



# albury bible church

## Albury Bible Church - Incident Response Process

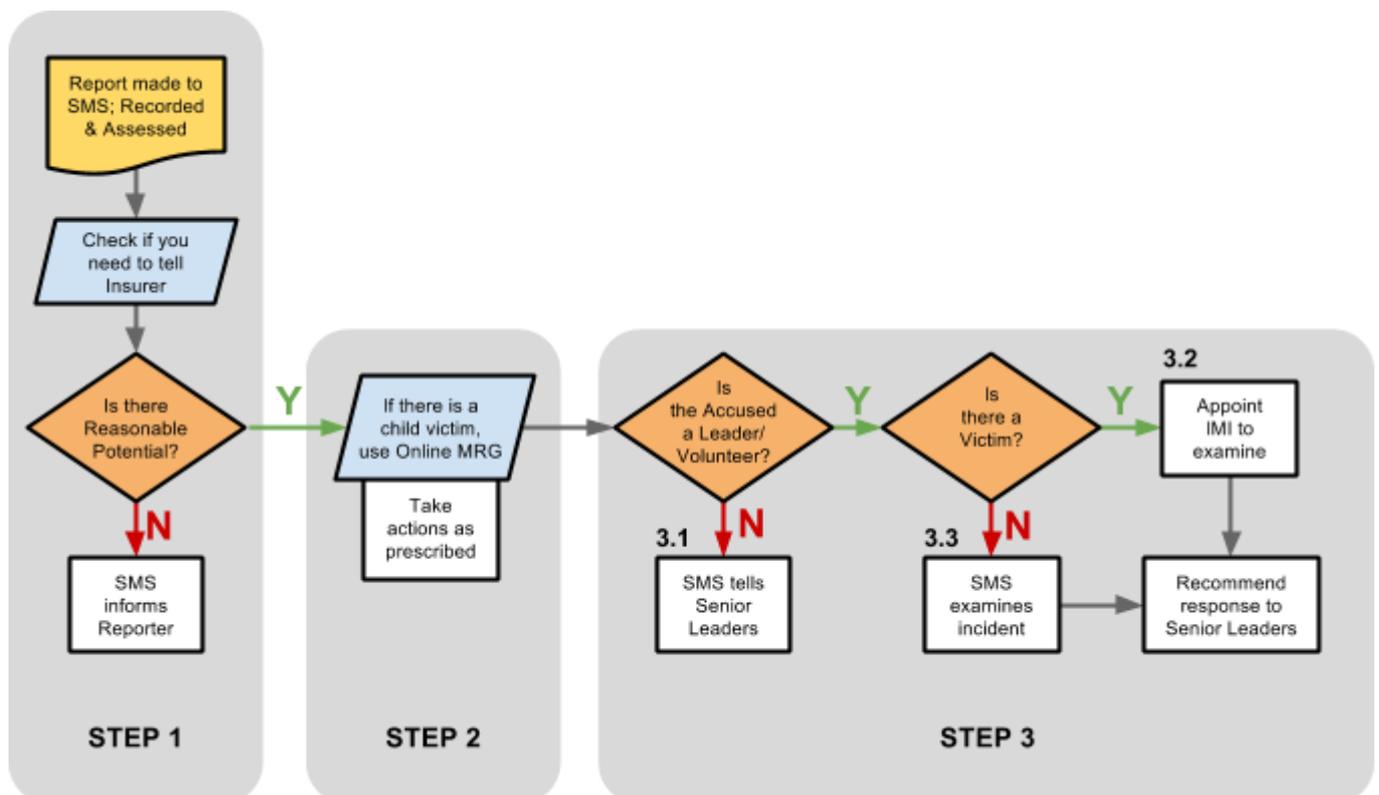
### Purpose

This Incident Response Process provides further detail to the Albury Bible Church Safe Ministry Policy. It details the minimum steps Albury Bible Church will take to ensure it follows appropriate legal processes and acts in accordance with insurance requirements. Other steps may also be taken on a case by case basis that are not detailed here.

### Context

As per the Albury Bible Church Safe Ministry Policy, if volunteer leaders or staff observe signs of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a volunteer or staff, they will immediately contact one of the Albury Bible Church Safe Ministry Supervisors (SMSs). The SMS will listen to the report and be responsible for enacting the following steps depending on the incident and claim.

### Overview



## **Step 1: Record and Determine the reasonable potential of abuse/inappropriate leader behaviour of the reported incident.**

1. The SMS will **write a record** of the report, and **share the report** with the other SMS (unless that SMS is the accused person)
2. The two (or more) SMSs will **independently assess the report** and determine if there is reasonable potential of abuse and/or inappropriate leader behaviour.  
This determination is a reasonable assessment of the worst case explanation of the reported sign of abuse/inappropriate leader behaviour. This allows the SMSs to dismiss overzealous observations as signs of abuse (e.g. a child with a runny nose, a boy who loves climbing trees has everyday bruises on his legs, a clear case of misunderstandings between people are all signs that could be reported to a SMS but should not go any further to avoid undue stress on individuals or the organisation).
3. If the allegation includes any suggestion of wrongdoing by a church leader, elder, volunteer or the church itself, the SMS will **share the report** with the Insurance provider, along with their assessment.
4. The SMSs will decide to do ONE of the following:
  - a. If BOTH the SMSs deem the report to be too minor for action (i.e. no reasonable potential of abuse/inappropriate leader behaviour, only third party reports), one of the SMSs will, **communicate this decision** with the reporter.  
This will be the end of the process for this report.
  - b. If EITHER of the SMSs (or the Insurance provider) deems there is any reasonable potential of abuse/inappropriate leader behaviour, **continue** the Incident Response Process at Step 2.

## **Step 2: Determine if the Report includes an Alleged Victim who is a Child**

If the Alleged Victim is a child (under 18 years) the **SMS will use** the NSW Government [Online Mandatory Reporter Guide](#) (MRG). They will use the online guide to:

1. **Write a record** of the advised response.
2. **Enact the steps** advised by the MRG.  
This may include contacting police, the Dept. of Community Services or other organisations. There may also be need for the initial Reporter to provide statements to authorities. The MRG may recommend no further action be taken with the Victim and/or the Accused, in which case this will end the Incident Response Process.
3. Continue to Step 3.

## **Step 3: Determine if the Report includes an “Accused Leader”**

A report includes an Accused Leader when the person (or persons) who are thought to have caused the reported incident were in a position of leadership during the alleged incident. An Accused Leader can include a person who was representing Albury Bible Church in a voluntary capacity. There may not be a victim (e.g. when a leader acts inappropriately, but no-one is hurt).

1. **In the case where the Accused was not in a volunteer or leadership role**  
If the Accused was not acting on behalf of Albury Bible Church in the alleged incident, the SMS will:
  - a. **share** the report with the Senior Leaders of Albury Bible Church and, with them, determine appropriate steps to take on a case by case basis.
2. **In the case where there is an Accused Leader AND a Victim**  
If the Report includes an Alleged Victim and an Accused Leader, the SMS and the Senior Leadership of Albury Bible Church will...

- a. **Appoint** an Independent Ministry Investigator (IMI) to examine allegations (unless Australian authorities instruct Albury Bible Church otherwise).

An appropriate IMI will be;

- i. Independent (they should not attend Albury Bible Church).
  - ii. Qualified (they should have appropriate skills to perform the task).
  - iii. Experienced (they should have some level of understanding of the processes and consequences)
- b. Once an IMI has been appointed,
- i. The SMS will...
    1. **Inform** the Alleged Victim and the Alleged Accused that an IMI has been appointed.
    2. **Provide** the IMI with contact details for both the Alleged Victim and the Alleged Accused.
  - ii. The IMI will...
    1. if authorities have been contacted, liaise with and submit to the authority's direction.
    2. contact both the Alleged Victim and the Alleged Accused to clarify the incident and the circumstances in which it allegedly happened. (The IMI may determine that there was no serious incident).  
NOTE: It is not the job of the SMS or the IMI to counsel either the Alleged Victim or Alleged Accused, the SMS and IMI are a liaison and referrer only. Either party has a right at all times to have a support person present. A responsible parent/guardian must be present when speaking to someone under 18.
    3. present a formal report to the Leadership Team of Albury Bible Church with
      - a. An opinion on the validity and severity of the alleged incident.
      - b. Recommendations (if any) on:
        - i. How to avoid such an incident in the future.
        - ii. What steps should be taken for the Accused (and associates).
        - iii. What steps should be taken for the Victim (and associated).
  - iii. The Leadership Team will:
    1. Determine what actions they will implement.
    2. Provide a report to the Insurance Provider.

**3. In the case there is an Accused Leader but NO Victim**

The SMSs will;

- a. **Examine** the validity of the alleged behaviour
- b. **Determine** the severity of the behaviour according to the table below, and
- c. **Enact** the related steps.

If a Leader has been accused twice or more in the space of 6 months, the SMS Action Steps will be determined by the sum of the severity of each case in that time span (rather than by the individual case). For example, if Bob behaved with Severity 1 in March and then with Severity 2 in May, the SMS would impose the step described in Severity 3 (1+2).

Severity of behaviour	Explanation of Severity	Action steps
1. Minor	The alleged inappropriate behaviour is minor when the behaviour is obviously without malice and there was little to no	The SMS will remind the Accused Leader of the appropriate behaviour policy.

	chance of injury or abuse.	
2. Mild	The alleged inappropriate behaviour is minor when the Leader thought there was circumstantial grounds for the behaviour and some caution was taken, even if it was not due practice.	The SMS will remind the Accused Leader of the appropriate behaviour policy and discuss with them other options to take if the circumstances arise again.
3. Substantial	The alleged inappropriate behaviour is substantial when the behaviour was obviously done without reasonable thought or in haste.	The SMS will remind the Accused Leader of the appropriate behaviour policy and warn them about their behaviour.
4. Severe	The alleged inappropriate behaviour is severe when the behaviour was done in malice or hostility, and brought significant danger of harm or abuse to others.	The SMS will arrange (with the Church leaders) to immediately remove the Accused Leader from their role until they are able to show reasonable grounds for their reappointment.

4. This is the end of the Incident Response Process.

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This policy is based on the Draft Policy provided at [SafeMinistryTraining.com.au](http://SafeMinistryTraining.com.au)

First Adopted by Albury Bible Church administration committee on: 10 August 2014

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Next policy review date: March 2019