www.childsafe.org.au

What is ChildSafe?

ChildSafe is a safety management system. It is designed for people working with children and young people, and provides an integrated system of safety and care at all levels. It is a lot more than a safety manual or a set of policies – but incorporates both of these.

It is produced as a partnership between the Lutheran Church of Australia and Scripture Union Australia.

Who is it for and what does it cover?

ChildSafe is for people in ministry with children and young people.

ChildSafe has two key thrusts - Safe People and Safe Programs:
- The system has a strong emphasis on preventing the maltreatment of children, and responding appropriately when child abuse comes to light.
- ChildSafe assists the Lutheran Church of Australia to plan safe activities and programs using a Risk Management framework.

The system covers a broad range of topics such as:
- Screening and recruiting.
- Duty of care issues, with a code of practice for working with children and young people.
- Supervision and work within a safe team.
- Signs and indicators of child abuse, responding sensitively to disclosure of abuse.
- Dealing with suspicions, disclosures and allegations relating to child protection issues.
- Transportation and water-based activities as a particular risk focus.
- Hygiene, medical safety, infection, food handling.
- Accident and incident reporting, processing and analysis.
- An emergency response process.

Why is this an important project?

- Children deserve the best endeavours of the Lutheran Church of Australia towards their safety. This involves more than good intentions, or the assumption that harmful incidents will not happen.
- Organisations working with children are under increased community scrutiny in relation to screening workers, risk management and the quality of care they offer.
- Many organisations within the Christian sector, or the volunteer sector, do not currently have adequate systems in place to ensure that sound policies are translated into practice.
- Governments are increasingly legislating standards and requirements for organisations working with children.
- The availability and affordability of insurance is an issue for community organisations working with children. Insurers are rightly expecting organisations to have effective risk management processes in place to minimise claims.

What makes ChildSafe distinct from a safety manual or policies?

ChildSafe works in levels

Each level represents a group of people who need distinct information, processes and guidelines:

- **Team Members** are all people working with children. They work within a broader team, and have limited responsibilities. A concise pocket guide is provided with a strong emphasis on child protection, safe activities and a range of specific guidelines.
- **Team Leaders** are people given responsibility for leadership of a discreet program or event. At this level of the system ChildSafe provides a range of forms and guidelines to assist in risk management planning, safety and responding to incidents.
- **Coordinators** are usually members of the Lutheran Church Of Australia staff given the task of coordinating a set of programs. ChildSafe assists them to assess safety issues and grant permission for programs.
- **Risk Management Officers** are appointed by the Lutheran Church of Australia to oversee safety and care. They deal with serious matters and emergencies, and ensure that ChildSafe protocols are adhered to.

Once implemented, ChildSafe does not gather dust

Having great policies sitting on the administration bookshelves does nothing to make children safer. ChildSafe is a 'living' system of safety and care, one that becomes fully operational and fully integrated across the organisation. The levels structure within ChildSafe is designed to facilitate accountability and support, bringing policy to life.

ChildSafe is written in plain English

Policy written in legal language is appropriate in some contexts, but often ends up looking like gobbledygook to the people actually working with children. ChildSafe is written in a straightforward, readable manner.

ChildSafe 'sets the bar high' but is practical

ChildSafe sets a standard of excellence for people working with children. It does this while acknowledging that the requirements must be reasonable, practical and not so onerous that people wanting to work with children find themselves jumping through endless hoops.

ChildSafe has an integrated Training Package to bring the materials to life

A Training Package to accompany each of the 4 levels of ChildSafe is included within the ChildSafe materials. These materials have been produced by professional trainers, and cover a range of training formats such as workshops, seminars, individual self-paced workbooks and the potential for online training as part of ChildSafe Online.

For information about ChildSafe in the Lutheran Church in South Australia and Northern Territory contact Judi Sykes – judi.sykes@sa.lca.org.au