

**Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui**



**SAFEGUARDING  
POLICY**

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16th Floor, Tung Wai Commercial Building

109–111 Gloucester Road

Wan Chai

Hong Kong

Tel.: +852 2526 5355

Fax: +852 2521 2199

[safeguarding@hkshk.org](mailto:safeguarding@hkshk.org)

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# I

## **Foreword by the Archbishop and Primate and Words from Archbishop Emeritus Paul Kwong**

### **Foreword by the Archbishop and Primate**

Peace be with you in Jesus Christ our Lord!

The Church is the body of Christ, and all members are parts of this body. Therefore all of us should dedicate ourselves to build up the Body healthily.

I give thanks to God for his calling to our brothers and sisters who have offered themselves to strengthen our Church through their work of drafting this HKSKH Safeguarding Policy. After nearly 2 years of hard work and under the leadership of Bishop Matthias Der, a well-balanced policy document regarding our pastoral ministry and church discipline has been produced. We can also appreciate that the Policy is imbued with pastoral significance.

I would say that this Policy Document does not read as a series of “regulations”, “appendix canon”, “ecclesiastical rules” etc. Instead, it is an instrument for us to ensure the safety and well-being of all who take up and participate in our pastoral, nurturing and mission ministries while aiming to achieve our healthy and positive vision.

This Policy was endorsed by the Standing Committee of the General Synod on 21 April 2021 and thus becomes our guideline relating to the care and safety of everyone flourishing in the warm and secure environment of our Church.

Let’s stay diligent and work together for the body of Christ, so our ministries may manifest God’s love, kindness, justice, mercy, joy and peace.

May God bless you all.

**The Most Revd Andrew Chan  
Archbishop and Primate  
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui**

## **Words from Archbishop Emeritus Paul Kwong**

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of Christ!

Jesus Christ says, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b). Through Jesus Christ, we receive the greatness of God’s love and experience his transforming power through the Holy Spirit. As followers of Jesus Christ and the members of the Body of Christ, we are called to manifest Christ’s love and holiness in our lives and within the church community for the glory of God.

I am grateful for the effort that had been given in the past few years in preparing the HKSKH Safeguarding Policy. This Policy will facilitate our church to be a community which affirms the belief that we are all made in the image of God and that each individual deserves to be treated with care, love, respect and honour.

Please help yourself to familiarize with the Policy. It is important that we commit ourselves to this sacred trust given by God and to create and maintain a safe and loving community for the witness of God’s kingdom.

God bless you all!

**The Most Revd Paul Kwong**  
**Archbishop Emeritus**  
**Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui**

## II

### Biblical Mandate for Providing a Safe Church

2.1 The Church—the Body of Christ, has a mission to spread the gospel and manifest the love of God with a safe, caring and respectful culture where lives and faith can grow and be nurtured.

Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (HKSKH) shoulders exactly that mission, to nurture members, to cultivate a peaceful, respectful, caring, safe and secure environment for all those whom we engage in the life of the church.

To honour this noble calling HKSKH has developed this Policy to ensure all stakeholders safe and sound in the life of the Church.

2.2 HKSKH is blessed with many people young and old in our care. This is a trust that we cannot take for granted. The Church is also the visible sign of Christ’s presence in our world and a witness of his redeeming love. All people are made in God’s own image and are precious in God’s sight. Each person deserves and ought to be treated with dignity, respect and love.

2.3 Sadly, in any given community, an imbalance of power can occur in which the stronger may take advantage of the weaker. Our God is a God who loves justice (Isaiah 61:8) and hates oppression (Psalm 10). He commands the protection of widows and the fatherless (Exodus 22), the weak and the vulnerable (Deuteronomy 24:17). He requires of us:

“To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

2.4 To “act justly” is to be responsible towards those under our care; to “love mercy” is to stand up for the vulnerable we may come across in our ministries; to “walk humbly” is to leave no room for complacency that any form of abuse will not happen in our churches.

2.5 Among the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion, the fourth Mark “To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation” challenge all of us to pursue this cause.

2.6 In the Chinese culture, the core values of respect, trust and loyalty are highly regarded in any relationship within a community. Each person is to have a sense of *li* 禮 (proper rite), *yi* 義 (righteousness or justice), *lian* 廉 (honesty and integrity) and *chi* 恥 (sense of right and wrong). Both the Christian biblical teaching and the ancient Chinese cultural heritage call

on the church in Hong Kong to help build a community that is undergirded with respect, care, honour and love for all people.

- 2.7 While we prayerfully hope that the church is a safe place for all people, the reality is that we need to begin equipping ourselves to respond faithfully. We need to take pro-active steps in creating a safe environment for all. When an unfortunate incident of misconduct occurs breaching the respect, trust given and honour that we should hold towards each other, the church needs to respond immediately with seriousness and great care. The 17th Anglican Consultative Council, held in April 2019 in Hong Kong, asked the provinces in the Anglican Communion to respect the dignity of all and to safeguard all those who participate in the ministry and life of the church.
- 2.8 Any form of physical and sexual misconduct, emotional abuse and bullying can bring a detrimental result to the person involved and cause serious harm to the church community. Caring for all, especially for children and vulnerable adults, is a sacred trust and responsibility that all of us are called to uphold.
- 2.9 One form of misconduct in our society is sexual violation against another person. One can take reference from the report in 1988 Lambeth Conference on issues related to sexual misconduct which states, “There is universal agreement that respect, reverence and mutuality are necessary in all human relationships. This agreement about the fundamentals of human relations, including sexual relations, leads to a firm judgement and condemnation of sexual abuse and exploitation. Sexual abuse is self-gratification by exploitation. It makes an impersonal object of the other person, abusing both the person and sexuality itself. Abuse occurs in a wide range of sexual activities: always in rape and child molestation, usually in adultery and prostitution, and sometimes even in marriage. Sexual abuse also occurs in the socially subtle aspects of sexism and in sexual harassment of employees in the workplace. The Church must be clear about these violations of sexual intimacy. It must be explicit in its teaching about these particular aberrations of sexual relations, aggressively proactive about its social policy and action touching on these areas, and forthright in dealing with violations in its own community.” (Lambeth Conference Report, 1988)
- 2.10 Sexual misconduct cannot be treated by the Church as a private matter even between consenting adults, since others’ attitudes and relationships are bound to be affected. Moreover, the greatest care is expected to be exercised in relationships of trust, power, authority and confidentiality, to avoid taking advantage of trust, or abuse of power and authority.



### III Applicability

- 3.1 This Safeguarding Policy (“**this Policy**”) shall cover the conduct of all levels of church personnel, ordained and lay, employees and volunteers and all people participating in the life of the church events.
- 3.2 This Policy applies to all the parishes and their ministries in the HKSKH.

## IV Overriding Principles

- 4.1 HKSKH and all its ministries shall comply with all relevant laws of Hong Kong.
- 4.2 HKSKH has zero tolerance on all forms of misconduct.
- 4.3 HKSKH shall use its best endeavours to protect all individuals especially children (pursuant to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)) and vulnerable persons.
- 4.4 When an allegation of misconduct is made, the church will immediately conduct internal investigation according to the procedure stated in this Policy. If deemed necessary, the church will report the allegation to the proper authorities.
- 4.5 HKSKH will not permit any person with any record of sexual criminal offences or who admits to having committed sexual abuse on anyone, or who is known to have a propensity to act inappropriately towards another person, to serve with our ministries.
- 4.6 HKSKH tolerates no violent, physical, psychological, or sexual misconduct, abusive or exploitative behaviour or bullying within the church community. Any such incident, with or without physical harm, must be addressed promptly, humanely and thoroughly.
- 4.7 Pastoral support will be given to alleged victims, perpetrators, and all other parties concerned during the time of investigation. We will also support their recovery. The best interest of all parties is to be upheld.
- 4.8 Confidentiality of all parties will be respected.
- 4.9 HKSKH endeavours to provide education and a model of best practice in creating a safe environment and community.
- 4.10 This Policy is to be a document made widely known to all members of the church and the public.
- 4.11 Where there is a difference in the definitions and standards between this Policy and the policies of partner organizations (for example, schools, or Scouts), the more stringent standard shall apply.

## V

### Definitions, Meanings and Interpretation

For the purpose of this Policy, the following terms have the meanings and explanations expounded below:

5.1 Vicar

A vicar is the priest having the cure of souls in a parish. Where the context of this Policy requires or permits, “Vicar” shall include the priest-in-charge of a mission church.

5.2 Parish

“Parish” carries the same meaning as defined by the Canons of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui; and where the context of this Policy requires or permits shall include mission church.

5.3 Pastoral relationship

A pastoral relationship is a relationship carried out in the name of or on behalf of the church or place of ministry, as the case may be, between a cleric, employee or volunteer and any person to whom such cleric, employee or volunteer provides pastoral counselling, pastoral care, spiritual direction, spiritual guidance or from whom the cleric, employee or volunteer has received confession or confidential or private information. In assuming responsibility for such a relationship, the cleric, employee or volunteer is deemed to acknowledge responsibility for the well-being of the other person, respect that individual’s personal integrity and determine not to abuse the power inherent in the relationship.

5.4 Consent

Consent is understood as non-coercive; therefore, consent has not been given if an individual agrees to any activity under threat, or if consent is obtained by fraud or through the influence of a person in authority over that person. Children under the age of 16 and mentally incapacitated persons are deemed incapable to give consent for the purpose of clause 5.6.1. (*Amended March 2023*)

5.5 Misconduct

5.5.1 Misconduct refers to physical, sexual, or psychological actions or omissions that injure or endanger the well-being (physical, sexual or psychological) of an individual or a group in the church, and includes (but is not limited to) sexual misconduct, physical misconduct, child abuse and bullying.

5.5.2 Any activity or conduct in which a person in a pastoral relationship with another takes advantage of the vulnerability of the person under his/her pastoral care or other guidance or leadership, regardless of who appears to have initiated it, shall be deemed to be misconduct.

5.5.3 When in doubt as to whether a reported act is considered a misconduct, advice should be sought from the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator / Parish Safeguarding Officer mentioned in this Policy.

## 5.6 Sexual misconduct

Sexual misconduct for the purposes of this Policy includes sexual assault, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation.

### 5.6.1 Sexual assault

Sexual assault is any unwanted intentional use of force or threat of use of force and involving some form of sexual activity (including, but not limited to, the examples listed below) against another person without his/her consent, or when a person is incapable of giving consent, such as when they are under duress, under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Examples:

- kissing, sexual contact, fondling or sexual intercourse
- unwanted touching of a sexual nature

### 5.6.2 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment means a person makes an unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature to another person. The unwelcome conduct includes unwelcome sexual attention, physical contact and talking about issues of a sexual nature, or making a sexual advance. It also amounts to sexual harassment if a person finds the environment sexually hostile or intimidating. Sexual harassment may also tantamount to a civil or criminal offence. The legal definition of sexual harassment under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 480, Laws of Hong Kong) is:

- (a) If any person
  - (i) makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the other person; or
  - (ii) engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the other person, in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated; or
- (b) the person, alone or together with other persons, engages in conduct of a sexual nature which creates a hostile or intimidating environment for another person.

Sexual harassment includes behaviour that has the effect of undermining, coercing, intimidating, humiliating or demeaning an individual on the basis of sex. It may have the effect of causing a place of ministry or workplace to become hostile or offensive. Such behaviour may consist of a single incident or several incidents over a period of time. The harasser could be of the same or opposite sex as the person harassed and may be a supervisor, co-worker/minister, client, parishioner, volunteer or an external person providing service. Sexual harassment can occur in or outside the office or church building in person or in the cyber world, or by any other means such as via electronic devices, but is not limited to a work-related activity.

Examples:

- unwelcomed sexually suggestive comments, jokes, innuendo or taunting about a person's body or sexual orientation
- distribution of material of a sexual nature which potentially could be offensive
- display pornographic or sexually explicit pictures
- unwelcomed invitations or requests or sexually suggestive remarks
- leering, staring or other sexually offensive gestures
- unwelcomed physical contact, such as patting, pinching, hugging, kissing or touching
- intrusive questions about one's private life
- brushing up against the body
- wolf whistling
- any form of unwanted affection including comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to a person's body or appearance that are at all suggestive. Examples would be, "You should wear that outfit more often," or "You look really hot in those jeans."

### 5.6.3 Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation is any form of sexual contact or invitation to sexual contact, with a person by a professional person, cleric or anyone in a position of authority, trust or power over that person whether or not there is consent from the individual. Sexual exploitation refers to the act of taking advantage of the vulnerability of a person, with whom there is a fiduciary and/or pastoral relationship, for one's own pleasure/gain.

Examples:

- demanding sex in any context
- making sex a condition for assistance
- forcing sex or forcing someone to have sex with anyone
- forcing a person to engage in prostitution or pornography

## 5.7 Bullying

### 5.7.1 According to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on the Violence Against Children,

Bullying can be defined as intentional and aggressive behaviour repeatedly occurring against a victim where there is a real or perceived power imbalance, and where the victim feels vulnerable and powerless to defend himself or herself. The unwanted behaviour is hurtful: it can be physical, including hitting, kicking and the destruction of property; verbal, such as teasing, insulting and threatening; or relational, through the spreading of rumours and exclusion from a group. Bullying usually occurs without provocation, and it constitutes a form of peer violence. People who bully often act out of frustration, humiliation and anger, or to achieve social status, and their actions can inflict physical, psychological and social harm. Children who are bullied are likely to experience interpersonal difficulties, to be depressed, lonely or anxious, to have low self-esteem and to suffer academically, but all actors, including bystanders, and the school climate as a whole are affected detrimentally.<sup>1</sup>

It is generally considered that bullying “has three components in common, namely:

- Repetition—Bullying repeats over time. It is not a single incident.
- Malicious intent—Bullies oppress and hurt others deliberately.
- Imbalance of power—Bullies are apparently more powerful and bullying occurs when the victims are unable to defend themselves.”<sup>2</sup>

### 5.7.2 “Bullying can be broadly classified into four categories as follows:

- Physical bullying with aggressive behavio[u]r—Punching, kicking, slapping, hitting, shoving, tripping, pulling hair, extorting money or properties, etc.
- Verbal bullying—Intimidating, making nasty/abusive call, cursing, defaming, mockery, name-calling and insulting or making malicious fun of somebody by attacking his personal characteristics like appearance, ability, and ethnicity.
- Indirect bullying—Spreading rumours, being hostile, ignoring, isolating, boycotting or rejecting the victim, etc.
- Cyber-bullying—[... S]pread[ing] rumours, post[ing] insulting remarks or mak[ing] other personal attacks, including pictures or videos, via electronic

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1. “Bullying and Cyberbullying”, *UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children*, <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/content/bullying-and-cyberbullying-0> (accessed 29 November 2019).

2. “Understanding Bullying”, *Education Bureau of the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*, [https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/teacher/student-guidance-discipline-services/gd-resources/anti\\_bullying1/index.html](https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/teacher/student-guidance-discipline-services/gd-resources/anti_bullying1/index.html) (accessed 4 December 2020).

means, such as emails, webpages, chat rooms, blogs and text messages of mobile phones, aimed at harassing, threatening or targeting another person and to mock and defame the victims.”<sup>3</sup>

5.8 Vulnerable adult

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or above who is unable to protect himself/herself from violence, abuse, neglect, significant harm or exploitation by reason of mental disability, physical disability, illness, old age, distress, or otherwise.

5.9 Child

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18.

5.10 Neglect and abuse of a child

5.10.1 *Physical abuse*: Any act that causes physical injury, which is not accidental in nature, to a child. It includes deliberately causing bruises, burns, cuts and broken bones by a range of actions such as beating, shaking and excessive discipline.

5.10.2 *Neglect*: Neglect occurs when a child is harmed because a parent or caregiver fails to provide adequate supervision, food, medical care and/or clothing appropriate to the child’s age and level of development. It may include situations when the parent or caregiver exposes the child to unsafe and/or unhygienic living conditions.

5.10.3 *Sexual abuse*: Any act where a child is used for sexual pleasure or is taken advantage of sexually. It also includes exposing a child to sexual acts or pornography. Sexual grooming is any act whereby a person gets close with a child to gain their confidence and trust, such as private text messaging of an inappropriate nature, spending private time alone with a child etc. setting the stage for abuse to happen without raising any alert.

5.10.4 *Psychological abuse*: Psychological abuse of a child is a pattern of intentional verbal or behavioural actions or lack of actions that convey to a child the message that he or she is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or only of value to meet someone else’s needs.

Reference to the church means a Parish, a Diocese or the Province as the context may apply.

Examples offered in this Policy are for aiding understanding and are not exhaustive.

Templates and Forms provided in this Policy are expected to be conformed; prior consultation should be sought from the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator if any proposed modifications is required in any special circumstance.

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3. Ibid.

## VI

### Implementation—Structure, Responsibility and Accountability

- 6.1 For the purpose of the implementation of this Policy, a Safeguarding Policy Committee shall be established. The Chairman and the members of this Committee shall be appointed by the Archbishop. The Chairman of the Safeguarding Policy Committee shall report to the Archbishop under the guidance of the Standing Committee of the General Synod.

The Safeguarding Policy Committee shall:

- (a) with the assistance of the Provincial Safeguarding Policy Coordinator (see paragraph 6.2 below), take all feasible steps and adopt all reasonable measures to ensure that the objectives of this Policy shall be achieved
  - (b) monitor the implementation of this Policy
  - (c) develop a training programme for all relevant stakeholders of the Province
  - (d) devise resources for the implementation of this Policy
  - (e) set a budget for the work of the Safeguarding Policy Committee
  - (f) evaluate and update this Policy when necessary, and at least once every 3 years
- 6.2 The Archbishop shall appoint a Provincial Safeguarding Policy Coordinator (“**Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator**”) and a deputy, who shall report to the Safeguarding Policy Committee.

The Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator, assisted by his/her deputy, shall:

- (a) implement this Policy
- (b) report progress of the implementation of this Policy to the Safeguarding Policy Committee
- (c) be the liaison with other relevant organizations such as government departments, non-governmental organizations and Equal Opportunities Commission
- (d) collect, keep, and divulge information in accordance with this Policy
- (e) develop and form an Investigation Taskforce, the members of which will be responsible for handling suspected misconducts. The Investigation Taskforce shall comprise of sufficient number of members who can handle all cases in a timely and professional manner
- (f) when a suspected misconduct is reported, designate members from the Investigation Taskforce (and any other personnel if he/she considers appropriate) to form an Incident Team which shall investigate into the matter
- (g) take charge of the screening process of staff and volunteers in the province and in the dioceses



- (h) keep, maintain, and dispatch an up-to-date contact list of those government departments, statutory bodies, and non-governmental organizations from which advice or assistance may be sought in relation to safeguarding matters
  - (i) assist the Safeguarding Policy Committee to discharge its duties set out in paragraph 6.1
  - (j) sit as an ex-officio member of the Safeguarding Policy Committee
- 6.3 This Policy shall be implemented at all levels by HKSKH and its ministries.
- 6.4 The Provincial Chancellor will provide legal advice for the implementation of this Policy as well as for the Incident Team as required. If the Provincial Chancellor deems necessary, he may, by himself or otherwise, engage external professional legal advisors to provide legal advice to the church. In such instance, the Provincial Chancellor will liaise with the external legal advisor or otherwise supervise the engagement.
- 6.5 The Vicar of each parish is responsible to:
- (a) provide leadership to implement this Policy at the congregation and church ministry
  - (b) ensure that all personnel involved in ministry shall comply with this Policy
  - (c) appoint a Parish Safeguarding Policy Officer and deputy
- 6.6 A Parish Safeguarding Policy Officer (“**Parish Safeguarding Officer**”), assisted by his/her deputy, shall:
- (a) serve as the point of contact between the Parish and the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator
  - (b) assist the clergy in implementing this Policy
  - (c) prepare an annual budget for the work
  - (d) assist the Vicar in the screening process of staff and volunteers
  - (e) assist the Vicar in reporting any suspected misconduct to the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator
  - (f) provide feedback and suggestion to the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator for improvement
  - (g) be the first point of contact for complaint or report, unless he/she is directly involved in the case
  - (h) collect, keep, and divulge information in accordance with this Policy
  - (i) keep and dispatch an up-to-date contact list of those government departments, statutory bodies, and non-governmental organizations from which advice or assistance may be sought in relation to safeguarding matters
  - (j) assist the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator in safeguarding matters

## VII Creation of Safe Environment

### 7.1 Definition of volunteers specific to this section

In Section VII, unless otherwise stated, “**volunteers**” mean persons who serve in unpaid positions which give chances for them to be alone with a child or vulnerable adult. In this Policy, “volunteers involving in ministry with children or vulnerable adults”, “volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults” or words to the same effect shall bear the same meaning as “volunteers” as defined above.

### 7.2 Operational procedures

The Province, each Diocese and Parish shall implement operational procedures for:

- (a) screening and recruitment of staff and volunteers
- (b) induction and training of staff and volunteers
- (c) safeguarding practices
- (d) handling disclosure of misconduct
- (e) release of information related to incidents of misconduct according to this Policy

### 7.3 Screening in the recruitment process

7.3.1 Screening of candidates for the admission to holy orders and of candidates for clerical positions is to be governed and administered by the relevant Diocesan Bishop who may delegate the task as he sees appropriate. All clergy joining HKSKH from overseas need to provide valid safeguarding documentation from his/her previous diocese before receiving a licence for the Province.

7.3.2 Screening in the recruitment process is required for volunteers for ministry involving children or vulnerable adults and staff. The screening of staff and volunteers is an important step in preventing abuse in the church. Face-to-face interviews as well as reference checks are necessary.

7.3.3 Volunteers involving in ministry with children or vulnerable adults shall pass a continuous six-month period of regular and frequent church ministry attendance before being allowed to serve. This requirement is to enable the church to know something of the volunteers before ascertaining their suitability to work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

- 7.3.4 Each volunteer working with children or vulnerable adults shall register with the Parish office, with his/her personal particulars and name and contact of one referee who vouches for his/her suitability to care for and work with children or vulnerable adults. *(Amended March 2023)*
- 7.3.5 Each volunteer working with children or vulnerable adults and all staff and vestry members shall complete the Safeguarding Policy Consent Form (Form A), acknowledging that he/she accepts and understands this Policy and agreeing to use it as a basis to strive to build a safe church and commit to safeguard and respect all, especially children and vulnerable adults. *(Amended March 2023)*
- 7.3.6 Each volunteer working with children or vulnerable adults shall complete a Volunteer Self-Declaration Form (Form B-1). He/She shall solemnly declare, among other things, that he/she has NEVER abused a child or vulnerable adult; NEVER been warned or cautioned in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult; NEVER been accused in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult; and NEVER been convicted in a court of law for any sexual criminal offence or for any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult. *(Amended March 2023)*
- 7.3.7 All staff and anyone seeking employment with the church should complete a Staff Self-Declaration Form (Form B-2). He/She shall solemnly declare, among other things, that he/she has NEVER abused a child or vulnerable adult; NEVER been warned or cautioned in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult; NEVER been accused in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult; and NEVER been convicted in a court of law for any sexual criminal offence or for any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult. The declaration shall also include information of the candidate's previous work with children or vulnerable adults if the candidate has previously worked with children or vulnerable adults in another church or parish or any other organization within the past five years, to facilitate due diligence checks as necessary. He/She should undergo a sexual conviction record check conducted by the relevant government agency and authorize HKSKH to access the result. Failure to do so shall lead to the rejection of one's application or, if employment has already been offered, the termination of one's employment. *(Amended March 2023)*
- 7.3.8 (a) Any staff or volunteer who has abused a child or a vulnerable adult, has been convicted in a court of law of any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult, or has been warned or cautioned in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult shall NOT be allowed to serve with children or vulnerable adults in HKSKH. *(Renumbered and amended March 2023)*

- (b) Any staff or volunteer who has been convicted of any sexual criminal offence in a court of law shall NOT be allowed to serve with any ministry in the HKSKH. *(Renumbered and amended March 2023)*
- 7.3.9 If the staff or volunteer has been accused in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult, enquiries should be made as to why the allegation did not lead to any warning or caution. Due discretion for acceptance can be given by the church with support of character reference and each decision should be made on a case-by-case basis. Churches are advised to err on the side of caution in the best interest of children and vulnerable adults. *(Amended March 2023)*
- 7.3.10 If an applicant seeking employment with the church has served or worked with children or vulnerable adults in another Church or Parish or any other organization within the past 5 years, the Parish is to exercise due diligence in checking with the respective churches or parishes or organizations on the suitability of the applicant in working with children or vulnerable adults. *(Amended March 2023)*
- 7.3.11 *(Amended and renumbered as 7.3.8(b) March 2023)*
- 7.3.12 All staff and anyone seeking employment with the church shall submit the names and contact details of two referees who can vouch for their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults. The church office of the Parish will contact the referees to request for supply of necessary information. The decision to offer employment will be dependent on receiving suitable references. *(Amended March 2023)*
- 7.3.13 The Safeguarding Policy Consent Form (Form A), Volunteer Self-Declaration Form (Form B-1), and Staff Self-Declaration Form (Form B-2) are confidential when completed and must be filed and kept in a secured place to which only the Vicar and those authorized by him have access. Information in those forms shall not be disclosed to any third party (the Archbishop, the Bishops, the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator and the Parish Safeguarding Officers are not considered “third party” here) unless in compliance with the requirements of this Policy or otherwise required under the law to disclose to any relevant competent authority. *(Amended March 2023)*
- 7.3.14 Forms A, B-1 or B-2 submitted in relation to a person shall be destroyed when that person ceases to be a member of the church concerned. *(Amended March 2023)*
- 7.3.15 If a person has already been accepted to be a volunteer, he/she will not be required to go through the screening process again if he/she is going to take up another volunteering post at the same time.
- 7.3.16 If there is any doubt as to whether the screening process is applicable to a particular volunteer position, advice should be sought from the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator (as the case may be), whose decision will be final. The Parish Safeguarding Officer and Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator

may also, on his/her own initiative, require that the person who takes up a particular volunteer post to go through the screening process.

#### 7.4 Induction and training

7.4.1 All volunteers in ministry with children or vulnerable adults and all staff and vestry members shall receive a full briefing of this Policy upon their appointment and thereafter must attend an update briefing and training session on this Policy at least once every three years. Participation in a session run by a Parish or a Diocese or the Province is a sufficient condition for fulfilling this requirement. Upon completion of an update briefing and training session, a participant shall fill in and submit a Misconduct Declaration (Form G) at least once every three years (ideally upon completion of an update briefing or training session) in order for one's appointment to be renewed. (*Amended September 2023*)

7.4.2 There will be a grace period of three years starting from the date of adoption of this Policy by the Province within which such volunteers in the ministry with children or vulnerable adults, and all staff and vestry members are required to receive a full briefing and training of this Policy. After the grace period, any new staff member or volunteer must have received training within one year after beginning ministry. (*Amended March 2023*)

7.4.3 The briefing should:

- (a) cover the overriding principles and Safeguarding Practices so that all staff and volunteers are familiar with them. This meeting can also gather feedback to improve and update this Policy.
- (b) raise awareness of the different types of misconduct.
- (c) cover procedures for handling complaints and reporting a possible incident of misconduct.

7.4.4 Training

The Safeguarding Policy Committee shall be responsible for developing training programmes (including update briefings mentioned above) and providing on-going training for all HKSKH clergy, Investigation Taskforce members, vestry members, staff and volunteers.

7.4.5 Consequence of non-compliance

Anyone who fails to comply with the aforesaid requirement shall not be allowed to continue his/her ministry with children or vulnerable adults until full compliance.

#### 7.5 Volunteers in positions not involving children or vulnerable adults

Volunteers who serve in positions that do not in the normal course of event present chances for them to be alone with a child or a vulnerable adult, and those volunteers who

serve only on one-off basis (for example, in an annual walkathon event) are not required to go through the screening, induction or training process as stipulated above. Volunteers who serve only on one-off basis will be required to submit a “Volunteer Declaration and Acknowledgment Form” (Form H) before they undertake the volunteer work. If a proposed volunteer has been convicted of any sexual criminal offence in a court of law, he/she shall NOT be allowed to undertake any volunteer work. Paragraphs 7.3.13 to 7.3.15 shall be applicable to the submission and keeping of Form H. (*Amended March 2023*)

## 7.6 Safeguarding best practices

### 7.6.1 Promotion and education

The following list of Safeguarding Practices helps people to feel safe in ministry and helps in the early detection of problems before they turn into an incident of misconduct.

Parishes shall make this list of Safeguarding Practices available in their offices and websites and post on their notice boards information about this Policy and the contact details of the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator, the Vicar and the Parish Safeguarding Officer. This will encourage members to follow good practices and to report any behaviour that is out of line with these good practices.

### 7.6.2 Prevention

#### 7.6.2.1 *Primary level of prevention:* targeting all before any risk or harm

- (a) Ensure all parties, children, adults, frontline staff, management and volunteers are familiar with the details of this Policy and ensure that there is a zero tolerance on misconducts in the church community.
- (b) To ensure all parties understand the definition of risk and harm, channels to seek help and/or to report actual or suspected risk or harm.
- (c) To ensure the accessibility of this Policy and the contact details of the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator and the Parish Safeguarding Officers.

#### 7.6.2.2 *Secondary level of prevention:* risks identified in the congregation

The church is open to all walks of life, which means that there is the possibility that those with criminal convictions for sexual offences and other forms of abuse and those who may behave in such a way could attend church activities. Where people may pose a risk to others, their position in a congregation will need to be carefully and sensitively assessed to decide whether they pose a present risk to others. The Parish has an important role in contributing to the prevention of risk of abuse and should put in place arrangements to ensure that these

risks are minimized. It is not about monitoring individuals but offering support to lead a fulfilled life.

Members of the congregation should be advised to contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer as soon as practicable, but in any event within 24 hours, if he/she has knowledge or information, supported by sound reasons, that any of the following people worship in the church:

1. Anyone who has been convicted of any sexual or violent offence, and/or who has been prohibited from working with children or vulnerable adults by any organizations.
2. Anyone who admits to being an abuser including non-recent abuse.
3. Anyone who is subject to an investigation for suspected abuse, including possession of indecent images of children, and/or is suspended from their usual role.
4. Anyone who may have behaved in such a manner that may pose a risk to other church members, irrespective of whether they have any criminal record.

Category (4) may include a person in relation to whom:

- an allegation of abuse against a child or adult has been investigated, but the matter has not proceeded to court, or the person has been acquitted, or the matter is currently the subject of proceedings in the criminal or civil courts
- a complaint or grievance has been received alleging inappropriate behaviour, which is not criminal
- there have been concerns about the person's alleged abusive behaviour to another person

If the Parish Safeguarding Officer is made aware, whether being informed or by any other source, of any person in the above categories (“**the concerned person**”) who is intending to participate or is participating in any activity at a parish church, he/she will notify the Vicar immediately.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer will determine the appropriate action to be taken to best safeguard the Parish and its congregation, based on the particular facts and circumstances of each case. He/She will undertake a risk assessment and the formation of a risk management plan, including formulating an agreement with the concerned person to regulate his/her behaviour known as a Safeguarding Agreement.

This will involve the concerned person and the Vicar and the Parish Safeguarding Officer and such other person as the Vicar may deem suitable depending on the case.

If a person is assessed as posing a risk to children or adults, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will support the parish to formulate suitable preventive measures to minimize the risks, with due care to balance the interest between the concerned person and the congregation, which may include the following:

- Form a small group of people to offer pastoral support, friendship and to watch over the concerned person.
- Maintain the highest levels of confidentiality unless there is a breach of the agreement and it is necessary to inform others to protect children or vulnerable adults.
- Agree with the concerned person that he/she should worship elsewhere than the parish that the protected person and his/her family members are worshipping.
- Ensure the concerned person is never offered any official role in the church or position of responsibility where he/she may be trusted by others, for example that of church warden, worship leader or any in which a child or vulnerable adult may, as a result, place trust in that person.
- Consider whether, with the concerned person's agreement and that of any statutory authorities involved, the congregation should be informed.
- Ask the concerned person to sign a Safeguarding Agreement, setting out the parameters of his/her behaviour in the church setting.

Where it is considered appropriate to set a Safeguarding Agreement, the Safeguarding Agreement may include the following elements:

- Attend designated services or meetings only.
- Sit apart from children and/or vulnerable adults.
- Stay away from areas of the building where children or vulnerable adults meet.
- Attend a house group where there are no children or vulnerable adults.
- Decline hospitality where there are children or vulnerable adults.
- Never be alone with children or vulnerable adults.
- Never work or be part of a mixed group with children or vulnerable adults.



- Take no role in the church which gives him or her status or authority as others may deem that person to be trustworthy.

The Vicar shall be involved in or otherwise supervise (or delegate a suitable person to supervise) the drawing up of the Safeguarding Agreement with the concerned person.

The Safeguarding Agreement will be monitored and reviewed at least annually.

Should the concerned person refuse to sign the agreement, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will advise the Vicar and formulate a course of action to reduce the risks to other church members, including preventing the concerned person from participating in church activities.

Any breach of the agreement should be shared with the Parish Safeguarding Officer immediately, who will liaise with the statutory authorities, if required. It should be remembered that it is not possible to prevent a parishioner from attending divine service, unless this is a condition included in a court order or in his/her licence conditions upon release from prison (although, of course, he/she could voluntarily agree not to attend certain services). If a concerned person wishes to attend any service, as part of the safeguarding arrangement (and this could be contained in his/her ongoing Safeguarding Agreement), it is possible for the Vicar to direct a person where to sit, put measures in place to closely supervise him/her (e.g. accompany the individual) and remove that person if he/she causes a disturbance. It is also possible to refuse access to other church activities (e.g. social activities such as tea/coffee after the service and choir and bell ringing activities). If a “disturbance” that may pose a danger to another person is anticipated to be imminent, the police must be notified.

7.6.2.3 *Tertiary level of prevention:* To ensure prompt intervention when harm caused by a misconduct is observed or reported, the incident should be reported to the proper authorities, which include the Vicar, the Parish Safeguarding Officer or leader of the ministry involved. An Incident Team should be formed and meet as soon as practicable to assess the situation and take appropriate action, including the following:

- (a) The Incident Team handling the case should keep clear written records (using Form D) and the data of such report, be it self-report, report by others and identifications by staff.
- (b) In emergency or necessary circumstances such as refusal of cooperation or aggression and threat of violence, the police must be involved promptly to prevent further harm done.

Referral to district police station may avoid unnecessary media involvement except in emergency in which case 999 is preferable.

### 7.6.3 Visibility

Observability is a key factor in minimizing the risk of misconduct. It is also about avoiding putting oneself in a situation that could be questioned or misinterpreted. As much as possible, ministry and activities in general, specifically those with children and vulnerable adults, ought to occur in highly visible areas. This means using open spaces or classrooms with big windows, and avoiding isolated areas.

### 7.6.4 Minimizing one-on-one situations

Most abuses happen in one-on-one situation. The church should strive to minimize all of these situations because they are such high risk. One-on-one unaccompanied training session or interview with children or vulnerable adults should be avoided. In situations such as individual music lessons or individual tuition of any kind for children, the child's parents or the person's carer or another adult must be invited to sit in during the lesson. This is for the tutor's own protection as well as the safety of the child.

In group activities for children (such as Sunday school, junior choir, etc.) it is required for a minimum of two adults (or an adult and an older teenager) to be in attendance when children are being supervised. At least one of the adults must be a staff or volunteer who is registered with the Parish office and has completed the forms and training required in this Policy.

For pastoral counselling session, it is understood that this may be held in private. When this will be held, the priest or counsellor should inform other staff members of the Parish that this will take place. Proper written records should be made after the session on the date, location, the nature of the discussion and any information deemed important. Records should be kept confidential.

### 7.6.5 Appropriate and inappropriate touch

It is acknowledged that, by God's design, appropriate touch is an important way for us to understand that we are loved. However, we should also be sensitive to the context and manner in which a touch would be considered appropriate or otherwise. For example, a hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors. The following guidelines should be remembered when one wishes to show appreciation or support to another person by touch:

- Touch should be made only when it is welcomed. It should immediately cease if it is unwelcomed or the person involved is in any way uncomfortable.
- Any resistance by any individual, especially a child or vulnerable adult, should be immediately respected.

- Touch must be open rather than secretive.
- Touch should show care rather than meeting one's selfish desire.
- Touch could be perceived differently by people of different age or personality or state of mind depending on the occasion.
- Touch would only be appropriate if it communicates respect for the person involved.

7.6.5.1 No one should be hit, slapped, pinched, pushed, held, or assaulted.

7.6.5.2 The following signs of affection are usually considered appropriate:

- Verbal praise
- Side hugs and shoulder to shoulder hugs
- High fives and fist bumps
- Pats on the shoulder, back, or head (when culturally appropriate)

7.6.5.3 For smaller children, the following are generally appropriate with other adults around and within the guidelines above:

- Touching hands, shoulders, and arms
- Hugs
- Holding them when others are present

7.6.5.4 The following behaviour is inappropriate:

- Any unwelcome touch, hugs, kissing and tickling (*Amended March 2023*)
- Showing inappropriate affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child or vulnerable adult
- Sleeping alone with a child or vulnerable adult
- Giving flirtatious or seductive looks
- Showing sexually suggestive content or playing sexually suggestive games
- Showing any form of affection that is unwanted by the individual involved
- Engaging in any behaviour that could be interpreted as sexual in nature
- (*Repealed March 2023*)
- Asking the other person to touch any part of his/her (or the other person's own) body

7.6.6 Appropriate and inappropriate speech

Words are a wonderful way to build one another up. Words can give encouragement and impart grace to the hearer (Ephesians 4:29). We must speak words that give life, such as praise, positive reinforcement, and speak the truth in love. At the same time we must avoid words that harm.

One should refrain from inappropriate verbal interaction such as shaming; belittling; name calling; using harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate a person; cursing; or making derogatory remarks about a person.

Inappropriate verbal interaction that may be considered a harassment of discriminatory nature includes jokes involving sex, the skin colour or race of another person; comments that relate to physique or body development; making sexually suggestive comments; telling inappropriate secrets; or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with anyone, especially children or vulnerable adults. (*Amended March 2023*)

#### 7.6.7 Misconduct, inappropriate relationships, and bullying

Disrespectful or reckless behaviour could also have serious consequences. For example, even if the act of sexual harassment is not intentional, it may be considered as sexual harassment once the act meets the legal definition of sexual harassment. Hence, no matter whether the act is intentional or not, or even if the act is of a playful nature, it may amount to sexual harassment.

All should refrain from developing an inappropriate relationship with anyone, especially a child or vulnerable adult. Any inappropriate sexual conversation between an adult and a child or vulnerable adult is abusive and is strictly prohibited. Any bullying, whether physical, verbal or online, will not be tolerated and should be reported to appropriate staff of the Parish if it is noticed within the Parish. (*Amended March 2023*)

#### 7.6.8 Information technology and communication media

Technology can quickly be turned from a proper use into something that is used for exploitation. The church is responsible to ensure that any technology is used appropriately. We must monitor any use of communication media such as phones, social media, the internet, television, and movies when people are in our care.

The production, possession, and dissemination of child pornography, are against the laws in Hong Kong and Macau. All pornography and any other sexually explicit or suggestive content are strictly prohibited from any communication media in HKSKH. Any suggestion of misconduct or inappropriate conduct or bullying carried on over any communication media, online or otherwise, will not be tolerated and should be reported to appropriate Parish staff. Adults should refrain from developing an inappropriate relationship with a child or vulnerable adult over electronic media (text, instant messaging, etc.), since this is not open and observable. Any sexual conversation between an adult and a child over electronic media is abusive and is strictly prohibited.

#### 7.6.9 Rules specific to ministry with children and vulnerable adults

In addition to the general preventive measures mentioned in this Policy, extra efforts should be made to provide a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults in the church as they are less equipped to defend themselves and more likely to need assistance and protection from harm. The following standards should be observed when working in ministry or carrying out activities with children and vulnerable adults:

- If young children need to use the bathroom, their parent or carer must always be called to assist. Only if the parent or carer cannot be contacted, then the child may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. A same-aged, same-sex peer buddy system may also be used.
- If the child needs assistance in bathrooms, the stall door is to be left partially opened. When assisting, allow for accountability while respecting the privacy of the child as much as possible.
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around.
- Ensure that the child and parents are aware of any activity that requires physical contact and its nature before the activity takes place.

Those working with children and vulnerable adults must NOT:

- allow unknown adults' access to children and/or vulnerable adults. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person
- allow strangers to give a lift to children and/or vulnerable adults in the group
- take photographs on personal phones or cameras of children and/or vulnerable adults without consent of their parents as this means that images are stored on personal devices
- smoke in their presence
- serve alcohol to them or allow them access to alcoholic food or drinks
- arrange social occasions with children outside organized group occasions without consent of their parents

In addition, adults must not:

- give a lift to children and/or vulnerable adults being supervised without consent of their parents or carer without being accompanied by another adult (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. in an emergency for medical reasons. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity)

For all groups and activities,

- a registration form must be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities which should include up-to-date information on parents' contact numbers, medical information (e.g. allergies) and any special needs. The registration forms shall be kept at the Parish office as record for reference.
- an attendance register must be kept and be available at all group meetings. The register shall be kept at the Parish office as record for reference.
- an accident and incident logbook must be available, and all accidents and significant incidents must be recorded (e.g. a fight between children). The logbook should be stored in a secure place and should only be accessible by authorized personnel.
- a first aid kit must be available on the relevant premises.
- parents must sign a consent form before children are transported outside the parish church for church activities.

*Activities outside of church premises*

When taking children or vulnerable adults outside the parish church premises:

- the Vicar and responsible Parish staff must be informed and agree to the activity, and prior consent must be obtained from the parents or carers. The following procedures must be observed:
  - Details of the arrangements must be given to the Vicar in advance.
  - A risk assessment must be undertaken, and confirmation obtained that the activity is covered by the Parish's insurance.
- consent forms duly signed by the parents or carers must be received in advance of the activity. The consent forms should contain details of the activity with venue and any itinerary. Parents or carers should be required to supply contact details for emergency.
- details of the activity and a list of contacts of persons in charge of the activity must be kept in the Parish office with the responsible staff and accessible to the staff on duty for reference in case of emergency.
- a leader must be designated to take responsibility for first aid.

7.6.10 If any staff or volunteer is convicted by a court of law of any sexual criminal offence, his/her employment or involvement in ministry, as the case may be, shall be terminated immediately.

7.6.11 If any staff or volunteer is found to have

- (i) abused any child or vulnerable adult;
- (ii) convicted in a court of law of any inappropriate conduct towards any child or vulnerable adult;
- (iii) been warned or cautioned in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards any child or vulnerable adult,

then such a staff or volunteer shall not be further allowed to serve with children or vulnerable adults in HKSKH.

- 7.6.12 The Vicar in whose Parish the staff/volunteer mentioned in paragraphs 7.6.10 and 7.6.11 serves shall inform the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator at once when the situation described in paragraph 7.6.10 or 7.6.11 is discovered, and the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator shall inform all Parish Safeguarding Officers and Vicars accordingly so that all necessary precautionary measures can be taken for the protection of their congregations.

## VIII

### Procedures for Handling Alleged Misconducts

#### 8.1 Important points to note in all cases

- 8.1.1 The name and contact details of the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator, the Vicar and the Parish Safeguarding Officer should be made accessible publicly such as posting on notice boards and websites for easy reporting.
- 8.1.2 If any of the officers or clergy named in the following procedures is the person suspected of committing the misconduct, a deputy shall be appointed to take their place in the procedures, and shall be supervised by the supervisor of the concerned officer or clergy.
- 8.1.3 If the alleged abuse or misconduct, regardless of its nature, involves a church staff member or a volunteer, that person shall be suspended from any further ministry involvement until he/she is exonerated, for the best interest of the victim and other children/vulnerable adults. Having said that, the presumption of innocence should still apply, and therefore no further disciplinary action should be taken until the complaint is proved.
- 8.1.4 While the staff or volunteer is suspended, pastoral support should still be provided for him/her. The Incident Team should act swiftly to gather the facts to ascertain whether there is a real case or a misunderstanding to avoid prolonged unexplained suspension.

#### 8.2 Procedures applicable to all cases

##### 8.2.1 Designated personnel to receive complaints and incident team

###### *Persons to receive complaints*

- 8.2.1.1 For effective administration, designated personnel should be arranged to receive and proceed to handle the complaints in the following circumstances:
- If an allegation of misconduct is made against the Archbishop, the complaint should be made to the Provincial Chancellor or the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator.
  - If the allegation of misconduct is made against a Bishop, the complaint should be made to the Archbishop or the House of Bishops.



- If an allegation of misconduct is made against the Provincial Chancellor or the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator, the complaint should be made to the Archbishop.
- If the allegation of misconduct is made against a priest or a deacon of the Church, the complaint should be made to the Diocesan Bishop of such Diocese that the priest or deacon belongs to.

(See further below for other cases on the Parish level.)

As the above arrangement may not be readily known by an informant or person making a complaint, upon receipt of a complaint or information, the Parish shall arrange for the complaint or information to be directed to the designated personnel, on a confidential basis, as soon as practicable.

In the above cases, the Incident Team shall be formed by members appointed by the person who is designated to receive the complaint (as mentioned above), and one of such members shall be appointed as the leader of the Team. Members of the Incident Team may come from the Investigation Taskforce (and any other personnel as appropriate). Individuals who are involved in the complaints shall not serve as members of the Incident Team.

The Incident Team should promptly acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant that an investigation has begun.

#### *Complaints in parishes*

- 8.2.1.2 On the parish level, the observant or recipient of the complaint (as the case may be) shall inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible (unless the complaint is against the Parish Safeguarding Officer, in which case the complaint should be made to the Vicar). The Vicar should also be informed at once. The Vicar and the Parish Safeguarding Officer should report to and consult the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator promptly. The Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator will assign an Incident Team to conduct the investigation. The Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator should also promptly acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant that an investigation has begun.

### **Investigation stage**

#### *Priority of immediate safety*

- 8.2.2 As soon as an initial suspicion is observed or received, the first priority is for the observant or the recipient of the complaint (as the case may be) to ensure that all involved are safe.

Sensitivity needs to be given in terms of how many people needed to be present to listen to the reporting so as to reduce unnecessary stress on the part of the alleged victim. The number of times that the alleged victim needs to repeat the incident for reporting purposes should also be minimized.

- 8.2.3 If the incident involved is criminal in nature, or the safety of the person involved is threatened, the church should advise the alleged victim to report it to the police as soon as possible.
- 8.2.4 All complaints shall be taken seriously and impartially by the Incident Team. Throughout the process of investigation and case handling, adequate support should be rendered to all parties involved. A proper balance must be struck between protecting the victim, and respecting the rights of the person against whom an allegation is made. The rights of the person against whom the allegation is made are important and must be given due weight, once the immediate safety and protection of the victim have been assured, but the welfare of the victim must come first. The guidelines for responding to a person disclosing abuse at Annex B should also be followed.
- 8.2.5 All allegations and the identities and personal particulars of all parties concerned must be kept strictly confidential and only those directly involved should be given information as deemed necessary, on a “need to know basis”. This confidentiality is imperative for the safety and protection of the victim(s) and the respondent.

*Initial report*

- 8.2.6 The Incident Team should conduct an initial investigation, meet all relevant parties (if necessary and feasible), keep notes of all conversations with all of them and complete the “Initial Report of Suspected Incident of Misconduct” in Form D. The initial investigation should be conducted within 72 hours after an alleged misconduct has been received under paragraph 8.2.1 above. It is accepted that the information supplied in the form is limited to that known at the time a report is received, and there may be blanks or missing information.
- 8.2.7 The complainant and the victim (or his/her parent or guardian if the victim is a child, provided that the parent or guardian of the child victim is not the alleged perpetrator) should be asked to sign the Initial Report so as to indicate their agreement with the accuracy of the report and a Confidentiality Agreement (Form F). The complainant and the victim should be advised that the salient points of the Initial Report (apart from the identities and personal details of the victim and /or informant) may be disclosed by the Incident Team to the person complained of in order to allow that person to be aware of the complaint and the chance to answer to the complaint during the investigation.
- 8.2.8 After submission of the Initial Report to the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator and the Vicar, unless the incident involved is of a serious or criminal nature and the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator and the Vicar are advised to keep the

report in strict confidence, the Incident Team should contact the respondent and inform him/her that he/she is the subject of an investigation under this Policy. (In some circumstances, the Incident Team may notify the respondent of the complaint prior to the completion of the Initial Report. For example, if it is known that rumours are spreading about the complaint, or the Incident Team is aware that the respondent has knowledge about the complaint, or some interim actions in light of the allegations are required to be taken.).

- 8.2.9 Upon receipt of the Initial Report, the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator shall inform the Diocesan Bishop concerned about the investigation. If the incident is serious, the matter should be reported to the police or the relevant Government authorities.
- 8.2.10 Unless the incident involved is of a serious or criminal nature and the Incident Team is advised to keep the report in strict confidence from the respondent, the Incident Team should give the respondent a copy of this Policy and the Initial Report (the address and telephone number of the victim should be redacted), explain to him/her the complaint process and limitations on confidentiality, and ask the respondent to sign a Confidentiality Agreement (see Form F). The Incident Team should also advise the respondent of his/her right to seek independent legal advice.
- 8.2.11 The Incident Team should advise the respondent of the names of its members and give the respondent at least 21 days to respond to the allegations in writing.
- 8.2.12 The Incident Team shall interview witnesses and review any other documentation that may be relevant to the complaint or incident.

*Meetings with complainant and respondent*

- 8.2.13 The Incident Team should schedule a meeting with the respondent to be held within 2 weeks after the respondent has submitted his/her written reply to the complaint, or within 2 weeks after the expiry of the time given to the respondent to submit such written reply (in the event the respondent does not submit any such reply). In all cases, the respondent will have the opportunity to reply to the specific allegations raised against him/her, and all materials to be relied on by the Incident Team (in so far as it does not prejudice the interests of the alleged victim) must be provided to the respondent for his/her consideration before he/she gives his/her reply.
- 8.2.14 No interview shall be conducted with a child or a vulnerable adult in the absence of his/her parent/guardian or an adult in whom the child or the vulnerable adult trusts.
- 8.2.15 The complainant and respondent shall each have the right to request a separate meeting with the Incident Team during the period of investigation prior to the Incident Team's decision.

- 8.2.16 If the respondent declines to reply to the complaint at all, the respondent should be reminded that the benefit of any doubt may fall in favour of the alleged victim, particularly in the case of a child or vulnerable adult, and the Incident Team may complete the investigation without the respondent's response.
- 8.2.17 At any stage of the investigation, the Incident Team can always consider to consult, report, or refer a complaint to the police or any of the appropriate organizations as set out in Annex A. The police should be informed in one of the following situations: (1) the emergency or safety of the victim is a concern; (2) a crime is suspected to have been committed; or (3) a child is believed to be at risk but the parent or guardian is uncooperative.

### **Completion of investigation**

#### *Final investigation report*

- 8.2.18 The Incident Team shall submit to the Vicar (or the person who received the complaint in circumstances covered by paragraph 8.2.1.1, as the case may be) a written report (the Final Investigation Report in Form E) which shall contain a summary of the complaint made, steps taken, the response from the respondent, and the evidence gathered. The report shall also contain any significant factual disputes with respect to the complaint, findings of fact, and the conclusion as to whether complaint is founded or not. Having received the Report, the Vicar (or the aforesaid person) would have to decide on what action to take and complete the last part of the Final Investigation Report within reasonable time. He shall consult the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator in this regard.

Once the Vicar (or the person mentioned in paragraph 8.2.1.1 referred to above) has completed the Final Investigation Report, he shall submit the same to the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as possible. The Vicar (or the aforesaid person) shall also inform the complainant, the alleged victim and the respondent in writing about the outcome of the investigation and his decision as soon as possible but in any event within 14 days.

Upon receipt of the Final Investigation Report, the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator shall consider whether a mediation should be held. If so, the procedures under the sub-heading "mediation" below should be adopted.

#### *Outcomes on findings*

- 8.2.19 Depending on the findings reached by the Incident Team after the investigation, the possible outcomes are:
- (i) confirmed misconduct;
  - (ii) inappropriate behaviour;
  - (iii) false accusation;
  - (iv) allegation not amounting to misconduct or abuse; and
  - (v) unclear outcome.

#### 8.2.20 Confirmed misconduct

If the misconduct is confirmed, the Vicar shall decide on the action to be taken. The Vicar shall consult the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator in this regard. The Vicar shall bear in mind paragraph 4.5 of this Policy when he decides on the action to be taken, which shall include but not limited to termination of the respondent's employment contract, termination of the respondent's involvement in ministry, removal from leadership responsibility, restriction of the respondent's ministry activities, counselling in the appropriate area, mentoring by an experienced and mature person, boundaries set up regarding activities, etc., depending on the seriousness of the misconduct and all the circumstances of the case. If appropriate, the respondent may also be deemed ineligible for service with ministries involving children or vulnerable adults in the HKSKH again.

Mitigating circumstances may allow more lenient disciplinary action than termination, or, if the involvement in ministry is terminated, later reapplication and restoration to service may be permitted, depending on the severity of the incident and of the situation. However, if the victim is a child or vulnerable adult, the new assignment should not be related to children or vulnerable adults in any event.

An appropriate action plan will be put in place by the Vicar of the Parish (or the person who received the complaint in circumstances covered by paragraph 8.2.1.1, as the case may be) to provide accountability, mentoring, and counselling to overcome both the behaviour and its causes.

Once the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator has been informed about the action in writing, he shall inform all Parish Safeguarding Officers and Vicars accordingly so that all necessary precautionary measures can be taken for the protection of their congregations.

If the confirmed misconduct is committed by an ordained person, without prejudice to the above, the Diocesan Bishop concerned may take further action, and may refer the matter to the Provincial Review Board for adjudication as described by the Canons of HKSKH.

#### 8.2.21 Inappropriate behaviour

If the subject behaviours are not covered by this Policy, but do constitute behaviours that are harmful to children or vulnerable adults, an outcome of inappropriate behaviour will be reached.

A non-compliance of the Safeguarding Practices under this Policy will be considered strong evidence of inappropriate behaviour.

There is a distinction between one-time inappropriate behaviour, which needs to be addressed to prevent recurrence, and repeated inappropriate behaviour which amounts to abuse and may be considered a misconduct.

Paragraph 8.2.20 shall be applicable to cases of “inappropriate behaviour”, and all references therein to “misconduct” shall be taken to mean “inappropriate behaviour”.

#### 8.2.22 False accusation

If it is found that the accusations are false and not made in good faith, the respondent may return to ministry. The church will acknowledge in writing to the respondent for the distress caused by the unfounded accusation, assist the respondent to clear his/her name, and to provide further counselling service if necessary.

Any kind of false accusation not made in good faith can cause severe harm to the community and should be discouraged. Appropriate counselling and/or disciplinary measures will be provided by the Vicar of the Parish to the accuser if it is considered that the accusation was not made in good faith. The severity of disciplinary measures may be decided on the basis of all circumstances including whether the accuser is willing to apologize to the respondent.

#### 8.2.23 Allegation not amounting to misconduct or abuse

If the Incident Team takes the view that the allegation of fact, even if proved, does not amount to any misconduct or abuse as defined in this Policy, then there is no need to take any action against the respondent.

The Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator (or the person who received the complaint in circumstances covered by paragraph 8.2.1.1, as the case may be) may consider arranging a mediation with the agreement of the respondent and the alleged victim if deemed appropriate to clear misunderstanding and mend the relationship. However, the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator (or the aforesaid person, as the case may be) has to be very careful when he/she deals with the alleged victim who may truly believe that he/she has been abused. In such circumstances, counselling service should be provided, if necessary. The Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator (or the aforesaid person, as the case may be) should also pay close attention to the emotion of the alleged victim and work closely with the family of the alleged victim so as to ensure that any adverse impact on the psychological health on the part of the alleged victim which is caused by the rejection of the complaint will be taken care of on a timely basis.

#### 8.2.24 Unclear outcome

If it is not possible to determine for certain what had happened (e.g. because of lack of evidence), the complainant and the respondent should be informed that the investigation is terminated for this reason, but may be revived if there should be new information coming into light. In the meantime, a safety action plan will be put in place for the respondent and the alleged victim. This may include but not limited to:

- ongoing close supervision by the Vicar (or the person who received the complaint in circumstances covered by paragraph 8.2.1.1, as the case may be)
- restrictions on the respondent's ministry to children and vulnerable adults (e.g. never be alone with someone under the age of 18) where there is strong suspicion of misconduct or abuse despite the lack of evidence
- the respondent being provided with counselling or a mentor to help him/her deal with feelings of unfairness, anger, bitterness, etc
- counselling for the alleged victim
- ensuring the alleged victim is in a safe environment
- training of children on practices for keeping safe
- training of volunteers and staff regarding child safety

*External investigations and other follow-ups*

8.2.25 External Investigation

In all instances, the complainant or victim should be made aware that he/she has the right to report the incident to, or seek external assistance from, the police or appropriate organizations. Some useful contacts are set out in Annex A. If the complainant or victim reports the incident to the police, the Incident Team should suspend the investigation until the outcome of the police investigation is known. Paragraph 8.1.3 shall still apply.

8.2.26 Recovery and rehabilitation

In the aftermath of a misconduct incident, the Vicar shall ensure that pastoral care and support are provided to the victim, the respondent and their families, with referral to professional counselling agencies as required.

8.2.27 Handling of materials created or received during the investigation process

During the investigation process, the Incident Team would create or receive a lot of materials and documents in relation to the complaint. For example, members of the Incident Team would take verbatim notes when they interview the victim and all witnesses. Recordings may also be made of those interviews. The Incident Team would complete Form D (Initial Report of Suspected Incident of Misconduct). It would also write a final incident report. All of the above materials must be handled on a strictly confidential basis. All possible measures must be taken to ensure that those materials would not be leaked out by accident.

The following guidelines must be followed:

- (1) At all times, all materials received or created must be kept by the Parish Safeguarding Officer concerned. All documents must, while not in use, be kept in a cabinet with lock (the key(s) to which must be kept by the said Officer alone), so that only the Parish Safeguarding Officer would have access to such documents.

- (2) If the documents are in digital form, they must be saved in the Parish Safeguarding Officer's computer in his/her office. To avoid accidental leakage, soft copies of such documents should never be sent to his/her other electronic devices.
- (3) The Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator, Parish Safeguarding Officers and Incident Team members are reminded that they must not leave the documents, whether in physical form or otherwise, unattended, while they are not working on them.
- (4) The materials received or created must not be disclosed to any third party (the Archbishop, the Bishops, the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator and the Parish Safeguarding Officers are not considered "third party" here) unless the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator takes the view that there is a very legitimate reason for such a third party to be given access to such materials, such as disclosing to legal advisors for the purpose of seeking legal advice or required to be disclosed to relevant authority by a court order. Before any disclosure to such a third party, legal advice should be sought as to whether the consent of the alleged victim and/or the alleged perpetrator must be obtained. If the alleged victim is a child or a mentally incapacitated person, the consent of his/her parent or guardian must be obtained, unless such parent or guardian is the suspected wrongdoer.
- (5) After the case is closed for whatever reason (whether the allegation is proved and whether the respondent is punished), all documents and material gathered during the investigation and a soft copy of all the documents/materials created/received shall be sent to the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator within 14 days for record.
- (6) Since it is not uncommon for an alleged victim to make a report to the police in relation to an incident a very long time thereafter, it is important for all the relevant materials/documents obtained/received/created during the investigation process to be stored properly until both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator have passed away.
- (7) It should be noted that pursuant to section 58 of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486, Laws of Hong Kong), personal data held for the purpose of detection of crime is exempt from the data protection principle concerning access of such data. Hence, if the police requests for such data for investigation purpose, the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator and the Parish Safeguarding Officer concerned are at liberty to disclose such data.

### *Mediation*

8.2.28 It is recognized that any form of misconduct could be harmful for the involved individuals and the community. As a church, healing within the community which



leads to some form of reconciliation should be encouraged as this is at the very core of Jesus' teaching. This process requires some thoughtful pastoral assessment and guidance and should be conducted with care and sensitivity.

- 8.2.29 Following the completion of the investigation, if appropriate in the circumstances, upon the suggestion of the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator or upon request by any relevant party, mediation may take place upon agreement of the complainant, respondent, Vicar and the Parish Safeguarding Officer. The church may refer the complaint to a trained mediator if both the complainant and respondent agree to do so. The fee of the mediator, if any, will be paid by the church. The parties are responsible for their own legal expenses, if incurred. The church will also be a party to the mediation, and, if necessary, shall also sign on the settlement agreement. The reference to "Vicar" in this paragraph shall be replaced by "the person who received the complaint" in circumstances covered by paragraph 8.2.1.1.
- 8.2.30 The mediation process shall take no longer than sixty (60) days from the time the mediation is agreed to be conducted, unless otherwise agreed in writing among the parties.
- 8.2.31 The results of the mediation should be reported by the mediator to the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator. The Vicar (or the person who received the complaint in circumstances covered by paragraph 8.2.1.1) shall be informed of the outcome of the mediation to enable him to consider the appropriate pastoral support to the parties and any follow-up measures which are required to protect the congregation at large. If the parties are ready to reach settlement, the Vicar's view should be sought as to the appropriate measures to be taken to facilitate the settlement.

The reference to "Vicar" in this paragraph shall be replaced by "the person who received the complaint" in circumstances covered by paragraph 8.2.1.1.

### 8.3 Procedures applicable to complaints of sexual misconduct of criminal nature only

- 8.3.1 When there is reasonable cause to believe sexual misconduct of criminal nature has occurred, a report should be made to the police immediately. Not reporting actually interferes with and delays a forensic investigation by the police. This delay can thwart the course of justice. For example, a delay for an internal investigation can lead to a loss of physical evidence (which must be collected by a professional in a timely fashion) and it can alert the alleged offender who may destroy evidence, take other abusive actions, or flee to avoid arrest.

However, there may be situations where the person making the report is uncertain if the sexual misconduct of criminal nature actually happened. In this situation, the church must act in the best interest of the victim and err on the side of caution. Advice can and should be sought from the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator.

8.3.2 Even if the alleged victim is not at risk, the Parish should still continue to monitor the situation and provide pastoral support for the victim and his/her family. If at any time it is considered that the victim is at risk, Child Protection Services (in the case of a child victim) or the police or any other relevant organizations should be called and advice sought from them.

#### 8.4 Children victims

8.4.1 If the alleged victim is a child, the following matters should be borne in mind:

- Ask a staff member, trained volunteer or other responsible adult to join in the listening to the child's account. Any adult listening to the child's account must be aware of the duty of confidentiality. After an initial understanding of the child's account, the child's parent should be informed unless he/she is a suspect.
- Keep calm, listen, and avoid expressing shock or outrage.
- Let the child know that he/she is believed, and assure him/her that it is not his/her fault.
- Regard must be given to the age, maturity, and understanding of a child.
- Avoid planting ideas (or using leading questions) that could taint the child's recollection and account.
- A written verbatim record of the conversation should be made as far as possible. The following points should be borne in mind:
  - Record the details of the concern or allegation.
  - Where it is not appropriate to take notes at the time (usually it will not be), make a written record as soon as possible afterwards or before the end of the day.
  - Record the time, date, location, persons present and how the concern or allegation was received, e.g. by telephone, face-to-face conversation, letter, etc.
  - The record should include details of information provided to that person as well as the information received.
  - Always sign and date the record.
  - Keep it factual.
  - Pass on a copy to the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator.
  - The records should be kept secure and confidential.

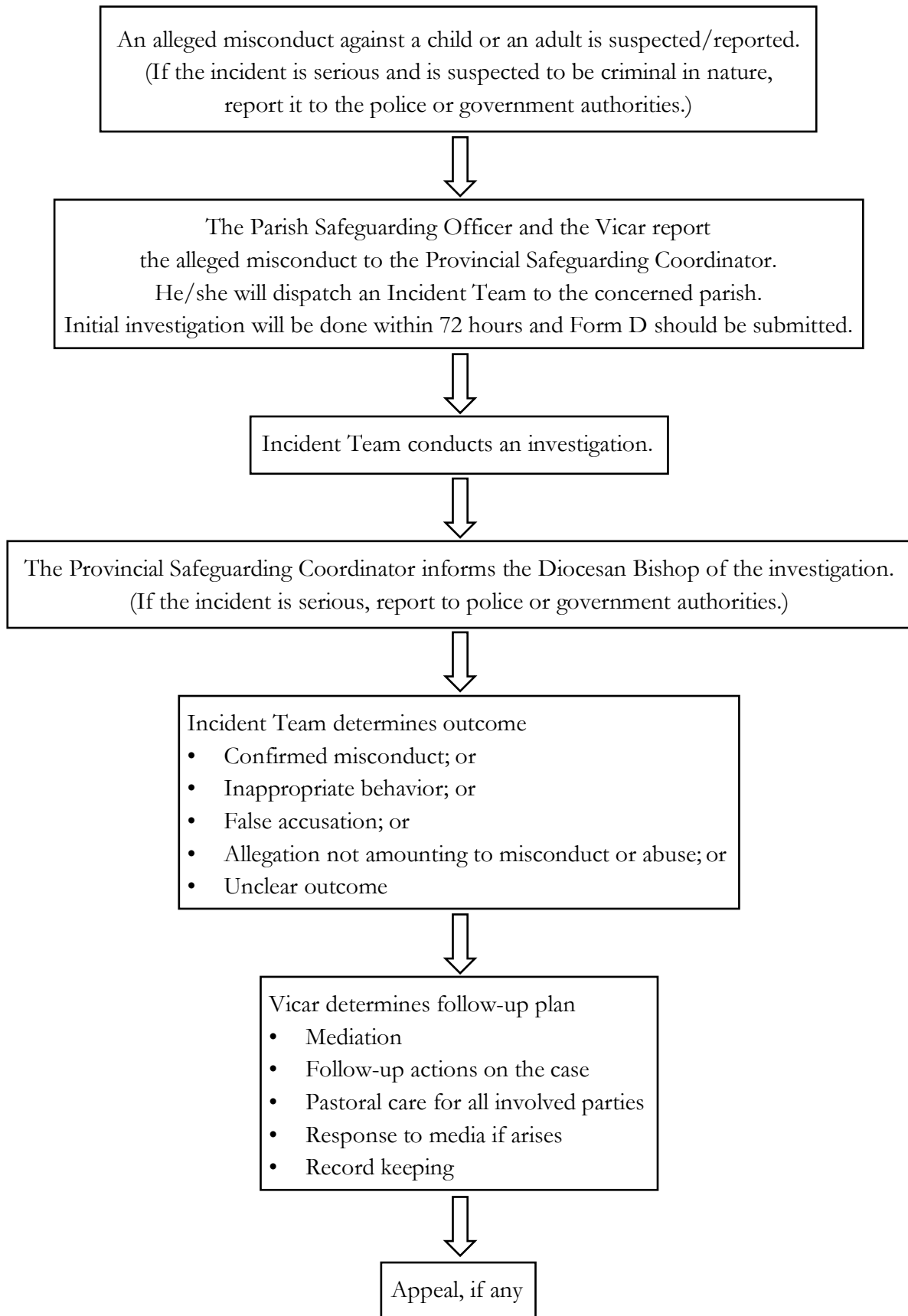
8.4.2 In cases where what the child discloses, or what is witnessed, raises concerns either that a parent is abusing the child or is unable to protect the child from abuse, our safeguarding duty requires that the incident be reported to the Child Protection Services or the police as soon as possible.

## 8.5 Appeal

An appeal of the decision of the Incident Team or the Vicar may be made to the Archbishop (the House of Bishops if the Archbishop is the alleged penetrator) within 30 days of such a decision by lodging a written request with the reasons of the appeal. The Archbishop (or the House of Bishops, as the case may be) may appoint a panel which will review the materials relied on by the Incident Team and re-consider the matter.

Pending the appeal, the Vicar shall decide what measures to implement to protect the congregation at large and whether the follow-up actions referred to in paragraphs 8.2.20 and 8.2.21 should be suspended.

8.6 Flow chart in handling alleged misconduct



## IX Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is violence or other form of abuse in a domestic relationship such as in marriage or cohabitation. It often refers to violence or abuse of spouse or former spouse, elderly or children in the family. It can take a number of forms, including physical, verbal, emotional, economical, sexual, religious and it can range from subtle, coercive to violently aggressive resulting in physical injury or emotional trauma such as fear, shame, shock, injury to a serious extent of homicide or suicide.

Members of the church should be encouraged to build a supportive community that is willing to act as a good listener. If the church is aware or suspects that:

- any person, his/her children or family member is/are assaulted or threatened by his/her spouse/partner or any other family member, such person should be advised to seek help as soon as possible from a professional body, and in case of severity or emergency, report the matter to the police immediately
- a child is suffering from abuse or neglect by his/her family, the appropriate professional body should be approached to seek advice, and in the case of severity or emergency, the matter should be reported to the police immediately

If it appears that the person needs to move away from home and find somewhere else to stay so as to ensure the safety of himself/herself and/or his/her children, assistance may be given to him/her to seek legal advice, or to contact the police or other professional agencies to seek protection such as an application of a Care or Protection Order. Some useful information are set out at Annex A.

The church is ready to provide pastoral support to victims of domestic abuse, who should be encouraged to talk to a member of the clergy.

If you suspect someone you know at the church is a victim of domestic abuse, it is important that you give him/her your support, and act as his/her good listener. If necessary, encourage the victim to seek professional help, or to talk to the clergy. It is dangerous to assume that the victim will be alright, and take no action in giving him/her your hand, for you could save a life if you act on a timely basis. Report to the police if the victim's life at risk.

## **X**

### **Responding to Enquiries**

#### 10.1 Media Enquiries

A case known to the media must be handled with care. No one may speak on behalf of, or in the name of, the church unless specifically authorized to do so. If approached by the media, the case should be referred at once to the official spokesperson of HKSKH (details of whom should be made known to the Parishes). An emergency meeting should be held prior to any media contact for the spokesperson to grasp details of the case for media interviews. Principles of confidentiality must be preserved to protect relevant parties' safety and well-being, yet no facts should be hidden or distorted at all times.

#### 10.2 Other Enquiries

The Vicar or a person designated by him/her will respond to all inquiries within the Parish, and all other workers will be instructed to politely direct all inquiries to that person. This person should use an approved, prepared statement to convey news to members of the church. Media enquiries are to be handled according to paragraph 10.1 above.

#### 10.3

The church should not release any information until its factual content has been properly confirmed. The church should also safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved by not releasing names or other identifying information, especially that concerning minors.

## **XI Review of This Policy**

This Policy shall be evaluated and updated when need arises and at least once every three years.

## **XII References**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), applied to Hong Kong in 1994.

Protecting Children from Maltreatment—Procedural Guide for Multi-disciplinary Cooperation (Revised 2020), Social Welfare Department, Hong Kong SAR

Procedural Guidelines for Handling Adult Sexual Violence Cases (Revised 2007), Working Group on Combating Violence, Social Welfare Department, Hong Kong SAR

Guidelines for Handling Mentally Handicapped / Mentally Ill Adult Abuse Cases (July 2012) (Chinese only), Social Welfare Department, Hong Kong SAR



**XIII**  
**Annexures and Forms**

## **Annex A: Contacts**

### **Government, Statutory and Non-Governmental Organizations**

Emergency Call	999
Social Welfare Department Hotline	2343 2255
Equal Opportunities Commission	2511 8211
Against Child Abuse	2755 1122
End Child Sexual Abuse Foundation	2889 9933
Rain Lily	2375 5322
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals CEASE Crisis Centre	18281
Caritas Specialised Treatment and Prevention Project Against Sexual Violence	3104 1331
Caritas Project for Adult Survivors of Childhood Trauma	2649 9900
Harmony House	
24-Hour Woman Hotline	2522 0434
Man Hotline	2295 1386
Children Hotline	2751 8822

### **Services Associated with Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui**

St James' Settlement	2574 5201
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Counselling Service	2713 9174
St John's Cathedral Counselling Service	2525 7207 / 2525 7208

*A fuller contact list is obtainable from the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator or the Parish Safeguarding Officer.*

## **Annex B: Guidelines for responding to a person disclosing abuse**

### **Respond**

*Do:*

- listen.
- take what is said seriously.
- only use open questions (open questions begin with words like: who, what, when, where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no”).
- remain calm.
- take into account the person’s age and level of understanding.
- check, if face to face, whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.
- check what the person hopes to happen as a result of the disclosure.
- tell the child or adult what you are going to do next.

*Do not:*

- make promises that cannot be kept (e.g. that you won’t share the information).
- make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- do a physical or medical examination.
- challenge or show doubt of the person’s story.

### **Record**

- Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the authorities.
- Record the date, time, place and actual words used, including any swear words or slang.
- Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.
- Do not speculate or jump to conclusions.

**Form A: Safeguarding Policy Consent Form**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui  
Safeguarding Policy Consent Form  
Consent Form**

(CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED)

*Note:* All parish council / vestry members, applicants for paid posts, and applicants for voluntary posts working with children or vulnerable adults must complete this form and return it to the Vicar (priest-in-charge) or his/her delegate of the parish in a sealed envelope.

I accept and understand the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Safeguarding Policy and agree to use it as a basis to strive to build a safe church and commit to safeguard and respect all, especially children and vulnerable adults.

**Full name (as on identity document)**

(English) \_\_\_\_\_ (Chinese) \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact number** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parish** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry(ies) involved** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Form B-1: Volunteer Self-Declaration Form**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui  
Safeguarding Policy  
Volunteer Self-Declaration Form**

(CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED)

*Note:* All applicants for voluntary posts working with children or vulnerable adults must complete this form and return it to the Vicar (priest-in-charge) or his/her delegate of the parish in a sealed envelope.

I solemnly declare that I have

- NEVER abused a child or a vulnerable adult;
- NEVER been warned or cautioned in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult;
- NEVER been accused in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult;
- NEVER been convicted in a court of law of any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult; and
- NEVER been convicted in a court of law of any sexual criminal offence.

*(Please cross out any UNTRUE statement(s).)*

I confirm that the following person has agreed to be contacted to vouch for my suitability to care for and work with children or vulnerable adults:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

I declare that the personal data voluntarily provided by me on this declaration form is accurate and up-to-date to the best of my knowledge. I undertake to notify Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui promptly should any of the statements above be no longer true.

I understand that if I withhold any relevant information, or present false or inaccurate information in this declaration, the church reserves the right to terminate my appointment with immediate effect.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Full name (as on identity document)**

(English) \_\_\_\_\_ (Chinese) \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact number** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parish** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry(ies) involved** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

*For a volunteer below 18 years of age*

The following is to be completed by the volunteer's parent / guardian:

I \_\_\_\_\_ (name) confirm that the declarations above  
made by \_\_\_\_\_ (volunteer's name) are correct to the best of my  
knowledge.

**Parent's / Guardian's signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Form B-2: Staff Self-Declaration Form**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui  
Safeguarding Policy  
Staff Self-Declaration Form**

(CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED)

*Note:* All applicants for paid posts must complete this form and return it to the Vicar (priest-in-charge) or his/her delegate of the parish in a sealed envelope.

I solemnly declare that I have

- NEVER abused a child or a vulnerable adult;
- NEVER been warned or cautioned in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult;
- NEVER been accused in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult;
- NEVER been convicted in a court of law of any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult; and
- NEVER been convicted in a court of law of any sexual criminal offence.

*(Please cross out any UNTRUE statement(s).)*

I hereby give my consent to the church for contacting the church(es), parish(es) or organization(s) set out below (if any) so as to obtain necessary information about myself:

*(To be filled in by a candidate who has worked with children or vulnerable adults in another church or parish or any other organization within the past five years).*

Name of establishment	Contact person	Capacity	Contact number

*(Please continue on additional sheet(s) if necessary.)*

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I confirm that the following persons have agreed to be contacted to vouch for my suitability to care for and work with children or vulnerable adults:

***Referee 1***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

***Referee 2***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm that the information contained on this form is true and accurate. After I have been appointed, I agree to inform the church if I am charged, cautioned or convicted of any offence that may affect my suitability to continue to work with children or vulnerable adults.

I understand that if I withhold any relevant information, or present false or inaccurate information in this declaration, the church reserves the right to terminate my employment or appointment, as the case may be, with immediate effect.

**Full name (as on identity document)**

(English) \_\_\_\_\_ (Chinese) \_\_\_\_\_

**Parish** \_\_\_\_\_ **Contact number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_



**Form C: Character Reference Form**

*(Repealed 21 March 2023)*

**Form D: Initial Report of Suspected Incident of Misconduct (Record of Allegation)**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui  
Initial Report of Suspected Incident of Misconduct  
(Record of Allegation)**

(CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED)

*Note:*

Please fill in this form with the information that is known. It is understood that there may be blanks or missing information. This form is to be filled out by the Incident Team and submitted to the Provincial Safeguarding Policy Coordinator and the Vicar of the parish when it is completed.

Please do provide support, care and safety to the victim(s), the alleged offender(s) and their families.

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Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person making report: \_\_\_\_\_

Church/Organization making report: \_\_\_\_\_

Date suspected abuse occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of suspected abuse (please see Section V of the Safeguarding Policy):

Sexual misconduct

Sexual assault

Sexual harassment

Sexual exploitation

Bullying

Neglect or abuse of a child

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

*Information regarding the Person suspected of misconduct*

Name of suspected perpetrator: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the Church (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

*Information regarding suspected victim*

Name of suspected victim: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the Church (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Report:**

Describe what occurred specifically, including where, when, specific actions, number of times it occurred, any threats, etc.

What led the complainant to suspect/become aware of the misconduct?

Date, time and setting in which the complainant became aware of the suspected misconduct :

Anecdotal records that support suspicion of misconduct?

Person(s), if any, present at the scene or aware of the incident

*Part 1: Actions Taken:*

Describe any arrangements that have already been made for counseling, and/or support for the alleged victim.

Describe the arrangements that have been made to ensure the safety of the suspected victim.

*Part 2: Other information (if available)*

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**Previous Reports**

Are you aware if the perpetrator has been accused or convicted of other misconduct in the past?  
If so, please describe:

Are you aware if the victim has experienced other misconduct in the past? If so, please describe:

**Other Victims**

Are there other people who might be potential victims (classmates, siblings, others who were in the same location, attended the same event, etc.)?

Name of the person completing the form: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Form E: Final Investigation Report**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui  
Safeguarding Policy  
Final Investigation Report**

(CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED)

(To be filled out by the Incident Team)

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Name of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of (alleged) perpetrator: \_\_\_\_\_

When (alleged) misconduct occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Where (alleged) misconduct occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

When the complaint was made: \_\_\_\_\_

Members of Incident Team (and their positions in the parish):

Was the suspicion confirmed? \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of the (alleged) misconduct:

Sexual misconduct

Sexual assault

Sexual harassment

Sexual exploitation

Bullying

Neglect or abuse of a child

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of the (alleged) misconduct:

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Please describe the further investigation and follow up actions after the Initial Report was filed, including any evidence obtained:

Response of the (alleged) perpetrator, if any:

Any significant factual disputes:

Finding of facts:

Was contact with any external body made?

Please describe the consultation made with external authority/agency: (if any)

Type of external authority/agency: Clinical psychologist / Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the pastoral care/support provided for the people involved in the case:



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Any other pertinent information:

Outcome of investigation:

- Confirmation of sexual misconduct
- Confirmation of physical and emotional abuse
- Confirmation of inappropriate behaviour
- False Accusation
- Allegation not amount to misconduct or abuse
- Unclear outcome
- External investigation recommended
- Other (please specify)

Decision and Follow-up Action based on the outcome of investigation:

Vicar of the Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Safeguarding Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Form F: Confidentiality Agreement**

**Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui  
Safeguarding Policy  
Confidentiality Agreement**

As a first principle, every effort will be made on the part of all parties concerned to hold in confidence information obtained in the process of a complaint made under the Safeguarding Policy, including identifying information about any persons involved. There will be times when this information is required to be disclosed by law, for the purposes of conducting a full and fair investigation, where safety issues exist, or where confidentiality is expressly waived by the parties.

Matters of confidentiality may bear directly not only upon the proper process of investigation, but on the well-being and recovery of individuals involved. When an offence has been alleged and an investigation is in process, immediate colleagues may become privy to confidential information. To promote collegial support, thereby empowering one another with confidence and hope, those aware of allegations are admonished against gossip and rumour and are required to hold such information as confidential. While the investigation is on-going, anyone involved as a complainant, respondent, or witness will be instructed not to discuss the complaint, incident, or the investigations with anyone unless necessary to obtain advice about their rights and well-being.

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Name) have received and read the Confidentiality statement above and understand it.
2. I agree to hold in confidence information obtained in the process of a complaint made, and investigations initiated, under the Safeguarding Policy.
3. I agree and commit not to discuss this process except with members of my immediate family, who agree to be bound by this same confidentiality provision, except to the extent that such disclosure may be required by law or to permit me to obtain legal, pastoral or other professional advice.
4. I understand that if I have any questions about this agreement and my rights and responsibilities under it, I may speak with the Parish Safeguarding Policy Officer.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Form G: Misconduct Declaration**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui  
Safeguarding Policy  
Misconduct Declaration**

(CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED)

*Note:* Each volunteer working with children or vulnerable adults and all staff must complete and submit this form to the Vicar (priest-in-charge) or his/her delegate of the parish in a sealed envelope at least once every three years (ideally upon completion of an update briefing or training session).

I solemnly declare that I have

- NEVER abused a child or a vulnerable adult;
- NEVER been warned or cautioned in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult;
- NEVER been accused in relation to any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult;
- NEVER been convicted in a court of law of any inappropriate conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult; and
- NEVER been convicted in a court of law of any sexual criminal offence.

*(Please cross out any UNTRUE statement(s).)*

I declare that the personal data voluntarily provided by me on this declaration form is accurate and up-to-date to the best of my knowledge. I undertake to notify Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui promptly should any of the statements above be no longer true.

**Full name (as on identity document)**

(English) \_\_\_\_\_ (Chinese) \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact number** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parish** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry(ies) involved** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFIDENTIAL**

*For a volunteer below 18 years of age*

The following is to be completed by the volunteer's parent / guardian:

I \_\_\_\_\_ (name) confirm that the declarations above  
made by \_\_\_\_\_ (volunteer's name) are correct to the best  
of my knowledge.

**Parent's / Guardian's signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Form H: Volunteer Declaration and Acknowledgement Form**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui  
Safeguarding Policy  
Volunteer Declaration and Acknowledgement Form**

(CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED)

*Note:* For volunteers who serve only on one-off basis.

In relation to my volunteering at the \_\_\_\_\_ [name of event] \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ [date] \_\_\_\_\_,  
I declare that I have not been convicted of any sexual criminal offence in a court of law.

I accept and understand the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Safeguarding Policy and agree to use it as a basis to strive to build a safe church and commit to safeguard and respect all, especially children and vulnerable adults.

**Full name (as on identity document)**

(English) \_\_\_\_\_ (Chinese) \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact number** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parish** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry(ies) involved** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

*For a volunteer below 18 years of age*

The following is to be completed by the volunteer's parent / guardian:

I \_\_\_\_\_ (name) confirm that the declarations above  
made by \_\_\_\_\_ (volunteer's name) are correct to the best  
of my knowledge.

**Parent's / Guardian's signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Acknowledgments

It is with grateful heart that we acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the following members of the HKSKH Safeguarding Taskforce for producing this Policy:

The Rt Revd Matthias Der (Chair)  
Ms Fredi Lam  
The Revd Franklin Lee  
Ms Shui-fong Lee  
Mrs Priscilla Lui

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The Hon. Dr Moses Cheng (Chancellor of HKSKH)  
Ms Terese Wong (Registrar of HKSKH)  
Mr Kerby Lau (Barrister-at-Law)

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**HKSKH Safeguarding Policy Committee**