



# OM Ships Child Protection Policy and Response Process



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## Section A – Child Protection Policy

### 1 Policy Foundations

#### 1.1 Biblical foundation

In the Bible Jesus emphasizes blessing the children in our midst. When the disciples wanted to push them away Jesus said in Matthew 19:14-15: *“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”. When He placed His hands on them, He went on from there.*

It is OM Ships desire to reflect Christ through life and ministry. Enabling children to come to Jesus and caring for them is a deep commitment OM Ships holds. Protecting them from any form of abuse is therefore a high priority.

#### 1.2 Zero-tolerance

OM Ships adopts a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to any form of child abuse, based on the biblical example set by Christ.

#### 1.3 Awareness

The first step in child protection is to be aware that abuse exists – even in the Christian environment. In fact, perpetrators often use spiritual or religious themes in the abuse of children. In a study of 3,952 male sex offenders, 93% described themselves as “religious.”<sup>1</sup>

Child Abuse as defined by this Policy is strictly prohibited.

### 2 Definitions

#### 2.1 Child

OM Ships considers any person under age 18 to be a child.

#### 2.2 Child Safety Team

##### 2.2.1 Child Safety Team (CST)

An onboard team of OM Ships staff who receive more in-depth training from child protection experts and who will facilitate compliance with the Child Protection Policy on *Logos Hope*, including,

- Answering any questions about the policy.
- Tracking completion of training videos.
- Providing regular reminders to the ship’s community regarding important aspects of the Child Protection Policy.
- Receiving reports of abuse, policy violations and safety concerns.
- Maintaining open communication with parents and appropriate departments with regard to those who are approved to work directly with children.
- Leading the onboard response team in the event of abuse allegations, including victim care and any safety concerns regarding the accused.

The CST is made up of: HRS Director (OB CSO), Personnel Manager, Events Manager\*, Head of the School\*, Book Fair Manager\*. (\* Will be involved in the CST when it relates to a child under their care.)

##### 2.2.2 Child Safety Officer (CSO)

OM Ships staff who shall coordinate child safety effort in general. One CSO will be appointed on-board and one in Florence. The HRS Managing Director based onshore has overall responsibility for Child Safety in OM Ships and is by default included in all communication handled by the CST and CSO’s.

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<sup>1</sup> Gene Abel & Nora Harlow, *The Stop Child Molestation Book* (2001).

### 2.2.3 International Child Safety Officer (ICSO)

The OM International Child Safety Officer is responsible for coordinating and initial investigation and the setting up a Response Team in the event of any report, complaint or concern raised related to child safety. The ICSO should be notified immediately when a report is made to the CSO and/or the CST.

### 2.2.4 Area and Field Leaders

The Area and Field Leader should appoint their CSO and support them to receive training and be involved in the response process on behalf of the Field/Area. Leaders have the ultimate decision making & implementation responsibility when it comes to disciplining/dismissing their people and any changes needed in Field policy or process.

### 2.2.5 People Care

Support and care for complainants, respondents and their families as well as any alleged perpetrator and other affected team members will be needed but this should happen independently of any inquiry.

### 2.2.6 Response Team<sup>2</sup>

A team consisting of the ICSO, OS CSO, Child Safety Team, field leader and area leaders who shall initiate an independent investigation and all subsequent appropriate responses after a report of abuse.

## 2.3 Defining Child Abuse

### 2.3.1 Child Abuse

An injury of a child by an adult or another child that is not accidental. It may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional / verbal abuse, neglect and spiritual abuse.

### 2.3.2 Sexual Abuse

Physical contact with a sexual or intimate part of the body, or other forms of sexual activity, conducted without consent, or engaged in for the purpose of sexual gratification or to degrade or abuse.

*Physical contact includes, but is not limited to:*

- Touching, grabbing, patting, slapping, pinching, rubbing, fondling, groping, poking, or other forms of contact, whether over or under clothing.
- Rubbing one's genital area up against another person or touching another person with one's genitals, whether over or under clothing. This includes instances when an individual act as though the rubbing was inadvertent but in fact it was intentional.
- Sexual intercourse of any kind.

*Sexual or intimate body parts include, but are not limited to:*

- Breasts
- Buttocks
- Genitals
- Groin area
- Upper thighs

*Other forms of sexual activity include, but are not limited to:*

- Photographing, videotaping, or making any other visual, descriptive or audio recording of sexual activity or the sexual or intimate parts of a person's body.
- Displaying to another any text, photograph, videotape, or other visual or auditory recording of sexual activity or the sexual or intimate parts of a person's body.

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 10 on the response process

*Lack of consent includes, but is not limited to:*

- Explicit indication of lack of consent.
- Physical/verbal force or intimidation, whether express or implicit.
- Circumstances making it obvious that consent has not been granted, such as:
  - If one individual is an adult (18yrs and older) and one individual is a child (<18 yrs), since children cannot reasonably consent to sexual activity with an adult. The adult will always be held responsible also when consent was perceived to be given.
  - Being asleep.
  - Lack of knowledge of the activity's occurrence.
  - Otherwise not having the physical or mental capacity to consent.

### 2.3.3 Physical Abuse

Non-accidental physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or otherwise harming a child, that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver, or other person relating to the child..

### 2.3.4 Emotional Abuse

Acts toward a child that cause or have a substantial likelihood of causing harm to the child's physical, psychological, social, spiritual, or moral development.

Consider the possibility of emotional abuse<sup>3</sup>

- being fearful of a parent.
- saying they hate a parent.
- talking badly about themselves (such as saying, "I'm stupid").
- seeming emotionally immature when compared to peers.
- exhibiting sudden changes in speech (such as stuttering).
- experiencing a sudden change in behaviour (such as doing poorly in school).

### 2.3.5 Neglect

- Physical: failure to provide necessary food, sleep or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision.
- Emotional: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs.
- Medical: failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment.
- Educational: failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs.

### 2.3.6 Spiritual Abuse

Abuse administered under the guise of religion (incl. any Christian or non-Christian religion). Including but not limited to:

- Use of religious ideology, precepts, tradition, or sacred texts to harm a child.
- Abuse that occurs in a religious context (e.g., on-board *Logos Hope*, in church, in a religious school, etc.).
- Abuse perpetuated by a religious leader (e.g., a leader on-board, a pastor, etc.).
- Invocation of divine authority to manipulate a child into meeting the needs of the abuser.

## 2.4 Poly-victimisation

OM Ships takes all indicators and suspicions of child maltreatment seriously. We are aware of the research on poly-victimisation, which tells us that children who are mistreated in one way are at significantly increased risk of being mistreated in multiple ways. Therefore, as OM Ships becomes aware of an indicator or report of a child being

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.healthline.com/health/child-neglect-and-psychological-abuse#signs-of-abuse>

maltreated in one way, we will be alert to the possibility that this child might also be mistreated in another way, and will take steps to protect the child from known risks and be extra attentive to and supportive of the child.

## 2.5 Indicators of Abuse

Because “the majority of children who are sexually abused will be moderately to severely symptomatic at some point in their life,”<sup>4</sup> OM Ships is familiar with and attentive to potential indicators of child abuse. Everyone on board *Logos Hope* is around children, but especially parents and certain OM Ships staff (e.g. school teachers, Sunday school teachers) have regular opportunities to observe children’s behaviour and may be in the unique position to detect child sexual abuse and other forms of child maltreatment.

*Consider the possibility of sexual abuse if a child has:*

- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.
- Difficulty, pain or blood in the genital area when walking, sitting, or using the bathroom.
- Discharge from the penis or vagina.
- Injuries (e.g., bruises, tearing, bleeding), itching, or swelling in the genital, vaginal, or anal area.
- Urinary tract infections, yeast infections, sexually transmitted diseases.
- Pregnancy.

*It is atypical for children to engage in the following sexual behaviours:*

- Placing mouth on sex part.
- Asking others to engage in sexual acts.
- Trying to have intercourse or imitating intercourse.
- Undressing others, especially if done forcefully.
- Imitating sexual positions with dolls.
- Inserting an object into vagina or anus, especially if child continues to do so despite pain.
- Making sexual sounds.
- Inserting tongue in mouth when kissing.

*Consider the possibility of physical abuse if you notice:*

- Frequent injuries of any kind (e.g., bruises, cuts, fractures, burns).
- Especially if the child is unable to provide an adequate explanation of the cause of injury.
- These injuries may appear in distinctive patterns such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns, or impressions of other instruments.
- Sudden change of behaviour and/or personality.
- Pay particular attention to injuries that present on both sides of the head or body, as accidental injuries typically only affect one side of the body.

*Consider the possibility of neglect if a child:*

- Is obviously malnourished, listless, or fatigued.
- Begg, steals, or hoards food or complains frequently of hunger.
- Is consistently dirty or has severe body odour.
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather.
- Untreated illness, injuries, health (e.g., unfilled cavities) or serious educational needs.
- Broken or missing eyeglasses, hearing aid, or other necessary aids or equipment.
- Has an untreated need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention.
- Stays at school outside of school hours.

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<sup>4</sup> S. R. Dube, R. F. Anda, C. L. Whitfield, D. W. Brown, V. J. Felitti, M. Dong, and W. H. Giles, “Child Sexual Abuse: Consequences and Implications,” *Journal of Pediatric Health Care* 24 (2005): 358-364. Retrieved from: [www.medscape.com/viewarticle/731970\\_1](http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/731970_1); See also, S. R. Dube, et. al., “Long-Term Consequences of Childhood Sexual Abuse by Gender of Victim,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28 (2005): 430-438. Retrieved from [www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(05\)00078-4/fulltext](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(05)00078-4/fulltext).

- Frequently absent or significant academic struggles.
- Is inappropriately left unsupervised.
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs.

## 2.6 Impact of Abuse

Though a child's injuries may be hidden from the untrained eye, child sexual abuse and other forms of child maltreatment can result in immediate and/or lasting impact in all realms of the person's well-being. Understanding how child sexual abuse can traumatise the child and have lasting impact in the life of a surviving adult is a critical first step in preventing abuse and responding compassionately. Not every child will display the impact of their maltreatment and not every adult will experience the long-term consequences of their traumatic childhood experiences, but all are at increased risk.

## 2.7 Perpetrators of child maltreatment

People who sexually abuse children in a Christian setting use trust to gain access and control over children so they can perpetrate the abuse. In order to do this, they must work hard to keep their intentions and the abuse secret. This means they are often highly skilled in deception. We cannot tell who is an abuser by appearances. Therefore, when we are made aware of abuse, a policy violation, or a safety concern, we cannot dismiss it because the person is known, respected, and well-liked. These are all typically true of an abuser in a Christian ministry.

# 3 Behavior Guidelines

## 3.1 General

OM Ships is committed to care for both the children living on board as well as those the ship's community interacts with in each port. OM Ships wants to provide an open and safe environment where children can feel free and safe to live life and experience *Logos Hope*.

As adults we have a tremendous opportunity to reflect Christ to children in our interactions with children and to impact their lives in a very positive way. OM Ships therefore wants to encourage the ship's community to feel free to interact with the children living on board and those we meet in the ports visited, within the framework given.

The following behaviour guidelines are meant to provide a clear framework for interaction with children, including teenagers, whether those on living on board, visiting the ship or when engaged in onshore ministry with children and teens. The foundation for a safe environment for children is educated adults who are accountable to each other for all interactions with young people. This includes the responsibility to understand, interrupt, and report any violations of these guidelines.

Any policy violation should be reported to the Child Safety Team as soon as possible. Any concern related to child safety should also be reported to the Child Safety Team. Please note, this does not mean you are accusing anyone of abuse. You are simply passing along information to trained individuals that may prove vital to child safety. Often, information that is critical to maintaining a safe environment never makes it to the responsible team.

These guidelines also apply to teens and older children where there is a significant difference in age, development, or power. On board, parents are responsible to ensure that older children understand and abide by these guidelines.

## 3.2 Supervision and Ship Access for onboard Children and Teens

An adult should never be alone with a child that is not their own child. The following exceptions apply:

- in the school setting, in line with school policy.
- When an onboard parent asks another adult to babysit (in which case adherence to the guidelines below regarding touch, sexual language, etc. is still expected).

Any time spent with children on the ship shall be with the knowledge of the child's parent, guardian or caregiver and shall include at least two unrelated adults and shall be in areas that are observable and interruptible. Careful attention must be taken to follow all behaviour guidelines below.

*Logos Hope* school group 3 children and up may go to designated areas of the ship on their own with the following limits:

- the parent must know where they will be at all times (children may not wander freely).
- the child must stay within designated areas (see below).

Any adult who observes an unauthorised child wandering alone should gently but firmly redirect the child back to parents or appropriate areas. If necessary, engage the help of another adult to avoid a one-on-one situation with the child, and report the incident to the Child Safety Team (who will follow up with the parents in the case of this involving an on-board child).

Areas of the ship where approved children may go on their own:

- higher visibility areas (e.g. dining room, Logos Lounge, main lobby (only during sailing)).
- children's library (usage in line with the school policy only).
- fun deck and outdoor recreation area.
- restrooms on deck 6.
- to and from approved areas (without lingering, for example in hallways or isolated areas).
- family cabin corridor on decks 5, 7 and 8 with the corridor barrier/door closed.

Areas of the ship where children may not go on their own:

- any non-carpeted areas on the ship.
- any areas on decks 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 (with the exception of their own cabin, fun deck, children's library, Hope Theatre, or the school).
- children are never to be in the cabins of other single ship staff (parents must initiate an arrangement if children are in any other cabin).
- Staff Lounge - with parent's approval kids from 14 years and older can play board games or table tennis with ships staff.
- Hope Theatre.

When children are on the fun deck, unrelated adults or older children (age 13 and up) may only be there if the parent of the child is present. Adults without children should only be on the fun deck when no children are present or at the invitation of a parent. During school hours, only school staff and authorised parents are allowed on the fun deck or if participating in PE with children. Any adults participating in PE during school hours are to be there at the invitation of and under the supervision of the school staff. All ship behavior guidelines and school policies apply during these times.

Adults should never be in the children's library with a closed door.

Because child abuse most often happens in isolated situations and because many adults seeking to harm a child prefer to do so in private, OM Ships requires two adults to supervise all children or youth-specific activities (however informal the activity).<sup>5</sup>

### 3.3 Touch

#### 3.3.1 Appropriate Touch

All adults are expected to interact with others at all times in a way that is above reproach. This is especially important in our behaviour with vulnerable children. Interaction is encouraged in a way that honours God and reflects Christ to the children.

Appropriate touch is important to developing children and nurtures a sense of care and safety. Appropriate touch meets a need in the child, not the adult. As such, all touch must be welcomed by the child. Appropriate touch

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<sup>5</sup> Excluding school classes, in which case the school policy shall apply.

should either be initiated by the child or the adult should ask the child's permission. All non-family member touch involving children must be observable by other adults.

Examples of appropriate touch include:

- Welcomed, observable touch to the head, shoulder, upper back, or hand.
- Culturally appropriate greetings for the child.
- High-fives and fist bumps.
- Hugs initiated by the child (bodily contact should be limited to the shoulder and upper back).
- Holding a child under 2 with parental permission.
- Tickling: welcomed by the child in non-private body areas and done in public.

If a child under age 5 needs comfort and a parent is not available, holding the child may be appropriate to comfort the child. Any touch should still be welcomed by the child and observable by other adults. If you find yourself in an isolated situation with a child, refrain from any touch since it is not observable.

### 3.3.2 Prohibited Touch

OM Ships prohibits the following:

- Inappropriate or sexually suggestive interaction is strictly prohibited.
- Sexually or physically abusive touch (see under "Definitions").
- Touching a child's thighs, stomach, or lower back.
- Corporal punishment administered by a non-parent.
- Any touch that is unwanted by a child.
- Kissing (except on the cheek, forehead and head when it is a culturally appropriate greeting, but this must be observable by other adults and welcomed by the child).
- Lap-sitting or sitting between legs, unless explicit consent is given by a parent, guardian or caregiver.
- Caressing (even in non-private body areas).
- Full frontal hugs (where there is contact below the shoulders and upper back).
- Picking up children (unless allowed under the circumstances described above or with permission of their parent(s), guardian or caregiver either on board or on shore and always in public areas).
- Never touch a child in areas that would be covered by a full swimming suit including the genital areas, the buttocks, and the chest/breasts. Teens and children must also refrain from any inappropriate or unwanted touch.
- Games or play that give easier opportunity for inappropriate touch or touch that is harder to observe.

\*If any of these touches are initiated by the child, it is the responsibility of the adult to ensure the appropriate boundaries are maintained at all times. Any inappropriate behaviour initiated by the child should be reported to the Child Safety Team and they will inform the parents so they can instruct the child.

Any violation of these guidelines should be interrupted immediately if at all possible, and the violation should be reported to the Child Safety Team so appropriate action can be taken.

*Inappropriately touching a child may be grounds for dismissal from OM Ships.*

### 3.4 Special Attention and Gifts

Child sex offenders will often use gifts or special attention as a means to gaining access and compliance from a family and child. Any private or special relationships between a non-family member and a child are forbidden. Any gifts should be rare and given only to one child or groups of children with the permission of the parents.

### 3.5 Communication and Sexual Content

All non-family communication with children must be observable or interruptible by other adults. Texting, messaging, any social media platform or any form of private communication between an adult and a child should

only occur if the parent is also included in the communication. The same applies to teenagers (age 13 and up) who are more than two years older than another child.

Exposing children to any visual sexual content is abusive and using sexual language is at minimum a serious boundary violation. The following is strictly forbidden:

- sexually suggestive language including jokes or descriptions of sexual experiences or habits.
- comments on the development of a child's body or any comment about bodies relating to sexuality.
- any form of pornography.
- music, video games, movies, or other digital content with sexual themes.

### 3.6 Bathroom Guidelines

#### 3.6.1 Public areas

If a child is in a toilet cubicle alone when you enter (e.g. they forgot to lock the door), please remain outside the toilet cubicle until the child exits. If a child tries to enter a toilet cubicle when you are using it, tell them they must wait outside and exit as soon as you are able.

In the rare case where a child asks for or needs assistance, every effort should be taken to locate the child's parent, guardian or caregiver. If this is not possible, two same-gender adults should assist so that such a vulnerable situation is observable.

#### 3.6.2 Children's Activities

(for example Sunday school or Crew for the Day, or onshore children's ministry)

Children aged 7 and under shall be taken to the restroom in groups of at least 2 children. A leader shall check to see that the restroom is empty and then the leader shall remain outside the door so they remain visible with the door ajar to maintain line of sight or at least the ability to hear what is happening. If help is needed for younger children, this is acceptable with parental, guardian or caregiver's consent.

Children aged 8 and over may go to the restroom on their own, but it is preferable to send them in close in age, same gender groups of 2 or 3.

Nappies can be changed by caregivers in a public space and with parental, guardian or caregivers' consent.

#### 3.6.3 *Logos Hope School*

School guidelines apply

### 3.7 Interaction with on board Children

#### 3.7.1 Onboard children's involvement in departments, ministry or outings

Children and teens living onboard may help out in various departments, either as a school activity or outside of school hours. This always needs to be done with parental consent and the child or teen should remain under the supervision of a designated adult at all times. The policies as outlined apply whilst helping out in a department.

Children who are living on board may only participate in onshore events with their parents or adults designated by the parents. Children should remain with their parent or designated adult at all times during the onshore ministry event.

Any children's outing organised by the ship (e.g. school outings) needs to be under the supervision of at least two adults. This can include parents or unrelated supervisors.

#### 3.7.2 Onboard children's involvement in other out of school activities

All onboard organised out of school groups/activities with children and teens can be done with parents' consent.

Consideration should be made of the following factors in determining how many adults should be supervising an activity:

- Ages (and age range) of children.
- Any special needs of the children.

- Risk level of activity.

Organised group activities should, however, always have at least either one parent or two single adults present and should take place either in a public area, a couple's or family cabin or one of the rooms that can be booked on board.

### 3.7.3 Ship Family groups

On board *Logos Hope*, our community is grouped into ship families. Special bonds develop as we live and serve God alongside each other. Appropriate play and interaction with children is permitted, as a healthy part of our close-knit community. This must still be welcomed by the child, with the parents' permission and in a public setting. This degree of familiarity would not be appropriate with children who are visiting the ship for the day or with those you meet on ministry activities ashore.

### 3.7.4 Sleepovers

Sleepovers of onboard children between onboard families is allowed with parental consent.

When onboard staff organise a sleepover, two adults of the same gender as the children must stay with the children overnight. If there are more than six children, then at least three adults of the same gender as the children must stay. The ideal location is the Karen and Sophia rooms with the divider closed to separate boys from girls. This is ideal as it is easily interruptible, there are bathrooms for both genders close by and it is easy to get off the ship in case of an emergency. The Hope Lounge is not an appropriate room to use. It is advisable for the activity to be planned in advance with the help of at least one parent, so that appropriate rooms can be booked and there is time to ensure all safety concerns are met. Preferably the parents of the child should be consulted first, before speaking with the child, so as to avoid unnecessary disappointment if the child for some reason cannot come to the sleepover.

## 3.8 Interactions with Child Visitors and Ministry involvement

### 3.8.1 General

There are often many opportunities to interact with children in the ports visited. OM Ships wants to embrace these opportunities to enable God's love for children to be passed on. When interacting with children who visit the ship or during onshore ministry, these guidelines as described in this policy remain in force for all adults serving in any capacity with OM Ships.

### 3.8.2 Visiting children

OM Ships very much welcomes children up to 18 years old to come and visit *Logos Hope*. All children under the age of 18 should always be accompanied by an adult. Staff members cannot invite a child under that age to visit without either an accompanying adult or a letter of consent from a caretaker of the child.

### 3.8.3 Onboard children's events

During onboard events held in the Hope Theatre, children and teens are only allowed backstage with two adults from the ship's crew.

All games or activities with children and teens (incl. crew for a day) will have a risk assessment carried out in advance in order to mitigate any possible harm to the child or teens participant in the event or activity.

When visiting adults for an onboard event leave their children under care the of ship's crew, this must always be under the care of two adults in easily accessible areas of the ship. If there are more the 20 children, a third adult should be added.

### 3.8.4 Onshore children's ministry

Line-up will be responsible for analysing what is and is not acceptable relating to children the team will minister to and add this to their PB.

The team leader will be responsible for ensuring the team is briefed on the information given on the PB before leaving.

The onshore coordinator who orientates the team just before leaving for the onshore ministry opportunity will briefly remind the team of relevant child safety issues as stated on the PB.

### 3.8.5 Bookfair code 'K'

#### 3.8.5.1 Touch

The guidelines under 3.3 regarding appropriate and prohibited touch apply. If a child allows, the child can be picked up by the bookfair shift leader, in order to lift the child above the crowd to look for the parents, guardian or caregiver.

#### 3.8.5.2 Bathroom guidelines

During a "Code K" where the visiting child must use the restroom, a crewmember shall ensure the restroom is empty before the child is allowed in on their own, while the crewmember remains outside the door to remain visible and ensure no one else enters the restroom until the child comes out.

## 4 Reporting and Responding to a Child Safety Concern

### 4.1 Reporting Summary

All OM Ships workers are required to report any child safety concerns relating to OM Ships ministry and personnel, whether current or historic, to the Child Safety Officer or a member of the Child Safety Team. All child safety concerns received will be passed on to the International Child Safety Officer and the Managing Director HRS of OM Ships.

An allegation of child abuse can be made by anyone (within or outside of OM Ships) at any time. It may be based on something the reporter personally witnessed, something they heard about, or something a child has disclosed to them.

Action is required when there is a disclosure, discovery, or suspicion of child abuse<sup>67</sup>. In such a case, the OMer should report to a member of the onboard Child Safety Team as soon as possible, either in person or via [Child.Protection@gbaships.org](mailto:Child.Protection@gbaships.org).

Do not attempt to investigate the matter in any way. Remember, you are not personally accusing anyone of abuse or building a case. You are simply passing along necessary information to the Child Safety Officer or a member of the Child Safety Team so that any appropriate action can be taken.

### 4.2 Responding Summary

The CSO is responsible to report immediately to the ICSSO, Director, Captain, HRS Managing Director, CEO and GBA Board Chairman that a report has been filed in line with the process as outlined in section B.3 – Response Process.

All reports of a child safety concern will be assessed by appropriately trained staff. Law enforcement will be called if appropriate and an internal inquiry launched if appropriate, in line with the OM Response Process as outlined under Section B – Responding to a Child Safety Concern. A copy of this is found on the HRS Sharepoint site onshore or elounge on board *Logos Hope*.

OM Ships will treat all child safety reports as confidential, with information being released on a 'need to know' basis in order to protect any children involved as much as possible. The 'need to know' principle is to be applied at every level of the Child Safety Response Process.

All OM Ships workers are required to cooperate with a child safety inquiry if requested.

### 4.3 Safety Concerns Outside the Scope of the Policy

OM Ships also encourages all OMer to bring any safety concern (general or specific) that is outside the scope of the policy to the attention of the Child Safety Team. The Child Safety Team will document the concern and inform the ICSSO and Managing Director HRS for discussion and any follow-up.

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<sup>6</sup> See definitions of abuse under 2.3 and further

<sup>7</sup> See section B – 2 When a report is required

## 5 Onshore Screening

### 5.1 General

OM Ships aims to recruit staff, crew, and volunteers who fit our vision for ministry and who share our commitment to the honoured place of children in the kingdom of God. OM Ships works to ensure as much as possible that those who serve in our ministry are aware of the reality of child abuse and are equipped to help keep children safe.

Those who work with kids in the ministry of OM Ships are those who:

- Acknowledge the reality of abuse in our world and even in Christian contexts.
- Demonstrate humility and a desire to work together to learn how to protect children.
- Uphold the child protection policies of OM Ships for themselves and others.

### 5.2 Various groups joining

#### 5.2.1 General Ship's Company (Staff, Crew and STEP)

Before a person comes to live on board as a member of the general ship's company (any role as staff, crew, or STEP), the appropriate sending office of OM shall thoroughly screen each candidate.

All candidates shall be required to:

- Complete an application including questions relating to child protection.
- Complete an interview including questions relating to child protection.
- Undergo a social media screening when there is cause for concern regarding past child abuse involvement.
- Consent to a criminal background check as per sending office requirements<sup>8</sup>.
- Read and sign the condensed Behaviour Guidelines and condensed Reporting Procedures – by the ship's orientation phase at the latest (either PST or the STEP orientation).

The local OM offices who are conducting these elements of screening will, where possible and needed, receive appropriate support from the ICSSO in order to properly assess applicants. When there is a question or concern about a particular applicant, the local OM office will work together with the ICSSO and if necessary, consult an outside expert.

#### 5.2.2 Schoolteachers

School administrators and teachers shall be screened in accordance with the screening procedures set forth in the school policy. This will include a criminal background check or equivalent to be submitted to OM Ships as part of the application process.

#### 5.2.3 Short-Term Ship Visitors (Guests and Vision Teams)

Each short-term visitor shall be required to:

- Receive training when arriving on-board regarding the protection policy of OM Ships.
- Read and sign the condensed Behaviour Guidelines and condensed Reporting Procedures.

#### 5.2.4 Volunteers

Each local volunteer shall also be screened by the appropriate department of OM Ships.

All applicants shall be required to:

- Complete an application including questions relating to child protection.
- Submit a pastoral recommendation with a statement that, to their knowledge, this person has never been accused, charged, or convicted of any form of child abuse or domestic violence.

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<sup>8</sup> Background checks will not be available in all field locations, but the minimum bar is getting consent regardless of whether it is available or not. There is some value in asking for this consent even if there are no readily available means to check criminal records, sex offender registries, or other relevant records.

- Read and sign condensed Behaviour Guidelines and condensed Reporting Procedures.

### 5.3 Disqualifying Applicants

OM Ships will not accept an applicant *for any position* who has been at any time during his/her life, rightfully accused, charged, or convicted of any form of child abuse. If any information unknown to OM Ships at the time of acceptance comes to light regarding abuse, that individual will be permanently dismissed. This may include acts of child maltreatment committed as a juvenile. An individual will not be allowed to work or volunteer with OM Ships where the application process or other information reveals a person is in denial about the reality of child abuse or that he/she could pose a risk of child abuse.

## 6 Onboard Screening

The onboard Child Safety Team shall conduct further screening measures for those who are serving directly with children. The onboard Child Safety Team will maintain records relating to any safety concerns and policy violations. There may be sufficient concerns that a member of crew is not approved for certain positions involving children.

- **Babysitting:** The onboard Child Safety Team shall work closely with parents on approved babysitters as outlined in the child abuse prevention pack for parents.
- The onboard Child Safety Team shall work closely with appropriate departments to ensure those participating in direct ministry with children on board or on shore are approved to serve directly with children and are a good fit for their role (for example, Sunday school teachers or an onshore children's ministry leader).

## 7 Training

The general ship's crew and STEP participants shall receive the following training:

- During PST or the STEP training (or on board if they are already serving), view 4 training videos on child protection, followed by a guided discussion time conducted by a member of the Child Safety Team.
- Complete a Child Protection Policy quiz in which each person is required to score 100% or resit the quiz till 100% has been reached.
- On board four videos will rotate on a quarterly basis during devotional time followed by Q&A hosted by the Child Safety Team.
- Parents will be given the child abuse prevention pack for parents to equip them to inform their children and teens about issues related to child safety and policy guidelines in an age-appropriate way.

Others on board such as general onboard guests, vision teams, project workers, volunteers, tour guides, and ambassadors will all watch a short video and sign that they have read the condensed Behaviour Guidelines and the condensed Reporting Policy.

The onboard Child Safety Team will ensure record attendance for the videos and the quiz. Those who teach Sunday school or babysit must complete all four of the training videos as a prerequisite for serving in those roles.

The onshore HRS Managing Director will coordinate training for the onboard Child Safety Team on an annual basis.

## 8 Policy Dissemination

This Child Protection Policy shall be disseminated widely to the ship community through public discussion, educational opportunities, training programmes and other appropriate means of communication that will raise awareness and create a safe environment for our children. Specifically, the most current version of our policy shall be:

- Available on the OM Ships website.
- Available on e-lounge on board *Logos Hope*.
- Part of the OM Ships handbook given out at the boarding process for ship staff.
- Printed policies will be available in the ship's lobby.

- Condensed Behaviour Guidelines and Condensed Reporting Policy will be posted on notice boards.

OM Ships requires all onboard staff and volunteers to sign an affirmation indicating that they have read and agree to abide by the terms of the OM Ships Child Protection Policy. The signed affirmation to abide by the policy is a precondition to any ministry or access to children. Records of signed affirmations will be maintained by the onboard Child Safety Team.

## 9 Boundary Violations and Safety Concerns

Policy exceptions should be rare. OM Ships allows policy exceptions that are pre-approved by the onboard Child Safety Team, or in a medical emergency or other rare and unforeseen circumstance. All exceptions, whether pre-approved or not, intentional or not, should be reported to and documented by the Child Safety Team.

OM Ships takes Child Protection Policy violations seriously. Any individual who witnesses a violation is expected to respond in an appropriate way. If immediate intervention is possible, intervene and remind those involved of the policy, enlisting the Child Safety Team or other leaders for support if necessary.

## 10 Revising the Policy

Feedback on the policy will be sought annually. The onboard Child Safety Team will review the feedback and any safety concerns, boundary violations, or abuse response situations and update the policy as necessary in consultation with child protection experts.

The following language will be included at the end of OM Ships Policy:

This policy is adopted by action of the CEO of OM Ships this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of November 2018.

This Policy was last reviewed by:

Onboard Child Safety Team Members: \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.

Outside Expert Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.

## Section B – Responding to a Child Safety Concern

### 1 Principles of OM’s Child Safety Response

#### 1.1 Guiding principles

In responding to child abuse allegations, OM Ships, in line with OM International<sup>9</sup>, will be guided by these principles:

1. When responding to child abuse allegations, our highest priority is the care and safety of children.
2. OM Ships is expected to meet the standards agreed by OM internationally, even when those standards are not required by local law.
3. A consistent response and process will be used across the organisation.
4. The response and inquiry process will be simple enough for all OMers to understand.
5. Inquiry and response processes will have the highest level of transparency and objectivity possible, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.
6. Response Teams will operate under the Gold-Silver-Bronze authority structure.
7. Response Teams will be formed of people who have received appropriate training.
8. Response Teams will include members who are same- or near-culture to both the complainant and respondent wherever possible.
9. In cases of clear sexual abuse of minors, independent, external investigators will always be part of the inquiry.
10. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the inquiry and details will be released to appropriate leaders on a need-to-know basis.
11. Written records of all initial reports, initial assessments, inquiries and response decisions will be kept in a secure central location, under the responsibility of the International Child Safety officer.
12. Responsibility for the costs of investigation and response will be determined between the Field and Area.

#### 1.2 Definition of terms

##### 1.2.1 Transparency

‘Able to be seen through’. In Child Safety, transparency means that reports will be responded to clearly and thoroughly. We will not engage in a ‘cover-up’. While we will not make every detail of an inquiry public, those who need to know will be kept informed as the inquiry progresses.

##### 1.2.2 Objectivity

‘Not influenced by personal feelings, interpretations or prejudice; based on facts; unbiased’. We will include people from outside the Field in each inquiry and will not ask people who are closely involved with the complainant or respondent to serve on the Response Team.

##### 1.2.3 Confidentiality

‘Spoken, written, acted on in strict privacy; secret’. Information will only be shared with those who really need to know.

##### 1.2.4 Complainant

‘A person or group who makes a complaint’. In Child Safety, this means the child involved in the incident or the adult making a report of experiencing abuse in their past.

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<sup>9</sup> For more information visit the OM International Child Safety Centre webpage by logging in with your account details from OM Ships:  
<https://emailnet.sharepoint.com/sites/Docs/CSG/SitePages/Home.aspx>

### 1.2.5 Respondent

`A person who responds or makes a reply'. In Child Safety, this means an adult who is named by the complainant. In some inquiries there may be more than one respondent, in others the respondent may not be identified.

### 1.2.6 Authority structure

Based on the OM International Crisis Management process, the Response Team will have 3 levels: Inquiry Oversight, Inquiry Manager, Inquiry Team. Oversight focusses on the big picture and will be the outward face of the inquiry. The Manager coordinates the inquiry, and the Inquiry Team are the people actually involved in communication, interviewing, etc.

## 2 When a Report is Required: Disclosure, Discovery and Suspicion

### 2.1 Disclosure

- Staff member is informed of allegations that constitute Child Abuse as defined by this policy.
- A disclosure can be made by alleged victims, witnesses, or anyone else with direct knowledge of alleged abuse.

If a child discloses abuse<sup>10</sup> to you, the following are helpful tips on how to respond in the moment:

- Stay calm.
- Show love and respect for the child.
- Thank the child for telling you and praise the child's courage.
- If the child expresses guilt or concerns about getting into trouble, reassure the child that no matter what happened, he or she is not to blame.
- Allow the child to talk freely; do not interrupt, ask the child to repeat words, or probe for details. Use open-ended questions such as, "What happened next?" or "It's ok to tell me more."
- Do not ask direct questions such as, "Did he touch you there?"
- Do not offer false assurances, such as promising to keep the child's disclosure a secret. Rather, explain that it will be communicated to others to deal with and respond to.
- Immediately protect the child or other children from the suspected offender and get help to do so, if necessary.
- Document the disclosure to the onboard Child Safety Team as soon as you are able to report.
- Protect the child's right to privacy and avoid the urge to turn indiscriminately to colleagues, friends, or family for advice. Instead, turn to the onboard Child Safety Team and the professionals who are engaged to handle the case.

### 2.2 Discovery

- Observation of Child Abuse by staff member or third party.
- Physical or sexual injuries to the child.
- Sexually transmitted disease suffered by the child.
- Child becomes pregnant.
- Indications of emotional / spiritual trauma / signs of neglect.

### 2.3 Suspicion

- Staff member has a belief without conclusive proof of child abuse as defined by this policy.
- Staff member observes any of the signs of child abuse listed below.

The following list includes possible signs of child abuse in addition to those listed under section A-2.5.

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<sup>10</sup> It is normal for children to never disclose their abuse or to delay disclosing. If questioned directly, many child victims may deny the abuse. It is also normal for children to disclose in ways that are unconvincing, or even accidental (especially in younger children). Children often recant their disclosure when they realize the perpetrator is facing consequences or under pressure from others. When they do disclose intentionally, children may first test the adult's reaction by pretending that the abuse happened to a friend or by supplying only a small bit of information.

### 2.3.1 *Signs of Physical Abuse*

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains.
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation\*.
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse<sup>11</sup>.

### 2.3.2 *Signs of Neglect*

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses,
- Inadequate care, etc.

### 2.3.3 *Signs of Child Sexual Abuse*

#### *Physical Signs:*

- Unusual lacerations and bruises.
- Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area.
- Difficulty urinating.
- Discomfort when sitting.
- Torn or bloody underclothing.
- Sexually transmitted disease.
- Pregnancy

#### *Behavioural Signs:*

- A sudden change in behaviour.
- Nervous or hostile behaviour toward adults.
- Avoiding a person or situation the child would normally have been involved in.
- Sexual self-consciousness.
- "Acting out" of sexual behaviour.

#### *Verbal Signs*

Comments such as:

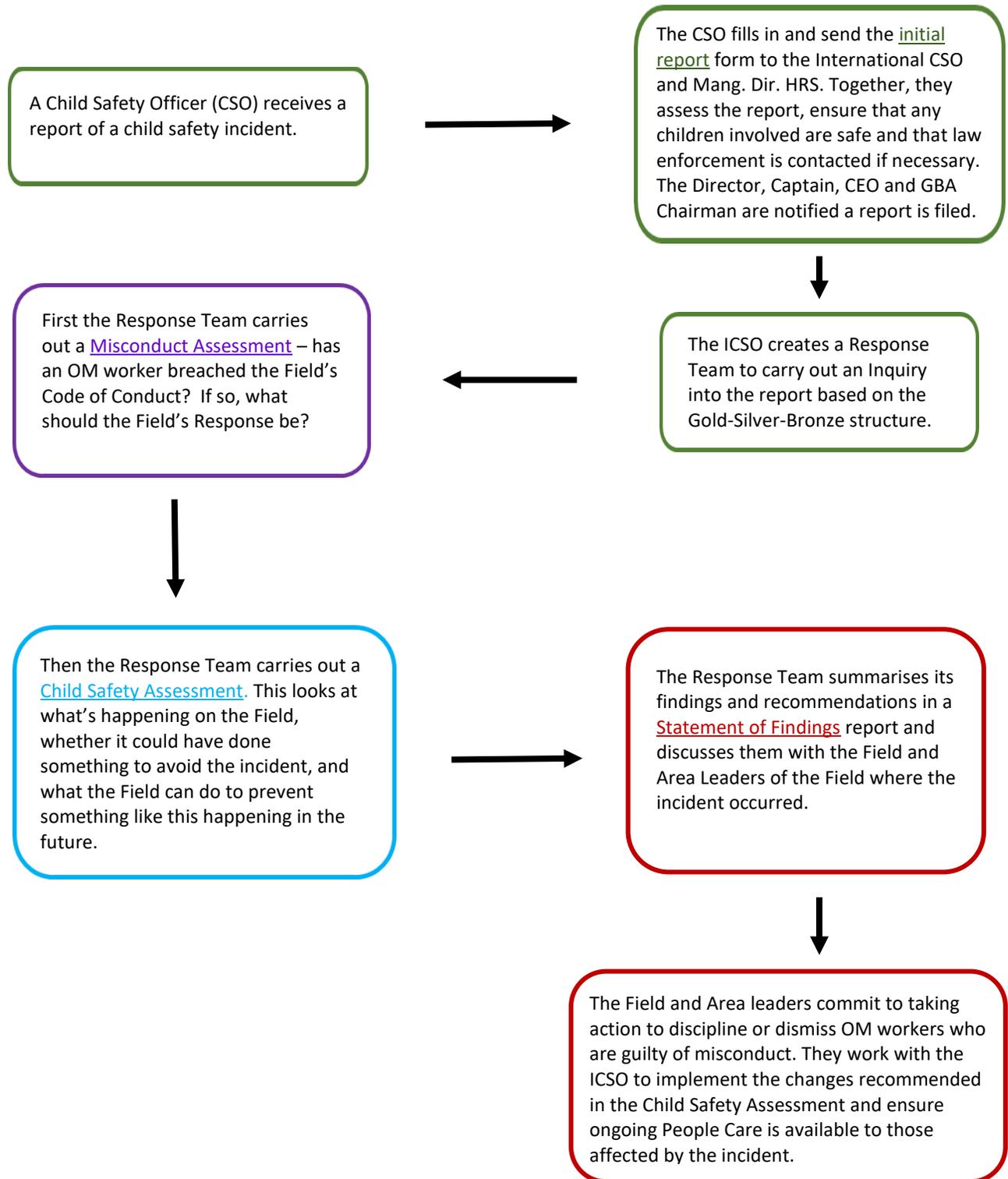
- " \_\_\_\_\_ does things to me when we're alone."
- "I don't like to be alone with \_\_\_\_\_."
- " \_\_\_\_\_ fooled around with me."
- " \_\_\_\_\_ says mean things to me."

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<sup>11</sup> This could indicate a possibility of self-harm.

### 3 Response process

After a report is made, the Child Safety Officer shall then initiate the response process outlined



## 3.1 The response process in more detail

### 3.1.1 Initial Assessment

The International Child Safety Officer (ICSO) and the Child Safety Officer of the Field where the alleged incident occurred assess the initial report, ensure that any children involved are safe and that law enforcement is contacted if required. They will decide what the next steps in the response will be. If it is determined that a Response is necessary, the ICSO will convene a Response Team to carry out a Child Safety Assessment and Misconduct Assessment, if required.

### 3.1.2 Misconduct Assessment

A Misconduct Assessment is focussed on the issue of whether an OM worker has behaved in an unacceptable manner, and what the repercussions of this may be. Interviewing the complainant, respondent and any witnesses will be necessary. The assessment is not considering guilt or innocence, rather whether OM is willing to have this person continue working with us, and in what capacity, given what we believe has happened. It could happen at the same time as the Child Safety Assessment but may be delayed until any police inquiries and legal processes have been completed.

### 3.1.3 Child Safety Assessment

A Child Safety Assessment will be required in all response scenarios. The Child Safety Assessment addresses any immediate risks to children, while looking at the issue of whether OM failed this child, and what lessons can be learned to keep this child and others safe in the future.

A Child Safety Assessment will usually involve interviewing the complainant, the respondent and any witnesses, and gathering any other pertinent information such as Field policies or training.

### 3.1.4 Implementation and Closing the Inquiry

The Field and Area leader are responsible to implement the recommendations for action set out in the Statement of Findings. They should advise the ICSO when implementation is completed. If leaders decide not to implement a Response Team recommendation, they need to provide written justification for this decision.

The ICSO is responsible to forward any wider organisational issues arising from the investigation (e.g. IT security issues) to the relevant international department for action.

When all documentation is filed and implementation is complete, the ICSO closes the file.

## 4 The Response Team

### 4.1 Response Team structure

OM Ships is committed to addressing all allegations of abuse in a manner that provides the most relief for the victim, whilst dealing appropriately with the suspected offender. Accordingly, OM Ships recognises that we will not always have the expertise required and will engage trained professionals where necessary.

When the Child Safety Team receives a report of abuse, it shall inform the International Child Safety Officer (ICSO) immediately, who will coordinate the formation of a Response Team. The Response Team will follow a Gold-Silver-Bronze structure and will include these people:

**INQUIRY OVERSIGHT** – makes sure that the inquiry is resourced properly and that the decision makers are kept informed. ICSO, CSOs from the sending Fields of the people involved. (In some cases, a Field leader may choose to take the place of their CSO, but this is not recommended.)

**INQUIRY MANAGER** – leads the Response Team. CSO of the Field where the incident was alleged to have occurred. (Or Area CSO if there is no trained Field CSO.)

**INQUIRY TEAM** – people who are doing the work of the inquiry; including external investigators, trained interviewers, communications staff.

The ICSO and CST will receive in-depth training in abuse response dynamics and other areas of response in the wake of a report of abuse.

The Response Team will work together on any appropriate steps in the immediate wake of a report and until the investigation is completed in accordance with the response process outlined under section 10.4. If there are any physical signs or evidence of sexual abuse or physical abuse, these should be documented in the ship's clinic and housed under lock and key until they can be turned over to the investigator.

### 4.2 Independent Investigation

The Response Team shall coordinate the involvement of an outside investigator to conduct an independent investigation in cases of clear sexual abuse of minors<sup>12</sup>. The investigator must be experienced in investigating cases of child maltreatment and must have access to current or past law enforcement officers, prosecutors, mental health and medical experts who are current on the literature pertaining to child abuse, and who have significant experience in the specific handling of these cases.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See principle 9 under section 10.1

<sup>13</sup> The reason for this is that two decades' worth of research documents that most police officers, prosecutors, judges, social workers, law enforcement officers, psychologists, nurses and physicians are inadequately trained in responding to these complex cases. See generally, Victor I. Vieth, *Unto the Third Generation: A Call to End Child Abuse in the United States within 120 Years (Revised and Expanded)*, 28 *Hamline Journal of Law & Public Policy* 3 (2006); Kelly M. Champion, Kimberly Shipman, Barbara L. Bonner, Lisa Hensley, and Allison C. Howe, *Child Maltreatment Training in Doctoral Programs in Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychology: Where Do We Go From Here?*, 8 *Child Maltreatment* 211, 215 (August 2003); Ann S. Botash, M.D., *From Curriculum to Practice: Implementation of the Child Abuse Curriculum*, 8(4) *Child Maltreatment* 239 (November 2003); Jenny et. al, *Analysis of missed cases of abusive head trauma*, 281 *JAMA* 621-626 (1999); Robert H.

It is also advised that the investigator and the Response Team have access to one mental health professional and one pastoral representative who can assist in addressing spiritual injuries and other aspects of response.<sup>14</sup>

In order to expedite the independent investigation in a cost-efficient manner, it is prudent to have the investigator take the lead by conducting interviews, review of documentation, and anything else required to carry out a thorough and objective investigation. During the course of the investigation, the investigator will consult with the Response Team and the mental health and pastoral team members as necessary. In other words, it won't be necessary to have all team members present for each step of the investigation, as long as they are kept informed of developments and consulted as the need arises.

Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will deliver to the Response Team a final report that will consist of its findings of fact and recommendations. The Response Team will review the final report and deliver its own recommendations along with the final report prepared by the Investigative Team to the OM Ships Gold Team for review and any necessary action, including a plan to care for any victims, a plan to assess any outstanding safety issues and a final personnel determination.

The recommendations of the final report shall include a recommendation on reporting the abuse in the native country of the alleged perpetrator and/or the alleged victim, depending on the laws of the respective countries. OM Ships will report abuse to any country where there is a reasonable expectation of due process for perpetrators and seeking justice for victims.

### 4.3 Role of the Response Team

The Response Team shall support the full cooperation of OM Ships with any independent investigation. The Response Team shall coordinate all necessary communication regarding the incident: with the victim and their family, with the alleged perpetrator, with the ship's crew or the public. The Response Team shall, at minimum, take the following actions as appropriate and, if necessary, in consultation with those trained in abuse dynamics and response best practices.

#### 4.3.1 Treatment and support for the child and family

One or more member(s) of the Response Team will be designated as a 'Support Person' and will reach out to the child and the child's family as soon as possible after the report, to offer unequivocal support. Understanding that abuse can have ongoing impact on a child and a child's family, the Support Person will seek permission from the child and the child's family to continue offering support on an ongoing basis. At the same time, appropriate confidentiality will be kept. This support will include:

- Safeguard any children or vulnerable persons with appropriate security, supervision and restrictions for the alleged perpetrator (this will likely need to be initiated by the Child Safety Team immediately, in collaboration with the captain of the ship).
- Showing up.
- Listening.
- Affirming.
- Asking the child and the child's family how else the Response Team can offer support, including appropriate pastoral support

The Support Person(s) will be careful to avoid causing further harm and under no circumstances, even when the abuse is alleged and not proven, will the Support Person(s):

- place any portion of blame for the abuse on the child or the child's family.
- probe for details of the abuse.
- express disbelief of the child.

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McCormick, The Master of Arts in Child Advocacy: A Contribution to an Emerging Discipline, 12 (3/4) Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma 149 (2006); Suzanne P. Starling & Stephen Boos, Core Content for Residency Training in Child Abuse and Neglect, 8(4) Child maltreatment 242-243 (November 2003).

<sup>14</sup> The need for more multi-disciplinary team members will be determined by the ICSO on a case-by-case basis.

- attempt to silence the child or the child’s family in any way or for any reason.
- encourage noncompliance with the investigation.
- express support of the alleged perpetrator.
- urge reconciliation with or forgiveness of the perpetrator.

The family will be advised not to go public until consultation has taken place with the investigative team.

Furthermore, the family and/or child will be:

- requested to participate in an investigation of all relevant facts.
- given the opportunity to provide relevant information.
- given the opportunity to participate in the investigation by providing names/identities of other witnesses and also recommend questions to be asked by the investigators during the investigation.

#### 4.3.2 Treatment and support of the alleged perpetrator

The alleged perpetrator will be treated respectfully and statements made by the alleged perpetrator will be kept in appropriate confidentiality.

The alleged perpetrator will be:

- advised of the allegations, orally and in writing.
- suspended from any responsibilities directly relating to children, pending the results of an investigation.
- expected to participate in an investigation of all relevant facts.
- given the opportunity to provide relevant information and respond to specific allegations. This response may be made verbally or in writing. (If the response is made orally, the person hearing the response must document it at the time and have the person giving the response sign the documentation.)
- given the opportunity to participate in the investigation by providing names/identities of other witnesses and also recommend questions to be asked by the investigators during the investigation.
- given appropriate pastoral support.
- assigned a liaison to maintain contact with the alleged perpetrator and offer appropriate support in consultation with those trained in abuse response.

In some cases, wisdom may lead to the alleged perpetrator disembarking from the ship, pending the results of the investigation.

The Response Team shall not usurp the investigator’s responsibility to interview the alleged perpetrator. The Response Team shall take care to ensure the alleged perpetrator is not permitted to rally support during the investigation.

#### 4.3.3 Ongoing care and communication

The Response Team will understand the limitations of its role and will not offer therapeutic, legal or other expert advice. The Response Team will handle any appropriate communication with the Field and the rest of OM Ships and will ensure that ongoing People Care is available to all affected parties. At the same time, the Response Team will protect the privacy of all victims of child abuse and that of the alleged perpetrator, where appropriate and reasonably possible.

In the event that a victim of abuse is publicly attacked or belittled for the abuse or their response to the abuse, or the alleged perpetrator is publicly attacked, the Response Team will – with the victim’s and/or the alleged perpetrator’s permission – make a public statement denouncing and prohibiting such treatment of the victim and/or perpetrator, and urge the community to offer appropriate support instead. If the attacks occur privately, the Response Team will communicate the same message privately to the relevant individuals.

The Response Team will help the family find a qualified mental health practitioner with expertise in treating victims of abuse and their family members. OM Ships will also look for appropriate ways to support and care for the perpetrator. OM Ships will offer to subsidise or pay for such treatment, as appropriate.

#### 4.4 Response Team Closure

The Response Team summarises its assessments in a Statement of Findings, which is then discussed with the relevant Field and Area leader. The team ensures that appropriate communication happens with the Field and the rest of OM and that ongoing People Care is available to all affected parties.

Once all documentation is completed and filed, the Response Team is debriefed and stood down.