

# Veta Youth Ltd. Child Safety Reporting Procedure

## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE

This procedure sets out who needs to report what, when, and to whom, when there is a current child safety concern at Veta Youth Ltd. This also includes:

- The complaint handling process of how the organisation will investigate
- How the organisation keeps records
- How people making a concern will be supported.

For more information on our approach and behavioural expectations in relation to child safety, please refer to our Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct.

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# OVERVIEW

## WHO SHOULD REPORT?

Anyone covered in the scope of the Child Safety Policy, including staff, volunteers, peer group supervisors, guest speakers, and any other contracted persons working in the Veta Youth Ltd. Ministry, must report child safety concerns according to this Reporting Procedure.

Anyone else associated with Veta Youth Ltd. should also report child safety concerns.

## WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED?

All child safety concerns must be reported, which include:

- Any disclosure, allegation, belief or suspicion of child abuse or harm
- Non-compliance with the Code of Conduct or other child-related misconduct
- Concerns regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child.

## WHO TO REPORT TO?

All child safety concerns must be reported to a Child Safety Officer.

Depending on the nature of the concern, the person with the concern may also need to report to designated authorities, as set out in this procedure and the Appendix 1: Reporting Flowchart.

Refer to Appendix 2: Child Safety Contact Details for a full list of contacts.

## CHILD SAFETY OFFICERS

| Veta Youth  | Rohan Waters         | 0432 991 836 | rohan@veta.au   |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Peer Groups | Partner Organisation | NA           | NA              |
| NSW         | Brianna Watson       | 0419 137 882 | brianna@veta.au |
| QLD         | Ben Chong            | 0431 118 350 | ben@veta.au     |
| SA          | Peter Eckermann      | 0427 780 004 | peter@veta.au   |
| VIC         | Rohan Waters         | 0432 991 836 | rohan@veta.au   |

If the officers for each state are not at a state specific event, please contact the Veta Youth Child Safety Officer.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Child:** means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

**Child Protection:** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

**Child Abuse:** includes -

- any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or an offence under the relevant section of the law for the relevant jurisdiction (eg. Victoria: section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming));
- the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm;
- serious neglect of a child

**Child Sexual Assault:** is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to moral law. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

**Mandatory Reporting:** the legal requirement for certain professional groups to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities.

- All employees and volunteers associated with Veta Youth Ltd. are currently considered Mandatory Reporters.
- See appendix for who is considered a Mandatory Reporter in each individual state.
- There is a fine and potential jail time depending on the State if the person with the concern does not report it to the relevant authorities.

**Reasonable Belief:** a belief formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. It is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A reasonable belief might be formed when:

- A child states that they have been sexually abused.
- A child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves).
- Someone who knows the child states that the child has been sexually abused.

- Signs of sexual abuse lead to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

**Reportable Conduct:** within the Reportable Conduct Scheme there are five types of reportable conduct:

- Sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- Sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- Behaviour that is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
- Significant neglect of a child.

# PROCEDURE

Please refer to Appendix 1: Reporting Flowchart for a summary of the procedure, and contact a Child Safety Officer at any stage for assistance.

## **1. CALL EMERGENCY SERVICES 000 IF THERE IS IMMEDIATE DANGER**

Remove any immediate threat if it is safe to do so, and call 000.

## **2. LISTEN TO ANY CONCERNS BEING RAISED**

If you are under 18, and a child starts to talk with you about behaviour which sounds concerning because it may indicate child abuse, ask an adult leader or a Child Safety Officer for help.

If you are over 18, interact with the child as follows:

- Reassure the child that telling someone was the right thing to do.
- Emphasise that they are not responsible for what occurred.
- Stop questioning the child/witnesses if the conduct is likely to constitute criminal conduct.
- Consider whether expert assistance is needed to support a child to communicate their concern or disclosure (for example, disability expert, language or cultural interpreter).
- Limit questioning; ask only open-ended questions (for example, can you tell me what happened?).
- Undertake to do something in response to what the child has said and, where appropriate, explain what will be done and the expected timeframe.
- Don't make promises that cannot be kept, including that the information will remain confidential.
- Document the conversation using the child's exact words as far as possible.
- If in doubt, ask a leader or a Child Safety Officer for help.

If an adult informs you of a child safety concern, direct them to make a report according to this procedure or gather as much information as possible and make a report.

If you otherwise become aware of a child safety concern, including concerns raised by yourself, move to step 3.

### **3. WRITE UP THE CONCERN**

Make notes straight away, using the Child Safety Report Form. If the form isn't immediately available, make a note of the following:

- Names and contact details of the people involved in the concern (e.g. children, parents, witnesses).
- Information that has led to the child safety concern (e.g. physical injuries, behaviour).
- The source of this information (e.g. observation of behaviour, report from child or another person).
- The actions taken as a result of the concern (e.g. consultation with a Child Safety Officer, report to police).

As the person with the concern, your role is to report; you do not need to know all the answers or investigate the situation before making a report. You only need to report what you have seen, heard or become aware of.

### **4. REPORT TO A CHILD SAFETY OFFICER**

All child safety concerns must be reported to a Child Safety Officer as soon as possible. If the matter is serious and you have not been able to contact a Child Safety Officer, do not delay reporting to authorities; simply move to step 5.

Report directly to your respective Child Safety Officer if applicable, otherwise report to the Veta Youth Ltd. Child Safety Officer. If your concern involves a Child Safety Officer, report to one of the other officers or directly to the chair of the board.

All child safety concerns should be treated confidentiality. You should only discuss the situation with a Child Safety Officer and others designated by them, except confidentially if you need to seek support yourself. Please reach out to a Child Safety Officer if you would like guidance on obtaining or providing appropriate support.

### **5. REPORT TO AUTHORITIES IF REQUIRED**

Sometimes reports need to be made to designated authorities to ensure the safety of children and to meet legal obligations. In some circumstances, you may need to make this report, and in others, certain Veta Youth Ltd. staff will need to make this report. However,

anyone can make a report to authorities at any time. If unsure, it is safer to report than fail to do so.

Please refer to the table in Appendix 1 and seek guidance from a Child Safety Officer as needed. Failure to report information to authorities and the relevant Commission or Social Services Regulator is considered a criminal offence, and may result in penalty fines and/or jail time.

## **6. FOLLOW UP TO ENSURE THE CHILD IS PROTECTED**

If you are an adult in a responsible position in the organisation you must follow up to make sure that appropriate action has been taken to protect the child or children involved in your child safety concern, or risk committing an offence. This can include reporting to the relevant state's Children Commission, Social Services Regulator and the relevant state's Churches of Christ Child Safe Coordinator.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **HOW WILL VETA YOUTH LTD. RESPOND TO A CHILD SAFETY REPORT?**

The response process for each report will depend on the nature of the child safety concern. For example, a report involving a disclosure of child abuse will need to be handled differently to a concern regarding an area of the Code of Conduct that has not been upheld by someone.

In general, Veta Youth Ltd. will take the following steps after being notified of a child safety concern:

- **Commence an investigation.** Once a report is received, an immediate meeting with the Child Safety Officer/s, Executive Leadership and Chair of the Veta Youth Board where necessary will take place and a Child Safety Officer will be appointed to lead the investigation. The concern will be treated as top priority until it is resolved. If the concern involves criminal conduct or is a serious concern, clearance must be given from police and/or the relevant state's Churches of Christ Child Safe Coordinator before the investigation commences.
- **Report to relevant authorities and bodies if required.** The lead Child Safety Officer will ensure all reports are made to the appropriate parties as outlined in the procedure listed in Appendix 1, unless the person who received the report has

already reported to authorities in line with their responsibilities. The lead Child Safety Officer will provide any additional information and documentation to authorities as required.

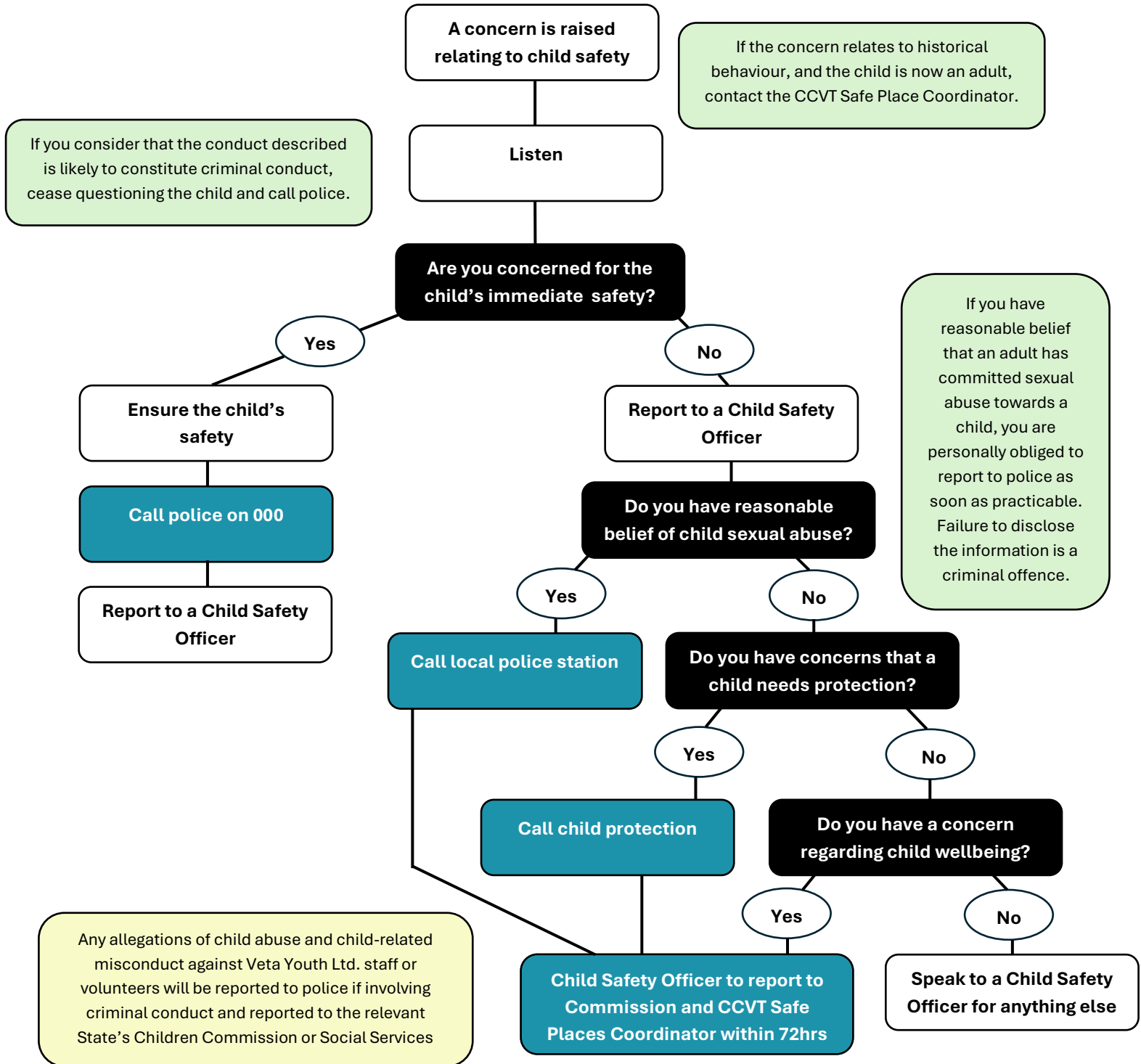
- **Take corrective actions.** If the concern involves misconduct of a Veta Youth Ltd. representative, appropriate actions will be taken, including temporarily stepping the person down from their role while the concern is investigated, and if severe or involving criminal conduct and proven credible, dismissal from roles and/or the organisation. Other concerns related to child safety in programs will be addressed appropriately on a case-by-case basis.
- **Support those involved.** All people involved, including the reporter, victim and the person the concern is against, will be treated with respect throughout the entire process. The lead Child Safety Officer will debrief with those involved and can provide, arrange or recommend additional pastoral care and external counselling where necessary.
- **Maintain confidentiality.** All information related to child safety concerns will be treated as confidential and only shared with the Child Safety Officer/s, Executive Leadership and Board members, and the relevant authorities and the relevant state's Churches of Christ Child Safe Coordinator where required. Wherever possible, only general details of the concern will be shared and identifying individuals involved will be kept to a minimum. All information related to child safety concern will be securely stored with restricted access.
- **Review.** At the end of the investigation, the lead Child Safety Officer will review the concern and the response process and identify any areas for improvement to programs, policies and procedures to minimise the risk of similar situations occurring in future. A copy of the final report will be sent to the Chair of the Board.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH THE RESPONSE?**

If you are not satisfied with Veta Youth Ltd.'s response, you can contact the relevant state's Churches of Christ Child Safe Coordinator, whose contact is listed in Appendix 2.

**APPENDIX 1:**

**CHILD SAFETY REPORTING FLOWCHART**



## APPENDIX 2:

# CHILD SAFETY CONTACT DETAILS

### CHILD SAFETY OFFICERS

|                     |                      |              |                 |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| <b>Veta Youth</b>   | Rohan Waters         | 0432 991 836 | rohan@veta.au   |
| <b>Peer Groups</b>  | Partner Organisation | NA           | NA              |
| <b>NSW</b>          | Brianna Watson       | 0419 137 882 | brianna@veta.au |
| <b>QLD</b>          | Ben Chong            | 0431 118 350 | ben@veta.au     |
| <b>SA</b>           | Peter Eckermann      | 0427 780 004 | peter@veta.au   |
| <b>VIC</b>          | Rohan Waters         | 0432 991 836 | rohan@veta.au   |
| <b>Lead Officer</b> | Sarah Berry          | 0402 554 462 | sarah@veta.au   |

### KEY CONTACTS

|  |                                    |              |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Veta Youth Ltd. Board</b>             | Chair of the Board (Matt Harridge) | NA           | mattharridge@gmail.com             |
| <b>Churches of Christ NSW/ACT (CCNA)</b> | Professional Standards Unit        |              | psu@ccnswact.org.au                |
| <b>Churches of Christ QLD (CCQ)</b>      | Safeguarding Coordinator           |              | safeguarding@cofcqld.com.au        |
| <b>Churches of Christ SA/NT (CCSN)</b>   | TBA                                |              |                                    |
| <b>Churches of Christ VIC/TAS (CCVT)</b> | Safe Places Coordinator            | 03 9488 8800 | safeplaces@churchesofchrist.org.au |

### EXTERNAL CONTACTS

#### New South Wales

|               |           |            |  |
|---------------|-----------|------------|--|
| <b>Police</b> | Emergency | <b>000</b> |  |
|---------------|-----------|------------|--|

|                         |                                  |                |   |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|---|
| <b>Child Protection</b> | Child Protection Helpline (24/7) | <b>132 111</b> | <i>Find your region:</i><br><a href="https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/csc.html">https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/csc.html</a> |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|---|

## Queensland

|                         |  |                     |   |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| <b>Police</b>           | Emergency                                | <b>000</b>          |   |
| <b>Child Protection</b> | Online or After Hours Emergency Helpline | <b>1800 177 135</b> | <i>Find your region:</i><br><a href="https://www.families.qld.gov.au/contact-us/department-contacts/child-family-contacts/child-safety-service-centres/regional-intake-services">https://www.families.qld.gov.au/contact-us/department-contacts/child-family-contacts/child-safety-service-centres/regional-intake-services</a> |

## South Australia

|                         |                                |                |  |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|--|
| <b>Police</b>           | Emergency                      | <b>000</b>     |  |
| <b>Child Protection</b> | Child Abuse Report Line (24/7) | <b>131 478</b> | <i>Making a report:</i><br><a href="https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/report-suspected-harm/process-for-mandated-reporters#ecarl">https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/report-suspected-harm/process-for-mandated-reporters#ecarl</a> |

## Victoria

|                                  |  |                     |   |
|----------------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| <b>Police</b>                    | Emergency                                | <b>000</b>          |   |
| <b>Child Protection</b>          | Online or After Hours Emergency Helpline | <b>13 12 78</b>     | <i>Find your region:</i><br><a href="https://www.police.vic.gov.au/sexual-offence-child-abuse-teams-centres">https://www.police.vic.gov.au/sexual-offence-child-abuse-teams-centres</a> |
| <b>Social Services Regulator</b> | SSR                                      | <b>1300 310 778</b> | <i>Making a report:</i><br><a href="https://rcs.ssr.vic.gov.au/">https://rcs.ssr.vic.gov.au/</a>  |

**APPENDIX 3:**

**CLASSIFICATION OF MANDATORY REPORTERS**

*\*Bolded are the areas where Veta Youth Ltd. Employees and Volunteers would classify.*

| State                  | Who is considered a Mandatory Reporter?   |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>New South Wales</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care — registered medical practitioners, specialists, enrolled and registered nurses, registered midwives, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, psychologists, dentists and other allied health professionals working in sole practice or in public or private health practices.</li> <li>• Welfare — registered psychologists, social workers, caseworkers and youth workers.</li> <li>• <b>Education — teachers, counsellors, principals.</b></li> <li>• Children’s services — child care workers, family day carers and home-based carers.</li> <li>• Residential services — refuge workers, community housing providers.</li> <li>• Law enforcement — police.</li> <li>• Disability services – disability support workers and personal care workers.</li> <li>• <b>A person in religious ministry or a person providing religion based activities to children (e.g. minister of religion, priest, deacon, pastor, rabbi, Salvation Army officer, church elder, religious brother or sister)</b></li> <li>• Registered psychologists providing a professional service as a psychologist to adults.</li> </ul> |
| <i>Queensland</i>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Doctors</li> <li>• Registered nurses</li> <li>• Police officers with child protection responsibilities</li> <li>• A person performing a child advocate function under the Public Guardian Act 2014</li> <li>• Early childhood education and care professionals.</li> <li>• <b>Child Safety employees</b></li> </ul>  |

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
|                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees of a departmental care service or licensed care service</li> <li>• An approved foster or kinship carer.</li> </ul>   |
| <i>South Australia</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prescribed health practitioners (medical practitioners, pharmacists, registered or enrolled nurses, dentists and psychologists)</li> <li>• Police officers</li> <li>• Community corrections officers</li> <li>• Social workers</li> <li>• <b>Ministers of religion</b></li> <li>• <b>Employees of, or volunteers in, an organisation formed for religious or spiritual purposes</b></li> <li>• Teachers employed as such in a school or a pre-school or kindergarten</li> <li>• <b>Employees of, or volunteers in, an organisation that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children or young people, being a person who:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>provides such services directly to children or young people, or</b></li> <li>• <b>holds a management position in the organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children or young people</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <i>Victoria</i>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered medical practitioners</li> <li>• Nurses</li> <li>• Midwives</li> <li>• Registered teachers and early childhood teachers</li> <li>• School principals</li> <li>• School counsellors</li> <li>• Police officers</li> <li>• Out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)</li> <li>• Early childhood workers</li> <li>• Youth justice workers</li> <li>• Registered psychologists; and</li> <li>• <b>People in religious ministry.</b></li> </ul>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>‘People in religious ministry’ refers to a person appointed, ordained or otherwise recognised as a religious or spiritual leader in a religious institution.</b></li></ul> |
|--|---|

## APPENDIX 4:

# CHILD SAFETY REPORT FORM

### SECTION A: YOUR CONCERN

*To be completed by you.*

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Date of Incident |  |
|------------------|--|

### YOUR DETAILS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name:  |  |
| Phone:   |  |
| Email:   |  |
| Relationship to Veta Youth Ltd. (e.g. staff, volunteer): |  |

### CHILD DETAILS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name:  |  |
| Address:   |  |
| Date of Birth:   |  |
| Phone:   |  |
| Relationship to Veta Youth Ltd. (e.g. staff, volunteer): |  |

### INCIDENT DETAILS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| What is the type of incident (tick one): | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical<br><input type="checkbox"/> Emotional<br><input type="checkbox"/> Property Damage<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual                           |
| What is your role in this:               | <input type="checkbox"/> Disclosure by the child<br><input type="checkbox"/> Observed/suspected by yourself<br><input type="checkbox"/> Allegation made by someone else<br>Name: |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>Phone:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> |
| Where did the incident occur (be specific to inside or outside of the retreat premises, which rooms etc):  |   |
| Describe incident in detail, providing dates, times and surrounding events:  |   |
| Witness to incident and phone numbers:   |   |
| Remarks, observations or comments made by the injured party:   |   |
| <p>Action or response of the person(s) responsible.<br/>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the injured party was removed from the program and for how long</li> <li>• Were they sent home or to hospital or for medical treatment</li> <li>• If an ambulance was required and</li> </ul> |   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| any first aid that was administered<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If any Police or Child Abuse reports were made</li> </ul> |  |
| Who, if anyone, has been notified about this situation already:<br>If so, when?   |  |
| Do you have any further comments:   |  |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Signature: |  |
| Date:      |  |

**SECTION B: STATE CHILD SAFETY OFFICER REVIEW**

*To be completed by the State Child Safety Officer, if different from the person who completed Section A.*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Name:   |  |
| Role:   |  |
| After reviewing the incident report, are there any further comments you wish to make: |  |
| What, if any, immediate actions have been taken regarding this situation:             |  |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Signature: |  |
| Date:      |  |

## SECTION C: CHILD SAFETY OFFICER REPORT

*To be completed by the lead Child Safety Officer.*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Date matter was referred:   |  |
| <b>Investigation.</b><br>Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How the investigation was conducted</li><li>• Who was involved</li><li>• Key dates</li></ul> <b>Findings.</b><br>Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The key findings from the investigation process</li></ul> |  |
| <b>Actions.</b><br>Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Actions taken</li><li>• Follow-up actions</li></ul>   |  |
| <b>Lessons Learned.</b><br>Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any strengths or weaknesses in the Child Safety Policy</li><li>• Recommendations for preventing this from recurring</li><li>• Recommendations for improving processes in future</li></ul>                                 |  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Report prepared by (Child Safety Officer): |  |
| Signature:                                 |  |
| Date:                                      |  |

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Reviewed by (Chair of Board): |  |
| Signature:                    |  |
| Date:                         |  |