



REDEMPTION
HILLS
CHURCH

Child Safety Policy and Procedure

Our belief in the value of all people means we will treat everyone with respect. We will listen and act on what people tell us and help when someone feels unsafe. We aim to be a trustworthy, supportive organisation and care for the needs of people. We want to make our community a happy and safe place for all people.

These policies and procedures comply with the [Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023](#).

Who does this apply to:

These policies and procedures apply to all **workers**: religious leaders, paid employees, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors, or consultants engaged by Redemption Hills Church to provide a service.

A **child** is a person under 18 years of age.

The following policy reflects the commitment by Redemption Hills Church to provide protective care of all children and workers who participate in church activities:

1. **Child physical and sexual abuses are criminal actions that should not be tolerated in our society and will not be tolerated at Redemption Hills Church (RHC).**
 - i. Any person with any prior convictions relating to violent or sexual offences will not be allowed to work with children (either voluntarily or in a paid position) at RHC or any RHC events.
2. **Recruitment and screening of workers**
 - i. All RHC workers (over 16) will be properly screened by presenting a current registration to work with vulnerable people (RWVP).
 - ii. No person who has been previously convicted of child abuse will be permitted to work with children at RHC.

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- iii. A copy of each person's RWVP will be kept on record by RHC. A calendar will be kept with the expiry dates of each of these and people will be reminded to update their registration one month prior to expiry.
- iv. All workers for RHC children's events are required to have attended RHC regularly for at least six months. They must nominate two personal referees from existing RHC attendees, one being an existing deacon or elder. They must read and agree to abide by this document and be approved by the ministry leader.
- v. Additionally, all workers who are rostered to serve directly as leaders and assistants with RHC's children and youth programs will be required to complete an RHC Ministry Screening Questionnaire form. This form includes the reference requirements detailed in point iv above and specific questions related to past conduct.

3. Supervision

- i. At least two workers will be always present in the space to supervise activities in which children are involved. One of these will be an adult. All volunteers in an assistant role for children's events must be at least 4 years older than the children in the group.
- ii. Family members may accompany children with additional needs to sessions under the agreement they are exclusively assisting that individual child. They must not be asked to provide supervision or assist other children and must be supervised by rostered RHC workers.
- iii. No adult, other than a designated family member as per clause 3.ii, will spend time alone with any child at any church activity or event of RHC.

4. Personal care

- i) No worker will change a child's nappy. The parent or guardian will be contacted as soon as it is known that a nappy needs to be changed.
- ii) The parent or guardian of a toilet-trained child under 4 will be contacted if they need to use the toilet whilst in the care of RHC workers. Only parents or guardians of children under 4 will be permitted to take children to the bathroom.
- iii) When children aged 5-12 go to the toilet, they will use the individual stalls. One RHC worker will stand at the main door of the program room to maintain eye contact with the hallway to the individual stall doors.
- iv) All food and beverage service must be reasonable portions, hygienically served and checked against allergy information provided at sign in.

- v) Parents/guardians should be notified in the main service immediately if there is a first aid incident. First aid incidents can be attended by an RHC worker with first aid training or medical qualifications in the presence of the parent/guardian and/or additional worker. Workers should fill out an incident report form in the first aid kit if a child requires first aid during a session. Incident report forms should be scanned electronically and archived.

5. Appropriate conduct

- i. Physical discipline is not the role of RHC workers. Workers may give children verbal reminders of safe conduct and respectful behaviour. If inappropriate behaviour continues the child should be given a choice to remain in the group and follow instructions, or to return to their family. Children who continue to behave in an unsafe or disrespectful manner during a church event will be collected by their family to protect the safety of other children and workers.
- ii. Physical contact with children will be appropriate and only in the presence of other workers or the child's family. Children (except for babies) should be the initiator of brief physical contact, not RHC workers. Appropriate touching includes:

Babies – cuddling and holding for comfort and settling.

Children 4 and under - holding on lap during group time and brief hugs in greeting or farewell or when needed for comfort.

Ages 5 and older - hugs from the side for greetings or farewell, a brief touch on the shoulder or arm, high fives or fist bumps etc.

- iii. Where appropriate touch is required for a group game, drama activity or prayer the worker should ask the children's permission before proceeding.
- iv. Workers should not demonstrate favouritism. They should not provide gifts for children unless all children receive the same or equal items.
- v. Workers should always use respectful and appropriate language.

6. Signing children in/out of RHC events

- i. Parents/guardians register their child electronically before the church event begins. Children 12 and under will receive a printed sticker to attach to their clothing. When the children's event officially begins duty of care is transferred from the parent/guardian to RHC workers until collected at the end of the event.
- ii. When events conclude workers stay with the children until they are safely turned over to person who shows the correct check-in receipt matching the

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child's information (children under 12). Once children are signed out of events duty of care no longer rests with RHC children's workers.

- iii. Children attending youth events may be electronically signed out by RHC workers and turned over to the person recognised by the child as designated to collect them at the end of the event.
- iv. If a parent or guardian is contacted during the event to collect to their child or opts to collect their child early, the child is signed out.

7. Reporting suspected harm to children

- i. Workers have an obligation to report suspected harm to children. Harm to children may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect or witnessing family violence (see appendix).
- ii. Workers observing any suspected neglect or emotional abuse by an adult toward a child, or who receive a direct report from a child, must support the child and report the incident or suspicion immediately to one of the elders as listed on the RHC website. The RHC eldership will support the person to notify the current Tasmanian Child Safety Services of the concerns.
- iii. The RHC eldership will support any worker with any concern or report that is deemed a reasonable suspicion of physical, sexual abuse or family violence to report to both the Police and Tasmanian Child Safety Services immediately. Reasonable suspicion of abuse means fair or practical reason to believe an incident involving physical, sexual abuse or family violence has occurred based on physical signs, verbal communication, or observance of behaviour.

8. Reporting suspected harm to children by a worker of RHC

- i. A worker must notify the eldership immediately if a child discloses abuse by another RHC worker or if they have a suspicion or belief that a RHC worker may be responsible for the harm of a child.
- ii. The eldership should determine a strategy ensuring the immediate safety of the child.
- iii. The eldership should support the worker (mandatory reporter) to follow mandatory reporting processes 7.i-7.iii as necessary.
- iv. The eldership will follow the required action under the Reportable Conduct Scheme of the [Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023](#).

9. Consequences for not adhering to the policy

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- i. Any person who is reported to the eldership under reasonable suspicion of harm to a child will be suspended from providing any services to RHC whilst under investigation either internally or with the police.
- ii. Any person found guilty of committing sexual abuse (either by internal investigation or a court) will be prohibited from working with children at RHC and if they are in a paid position their employment will be terminated.

10. Training

- i. Workers will attend a training session regarding the contents of this policy and procedure every 12 months and complete electronic recognition of having read its contents.

Appendix 1:

The 5 types of harm child may experience.

Physical Abuse:

Non-accidental physical trauma or injury. May include:

- hitting, punching or pinching
- kicking
- strangling or shaking
- throwing, or throwing items at a person intending to cause harm
- burning
- biting
- poisoning
- smothering

Sexual Abuse:

Sexual behaviour involving the relevant person and another person where there is a disparity in power, maturity, or intellectual capacity. May include in-person or online conduct such as:

- Bribing
- Coercion or exploitation
- Threats or violence
- Grooming behaviours
- Inappropriate touching
- Comments or joking of a sexual nature
- Displaying inappropriate images or content

Emotional Abuse:

Actions that threaten a child's social, emotional, cognitive, or intellectual development. May include:

- persistent rejection or hostility
- threats
- teasing or bullying
- yelling or criticism
- exposure to family violence

Neglect:

When a child's needs are not met, affecting their health and development. May include insufficient:

- food
- housing
- health care
- clothing
- personal hygiene

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- adequate supervision
- education

Experiencing family violence:

Conduct (whether actual or threatened) by a person towards a family member or their property, that causes them or any other family member to fear for, or to be apprehensive about, his or her safety.

Definition of Grooming:

The term 'grooming' refers to intentional behaviours that manipulate and control a child, as well as their family, kin and carers, other support networks, or organisations in order to perpetrate child sexual abuse.

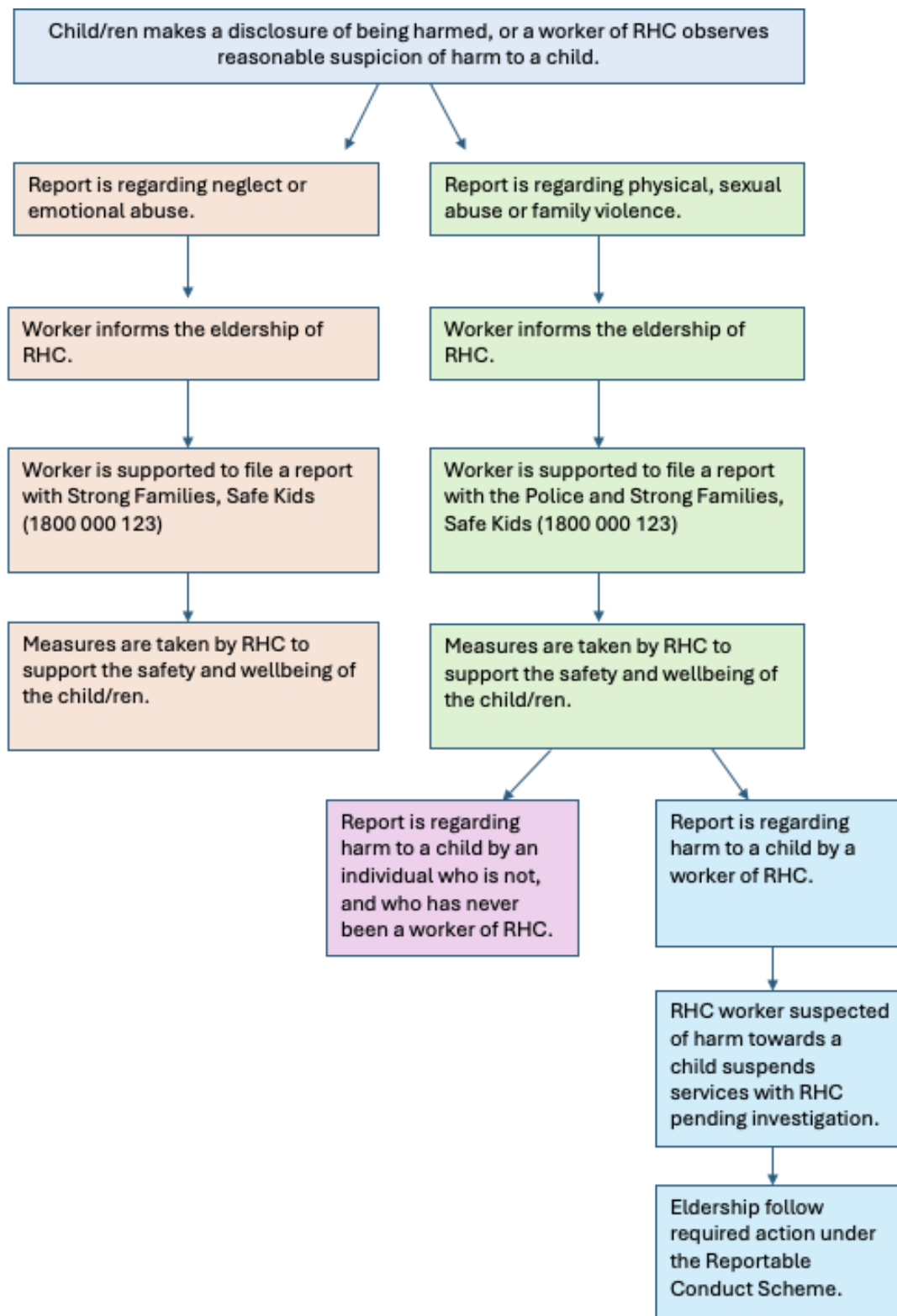
Grooming can occur online or in person. Online child grooming is the process of establishing and building a relationship with a child or young person while online, to facilitate sexual abuse that occurs either in person or online.

The intent of grooming is to:

- gain access to the child or young person to perpetrate child sexual abuse
- obtain the child or young person's trust and/or compliance
- obtain sexual material of the child or young person
- maintain the child or young person's silence

Appendix 2

A guide for reporting harm towards children at RHC.



[Click here to confirm you have read and understood this policy](#)