



Safety in Youth Ministry

revised edition: November 2011



Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

Introduction

It is our responsibility to ensure the safety of our **youth people** and **ourselves**, as **youth leaders**, in youth ministry. This booklet written by Mo Mansill and revised in 2011 contains guidelines that will help you do this

There are four major areas of safety to be considered in youth ministry:

1. Physical Safety

Anything that causes physical pain or injury, whether accidental or intentional, cause by people or the environment.

2. Psychological Safety

Anything that causes mental anguish, including feelings or fear, shame, humiliation, indignity, powerlessness e.g. Verbal intimidation and humiliation, shouting or screaming, threats of physical harm, favouritism and belittling another's culture (including racism) or appearance, silent abuse(allowing the misuse of power by other people, by doing nothing)

3. Sexual Safety

Any sexual behaviour, whether implied or actual, which is inappropriate or offensive. e.g. Deliberate and unwelcome physical or sexual touching, suggestively sexual comments, requests for sexual favours, obscene exposure and the display of pornographic material.

4. Spiritual Safety

Placing ourselves at the centre of young people's lives, instead of Jesus Christ. e.g. Misusing our ability to influence the emotions of young people, spiritual manipulation, brainwashing

This booklet contains **prevention guidelines** and **crisis management guidelines** to keep your youth ministry safe in these four areas.

As well as ensuring that young people and youth leaders are safe, it is important to remember that young people learn from demonstrated behaviours. At all times, youth leaders are role models for the people under their care. Safety guidelines should be clear and consistent and revised on a regular basis by those advocating them.

All sample policies and forms found in this booklet can also be found individually on the PYM website at: <http://www.pym.org.nz/resources/for-leaders/documents/>

If you are unclear about a situation or procedure, ask your co-workers, supervisor or contact us at the Presbyterian Youth Ministry Office.

Gordon Fitch

National Youth Ministry Coordinator

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand,
Terralink House, 275 Cuba Street,
PO Box 9049, Wellington 6141

Email: gordon@pym.org.nz
Phone: (04) 381-8292
Mobile: 027 272-7716
Web: www.pym.org.nz

Contents

Section	Page
Physical safety	4
Psychological safety	5
Sexual safety	6
Spiritual safety	6
Risk Assessment and Management Strategies	7
Driving Policies	10
Permission Slips	11
Accident and Emergency Procedures	12
Incident Reporting Form	13
Safety and Protection Policy	14
Code of Ethics for Pastoral Care	15
Code of Conduct for those working with Young People	16
Police Checks	17
Complaints Procedure	20

Physical Safety

Definition:

Anything that causes physical pain or injury, whether accidental or intentional, by people or the environment.

Prevention Guidelines:

There are three things you can do to prevent physical injury in your youth ministry:

1. Keep your buildings/environment safe

- Identify and remove obvious physical hazards on church property on a regular basis – e.g. broken fittings, rubbish, glass, vegetation
- Repair damaged electrical cords or appliances
- Fire and smoke alarms installed
- Adequate lighting both interior and exterior
- Lights secure – guarded if in an area where balls are going to be flying

2. Keep your equipment safe

- Regularly check sports and other equipment. Discard any that are worn.
- Keep a log of when/where/by whom equipment was bought.
- Keep equipment in secure storage to prevent misuse

3. Keep your activities safe

- Evacuation drill practised regularly
- First Aid kit available and checked/replenished regularly
- Adequate supervision of activities
- Training leaders – First Aid courses, Risk Management courses
- We should also have appropriate boundaries and consequences in place for our young people regarding physical violence.

To prevent physical accidents from taking place, we can implement Risk Management Strategies like:

- RAMS forms [See page 7-9]
- Driving Policies [See page 10]
- Permission forms [See page 11]

Crisis Management Guidelines:

When accidents happen, it's good to know what to do. There are two procedures you should have in place in your youth ministry:

1. Accident and Emergency Procedure [See page 12]

Why? – People can freeze and/or react badly in the case of an emergency. If they've had a procedure drummed into them, it may prevent more damage than is necessary in the case of an accident or emergency

2. Incident form filled out and filed [see page 13]

Why? – If similar accidents keep occurring, it will indicate that a change of practice or procedure, and/or further training is required for the people leading your youth ministry

Psychological Safety

Definition:

Anything that causes mental anguish, including feelings of fear, shame, humiliation, indignity powerlessness. e.g. Verbal intimidation and humiliation, shouting or screaming, threats of physical harm, favouritism and belittling another's culture (including racism) or appearance, silent abuse (allowing the misuse of power by other people, by doing nothing)

Prevention Guidelines:

To prevent or minimise any of the above from happening, behaviour guidelines for both your YOUTH LEADERS and your YOUNG PEOPLE need to be set up.

- YOUTH LEADERS:

Youth leaders should know and be reminded of the behaviour guidelines they should practice in their role. These guidelines are outlined in the documents listed below. Any person working with young people should:

- Sign a Code of Ethics [see page 15]
- Sign a Code of Conduct [see page 16]
- Perform Police Checks [see page 17-19]
- Be provided with training so that they understand and are encouraged to practice good safety practices in youth ministry
- Be provided with an accountability procedure (e.g. Regular supervision & regular team meetings with opportunities for debriefing)

- YOUNG PEOPLE:

Like wise, young people need to know what are acceptable ways of treating people and what are not. For your young people, you need to:

- Establish clear boundaries and consequences
- Provide avenues for young people to voice any concerns they have for their/other peoples' safety

And remember!

Unless you're trained in counselling...

YOU'RE NOT QUALIFIED TO PRESCRIBE ADVICE, BUT YOU ARE FULLY QUALIFIED TO CARE!

Crisis Management Guidelines:

If a complaint is made, you need to have a clear complaint procedure [see page 20]

Sexual Safety

Definition:

Any sexual behaviour, whether implied or actual, which is inappropriate or offensive. e.g. Deliberate and unwelcome physical or sexual touching, suggestively sexual comments, requests for sexual favours, obscene exposure and the display of pornographic material.

Prevention Guidelines:

It's important to establish clear boundaries in your youth ministry regarding appropriate and inappropriate touching. Any person working with young people should:

- *Sign a Code of Ethics [see page 15]*
- *Sign a Code of Conduct [see page 16]*
- *Perform Police Checks [see page 17-19]*
- *Be provided with training*
- *Be provided with an accountability procedure (e.g. Regular supervision)*

Crisis Management Guidelines:

If a complaint is made, you need to have a clear complaint procedure [see page 20]

Spiritual Safety

Definition:

Placing ourselves at the centre of young people's lives, instead of Jesus Christ
e.g. Misusing our ability to influence the emotions of young people, spiritual manipulation, brainwashing

Prevention Guidelines:

Any person working with young people should:

- *Sign a Code of Ethics [see page 15]*
- *Sign a Code of Conduct [see page 16]*
- *Be provided with an accountability procedure (e.g. Regular supervision)*

Crisis Management Guidelines:

If a complaint is made, you need to have a clear complaint procedure [see page 20]

Risk Assessment And Management Strategies

We want our programmes to be safe for the sake of our young people, but we also need to be aware of the legal requirements to do so, as there can be consequences if our programmes are unsafe.

As youth workers, we need to know what the risks are, have strategies in place to deal with them and have documentation on hand in case proof is ever needed.

Risk Assessment and Management Strategy (RAMS) forms are an easy way to do this.

What is a RAMS form?

A RAMS form is a sheet that is filled out before an event or programme by the event co-ordinator. It identifies all the potential risks and what might cause them, establishes strategies to minimise these risks, and gives an emergency management plan.

When would I fill in a RAMS form?

- Trips away (camps, tramps)
- Individual nights if there could be risks involved (Beach swimming, 'Bus pull' activity etc.)
- Have a few generic forms in your files for general events, vehicle use etc. [page 8]

How do I fill in a RAMS form?

- **Risk:** These are the end result of any mishap, e.g. physical injury (minor/moderate/major), emotional stress. Ask: What is the worst thing that could happen during this activity?
- **Casual Factors:** These are listed under three categories: people, equipment, environment. Ask: What factors could cause these incidents?
- **Risk Management – Normal Operations:** Establish strategies to deal with each of these specific causes. Ask: What can I reasonably do to stop these incidents from happening?
- **Risk Management - Emergency:** Establish a plan to deal with incidents if they do happen. Ask: What can I put in place now so that I could deal with an emergency effectively?

While filling in the form, be realistic but cover your bases. Think of all possibilities.

What do I do with the RAMS form once it's filled out?

Keep the form in your files in case it needs referring to at a later date by yourself or OSH...

On the night - be aware of the factors you've listed – you've got the plan, so follow it!

Risk Assessment and Management Form



Ministry / Group		Date/Time		
Location		Leaders Name		
Activity		Number of Leaders		
Analysis		Description		
Risks Accident, injury, damage				
Casual Factors Hazards, perils, dangers		People	Equipment	Environment
		1.	1.	1.
Risk Management	Normal Operations			
	Emergency			
Relevant Industry Standards Applicable				
Skills required by staff				
Final Decision on Implementing activity	Form Completed by			
	Choose one: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Approved by			
	Position in Church			Date

Risk Assessment and Management Form



Ministry / Group Knox Youth Group		Date/Time 12/12/12	
Location Knox Park		Leaders Name John Knox	
Activity Tramp		Number of Leaders 3	
Analysis		Description	
Risks Accident, injury, damage	Physical injury - Minor (cuts, scrapes) - Moderate (broken bones, sprains) - Major (hypothermia)		
	Getting Lost Emotional Trauma		
Casual Factors Hazards, perils, dangers	People	Equipment	Environment
	1. Leader could negotiate track incorrectly 2. Young person could wander from the main group.	1. Lack of adequate clothing and footwear.	1. Weather could turn bad.
Risk Management	Normal Operations	1. Take and refer to map/ Leader walk track prior to trip. 2. Set clear boundaries beforehand. Have leaders dispersed through group. Count young people when stopped for breaks	1. Check weather forecast beforehand, cancel trip if forecast looks bad. All participants take warm/wet weather gear.
	Emergency	Take 1 st Aid Kit Person trained in First Aid to participate in the walk Adequate leaders in case one needs to walk out to get help	
Relevant Industry Standards Applicable	National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa Code of Ethics PYM "Safety in Youth Ministry" Booklet		
Skills required by staff	1 st aid certificate Group management		
Final Decision on Implementing activity	Form Completed by John Knox		
	Choose one: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Approved by Rev Calvin		
	Position in Church Minister	Date 11/11/12	

Driving Policy (example)

Principles:

- Driving competently and safely is essential. The lives of our young people and leaders are extremely valuable and must be protected by the highest standard of driving.
- Drivers must be a good example to young people of how to drive responsibly.
- Drivers must take full responsibility for their own actions.

Policy:

1. Any driver of under-age passengers must hold a full drivers licence.
2. A police check is required for all drivers. If a driver has any criminal driving convictions, the insurance company must be contacted for advice on the eligibility to drive.
3. Drivers must adhere to the road code
4. The vehicle must be worthy with a current WOF, registration and seatbelts
5. All under-age passengers must have written consent signed by parent or guardian to be transported by driver.
6. All accidents, near misses (incidents), or irresponsible driving must be reported to the key leader immediately after travelling and written in the Health and Safety manual. In the case of deliberate recklessness; the driver will be required to step down from driving responsibilities as determined by church leadership, insurance company and/or legal authorities.
Reckless driving includes:
 1. Speeding
 2. Fast cornering
 3. Unnecessary passing
 4. Close tailing of other vehicles
 5. Any games with other vehicles on the road
 6. Permitting young people to put their heads or hands out of the windows
 7. Permitting young people to not wear seatbelts
8. The driver will be required to pay the excess on insurance for any accident resulting from reckless driving.

Permission Form

Event:
Starting Time:
Ending Time:



Section A - Personal Details

First Name	Middle Name	Last Name
Address		
Mailing Address If Different		
Email address	Date Of Birth	
Daytime Phone	Age	
Evening Phone	Male / Female	
Mobile Number		
Emergency Contact Details		

Section B – Medical And Child Protection

Special Medical Needs (eg Asthma, Diabetes)
Special Dietary Requirements
Doctors Contact Details

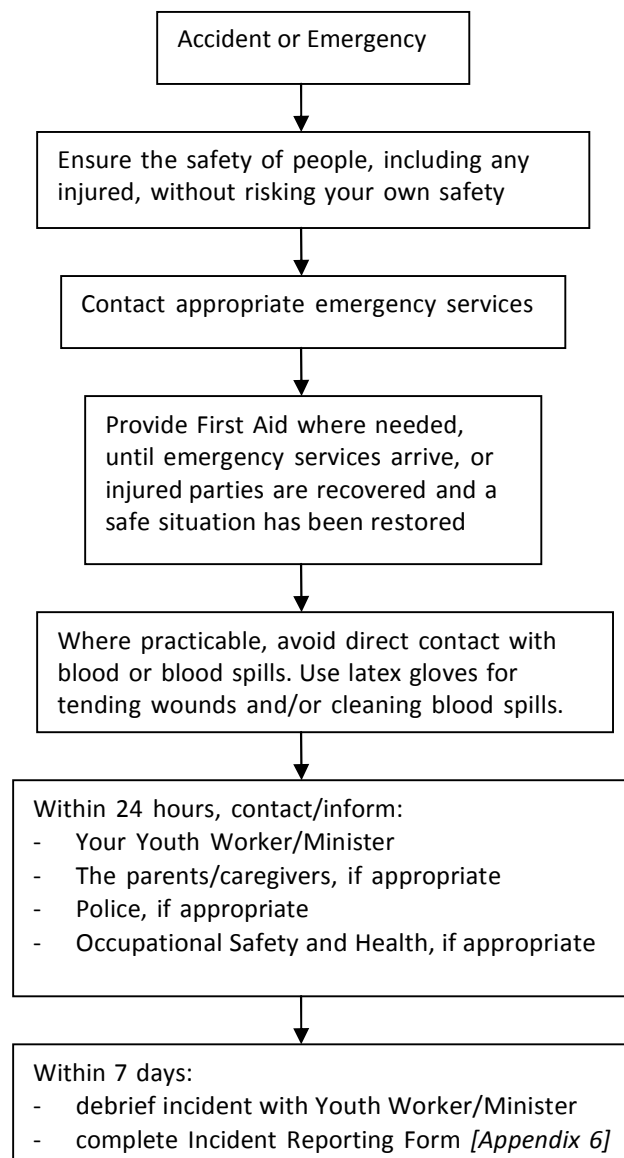
Section C– Permission

Signature	Date
By signing; I understand that in the event of an emergency I have given permission for the youth leader to act in the safety interests of my child. I understand that every attempt will be made to contact me first before any decision is made regarding treatment or medication.	

Accident and Emergency Procedure

An incident may include any of the following:

- Accident
- moderate or serious injuries
- moderate or significant damage to property or equipment
- 'near misses' which may have caused any of the above
- serious or ongoing breach by Youth Group leaders of the Code of Conduct
- criminal activity of leaders or programme participants (while in a Youth Group programme)
- behaviour or circumstances which threaten the safety of youth leader or participants
- complaints
- unresolved disputes
- allegations of misconduct or abuse by youth leaders



[Thanks to Youth For Christ for their model Accident and Emergencies Procedure]

Incident Reporting Form

Incidents should be reported within 7 days.



Section A - The Details

Name of leader reporting incident					Today's Date
Youth Worker/Minister receiving report					Date of Incident
Type of incident (circle)	Accident	Personal Injury	Safety Concern	Complaint	Other
Names and Contacts of affected parties					

Section B – The Incident

Incident / issue description
Action(s) taken
Outcome(s) if known

Section C– The Analysis

Is this type of incident (circle)	NEW	OLD	Is this type of incident	ONE-OFF	ONGOING
Has this type of incident been increasing?	YES	NO	Have appropriate steps been taken to address this incident?	YES	NO
If "NO," what needs to be done?					



Safety And Protection Policy

This policy exists to ensure the safety and well being of all the children and young people in our care. The policy is also designed to protect leaders of activities and programmes involving children and young people from allegations that can arise from careless and unwise behaviour.

Safety and Protection Mission Statement:

“We will seek to ensure that children and young people in our care are nurtured and cared for in a safe environment and are protected from any potential harm.”

This church is committed to keeping the law and will therefore operate in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health requirements, the Human Rights Act and the Privacy Act and other relevant legislation. This church is also committed to being an agent of healing and justice and to prevention of abuse: spiritual, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

Recruitment and appointment process:

This applies equally to “volunteers” as to any paid worker:

All those who want to work with children and young people through this church will undergo a suitable screening process that includes collection of information from referees. A condition of appointment will be that applicants must respond to questions about whether they have ever committed or been accused of any acts of child molestation or abuse.

No-one who has sexually abused a child will ever be appointed.

Appointees must sign a declaration of commitment that acknowledges willingness to adhere to the Code of Ethics for Pastoral Care and the Code of Conduct for those working with children and young people.

Protective boundaries endorsed and implemented by this church:

1. Leaders will abide by the requirements of the leadership of this church including acceptance of the principles of the Code of Ethics for Pastoral Care and the Code of Conduct for those working with children and young people.
2. Parents and care-givers will be given all pertinent information about church programmes for their children and young people, including starting and finishing times.
3. Leaders will co-operate with parents to ensure that children and young people are taken home safely.
4. “Teaching” will be done in an open environment to which parents and other teachers have free access. Visitors will not be allowed access to children and young people without the supervision of an approved leader.
5. While under the care of the church, children and young people will be supervised and will not be allowed to play in dangerous places.
6. Leaders will not be alone with one child or young person unless they are within sight of others.
7. Leaders are not permitted to touch children or young people on any part of their body that would normally be covered by swimming togs.
8. Leaders are not permitted to kiss or tickle a child or young person or do anything that is potentially sexual.
9. This church has a process for reporting any suspected abuse to the appropriate legal authority.



Code of Ethics for Pastoral Care

For Clergy and Lay Leaders, Educators and Pastoral Carers, both paid and voluntary

This code is a statement of how the Negotiating Partners in the Co-operative Ventures in Aotearoa New Zealand understand the standards of conduct by those members (both clergy and lay) who undertake the work of Pastoral care, in the name of the church and as part of the Body of Christ. The church is a community bound together by faith, hope and love. We all share responsibility for its mission, to be a sign and instrument of the communion of human kind with God and with one another.

Our rule of life is the inseparable two-fold commandment of Jesus: love God and love your neighbour as you love yourself. We are committed to living by this law of love as professional ministers and lay leaders, accountable for our ministry whatever its setting. This accountability is expressed in a minimal way through the acceptance of the responsibilities of this code of ethics.

The responsibility for adhering to the code rests with us. It has no official standing in the church, and no official body exists to enforce it and there are no sanctions against those who do not follow it. The code is offered to enhance the dignity of pastoral care and to give the public greater confidence that we are committed to standards of excellence and to a high quality of service.

The code is not to be taken as legal advice. When in doubt about the appropriateness of one’s actions, ethically or legally, consultation with experts in related fields is always wise. This code is not a substitute for the codes or standards of practice of the Negotiating Partners but is intended to stand alongside them.

With God’s help,

1. I will keep spiritually and emotionally healthy by following a regular discipline of spiritual growth and adequate personal recreation and self care.
2. I will act with integrity, dealing openly and honestly with those under pastoral care, maintaining a safe environment and upholding their best interests, rights and well-being, rather than my own.
3. I will respect the privacy of individuals and confidentiality of information. The only exception is where there is clear and imminent danger to the person or others, at which time he/she will be informed of those limits.
4. I will affirm the dignity and worth of each person and will ensure pastoral care is available for them without discrimination on grounds of their age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religious belief, economic status or physical or mental abilities.
5. I will acknowledge that people in pastoral care come from *different* ethnic and cultural backgrounds and will act therefore with awareness, sensitivity and responsibility.
6. I will recognise that it is my responsibility, whose role and status gives me greater power, to maintain personal and professional boundaries in Pastoral relationships.
7. I will not abuse the relative power of my position by taking advantage of people for personal, financial institutional or spiritual gain.
8. I will not subject anyone to sexual exploitation, harassment or abuse, and recognise that any sexual intimacy in the pastoral situation is totally unacceptable.
9. I will recognise that there are limits to my competence and will refer people to others better qualified when this proves necessary or desirable. I will not attempt clinical counselling without appropriate training.
10. I will use regular professional supervision, where appropriate, or some similar process, to ensure accountability, good time management, appropriate theological reflection and a high standard of pastoral care.

Signed	Date
Witnessed by	

Code of Conduct for Those Working With Young People

As a person working in ministry with children in the Presbyterian and partner churches you are involved in a five-way interaction between the children, the children's parents or guardians, your co-workers in children's ministry, the Church and yourself. Primarily, you are accountable to the session or parish council of the congregation in which you are working.

Leader's responsibilities towards children

1. Ensure the safety and well being of all children in your care.
2. Make certain that all activities are undertaken with sufficient suitably qualified supervision and approved resources.
3. Treat all children as individuals, with dignity and sensitivity, avoiding favouritism, respecting their culture, their home background, their age and their physical and mental abilities.
4. Neglect, harassment, bullying, sarcasm, and bad language are unacceptable, as is any degree of physical, emotional, mental or spiritual abuse.
5. Respect children's privacy at all times, particularly where activities include sleeping, changing of clothing, bathing and ablutions.
6. Remain in sight of others, even if out of hearing, when dealing with an individual child. Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities and inappropriate physical contact.

Leader's responsibilities towards parents/guardians

1. Take the time to get to know all parents/guardians.
2. Keep parents/guardians informed, inviting them to participate in or observe the programmes being provided.
3. Find out if children have any special needs or medical requirements.
4. Obtain written consent from parents/guardians prior to undertaking activities off church premises. Request their involvement in transport and other arrangements.

Leader's responsibilities to the Church

1. Conduct yourself in a manner in keeping with Christian principles and ethics.
2. Be a healthy role model.
3. In providing instruction in the Christian faith, teaching and training should follow theology and resources approved by session/parish council.
4. Report regularly on ministry with children to the session/parish council.
5. Be educated in the recognition of the warning signs and symptoms of abuse.
6. All activities away from church premises need to be reported in advance to the session/parish clerk and clergy to check that procedures are followed.

Leader's responsibilities to self and co-workers

1. Use resources approved by session/parish council. Be well prepared for all events and activities and attend training and planning meetings.
2. Keep contact with session/parish council or subgroup (e.g. Christian Education Committee) to support you, and overview children's ministry in the parish.
3. Avoid placing yourself and your co-workers in compromising situations and protect yourself from actions that may be misconstrued.
4. Support your colleagues, and develop good relationships with them.
5. Report to session/parish council any anxieties you have regarding questionable behaviour of any person participating in children's ministry. This is to safeguard the integrity of leaders from potential accusations of abuse.

Police Checks – General Information

Anyone who is paid to work with children, youth and families must undergo a police check prior to their appointment. The Presbyterian Church also strongly encourages police checks for volunteers working with vulnerable people.

The Application form for a Police Check must be completed by the Session Clerk while the Consent Form should be filled in by the prospective employee.

The Police Vetting Service will only process Consent Forms that are signed within the last three months.

Before you send a consent form to us, please check

- The Date and Place of Birth have been entered.
- The person is over 17 years of age.
- The form has been signed within 3 months.
- That you are using the new form with the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Code (P30173) on it.

An application form should be completed and signed by the Session Clerk. If your parish is taking part in the OSCAR programme, be sure to tick this box as we can then return the original consent form to you for your parish audit.

Ref Code: P30173

Application Form for a Police Check

To be completed by the session clerk

Name: _____

Title: _____

Parish: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Presbytery: _____

Names of individuals to be vetted:

Checklist:

I have checked consent forms have been completed in full

I confirm the attached identification belongs to the individuals to be vetted

These consent forms were filled out less than three months ago

Consent forms for all individuals listed above are attached

My parish belongs to the OSCAR programme (only tick if yes)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please note that applications must be sent by mail. Faxes and e-mails will not be used except for providing general information about the process.

Please post completed form to: Police Checks
Assembly Office
PO Box 9049
Wellington, 6141

Ref Code: P30173

Presbyterian Church Police Consent Form

This form will be sent to the Licensing & Vetting Service of the New Zealand Police.

Please fill in all fields of this form and **attach a copy of your photo identification (driving license, passport, student ID)** before giving it to your session clerk.

Family Name: _____

Given Names: _____

Maiden Name: _____

Other Names Used: _____

Date of Birth: Day: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____
(Please note that you must be at least 17 years old)

Place of Birth: _____
(Please include country if outside New Zealand)

Gender: Male / Female (Please circle)

Nationality: _____
(Country of citizenship)

Home Address: _____

Drivers Licence no: _____

I _____ hereby consent to the disclosure by the New Zealand Police of any information they may have pursuant to this application, to the **Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand**. I understand that any record of criminal convictions I might have will automatically be concealed if I meet the eligibility criteria stipulated in Section 7 of the criminal records (Clean Slate) Act 2004.

Signed: _____

Date: _____
(Please note that forms completed more than three months ago will not be processed)

COMMENTS OF THE NEW ZEALAND POLICE

Complaints Procedure

A full outline of Complaint Investigation Guidelines is provided in the Presbyterian Book of Order, in Appendix E-9

