

baptist
churches of new zealand
te hāhi iriiri o aotearoa

SAFETY FIRST

Safety Management for Children's
Ministries in NZ Baptist Churches



The aim of this resource is to:

- Assist practitioners in the development and implementation of a Safety Management System in their local church or similar context.
- Provide SAMPLES and or EXAMPLES for practitioners to adapt for their context.
- Provide a reference point for the review of existing systems.

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INTRODUCTION

The leadership of the Baptist Churches of New Zealand recognises the value of children in our local churches as well as in the wider community. Recognising the impact of harm towards children, we make a commitment to do all we can to provide safe, positive environments for the development of children, free from the risk of harm.

We do this by encouraging all churches to:

- Establish appropriate behavioural guidelines and boundaries.
- Establish appropriate procedures.
- Screen those who work with children.
- Clarify the duty of care responsibilities for such people.
- Ensure that if harm occurs it is dealt with appropriately.

The purpose of this manual is to assist local churches to develop policies and procedures, generally referred to as a SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SMS) that is used to create and control a safe environment for children and the people who work with them.

This publication is designed to accompany an SMS seminar as a repository of examples. It is not a coherent system on its own. It is designed to enable persons needing to create a Safety Management System to have access to best practice and proven templates.

The care of all children is served when we:

- Become better informed about the safety and care of children.
- Work towards reducing the factors that contribute to the harm of children.

- Listen to children and treat them with dignity and respect.
- Educate, train and support all who care for children.
- Take action on suspicions we may have about children who may be at risk.
- Introduce standards, principles and procedures to protect children from harm and to protect innocent adults from wrongful accusation.

In recent times, the church has come under closer scrutiny by society through the media and government. Unfortunately, the church has sometimes fallen short of her responsibilities in the area of extending care to children. While this attention has brought with it negative sentiment, it has stirred many churches into taking a closer look at our obligation to do all we can to protect the lives of those entrusted to our care.

It is our hope that these guidelines and templates will enable your church to move to the cutting edge of child protection in all your ministries, so that children can grow and develop their faith in Christ in safe environments.

This workbook is not exhaustive in all that can be written in regard to the protection of children, but gives you a foundation from which the local church can begin to build a safe ministry for our children.

Further information and training

Two excellent organisations that offer further training and resources in the area of child protection are:

SafeHere: www.safehere.org

Child Matters: www.childmatters.org.nz

Other Safety Manuals available online:

Salvation Army - Safe to Serve

This Safety First manual for Children & Family Ministries comes under your church's wider Health and Safety System, which can be accessed directly from your church administration.

If your church requires more information regarding Health and Safety Systems, please contact the Baptist National Centre on 09 526 0333 or email info@baptist.org.nz

SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS OVERVIEW

A Safety Management System is a name given to a coherent collection of policy, practices and procedures that are all aimed at providing a safe and rewarding interaction for all participants.

The purpose of a Safety Management System is to provide a non-complex, robust procedure for all leaders and helpers to follow when planning and running any activity that has associated risk or risks attached to it.

Safety Management Systems are required to ensure that programme organisers go through the necessary steps to ensure the safety of participants. In legal terminology this is referred to as providing the “required duty of care,” while acting “in loco parentis” (in place of the parent).

In and of themselves, Safety Management Systems don’t guarantee the safety of participants but they do provide guidance and an umbrella type protection for event organisers. They are also a mechanism for an organisation to require and ensure a certain standard of performance and competence from those entrusted with the responsibility for others safety.

It is more than likely that a system of some sort already exists in your organisation, albeit something less than what is recommended here.

Many relatively effective systems exist undocumented. This was certainly true of the past where procedures were often assimilated by new recruits as, “the way things are done.” While this methodology was appropriate to the past, it no longer meets the expectations and or requirements of best practice in the 21st Century.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 covers everybody on the church premises, workers (employers, employees, and volunteers), and visitors. In a nutshell the church ensures that, as far as they are practicably able, anyone on site is provided with a safe environment and not harmed. It is the responsibility of ALL workers to reduce the risk of accidents and injuries that may course personal injury, occupational illness or property damage. It is therefore, the responsibility of the eldership and leadership of the church to ensure that all people who come onto the church property are kept safe.

Objectives:

The primary objective of any SMS is to help leaders provide high quality, objective achieving, inherently safe programmes and environments.

The secondary objectives are:

- To match leader skill, knowledge and experience with activity requirements.
- To inform the leader training curriculum.
- To provide documented evidence of safe practice.

DESIGNING A SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SMS)

The following two pages show how to use this manual to develop a SMS for your church. If you have questions or need further assistance please contact us (see page 13 for contact details).

All ministries must establish a simple and workable Safety Management System. It must have a very low administrative overhead. The SMS must also add value to the overall programme, rather than detract or distract from it.

1 Read the overview and design of a Safety Management System (SMS) – page 4

2 Select the appropriate size for your ministry
– see size breakdowns on pages 7, 9 & 12 for small, medium and large churches



3 Review the SMS table for your size – the three tables are found on pages 7, 9, 12

4 Write a SMS Overview for your church
– see examples on pages 8, 10, 13

5 Include items as per the table:

- Policies
- Procedures/guidelines
- Forms/checklists

6 You're finished. Well done!
Now it is time to train your volunteers and share this with your leadership team.

Step One:

Read through the overview of an SMS on page 4 (or others you may have access to).

Step Two:

Determine the scope of the SMS required, based on the size and complexity of the ministry or operation/ programme or organisation you are involved in. Use the tables on the following pages.

Good guidelines for determining needs are:

- How many participants are involved?
- How many leaders are involved?
- How many staff is involved?
- Are most events held on site?
- Are some or all events held off site?
- What equipment is in normal use?
- Is specialised equipment used as part of the programme?

Step Three:

Use the tables on pages 7, 9 and 12 to determine:

- Policies needed (including guidelines and procedures if these are to be incorporated in the policy.)
- Guidelines or procedures required that will not be included in the policy statements.
- Forms or checklists that are required.
- Check what you already have in place and review its effectiveness.

Step Four:

Start your SMS overview document. This document needs to be able to adapt to changes (see the examples on pages 8, 10 and 13).

Think carefully about the system you are creating:

- Flowcharts and mindmaps can be useful design tools.
- Are the expectations for everyone involved in your ministry easy to understand and are they achievable?

Step Five:

Collect, edit and collate all the documentation you will need to complete your SMS. Use the templates and examples in this manual but adapt them to fit your own requirements and situation. A copy of the full SMS should be kept in the church office.

Step Six:

Consider how you are going to communicate your SMS (and the reasons for it) to the relevant people, especially to leaders and others involved in your ministry or programme.

Questions to consider include:

- How will this be incorporated into leader training?
- How will aspects of the SMS be reflected in job descriptions?
- What documentation or information is given to leaders (for example through handbooks and meetings) and how are the policies, procedures and guidelines included in these.
- How will you inform church management/ leadership regarding this SMS?

Now that you have finished don't forget to regularly review your SMS.

- **Is the system being used in the way intended?**
- **Are all those involved aware of the system and the reasons behind it?**
- **Is it a user-friendly and workable system or is it too complicated?**
- **Has anything been missed?**

SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TABLES

SMALL CHURCH (1-20 CHILDREN)



Check when complete

* No example provided

		POLICIES	PROCEDURES / GUIDELINES	CHECK LISTS AND FORMS
1. PEOPLE	Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration & Enrolment p.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision p.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Child Protection p.8-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration & Enrolment p.5	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration & Enrolment p.76 <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance and Recording *
	Leaders	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Checking / Vetting p.32 <input type="checkbox"/> Leader Protection p.8 <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Children p.18 <input type="checkbox"/> Touching p.17 <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision p.6	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Checking / Vetting p.32 <input type="checkbox"/> Reporting Child Abuse p.49	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Checking / Vetting p.83 <input type="checkbox"/> Code of Conduct p.87 <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Information p.80 <input type="checkbox"/> Job Descriptions p.60
2. ENVIRONMENT	On Site Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Building Safety* <input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies p.29 <input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with church H&S Officer*	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Procedures p.29	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Checklist p.95 <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit Checklist p.97
	Off Site Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation p.26	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk Analysis and Management Requirements (RAMs) p.55-59	<input type="checkbox"/> Permission* <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Plan p.101
3. EQUIPMENT	Equipment as per below (same for all ministry sizes)			

EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT FOR ALL MINISTRY SIZES

NORMAL USE	Low level of risk/hazard	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Policy – use of vehicles p.25 <input type="checkbox"/> Normal Operational Equipment Checks* <input type="checkbox"/> Accident and Incident Recording and Reporting p.42
	Significant level of risk/ hazard	<input type="checkbox"/> Item specific RAMs p.104
SPECIALIST USE	Low level of risk/hazard	<input type="checkbox"/> Use of Specialist Equipment Guidelines* <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Logs Policy and Procedures*
	Significant level of risk/ hazard	<input type="checkbox"/> Item specific RAMs p.104

NOTE: Equipment management is the same for all churches regardless of size.

SAMPLE SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OVERVIEW

SMALL CHURCH

Purpose

It is important that children entering our doors will be kept safe physically, emotionally and spiritually, so we have put systems in place to facilitate this.

Children's Church Enrolment/Registration

All families that are regular attendees must complete a comprehensive enrolment and registration form, and are encouraged to establish an open and honest dialogue with leaders, to ensure that the needs of the child and family are being met. A shorter registration form for visitors will ensure that they are not put off, while at the same time keeping their children safe.

Attendance

All children need to be signed in for every programme attended. This sign in is to be completed by the parent, caregiver, the child or a leader, depending on the age of the child. Accurate records are kept, as the attendance sheets are used for role call after an emergency at the assembly area.

Children

Keeping children safe is a priority in our ministry. To this end we have policies and procedures that cover:

- Supervision
- Behaviour guidelines

Leaders

In line with the importance of keeping children safe, all leaders will be Police checked.

All leaders will be familiar with the following policies and have received training as necessary:

- Touching Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Standard of Conduct guidelines

H&S Requirements

We have guidelines and procedures in place to ensure that all buildings and equipment are used as safely as possible. Policies include:

- Emergency procedures
- Health and safety guidelines
- First Aid checklist

Policies

The policies of our Children's Ministry are regularly assessed. A formal review will be undertaken every two years and signed off by the Children's Ministry leader. A copy of all policies is available through the church office and CM leadership and is available to parents and leaders. Policies and procedures are updated as required to reflect current practice.



MEDIUM CHURCH (20-60 CHILDREN)



Check when complete

* No example provided

		POLICIES	PROCEDURES / GUIDELINES	CHECK LISTS AND FORMS
1. PEOPLE				
Children		<input type="checkbox"/> Registration & Enrolment p.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision p.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Child Protection p.8-16 <input type="checkbox"/> Special Needs p.22 <input type="checkbox"/> Physical and Verbal Safety p.21	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration & Enrolment p.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour Management p.34 <input type="checkbox"/> Accident and Incident Reporting p.43	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration & Enrolment p.76 <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance and Recording * <input type="checkbox"/> Accident and Incident Report p.78
Leaders	Volunteers (6-15)	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Checking / Vetting p.32 <input type="checkbox"/> Leader Protection p.8 <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Children p.18 <input type="checkbox"/> Touching p.17 <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision p.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Care p.19 <input type="checkbox"/> Training p.25 <input type="checkbox"/> Complaints p.27	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Checking / Vetting p.32 <input type="checkbox"/> Code of Conduct p.42 <input type="checkbox"/> Email and Mobile Phones p.54 <input type="checkbox"/> Disclosure by a Child p.48 <input type="checkbox"/> Touching p.17 <input type="checkbox"/> Reporting Child Abuse p.49	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Checking / Vetting p.83 <input type="checkbox"/> Code of Conduct p.87 <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Information p.80 <input type="checkbox"/> Job Descriptions p.60 <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Training p.86 <input type="checkbox"/> Young Volunteer Covenant p.88
	Staff (1-3)	<i>All of the above for volunteers</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop Training Policies and Practice* <input type="checkbox"/> Use of RAMs p.55 <input type="checkbox"/> Policy Reviews*	<i>All of the above for volunteers</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Risk Analysis & Management (RAMs) p.55-59 <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety p.37	<i>All of the above for volunteers</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant Recruitment p.92 <input type="checkbox"/> Interview script p.90 <input type="checkbox"/> Leader Review p.93 <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Care p.94 <input type="checkbox"/> Risk Analysis & Management (RAMs) p.104
2. ENVIRONMENT				
	On Site Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Building Safety* <input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies p.29 <input type="checkbox"/> Liase with church H&S Officer*	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency procedures p.29 <input type="checkbox"/> Event Safety Plan p.55-59 <input type="checkbox"/> Risk Analysis & Management (RAMs) p.55-59	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety checklist p.95 <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit checklist p.97 <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Site Risk Assessment* <input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Identification and Analysis p.103 <input type="checkbox"/> Venue Checklist p.102
	Off Site Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Transporting Participants p.26	<input type="checkbox"/> Event Safety Plan p.55-59 <input type="checkbox"/> Risk Analysis and Management Requirements (RAMs) p.55-59	<input type="checkbox"/> Permission* <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Plan p.101 <input type="checkbox"/> Risk analysis and Management requirements (RAMs) p.104 <input type="checkbox"/> Venue Checklist p.103
3. EQUIPMENT	Equipment as per page 7 (same for all ministry sizes)			

SAMPLE SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OVERVIEW

MEDIUM CHURCH

Purpose

It is important that children entering our doors will be kept safe physically, emotionally and spiritually, so we have put systems in place to facilitate this.

Children's Church Enrolment/Registration

All families that are regular attendees must complete a comprehensive enrolment and registration form, and are encouraged to establish an open and honest dialogue with leaders, to ensure that the needs of the child and family are being met. A shorter registration form for visitors will ensure that they are not put off, while at the same time keeping their children safe.

Attendance

All children need to be signed in for every programme attended. This sign in is to be completed by the parent, the child or a leader, depending on the age of the child. Accurate records are kept, as the attendance sheets are used for role call after an emergency at the assembly area.

Children

Keeping children safe is a priority in our ministry. To this end we have policies and procedures that cover:

- Supervision
- Child and leader protection
- Behaviour guidelines
- Health and safety guidelines

Leaders

In line with the importance of keeping children safe, all leaders will be Police checked.

All leaders will have completed a Volunteer Information form. All leaders will be familiar with the following policies and have received training as necessary:

- Access to Children Policy and Procedures
- Touching Policy

- Supervision Policy
- Standard of Conduct guidelines
- Guidelines for use of emails and mobile phones
- Guidelines for what to do if a child discloses information to you

Job descriptions are provided for all leaders, both staff and volunteers.

We have a Recruitment, Screening and Appointment of Staff policy for paid positions.

Pastoral Care

Caring for children and their families is important to our church. We have guidelines covering the pastoral care of both children and their families that address:

- Counselling
- Parent communication
- Phone calls
- Visitation

Children with Special Needs

We believe that all children are part of God's family. We aim to do all that we can to ensure that children with special needs are welcomed and that their needs are adequately catered for. Every effort is made to include these children into all of our programmes. We have policies and procedures in place and maintain open lines of communication with the parents of children with special needs.

H&S Requirements

We have guidelines and procedures in place to ensure that all buildings and equipment are maintained and used as safely as possible.

Policies include:

- Event Safety Planning
- Emergency procedures
- First Aid checklist
- Safety checklist
- Annual site risk assessment
- Accident and incident reporting

Complaints Procedure

Positive, open and clear communication is required from all leaders and expected from families.

- Families are encouraged to express their views openly to the leader concerned and / or the leader of the ministry area.
- Any issues arising will be dealt with respectfully.
- A complaints form is to be used if mutual agreement is not reached. This will then go the senior pastor and / or governance body of the church.

Policies

The policies of the Children's Ministry are regularly assessed. A formal review will be undertaken every two years and signed off by the Children's Ministry leader. A copy of all policies is available through the church office and CM leadership and is available to parents and leaders. Policies and procedures are updated as required to reflect current practice.



Further things to consider:

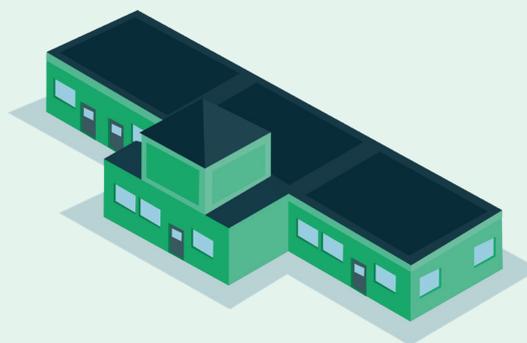
Now that you have completed the SMS and the overview don't forget to regularly review it.

Ask the following questions:

1. Is the system being used in the way intended?
2. Are all those involved aware of the system and the reasons behind it?
3. Is it a user-friendly and workable system or is it too complicated?
4. Has anything been missed?

- Make sure that you give the overview document to the leadership of your church, including other staff members.
- Put together a brief training manual for your leaders and volunteers and set regular times throughout the year to discuss safety with your team/s.
- Set a yearly date for reviewing the documentation and for updating as needed.
- Ensure that your SMS fits the H&S policies that have been set for the wider church.

LARGE CHURCH (60+ CHILDREN)



Check when complete

* No example provided

		POLICIES	PROCEDURES / GUIDELINES	CHECK LISTS AND FORMS
1. PEOPLE				
Children		<input type="checkbox"/> Registration & Enrolment p.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision p.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Child Protection p.8-16 <input type="checkbox"/> Special Needs p.22 <input type="checkbox"/> Physical and Verbal Safety p.21	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration & Enrolment p.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Accident and incident Reporting p.43 <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour Management p.34	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration & Enrolment p.76 <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance and Recording * <input type="checkbox"/> Accident and Incident Report p.78
Leaders	Volunteers (6-15)	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Checking / Vetting p.32 <input type="checkbox"/> Leader Protection p.8 <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Children p.18 <input type="checkbox"/> Touching p.17 <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision p.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Care p.19 <input type="checkbox"/> Complaints p.27 <input type="checkbox"/> Training p.25	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Checking / Vetting p.32 <input type="checkbox"/> Code of Conduct p.42 <input type="checkbox"/> Email and Mobile Phones p.54 <input type="checkbox"/> Disclosure by a Child p.48 <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber Safety p.51 <input type="checkbox"/> Touching p.17 <input type="checkbox"/> Reporting Child Abuse p.49	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Checking / Vetting p.83 <input type="checkbox"/> Code of Conduct p.87 <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Information p.80 <input type="checkbox"/> Job descriptions p.60 <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Training p.86 <input type="checkbox"/> Young Volunteer Covenant p.88
	Staff (1-3)	<i>All of the above for volunteers</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Appointment & Recruitment p.24 <input type="checkbox"/> Develop Training Policies and Practice * <input type="checkbox"/> Policy Reviews * <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber Safety p.28 <input type="checkbox"/> Use of RAMs p.55	<i>All of the above for volunteers</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety p.37 <input type="checkbox"/> Risk Analysis & Management (RAMs) p.55-59 <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment, Screening & Appointment Guidelines p.43 <input type="checkbox"/> Revocation and Termination of Leader p.50 <input type="checkbox"/> Use of Social Networking tools p.52	<i>All of the above for volunteers</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Script p.90 <input type="checkbox"/> Leader Review p.93 <input type="checkbox"/> RAMs p.104 <input type="checkbox"/> Management Checklist p.92 <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Care p.94
2. ENVIRONMENT	On Site Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Building Safety* <input type="checkbox"/> Emergencies p.29 <input type="checkbox"/> Liase with church H&S Officer*	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency procedures p.29 <input type="checkbox"/> Event Safety Plan p.55-59 <input type="checkbox"/> Risk Analysis and Management Requirements (RAMs) p.55-59	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety checklist p.95 <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit checklist p.97 <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Site Risk Assessment* <input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Identification and Analysis p.103 <input type="checkbox"/> Venue Checklist p.102
	Off Site Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Transporting Participants p.26	<input type="checkbox"/> Event Safety Plan p.55-59 <input type="checkbox"/> Risk Analysis and Management Requirements (RAMs) p.55-59	<input type="checkbox"/> Permission* <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Plan p.101 <input type="checkbox"/> Risk analysis and Management requirements (RAMs) p.104 <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Flow Chart p.59
3. EQUIPMENT	Equipment as per page 7 (same for all ministry sizes)			

SAMPLE SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OVERVIEW LARGE CHURCH

The overview for a large church will include everything in the overview of a medium sized church with the possible addition of the following:

- Training
- Appointment and Recruitment
- Cyber Safety
- Use of Social Networking Tools
- Reporting Child Abuse

All of these policies need to have an overview statement explaining the purpose of each and how they will be outworked in your context.

The purpose of the SMS Overview is to have a succinct version of your SMS that a Board of Elders or other staff and leaders can read.

Now that you have finished don't forget to regularly review your SMS.

- Is the system being used in the way intended?
- Are all those involved aware of the system and the reasons behind it?
- Is it a user-friendly and workable system or is it too complicated?

Further things to consider:

- **Make sure that you give the overview document to the leadership of your church, including other staff members.**
- **Put together a brief training manual for your leaders and volunteers and set regular times throughout the year to discuss safety with your team/s.**
- **Set a yearly date for reviewing the documentation and for updating as needed.**
- **Ensure that your SMS fits the H&S policies that have been set for the wider church.**

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

This manual comes with an online file available via password through BCFM. The documentation included in the file is listed on the following pages. The file has copies of most of the policies, guidelines and forms that you will need. **These are in a generic form and will need to be changed and adapted to fit your context.** PLEASE remember that no two churches are the same and that these documents are there as a guide and to assist in the process. They are not designed to be copied 'as is'.

As you start writing your SMS we encourage you to consider the following:

- what you learned at the SMS seminar
- your children, staff and volunteers
- the environment.

Ensure that the documents you include can be used effectively in your church. These need to be 'living' documents that are regularly referred to and used in training your leaders. Make sure they do not just gather dust on your shelf.

The following page has a table of contents listing the documents as they appear in the online file. This material is only available to our Baptist Churches, so please do not copy for other churches. Instead, please direct them to the BCFM office.

If you believe you have documentation that may be of assistance to other Baptist churches please share this with us so that we can add it to the body of material in this manual.

If you would like further help or assistance please do not hesitate to contact us:

Baptist Children and Family Ministries (BCFM)

(09) 526 7958

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www.baptistcfm.org.nz

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TERMINOLOGY

Clarification of terminology used in this publication.

Best Practice:

Practice is the term given to describe what is actually happening. Best practice recognises what the best practitioners are doing and that continual evolution is not only desirable but necessary.

Guidelines:

Guidelines are similar to procedures in that they describe what may or may not be done in a given situation, but they differ in providing information that encourages judgment and discretion.

H&S:

Health and Safety. The Health and Safety at Work Act(s) of Parliament (1992, amended 2015) that governs safety and responsibilities in the workplace.

Informed Permission Giver:

It is necessary for someone to decide if specific parental consent is needed, to decide if an Event Safety Plan (RAMs) is warranted, to scrutinise those Event Safety Plans and to decide if the event is acceptably safe. It is this person who gives permission on behalf of the church leadership for the event to proceed. In the Event Safety Plan this person is referred to as the INFORMED PERMISSION GIVER.

Parental Permission:

General consent should be gained for involvement in a programme. This is usually done on enrolment or at the beginning of the year. As a general principle specific parental consent should be gained whenever activities carry with them a degree of risk, and/or whenever those activities occur in a context different to the normal operating venue. It is smart practice to keep parents informed!

Policy:

A policy is a document that records the organisations thinking and action(s) related to a specific area of operation. Typically a policy will contain some or all of the following four topics.

Procedures:

Procedures are the actual steps or processes that are to be followed. These are generally not open for interpretation but must be complied with. Procedures tend to be used when a discretionary approach is not desired.

Rationale:

A rationale describes the reason for the policy's existence. This may or may not be similar to the aim or goal of the policy.

Scope:

The scope section of a policy should document what the policy is designed to cover, thereby making it clear what is not covered.

SMS:

Safety Management System. An SMS is a coherent collection of policies, procedures, and practices, that combine to govern the actions of all persons associated with the event to provide a safe (as is reasonably possible) experience for all.

WorkSafe NZ:

The government department that is responsible for ensuring compliance to the HSE legislation.

Disclaimer

While the Baptist Union can encourage and assist you to devise a system, our efforts are at best generic and cannot be expected to cover all scenarios. Individual churches must adapt things to fit. Neither do we claim that this resource is exhaustive. It is designed as a resource for a primarily volunteer organisation that is transitioning from a near-nothing situation to the beginnings of a Safety Management System. It is entirely insufficient for an educational or commercial organisation. It seeks to balance the need to have something operative, with the administrative overhead required. It is a pared down, no frills, basic bare bones approach.

The Baptist Union of New Zealand cannot and does not accept any liability for how this resource and its contents may be used, nor for any actions, by intent or omission, performed or omitted, by individuals and churches using this resource.

Warning

When organisations have a written Safety Management System, or similar, leaders are expected to conform to its requirements. Any inquiry resulting from an accident or incident will investigate not only the accident but also the system that allowed the accident to occur. To have developed and documented procedures and then ignore them places a person and the organisation in a very vulnerable position.