
Encompass Child Protection Policy Manual

Leaders and Workers



ENCOMPASS
CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Encompass Church, being committed to providing a safe environment for every child and to protect you as a leader from any unpleasant complaints, wishes to emphasise the importance of our ACC Kids R Us Victoria Child Protection Policy 2005.

Please note that this document does not negate the Victorian Australian Christian Churches Child Protection Policy (2005 version) but rather details its application by taking into account our facilities and the programs being delivered.

1.1 VIC ACC¹ Policy Information Location

The table below details the location of further details in the VIC ACC manual which can be found on our church² and/or ACC³ website.

Subject	Location in VIC ACC Manual
<i>Child Protection Policy Outlines</i>	
Anti-Abuse Policy	Page 5 & 22
Summary of Child Protection Policy	Page 36
Policy for Camp & Out of Church Activities	Page 6
Policy for Foyer & House Meetings	Page 7
Policy for Toilets	Page 7
Policy for Visitors to Children's Programs	Page 8
Policy for Stewards & Ushers	Page 9
<i>About Child Abuse</i>	
Characteristics of an Abuser	Page 3
Definition & Types of Child Abuse	Page 15
Symptoms of Child Abuse	Page 17
Dealing with Child Abusers who attend your church	Page 67
<i>Reporting Suspected Child Abuse</i>	
What to do when a Child reports Abuse	Page 23
Some Questions Answered	Page 27
Procedure for Reporting Suspicious Behaviour	Page 9
Procedure for Reporting Suspected Abuse	Page 27
Sample of Child Abuse Report Form	Page 44

¹ VIC ACC stands for Victorian Australian Christian Churches

² www.encompass.org.au

³ <http://accvic.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/KRUChildProtectPolicy2005.pdf>

1 RECRUITMENT & SCREENING POLICY

Encompass Church ensures that applicants are taken through three phases of screening⁴ to ensure that they are suitable and equipped for their work with children. With the exception of membership and acquisition of the Working with Children Check, this policy applies to all leaders even if they are not yet 18 years of age.

1.1 Phase I: Administration Check List

1.1.1 Application Form⁵

The interested person would be asked to provide a complete application form with two adult references from within the church. In instances where they have been in the church for less than three years, applicants must provide a reference from their previous church as well. See attachment A for a copy of the application form.

While a leader's application is being processed they can participate in the ministry by begin the process of being trained up. They will be under the supervision of a Team leader and clearly identified as a visitor (See Visitor Policy).

1.1.2 Church Membership & Attendance⁶

It would be expected that adult applicants are members of the church and regular attendees to Sunday services and/or meetings relevant to their stage in life. If this is not the case they would be given the opportunity to attain these requirements through the course of the application process.

1.2 Phase II: Recruitment Check List

1.2.1 References⁷

Referees would be contacted and a record of the interview kept on file with the application. See attachment B for a copy of the interview questions.

1.2.2 Pastoral Authorization⁸

The application and reference check would be sighted, reviewed and signed by the supervisor of the children's pastor to affirm that the applicant and referee information was collected, and that the applicant has been deemed suitable for working with children at Northside.

1.2.3 Working with Children Check⁹

⁴This screening policy is adapted from the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy recommendations on Page 62.

⁵ As recommended by the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy, page 63.

⁶ As recommended by the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy, page 65 (Database)

⁷ As recommended by the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy, page 64.

⁸ As recommended by the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy, page 63 (Internal Pastoral Check).

All adult applicants would be asked to acquire a valid *Working with Children Check* card.

Applicants with existing cards will be asked to update their details with the Department of Justice to ensure that the accounts department receives notifications of their status. In the interim, they would need to provide a copy of their card so that it may be stored on file.

Youth leaders who attain adult age during the course of their service would be asked to acquire a Working with Children Check card promptly.

Any adult who has been convicted of child abuse, or exhibits substantial indicators to suggest that they would express such a tendency would not be allowed to join a team that directly works with or gives them access to children.

1.3 Phase III: Orientation Check List

1.3.1 Team Leader Interview¹⁰

The applicant will then undergo an interview with their team leader so that there is an opportunity to review the applicants' intentions, answer any questions about the ministry, and reinforce child protection policies. A record of the outcomes would be kept on file. See attachment C for a copy of the team leader interview guidelines.

For minors, parents will be present for the second part of the interview to ensure that they understand the expectations of leadership. And both parties will be asked to sign off on the Standard of Conduct Contract¹¹. See attachment D for a copy of the standard of Conduct form.

1.3.2 Identification¹²

Only after all of the above phases have been completed will the applicant acquire a Encompass Kids leader t-shirt. This shirt would be worn by them for all events/programs that are run under the Encompass Kids banner to affirm and identify them as having been approved for working with children in the Northside community.

This phase does not apply to programs running outside of a Sunday morning, under other ministry areas, or where parents are present (eg. Playgroup & Creative Kidz).

⁹ As recommended by the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy, page 64 (Please see *Amendments* for details).

¹⁰ As recommended by the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy, page 63.

¹¹ As recommended by the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy, page 65.

¹² As recommended by the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy, page 67.

2 VISITOR POLICY¹³

The word *Visitor* would characterize anyone who is not approved as a Encompass Kids leader. This may be a parent, guardian, or new recruit. Such people would need to:

1. Write down their name and signature in the visitor log.
2. Wear a red visitor lanyard and tag.
3. Have the team leader of the day noted as the person who is supervising them that morning, ensuring that they are not left alone.

3 TOILET POLICY¹⁴

3.1 General Toileting Procedure

All children will be encouraged to avoid a toilet visit during their stay in the program. However, should this be necessary the following procedure will be followed:

1. Two female¹⁵ leaders would be assigned to escort the child to the toilet. At least one of these leaders must be an adult.
2. Leaders will enter into the rest rooms with the child(ren) and wait inside while the child(ren) make use of the toilet cubicles.
3. Both leaders must wait together (in each other's line of sight) and ensure that the child closes the cubicle doors adequately while making use of the toilet.
4. Should a child require assistance, leaders must maintain their line of sight with each other. And if there is prior knowledge that the child may not be able to accomplish toileting alone, the *Distressed Child Procedure* should be followed to request parental support.

3.2 Occasional Use of Male Toilets

The design of the male toilets does not support a secure toileting procedure for boys. Hence, for regular programs, the above general procedure will be followed. However for larger scale programs where there is a scheduled toilet run and/or adequate numbers of male leaders, the procedure for securing the male toilets would be:

1. Two male leaders would be assigned to escort and monitor the child(ren).
2. One leader would walk through the toilets to ensure that no one is lurking and position themselves at the alternative (back) entrance. No adult males would be allowed to enter into the toilet while this procedure is taking place. All effort would be made to ensure that signage is put up on the door

¹³ As recommended by the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy, page 8.

¹⁴ As recommended by the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy, page 5 (Anti-abuse policy).

¹⁵ Due to the re-design of our toilets only the female toilets are presently suitable for enforcing a secure toileting procedure. Hence, female leaders would be required to take both male and female children to the toilets.

of the male toilet so that everyone is aware of the time and condition of the toilet run.

3. The other leader will then engage in a head count of boys going into and exiting from the toilet. Once they are satisfied that all the boys are out, they will walk through the toilet to confirm this fact and inform the leader on the other side that the toilet run has been completed.

4 SAFETY POLICY

4.1 Registrations (Check In/Out)

4.1.1 Regular Attendees

1. Every child must be checked in by their parent.
2. Every program must have a leader assigned to ensure secure check-in/out. And an adult leader must always be positioned such that they can view the entrance/exit of the program and ensure procedure is being followed.
3. Children may not be Checked out unless the identity of the parent/guardian has been adequately confirmed by the following methods:
 - a. The Check-Out leader has sighted the parent/guardian.
 - b. Parent/guardian has been identified by the check-out photo on the system.
 - c. Parent/guardian has provided a corresponding pick-up card (which would have been given to them upon registration where applicable).
 - d. Child has sufficiently identified the parent/guardian (Only in the instance that the other methods were not available, and for added security. Especially in the case of visiting/new families).

4.1.2 Visiting or New Children

Every visiting or new family must complete a registration form. This is important in case of an emergency, the occasional absent mindedness of a parent (if they forget their child) and for the conduction of a head count. It also has the added benefit of being able to follow up the family after their visit.

No child should be accepted without the parent/guardian having filled in a registration form. This also applies if a child is visiting with an existing family. The parents of that family must be noted as the guardians of the child.

4.1.3 Distressed Child Procedure

A child may become distressed for many reasons. And this procedure also applies to instances where parental support is required for toileting. There are three main variations to this procedure. In the event that a child is distressed,

1. Their ID number or name may be displayed on the screen in the auditorium signaling to the parent that they are needed in the program.
2. The parent may be called or texted on their mobile phone to come and pick up their child.

3. If leaders are aware of where the parent is seated in the service, they may go and personally collect the parent to come and pick up their child.

4.2 Supervision Policy

Encompass Kids endeavors to uphold a minimum adult-to-child ratio in accordance with government recommendations, for the purpose of ensuring safety and providing an optimal learning environment for every child.

Our supervision policy is:

1. A head count must be conducted once registrations have finished. It is important to know the whereabouts of every child during the duration of the program as they have been placed in our care.
2. Every child must always be in the line of sight of the leaders and workers in the program.
3. Each program must uphold the adult-to-child ratio for their room. That is,

1-2 year olds	1 to 3
2-4 year olds	1 to 5 ¹⁶
Primary School Kids	1 to 15 ¹⁷
Primary Excursions ¹⁸	1 to 8

The ratios above do not negate the requirement to always have two adult leaders present at all times during the conduct of any child related church program.

Please note that these ratios do not apply for programs where parents are present with their children.

5 LEADER CONDUCT POLICY

5.1 Standard of Conduct

Every leader should abide by the following regulations:

- Do not be alone with a child at any time (whether on church grounds or even outside of church facilities and programs). Always stay in sight of other leaders.
- No one is permitted to visit a child alone. Visits can only occur in two's (with the other visitation partner not being related to you).
- If the need to counsel a child arises, it is to be done in public view of other adult leaders yet out of hearing range. Do not take children into solitary or dark place. Do not engage in private conversations with children on social media or on the phone, your relationship with the child must be kept public.
- Do not drive a child home alone.
- Do not kiss a child or coax a child to kiss you.

¹⁶ CitiLife recommends 1 to 4.

¹⁷ CitiLife recommends 1 to 10.

¹⁸ The word *Excursion* would qualify any situation where children are leaving the church premises.

- Do not engage in extended hugging or tickling/poking. A short side hug is acceptable or keep your lower half of your body well away. Only young children (5 years and younger) are permitted on a leaders knee, the lap is never acceptable. We encourage physical contact to be limited.
- Leaders must be easily identifiable by wearing the correct uniform and Leader ID Tag.
- Be aware of your reporting obligations.

Please refer to standards set out in section 2-5 of the Encompass Child Protection Policy Manual and also Part A and B of the ACC VIC Child Protection Policy 2005 for a comprehensive overview of conduct policy and reporting obligations.

5.2 Reporting Complaints, Incidents & Suspicious Behaviour¹⁹

As a church we abhor any kind of abuse and take very seriously any incidence of abuse within the church. Children and youth are trusting and vulnerable and therefore the church has a particular responsibility to ensure that it takes every reasonable step to reduce the risk of abuse and that suspected or known instances of abuse are dealt with consistently and appropriately.

We have both a duty of care and moral/ethical obligations that compels us to ensure that those in our care are protected from harm. We strongly advocate that if anyone believes or suspects a child is in an unsafe situation, you should report your concerns to either your nominated supervisors or relevant State Authorities.

There are legal consequences if specific instances of child harm are not reported to designated persons or agencies. Examples of instances you need to report (but not limited to these):

- An incident that happened during the church program, (child/leader/parent) related.
- Complaint given by parents/leader.
- Suspicious behaviour or suspected child abuse as detailed in section **B3** of VIC ACC Child Protection Policy 2005.

Every incident reported will be evaluated and assessed for a response and action. This process does not intend to reduce or replace an individual's obligation to report certain concerns which arise at law. Whilst the leadership of Encompass Church will provide assistance to individuals in these circumstances an individual should be aware of his or her personal rights and obligations.

Your supervisor will advise you how it meets our reporting obligations to comply with our church policy.

¹⁹ Please visit the VIC ACC Child Protection Policy Manual for further details on reporting suspected child abuse. Page 9.

6 ATTACHMENTS

6.1 Attachment A: Application Form

CONFIDENTIAL ENCOMPASS KIDS LEADER APPLICATION FORM

I am a

Child (Primary School) Youth Adult (18years +)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Administration Check List

Put on Database __/__/__

Is Church Partner __/__/__

Police Check Conducted __/__/__

Recruitment Check List

Referees Called __/__/__

WWCC Expires __/__/__

Orientation Check List

Interview Conducted __/__/__

CP Policy Signed __/__/__

PERSONAL DETAILS

Full Name

Date of Birth

Address

Suburb

Post Code

Email

Contact Number

Please attach a suitable photo of yourself here

Select File

GENERAL INFORMATION

Which Ministry area are you interested in?

- JAM (Primary school kids) Kingdom Kids (2-4yrs)
 Playgroup (Kids & Parents) Fun Friday (Holiday Outreach Program)

How many years do you expect to be available?

How would you like to contribute to this ministry area?

How long have you been attending Encompass Church?

Please list any ministry areas that you are currently serving in:

Are you prepared to attend training, retreats and team meetings relevant to the team?

Yes No

Are you prepared to undergo a 3-month (1 Term) trial period with no guarantee of further involvement?

Yes No

ADULT VOLUNTEER COMPONENT

What is your marital status?

Single Married Divorced Separated

Do you presently hold a valid Working with Children Check Card?

Yes No Just applied

Have you every completed a food handling course?

Yes No I'd like to

Are you a partner of Encompass Church?

Yes No I'd like to be

Do you have any criminal records?

Yes No

Do you smoke, drink or use drugs?

Yes No

Did you suffer abuse as a child or adolescent?

Yes No

Please provide further comments below if you feel you need to qualify a response made above.

DECLARATION

I declare that I have provided truthful information and have not been charged or convicted of any criminal offences relating to the physical or sexual abuse of children.

Yes, I agree No, I don't agree

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT

When did you get saved?

How often do you read your Bible?

Have you been baptised in Water?

Yes No

Have you been baptised in the Holy Spirit?

Yes No

Which meetings do you regularly attend?

1st Service 2nd Service Fusion Ignite
 Other

Who is your Life Group Leader?

REFEREES

Please provide the names and contact numbers of 2 referees (not related to yourself) who can confirm your moral suitability to be involved in working with children.

Referee 1

Full Name

Contact Number

How do they know you?

Referee 2

Full Name

Contact Number

How do they know you?

If you are **new to Encompass** or have been a **regular attender at another church** within the past 3 years, please list the names of the churches and at least 2 other referees from those churches. Don't forget to include their phone numbers.

I agree that the church may contact my referees to establish my suitability for involvement in children's ministry.

- Yes
 No

PASTOR'S ENDORSEMENT

I, _____ as Pastor of Encompass Church, have
authorized _____ to volunteer in the Encompass Kids Department.

Having checked with referees, I am satisfied of his/her ability to work in our children's ministry.

Signature _____ Date: _____

6.2 Attachment B: Referee Interview Questions

REFEREE RESPONSE FORM FOR ENCOMPASS KIDS LEADER APPLICATIONS

GENERAL DETAILS

Name of Applicant:

Your Full Name:

How do you know the applicant?

How long have you known them for?

CHARACTER & FAITH

Write down 5 words that you would use to describe the applicant:

What do you think of their spiritual development?

Eg. Church/youth attendance, understanding, growing in and expression of good values & principles, devotional life...

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Do you think the applicant is a good candidate to work with children? (Explain)

Is there anything in their previous experience that would adversely affect how they work with children in our church community? (Explain).

TEAM WORK, STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

What do you think of their team work ability?

Eg. Engagement in team activity, sharing responsibility, respect & cooperation, type of role they are most suited to?

In what areas do you think/feel we would need to offer him/her support?

6.3 Attachment C: Team Leader Interview Questions

TEAM LEADER INTERVIEW WITH APPLICANT

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS DETAILS

Name of Applicant:

Name of Team Leader:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your salvation experience?

(How did you become born again? When was the first time God became real to you? How do you see God?)

2. What are you doing to help you grow in God?

[Reinforce importance of reading God's word- give them suggestions to do this, being in a connect group, and the role you will play in their discipleship.]

3. Why Kids Ministry?

(Find out what their interest are, and talk about how you see them fitting into the ministry and how they can grow. Good idea to talk about Leadership Pathway at this time).

4. Leadership Expectations and Child Protection Policies

(End by talking about the leadership expectations- 5 P's and Child Protection. A clear understanding about the importance of child protection and how it is achieved through our policies and practices was discussed).

5. Any Questions?

[Does the applicant have any questions for you?]

6.4 Attachment D: Standard of Conduct Contract

6.4.1 Adult Contract

ADULT STANDARD OF CONDUCT CONTRACT

Please complete, sign and return the form below as evidence that you have read and agreed with Encompass Child Protection policies and practices, as well as the information detailed in the Encompass Kids Leadership Expectations & Responsibilities Brochure.

I will agree to abide by the following regulations:

- All children in my care will be looked after in a responsible way.
- I am not permitted:
 - To be alone with a child at any time.
 - To take children alone in a solitary or dark place.
 - To visit or counsel children alone.
 - To be involved in their toileting, I will call the child's parent instead.
 - To kiss, cuddle or do anything that is potentially sexual.
- If it is necessary to speak to a child alone, it will be done in the sight of other people.
- The standards as set out in section 2-5 of the Encompass Child Protection Policy Manual.
- I will support my team by meeting the leadership expectations.
- I am aware of my reporting obligations (as referred to in section B3.3 of the ACC VIC Child Protection Policy 2005)

My first priority is to ensure the well-being and safety of all young people in my care and to protect and guard them from any danger of abuse.

SIGNATURES:

Name of Applicant/Leader/Worker:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Team Leader:

Signature:

Date:

6.4.2 Youth and LIT²⁰ Contract

YOUTH STANDARD OF CONDUCT CONTRACT

Please complete, sign and return the form below as evidence that you have read and agreed with what has been detailed in the Encompass Kids Leadership Expectations and Responsibilities brochure as well as further instructions given in the interview/orientation.

I will agree to abide by the following regulations:

- All children in my care will be looked after in a responsible way.
- I will talk kindly to children.
- I will not play roughly with children.
- I am not permitted:
 - To be alone with a child at any time.
 - To take children alone in a solitary or dark place.
 - To kiss, cuddle or touch them inappropriately.
- I will honour and show respect to the leaders that supervise and teach me.
- I will support my team by meeting the leadership expectations.

SIGNATURES:

Name of Applicant:

Signature: Date:

Name of Parent/Guardian:

Signature: Date:

Name of Team Leader:

Signature: Date:

²⁰ LIT stands for Leaders in Training and comprises of children who are in grade 4, 5 or 6.

6.5 Attachment E: Leadership Expectations & Responsibilities (Children's Ministry)

STANDARD OF CONDUCT & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Our aim is to **provide** a safe environment for every child and also to **protect** you as a leader from any unpleasant complaints. Please help Encompass Kids uphold their good reputation and standing by following these recommendations.

Every adult leader is responsible for ensuring that the recommendations provided below are followed in the program. Adult leaders are asked to apply the same recommendations to our Youth and LIT leaders because they are under 18 years of age and hence, still classified as children.

As an Encompass Kids leader:

- ◆ All children in your care must be looked after in a responsible way. Do not leave any child unsupervised.
- ◆ Be careful of your conduct with children at all times. Do not hit, verbally degrade, wrestle with or carry children.
- ◆ You are not permitted to be left alone with a child at any time. If you need to speak with a child alone make sure that you are in the sight of other leaders.
- ◆ Two leaders must always accompany a child to the toilet and follow the **clear-send-guard** process (explained during the interview/orientation meeting).
- ◆ Youth and LIT leaders must always inform adult leaders of their whereabouts.

Updated 04/03/2014

ENCOMPASS CHURCH

Encompass Church has three key aspirations. These are to:

INCLUDE all by demonstrating God's unconditional love.

SURROUND by creating an environment for discipleship.

TAKE TERRITORY by growing in influence for His Glory.



ENCOMPASS KIDS are the outworking of the church goal to **include, surround and take territory** in the lives of children and their families.

We **include** kids by providing programs that cater to their age. We run programs for children aged 2- 12 years.



We **surround** kids by creating supportive discipleship groups (Life Groups) and running leadership programs that provide a forum for one-on-one discipleship and the application of their Christian faith.

We work to **take territory** through outreach events like Fun Fridays and missions' projects like operation *Christmas Child*, *Easter Mission adventures* and *Impacting Our World Cookie bakes*.



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

There are 4 tiers of leadership in Encompass Kids.

Team Leaders

Their responsibility is to make sure that the day runs smoothly and that *all* the members of that team are cared for.

Leaders

All adult and youth leaders fall into this category. Leaders are given specific tasks for the day. Be a good shepherd, seek out the kids who are by themselves and help them connect with others. Guide the play, behaviour and participation of all children so that they engage in the program. Be genuine and make it a point to know the kids.

LIT (Leader in Training)

This category is for Grade 4, 5 & 6 kids. The only difference is in our understanding that they rely on their parents for things like transportation and availability to serve. Otherwise, they are expected to meet the same leadership requirements as our youth leaders.

KIT (Kid in Training)

All primary school aged children can sign up for this opportunity and can help out with a team on a Sunday morning. Such a role places them in a better position for discipleship as they will be assigned to a team leader. They are the only ones on the team who are not required to complete an application process. They simply need the consent of their parent or guardian to participate.

Any role/task that you are given within the ministry depends on your show of **dependability, preparation, punctuality and participation**. It is an opportunity for you to grow...

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU...

As you join the team, our commitment to you is to make sure that you feel right at home in the ministry by recognising that you need:

- ◆ Adequate time, resources and instructions to fulfil your duties.
- ◆ A safe and healthy working environment.
- ◆ To be recognised as a valuable team member.
- ◆ To know to whom you are directly accountable.
- ◆ To receive ongoing supervision and feedback.
- ◆ To be able to say "No" to any request you believe may be inappropriate or dangerous.
- ◆ To be supported in your spiritual growth and personal development.

If you have any concerns about anything that happens in your area of ministry, you can talk to your team leader or the Children's Pastor. We are here to help you fit in and to answer any questions that you may have.

OUR DRESS CODE...

Encompass Kids have a dress code. All leaders are asked to wear a **RED T-shirt** so that they can be clearly identified by kids, parents and other leaders as being on duty that day should anyone have questions or require assistance.

Leaders also receive a name badge. A **red** one for leaders who have been approved for the leadership role, and a **blue** one for new recruits and those who are still in the process of being trained or approved for leadership.



WHAT'S WITH THE APPROVAL PROCESS?

The approval process is designed to ensure that we meet the strict government guidelines for duty of care when working with children. Upon completion, it shows that the Senior Pastors **trust** you to care for the children in the church on their behalf. It means that you have been trained/are undergoing **training** to do your role and have accepted the leadership **responsibilities** of the team.



ENCOMPASS CHURCH



Encompass Kids LEADERSHIP

Expectations & Responsibilities



YOUR LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES...



Punctuality: Be on time! The team is relying on you and this goes a long way in you helping to carry the load. **Organize a swap if you cannot be there, and inform your team leader.**

Preparation: Be prepared for your role and the responsibilities that you have that day. **If you are not sure, catch up with your team leader the week before in person, by email or phone.**

Participation: Remember that you are a role model to the children. They will copy what you do. **Monkey See- Monkey DoJ.**



Always be **respectful** of others, **enthusiastic**, bring a **Christ like attitude** and have **fun!**

Prayer: Pray for the program, the children, the team and the church.

Personal Development: Make sure that you are taking steps to grow not just in your skills, but spiritually as well.



Take advantage of training opportunities offered through *team meetings*, *special training workshops* and *seminars*. Strive to attain your personal best for God... **Attendance** at team meetings is compulsory.