



AG-NZ SAFER CHURCHES

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

OCTOBER 2021



NEW ZEALAND
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN NZ INC CHURCHES

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**AG-NZ People includes: officers or employees of AG-NZ National Office and ministries, AG-NZ Credential holders; officers of a Member Church; employees, volunteers and other members of a congregation of a Member Church who may or will have a Direct Role with children and young people; contractors (external agents) engaged by the AG-NZ or a Member Church who may or will have a Direct Role with children and young people.*

INTRODUCTION:

AG-NZ is committed to protecting Children and Young People through the local church.

AG-NZ strives for a Christ centred and inclusive approach that is committed to providing opportunities for all people to have caring relationships.

This Child Protection Policy is a policy of the AG-NZ Movement that reflects the moral and ethical standards of the Movement as declared in The Assemblies of God in New Zealand Inc Constitution & By-Laws, and the AG-NZ Code of Conduct for Ministry.



PURPOSE OF OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

- To provide for and promote the care, protection and wellbeing of Children or Young People in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment and the right to be protected from harm, and to maximise opportunities for Children or Young People to realise their full potential;
- To provide for and promote the provision of services that foster the health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity of Children or Young People including by ensuring that persons responsible for Children or Young People within the movement are appropriately performing their responsibilities;
- To promote caring attitudes and responses towards Children or Young People, so that the need for appropriate nurture, care and protection is understood, risks to a Child's wellbeing are quickly identified, and any necessary support, protection or care is promptly provided;
- To recognise the family (care givers / whānau) as the primary means of providing for the nurture, care and protection of Children or Young People and to accord high priority to supporting and assisting the family to carry out its responsibilities to Children or Young People;

- To promote and recognise the need to strengthen, preserve and promote positive relationships between the Child and the Child's parent, (care givers / whānau), family members , leaders, mentors, spiritual advisors and significant others; and
- To provide for and promote a Child safe culture within our churches that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access an AG-NZ programme, service or managed facility.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

The AG-NZ Child Protection Policy acknowledges the following legislation:

- Treaty of Waitangi, 1840
- Oranga Tamariki Act, 1989
- Family Violence Act, 2018
- Children's Act, 2014
- Privacy Act, 2020

Information regarding any abuse is highly sensitive and must be handled with appropriate confidentiality. In dealing with such information, our Churches will comply with the Privacy Act, in particular referring to the Principles Section 2: 1-12.

HOW THE AG-NZ WILL INTEGRATE TANGATA WHENUA HERITAGE INTO THE POLICY

The AG-NZ recognise the unique place of Māori as tangata whenua in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The AG-NZ also recognise the historical nature of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in expressing an aspect of the heart of God for Māori as partners with the British Crown.

The members of the AG-NZ Executive Presbytery are therefore committed to working with Māori in the development and review of this policy and its implementation.

Such work will be carried out by the Executive Presbytery (or their delegate/s) in consultation with Māori leaders or kaumatua. It is envisaged that this work will involve consideration and application of the teachings of the New Testament with regard to the family and relevant Maori values and practices.

As background to this activity it should be borne in mind that the constituents of AG-NZ include people drawn from many different racial and socio-economic groups, embracing people of European, Asian, African and Pacific Islands descent.

WHO DOES THE POLICY APPLY TO?

The AG-NZ Child Protection Policy, adopted by the AG-NZ General Council, underpins other policies and procedures in relation to the protection of Children and Young People that the AG-NZ and its Member Churches have in place for their Ministers, AG-NZ credential holders, staff, volunteers and other regular attendees of a congregation.





Member Churches are required to adopt the AG-NZ Child Protection Procedures, developed by the Executive Presbytery as a minimum standard.

The AG-NZ Child Protection Policy covers all AG-NZ People.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE AG-NZ CHILD PROTECTION POLICY?

The AG-NZ General Council is responsible for the development and endorsement of the AG-NZ Child Protection Policy. It delegates the implementation of the AG-NZ Child Protection Policy to the AG-NZ Executive Presbytery, National Office, Regional Over-seers, Ethnic Leaders, Member Churches, and Credential Holders.

The role of each entity in relation to the implementation and enforcement of the AG-NZ Child Protection Policy is detailed in the table below.

Entity	Role/Responsibility
AGNZ Executive Presbytery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate the AG-NZ commitment to the AG-NZ Child Protection Policy; • Ensure all AG-NZ People understand their obligations in accordance with the AG-NZ Child Protection Policy; • Support review on an annual cycle as a minimum, of the AG-NZ Child Protection Policy or at a time governed by Government legislation, regulations or organisational learnings that requires a change to the AG-NZ Child Protection Policy; • Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of transparency and continued improvement and accountability to Child protection; • Develop and implement corresponding Child Protection Procedures as a set of minimum requirements for member Churches

Entity	Role/Responsibility
National Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate training and learning resources are provided to allow effective implementation; • Proactively share resources and experience in the development of Child safe initiatives as they are identified; • Ensure the AG-NZ Child Protection Policy is implemented and adhered to by member Churches and AG-NZ Credential Holders;
National Children's Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Child Protection Policy and Procedures; • Promote training and learning resources.
Boards and Senior Ministers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all AG-NZ People within the respective Member Church understand, and adhere to, their obligations in accordance with the AG-NZ Child Protection Policy; • Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of Child protection. • Adopt the approved Child Protection Practice Procedures as a minimum standard

Entity	Role/Responsibility
Regional Overseers and Ethnic Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop opportunities for training and discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of Child protection.

WHAT IS OUR COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE?

AG-NZ and Member Churches recognise that Children or Young People under the age of 18 years need special care and protection.

AG-NZ and its Member Churches make the following commitments to the Children or Young People and families who access its activities, programmes, services and facilities.

Our commitment to Children or Young People:

- We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all Children or Young People who access any of our activities, programmes, services or facilities.
- We are committed to providing Children or Young People with positive and nurturing experiences.
- We will support families and communities to promote Children or Young People's healthy development and wellbeing.
- We will take action to ensure that Children or Young People are protected from harm by identifying and addressing risk factors as soon as practicable.
- We will take action to ensure that Children or Young People are not harmed during the time that they are involved with any of our activities, programmes, services or facilities.
- We will ensure that Children or Young People have access to adequate support to promote safety and intervene early.

We will listen to Children or Young People and appropriately address any concerns that they raise with us in the least intrusive way possible that is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the Child or Young Person from harm and promote the Child or Young Person's development.

Our commitment to parents, carers, and whānau:

- We are committed to supporting parents, carers, and whānau to protect their Children or Young People.
- We will offer assistance that builds on a family's strengths, is sensitive to their cultural and religious beliefs and empowers them to meet the changing needs of their Children or Young People.
- We are committed to communicating honestly and openly with parents, carers, and whānau about the wellbeing and safety of their Children or Young People if it is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the Child or Young Person from harm and promote the Child or Young Person's development.
- We aim to be transparent in our decision-making with parents and carers as long as doing so does not compromise the safety of Children or Young people.
- We will seek to involve parents whenever possible and practicable in the decision-making process that impacts on them and the Children or Young People.

In the statements in this section, references to “we” and “our” are references to the AG-NZ Executive Presbytery, Member Churches and Credential Holders.

Our commitment to AG-NZ People:

In order to fulfil our obligations to the protection of Children or Young People, the AG-NZ Executive Presbytery, and Credential Holders make the following commitments to AG-NZ People.

- We are committed to providing AG-NZ People with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles.
- We are committed to providing AG-NZ People with regular training and development.
- We will work to ensure that AG-NZ People have access to a senior person in their Church to assist in making decisions in relation to any action required to protect Children or Young People from harm.
- We will ensure that AG-NZ People are aware of the formal recruitment, screening and employment practices of the AG-NZ in relation to individuals with specific roles in working or volunteering with Children or Young People and families.

Our commitment to ensuring a Child safe organisation:

- We are committed to using best practice standards in the recruitment, screening and employment of AG-NZ People.
- We will work to create an environment in which Children or Young People are safe and feel safe.
- We will work to ensure that AG-NZ People do not harm Children or Young People who are involved with our programmes, services or facilities.

Our commitment is to ensure that AG-NZ People receive support and training about this Policy.

On a regular basis, we will ensure that all AG-NZ People are provided with training to understand and recommit to this Policy and the approved Child Protection Practice Procedures. Such training will also form part of any induction we provide to AG-NZ People.

