

# WORLD HEADQUARTERS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

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SC:AT September 7, 2005 No. 115S

Via BSN

Branch Committee  
AUSTRALIA

Dear Brothers:

We are providing you with revised guidelines for use by the Service Desk(s) when handling certain matters. The attachment dated September 1, 2005, replaces the guidelines of March 31, 1997. The information in the revised guidelines is confidential and should only be distributed to the Service Desk(s) in your branch office. Comments in the guidelines are not to be included in the letters your Service Desk(s) sends out to answer questions raised by those who make inquiries.

The following are some notable adjustments that are included in the updated guidelines.

- 1) In point 1, a statement was added to the effect that elders are to not interview a victim or a victim's relatives when determining what the current feeling is toward an individual guilty of child abuse. Elders are to communicate with the branch office if they feel that this needs to be done. The branch office should be very cautious before giving elders permission to interview anyone, whether it is the victim or the victim's relatives.
- 2) In the "Factors to consider" for point 3, the statement is added that if twenty or more years have passed an individual who has built up a good record may serve in a position of trust provided there is no outcry.
- 3) In point 7, the reference is removed about elders meeting with a brother who is reaching out so as to make him aware of what is stated in the January 1, 1997, issue of *The Watchtower*.
- 4) In the "Factors to consider" for point 7, direction is given to the effect that if a brother has not *previously served* as an elder or ministerial servant, it would be appropriate to ask him privately if he has ever been involved in the past with child sexual molestation. This would most appropriately be done when two elders meet with him about his receiving an appointment from the branch office.
- 5) For point 8, it has been clarified that those guilty of child abuse would not qualify to serve as an auxiliary or regular pioneer since they would not be considered exemplary.
- 6) In point 9, a statement is included about restricting a known child abuser from using the Kingdom Hall for a wedding ceremony.
- 7) Another statement added to point 9 is that a book study should not be held in the home of a known child abuser.

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- 8) In point 11, it is explained that a former child abuser is not to work in the field ministry with children, including his own children, unless another adult publisher who is in good standing in the congregation accompanies him.
- 9) In point 11, a statement concerning Caesar restricting a known child abuser from participating in the ministry is provided along with instructions on how the elders are to handle this type of matter.
- 10) In point 11, direction is also given about what precautions to take when the elders are notified that a child abuser is living in the territory.
- 11) A final change with point 11 is the removal of the reference about elders speaking with an individual who desires to be baptized so as to make him aware of what is stated in the January 1, 1997, issue of *The Watchtower*.
- 12) For point 12, a statement was added to the effect that when a former child abuser is appointed to a position of trust, there is no need to pass information about his sin to another congregation's elders.
- 13) Also, in point 12, in the "Factors to consider" section, it is mentioned that if an individual is disfellowshipped there is no need to mention all the details of the person's sin. The elders would simply inform the new congregation that the individual was guilty of child abuse.

We trust this information will be helpful to you. Please be assured of our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

Service Committee

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