



TO INTENDING BCA NOMADS & CO-WORKERS

The Bush Church Aid Society of Australia Child Protection Legislation

POLICY STATEMENT

The Bush Church Aid Society of Australia acknowledges the trust placed in members of the Society in the course of our ministry. We shall endeavour to safeguard the welfare of all people with whom we have contact. We recognise the importance of the safety of children and young people and consider any situation that may frighten or intimidate those in our care to be of a serious nature. Staff, both paid and voluntary, are carefully screened and appropriate measures put in place to safeguard the welfare of all with whom we have contact.

Note :

- a) *“Child” is defined as a person under the age of 18 years and “child related employment” means any employment that primarily involves direct contact with children where the contact is not directly supervised.*
- b) *The Act requires only that people with unsupervised access to children sign the Prohibited Employment declaration.*
- c) *However, the law indirectly encourages the presence of 2 adults wherever reasonably possible in the following two ways :*
 - i) *by the way child related employment is defined in the legislation (i.e. work which falls within this definition is subject to declaration requirements and, in the case of paid workers and ministers of religion, screening requirements), and*
 - ii) *in terms of the general duty of care that is applicable at law generally when persons are responsible for looking after children.*

The Society ensures that all staff, volunteer workers, BCA Nomads, ministers, office staff, deputationists, speakers, Regional Officers, the National Director and any committee/Executive Committee/Council Member are aware of the Child Protection Legislation and its impact on the work of the Society.

All Field Staff and those engaged in ministry to children and/or those who have access to children during the course of their work, whether paid or voluntary, are required to sign a Prohibited Employment Declaration for the Society, annually, in respect to their compliance with the Legislation and whether they have knowledge of any events which may give rise to a claim against the Society.

I agree to be bound by the Policy and Procedural Guidelines of The Bush Church Aid Society of Australia as it relates to Child Protection legislation

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Signature Date

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES TO ASSIST IN RISK MANAGEMENT AGAINST MOLESTATION/SEXUAL ABUSE CLAIMS

Upon your application for appointment to the Society in the voluntary/self-funded position of Co-Worker, BCA Nomad, representative or service provider, the Society will ensure they –

- i)* enquire of two referees as to your suitability for the role or position
- ii)* enquire with your previous posting or employment as to your suitability for the role or position
- iii)* enquire of you as to whether you have ever been convicted or investigated for sexual abuse, assault or a sexual offence of any kind
- iv)* have you sign the Prohibited Employment Declaration in relation to the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998
- v)* do not place previously unknown volunteers in a position of trust within their first six months of joining the Society

Note that - If you will be working in a voluntary capacity in those States where Police Checks or Working with Children Checks are mandatory, it will be your responsibility to provide the Society with the relevant clearance documentation. (Queensland is the only State which currently mandates Working with Children Checks for volunteers who will be engaging with children)

Reducing the Risk

- i)* Treat everyone with respect and honesty (including all staff, volunteers, students, children, young people and parents)
- ii)* Remember to be a positive role model to kids in all your conduct with them
- iii)* Set clear boundaries about appropriate behavior between yourself and the kids you are involved with – boundaries help everyone carry out their roles well.
- iv)* Ensure the two adult rule is in place wherever possible. No adult other than a child's parent/guardian or those authorised in writing by the parent/guardian should ever be left alone with a child. If it is necessary for an adult to work one to one with a child, it should be done in an area that can be observed easily by others.
- v)* Leaders should avoid one on one counselling with members of the opposite sex. It is preferable to have another person present
- vi)* Record and act on serious complaints of abuse.

DO NOT –

- i)* Develop any “special” relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment
- ii)* Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as going to the toilet or changing clothes

Appropriate Response to Allegations

With existing employees, representatives, members or service providers, ensure –

- i)* the Society investigates fully any complaint regarding any alleged sexual abuse, assault or offence
- ii)* use a standard reporting procedure/document for any allegation of abuse
- iii)* treat allegations seriously
- iv)* appoint an independent person to deal with the allegation
- v)* advise the authority with the statutory responsibility to investigate
- vi)* if appropriate remove that person from their role or position