



HOW TO...

write a child protection policy

Watch the [recording](#) of the Practical Workshop hosted by Sikunye, discussing how to write a Child Protection Policy for your church. Here you can listen to an interview with Mariette Jacobs from Ezrah on the law, the importance of a Child Protection Policy (CPP) and tips on how to write and implement a CPP for your church.

what is child abuse or maltreatment?

Child maltreatment refers to many types of violence that are perpetrated against children (persons under the age of 18 years old).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines child maltreatment as:

"All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power."

This definition shows the many ways in which maltreatment can take place. Research has shown that in South Africa:

- 44.6% of child homicides/deaths are due to abuse and neglect, including abandonment
- 42.2% of children have experienced some form of maltreatment (whether sexual, physical, emotional or neglect) with 784 967 of children having experienced some form of sexual abuse in their lifetime
- 82.0% have experienced some form of victimisation (whether criminal victimisation or exposure to family or community violence)
- Families can be the greatest source of support, care, love, and protection for children, but they can also be the source of harm
- Perpetrators of violence and abuse are often people children know, or who hold a position of power

The church has an incredible opportunity to champion the needs and rights of children – and it starts by knowing what we are mandated by the South African law to do.

what is the law?

The United Nations on the Rights of the Child promotes children's rights and responsibilities. The South African Constitution is aligned with the United Nations Convention. [The Rights of Children is enshrined in Section 28 of the South African Constitution](#) – this is the highest legal framework in South Africa and from this, the rest of the laws flow. Two important laws with regards to child protection are:

1. **The Children's Act** which is the most important child-focused legislation with regulations of child protection and child wellbeing
2. **The Sexual Offences Act** which regulates sexual offences against children and adults, as well as regulating the National Register for sexual offenders

All these laws apply to ALL organisations, individuals, churches etc. that have children coming into their spaces.

Faith leaders are mandated in Section 110 of the Children's act to report any form of or suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

All church leaders are mandated by law to report any form of child abuse or neglect – whether that is suspected or confirmed abuse or neglect. You do not need to do the investigation or have proof, that is for the relevant authorities, simply report your suspicion.

If you fail to report, criminal charges may be placed against you.

All members of community are mandated by law to report any forms or suspicions of sexual abuse.

To help churches be in line with the law (legally compliant), a Child Protection Policy is to be written and used.

what is a child protection policy?

Click here [to watch this video](#) on why is a Child Protection Policy important?

- It is a document that guides your church leadership on implementing child protection in your church and community context
- It equips all church leadership, staff members and volunteers with the right language and right skills to implement a Child Protection Policy
- It outlines how to recruit and screen church leadership, staff and volunteers to make sure the right people are coming to work with children in your church programmes and activities
- It guides the interaction between adult and children, as well as between child and child to prevent abuse
- And it includes things like behaviour protocols, discipline rules, transport rules, use of technology, supervision rules, how to use photos of children, administration of medication, use of child personal info, rules for volunteers, consequences if rules are broken and more

Having a Child Protection Policy is not effective if it is not implemented. This means that church leaders, staff members and volunteers must be trained in the Child Protection Policy so that it becomes the culture of the church.

In every decision being made, always ask:
Is this in the best interest of the child?

why should a church have a child protection policy?

For a church to be legally compliant with the law it should have a Child Protection Policy (CPP) in place; and it is important to do so because:

- It is an opportunity to express God's heart for children in a practical way
- We want our children to be safe and protected. A CPP is a document to equip church leaders, staff and volunteers on how to protect children
- It protects the church if any charges are placed against the church or an individual in the church, to show that as a church you have put everything in place to protect children – and you will not be held responsible for being negligent to child safety

- If you have Sunday school, volunteers going into homes where children are present, Flourish hosts visiting moms, pastors praying with families, youth programmes, children focused ministries, children that come with parents to church, holiday clubs, ECD programmes, you need a CPP in place

how do you screen and report child abuse?

[Click here to Watch this video](#) on the basic requirements in Child Protection

There are two legal requirements in Child Protection:

1. Churches must screen everyone working for or volunteering for their church
2. Churches must report any cases of child abuse (even suspected cases)

how do you screen?

Every church elder, pastor, Sunday school teacher, volunteer, staff member – anyone that works for or volunteers for your church must be screened. This is done by:

- **A Police Clearance Certificate** at the local police station
- **Form 29** to check if the person is on Part B of the National Child Protection Register

This will help you know that any person coming into your church is suitable to work with and around children, and that they are not on a child abuse or sexual offenders list. You want to ensure that the people working with children in or from your church and community are safe to do so, and your children are protected.

things to know

- A Police Clearance Certificate can be redone every second or third year
- The cost is R160 for the full police clearance – you need to take the exact amount of cash and ID to apply at the police station
- Fingerprint clearance is cheaper, and the results are fast, but it is advised to do the full Police Clearance Certificate
- The Police Clearance Certificate must be done by the individual applying
- The church can submit the Form 29 for a group of people, and the form is sent to the address on the form
- Remember to make copies to keep of all the documents being submitted

how do you report suspected or confirmed cases of child abuse?

- It is important to know which abuse you suspect (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect)
- If it is physical, emotional abuse or neglect, contact the local social worker of a designated Child Protection Organisation in your community
- For sexual offences you report at your local police station
- Report through **Form 22** or making a statement at your local police station
- If you do not know who to report to you can report to both the police and the local social worker of the designated Child Protection Organisation
- Know which Child Protection Organisation is in your area – there are four – get the contact details for the one in your area

If you are unsure of who is the Child Protection Organisation in your area, contact the **Department of Social Development Call Centre: 012 312 7727**

A – ACVV

B – Badisa

C – Child welfare

D – Dept of Social Development

- If you suspect Child trafficking call **A21 Hotline: 0800 222 777** AND report to the police
- If you need to report anonymously call **Childline: 116** – they will guide you through the process of reporting

Anyone can report should they suspect or know of a case of child abuse – if it is done in good will. But they are obligated by law to report any case of *sexual abuse*.

Remember if a church leader fails to report child abuse this can lead to criminal charges placed against them

resources to help churches

Here is the Child Protection Policy draft – [click here](#)

- Please edit it to make it your own document for YOUR church
- The final draft of your Child Protection Policy must be signed by the church leadership / elders AND used in your church
- Screen your church leadership, staff and volunteers to ensure they are not on any offenders list
- Train your church leadership, staff and volunteers so they know what is in the Child Protection Policy

Follow [Ezrah](#) on social media and visit their website (www.ezrah.co.za)

other resources

1. Ezrah's policy template resources and forms:
 - Acknowledgement of receipt child protection policy.
 - Child protection declaration form template.
 - Code of conduct working with children
 - Code of conduct for children
 - Consent and indemnity form
 - Volunteer application and declaration form
 - Excursions consent form
 - Incident register
 - Medicine administration chart
 - Child Intake form for church programmes
 - Child exit form for church programmes
2. Ezrah's **Child Protection Resources**: <https://www.ezrah.co.za/child-protection-resources/>
3. Ezrah's **faith-based resources** including a devotional on child protection and prayer points: <https://www.ezrah.co.za/faith-based-resources/>
4. Ezrah's **blog** on the importance of having a Child Protection Policy: <https://www.ezrah.co.za/the-importance-of-a-child-protection-policy/>
5. **JellyBeanz** website: <https://www.jellybeanz.org.za/downloads/>

Please click on the highlighted or underlined word to open the document or watch the videos

6. **A21** websites on human trafficking:
 - <https://www.a21.org/content/south-africa/gr3fvs>
 - <https://www.a21.org/content/can-you-see-me-south-africa/grndh4>
 - Reporting website for suspected cases of human trafficking in South Africa <https://www.a21.org/content/report-now/grbqhs> or phone 0800 222 777
7. **Childline's** website: <https://www.childlinesa.org.za/> or phone: 116
8. Online training
 - **Connect Network**
 - EzraH online courses to come
9. **Children Church And The Law (Book)**: A Practical Guide for Churches on the Children's Act and Other Laws Relating to Children – for purchase at R380 or you can get the PDF R160 from <https://www.warehouse.org.za/2018/09/17/children-church-and-the-law/>