to determine the selection of suitable employees and volunteers.

Volunteer

An individual within the Archdiocese of Adelaide or the Diocese of Port Pirie who has been assigned or given a role or responsibility of any kind within a parish, school or other Catholic agency, while not being paid for the service they provide.

5. REFERENCES AND KEY DOCUMENTS

6. USEFUL LINKS



South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Policy for the
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REFERENCES AND KEY DOCUMENTS

These Implementation Procedures are to be read with reference to other key documents which may be sourced from:

INFORMATION SOURCE	WEBSITE	KEY DOCUMENTS
South Australian legislation	www.legislation.sa.gov.au Then search alphabetically under Acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Children's Protection Act 1993, (SA)</i>
Department for Families and Communities	www.dfc.sa.gov.au Select 'Families and young people' then 'Protecting children'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Them Safe the South Australian Government's child protection reform program (2004); • <i>Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers - National Framework. (2005);</i> • <i>Families SA Mandatory Notification – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect. A Practical Guide for organisations. (2006).</i>
Archdiocese of Adelaide	www.adelaide.catholic.org.au Select 'Service Directory' (top left of page) then select Child Protection Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Charter (Version 2006);</i> • <i>The Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People (Revised 2009).</i>
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference	www.acbc.catholic.org.au Select 'Organisations' then 'National Committee for Professional Standards'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Integrity in Ministry (June 2004), a document of principles and standards for Catholic clergy and religious in Australia.</i> • <i>Integrity in the Service of the Church (September 2011), a resource document of principles and standards for lay workers in the Catholic Church in Australia.</i>

USEFUL LINKS

USEFUL LINKS	WEBSITE
Archdiocese of Adelaide	www.adelaide.catholic.org.au
Catholic Education SA	www.cesa.catholic.edu.a
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference	www.acbc.catholic.org.au
Centacare	www.centacare.org.au
Child and Youth Health	www.cyh.com
ChildWise	www.childwise.net
Department for Families and Communities (SA Government)	www.dfc.sa.gov.au
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (Commonwealth Government)	www.fahcsia.gov.au
Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities	www.fedparents.adl.catholic.edu.au
National Association for Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)	www.napcan.org.au
National Child Protection Clearinghouse	www.aifs.gov.au/nch

7. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Policy for the
**Care, Wellbeing and Protection
of Children and Young People**

WHAT IS CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN RELATION TO THE CARE, WELLBEING AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?

(Information adapted from the *Continuous Improvement Handbook, Version 2, 2004*, Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services)

Continuous improvement is a systematic ongoing effort to improve the implementation of the elements of a child-safe environment in a Church community or Church agency.

WHO - all stakeholders in the Church community or Church agency should have the opportunity to be involved.

WHEN - it is undertaken as an ongoing cycle. As legislative requirements and Church culture changes, the Church community or Church agency needs to respond with new ideas and new ways of working.

WHAT - the focus is on the key methods a Church community uses in developing a child-safe environment.

WHY - so that that Church agencies can accommodate change and continually develop to address the opportunities and challenges ahead in relation to child-safe initiatives.

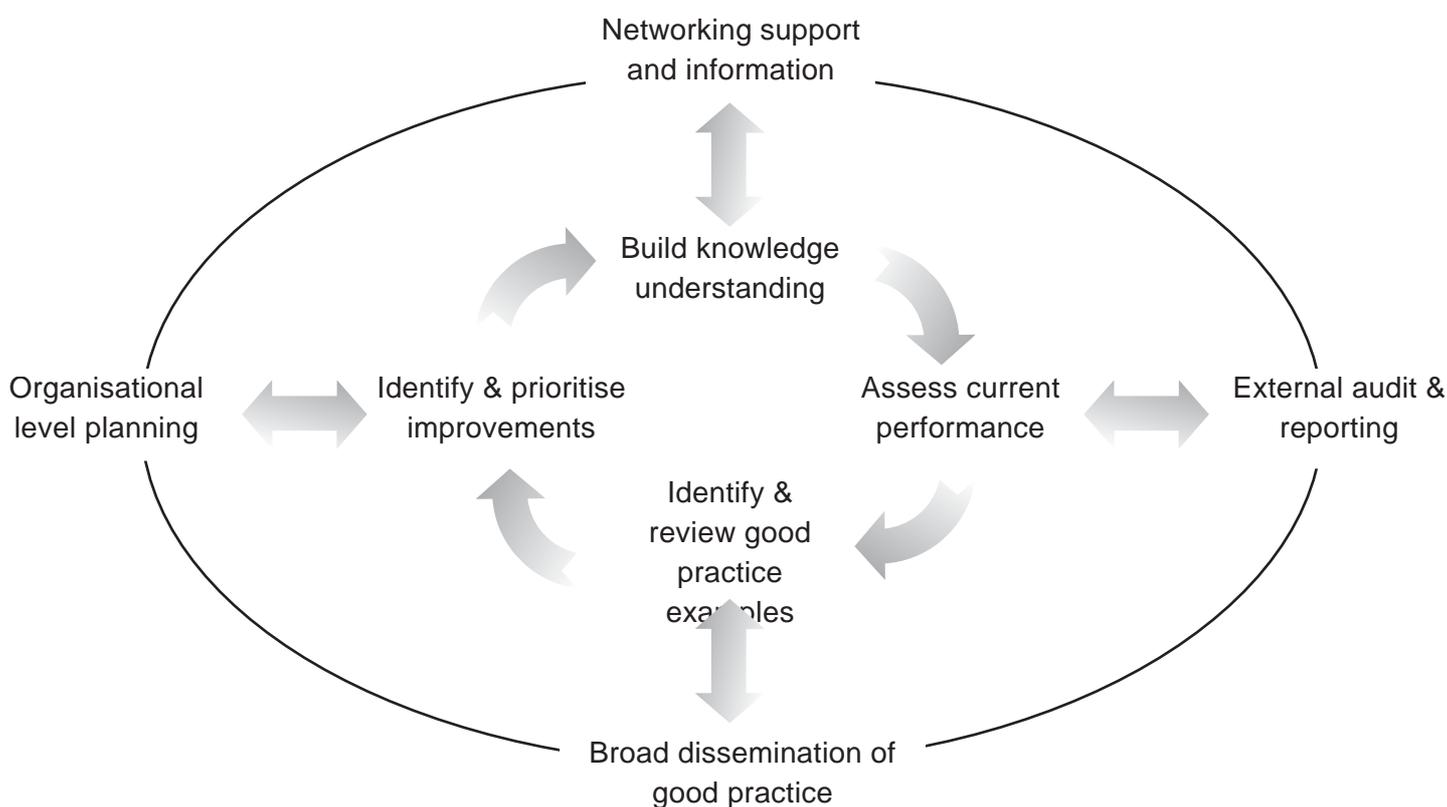
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT MODEL

Continuous improvement operates at two levels:

- At the level of individual Church agencies or communities where improvements are sought in the practices within the agency or community;
- At the broader diocesan level – where improvements are sought across the wider Church community in South Australia.

Ideally, these two processes are closely related. Information about successful innovations within one agency or community can be disseminated across the two dioceses, and areas of need for additional training and support can be identified.

Continuous improvement can be thought of as two interacting circles - an inner circle applied in unique ways by individual Church agencies or communities, and another circle of diocesan-wide capacity building and support.



A continuous improvement process is generally linked with an assessment or audit process that identifies good practice and areas for improvement.

8. SELF-ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLANNING FOR CATHOLIC CHURCH PARISHES AND AGENCIES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

KEY ELEMENTS

1. Faith and Culture
2. Governance
3. Human Resources Practices
4. Training



South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Policy for the
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SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL BASED ON THE FOUR KEY ELEMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

Name of Church community or agency:

Self-assessment conducted by: Date conducted: / /20

KEY ELEMENT

1. Faith and Culture

This element requires that: *Catholic Church communities witness Gospel values by respecting the dignity of every person, in the context of the care and wellbeing of children and young people.*

ELEMENT NUMBER	HOW DO WE...?	CURRENT PERFORMANCE					EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE
		STRENGTH			WEAKNESS		
		5	4	3	2	1	
1.1.1	Provide a safe Church environment where children and young people are nurtured to develop their full potential	5	4	3	2	1	
1.1.2	Provide a welcoming environment for everyone especially children, young people and their families	5	4	3	2	1	
1.1.3	Involve children and young people in making decisions and empowering them to contribute to the community	5	4	3	2	1	
1.1.4	Promote an understanding of the impact of the differences in power between adults and children and young people	5	4	3	2	1	
1.1.5	Develop positive relationships between Church agencies, such as the parish, and community groups providing services to children and young people	5	4	3	2	1	
1.1.6	Identify partnerships and promote the potential for collaboration and community building	5	4	3	2	1	

2. Governance

Governance refers to the manner in which an organisation operates. It describes the process of decision-making and the method by which decisions are implemented within a parish or agency.

ELEMENT NUMBER	HOW DO WE...?	CURRENT					EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE
		PERFORMANCE		WEAKNESS			
		5	4	3	2	1	
2.1.1	Provide all personnel with current information on child protection legislation and government initiatives	5	4	3	2	1	
2.1.2	Evaluate current practices and develop a plan to implement changes that meet legislative requirements	5	4	3	2	1	
2.2.1	Clearly display the Charter and Policy in the Church community	5	4	3	2	1	
2.2.2	Engage the Church community or Church agency in activities relating to the implementation of the Policy	5	4	3	2	1	
2.2.3	Identify and build on existing structures and practices to support children, young people and their families (eg. commission a Child-Safe Working Party and/or Child-Safe Contact Person)	5	4	3	2	1	
2.2.4	Evaluate current practices and develop an action plan for implementing changes to meet Church requirements.	5	4	3	2	1	
2.3.1	Act in accordance with the principles and standards of pastoral and professional practice outlined in documents relating to professional standards	5	4	3	2	1	
2.3.2	Evaluate pastoral and professional practice against the principles and standards outlined in the Professional Standards documents	5	4	3	2	1	
2.4.1	Store and access personal information relating to children and young people appropriately to ensure their safety and protection at all times	5	4	3	2	1	
2.4.2	Ensure that employees and volunteers who have access to confidential records, including the personal details of children and young people, have been appropriately screened and trained	5	4	3	2	1	
2.5.1	Provide training and development for Church community leaders and workers to support them to create and maintain safe environments for children and young people	5	4	3	2	1	
2.5.2	Provide programs that promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and provide a network of support for families in the Church community	5	4	3	2	1	

3. Human Resources Practices

This element requires that: *The Catholic Church takes all necessary steps to maximise the safety of children and young people through its recruitment, selection and support of Church personnel including volunteers.*

ELEMENT NUMBER	HOW DO WE...?	CURRENT					EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE
		PERFORMANCE		WEAKNESS			
		5	4	3	2	1	
3.1.1	Include a public statement of the Church's commitment to maintain a child-safe environment in all advertised positions	5	4	3	2	1	
3.1.2	Provide clear job/role descriptions for employees and volunteers outlining key functions, specific responsibilities and accountability	5	4	3	2	1	
3.1.3	Include copies of relevant policies, procedures and codes of conduct in position information packages	5	4	3	2	1	
3.1.4	Ensure that offers of appointment are provisional based on a criminal history assessment clearance	5	4	3	2	1	
3.1.5	Conduct reference checks on all applicants who meet selection criteria for paid and voluntary positions	5	4	3	2	1	
3.1.6	Review role/duty statements to reflect the focus on child-safe environments	5	4	3	2	1	
3.1.7	Ensure new employees and volunteers sign a Code of Conduct and agree to work within the professional boundaries of the role	5	4	3	2	1	
3.1.8	Review role descriptions for employees and volunteers to reflect values, expectations and workplace practices in relation to child protection	5	4	3	2	1	
3.2.1	Provide induction programs for new workers to reinforce the values, expectations and work practices of the Church community	5	4	3	2	1	
3.2.2	Place a high priority on the quality of relationships between Church personnel and children and young people when planning and reviewing work performance	5	4	3	2	1	
3.2.4	Respond promptly and appropriately to any concerns about child protection	5	4	3	2	1	

4. Training

This element requires that: *All Church personnel, including priests, religious brothers and sisters, pastoral associates and employees and volunteers, involved with children and young people are aware of their responsibilities in creating child-safe environments and their legal obligation to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect.*

ELEMENT NUMBER	HOW DO WE...?	CURRENT PERFORMANCE					EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE
		STRENGTH		WEAKNESS			
4.1.1	Develop a child safe environments training framework for Church personnel and appropriate information for volunteers	5	4	3	2	1	
4.1.2	Implement and review Child Safe Environments training requirements	5	4	3	2	1	
4.1.3	Provide personnel with accredited Child Safe Environments training and refresher courses that inform them of their legal responsibilities as mandated notifiers of child abuse and/or neglect	5	4	3	2	1	
4.1.4	Provide volunteers with appropriate information about child-safe environments and their legal responsibilities to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect	5	4	3	2	1	

Planning for continuous improvement

Name of Church community or agency:

Plan developed by:

Date plan developed: / /20

PROCESS TO DEVELOP A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN:

1. Look through the most recent self-assessment or audit report of the Church community or agency
2. Transfer the Element number onto this Plan where an element has been assessed as a weakness or as requiring improvement
3. Consult with Church community or agency stakeholders and brainstorm possible strategies for improvement for that Element
4. Prioritise the strategies (high, medium or low priority)
5. Decide on a realistic timeframe to implement the strategies.

ELEMENT NUMBER	STRATEGY FOR CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY (HIGH, MED, LOW)	IMPLEMENT IN 2011	IMPLEMENT IN 2012	IMPLEMENT IN 2013 & BEYOND

for assistance and further information, contact the:

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE: 8210 8159