



Uniting Church. **Uniting People.**

Child Safe Policy

The Uniting Church affirms that all people are made in the image of God. The Uniting Church commits itself to the care, protection and safety of all people with whom it comes in contact.

As a community of faith, we are committed to providing a safe environment for both children and adults to encounter God, to develop relationships as part of a community and to grow in faith. (Safe Church Policy – Safe Place statement)

CoroUniting church is committed to protecting the safety of all people within its programs, ministries and events.

We will not tolerate harm especially to a child or young person

All people, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, disability and family or social background have equal rights to this protection.

All people (including children) have the right to be respected and valued as well as feel emotionally, physically and spiritually safe at all times.

Our policy has been developed to uphold this commitment to wellbeing and safety of children and to adhere to National and State legislation and regulations.

Our Child Safe Policy

This Policy applies to all Ministry practitioners, lay employees, lay leaders, members' and volunteers on behalf of CoroUniting church

The purpose of this Policy:

To protect children and young people who participate in the life of CoroUniting church

To provide all with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe.

CoroUniting church believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Our Policy aims to:

- Create a safe place for all people with focus particularly for children and young people
- Eliminate the risk of abuse, misconduct and the misuse of positional power.
- Ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- Ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- Ensure that all people are respected and valued.



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Statement of Commitment to child safety

CoroUniting church is committed to children and young people by providing an environment that is physically, emotionally and spiritually safe.

CoroUniting church is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people by the following safeguarding measures: which include a national criminal history checks, interviews, referee checks and relevant Training, Induction, Supervision and Reviews.

In creating a safe church culture we will actively promote our awareness of Duty of Care and our commitment to due diligence undergirded by fair process, integrity, transparency, inclusivity, teamwork and fair process.

Legal framework

This Policy reflects legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

National

[National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children "Protecting Children is Everyone's Business" 2009 – 2020 \(Commonwealth of Australia\)](#)

State Legislation

Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)

This Act will be repealed by Sch 1 cl 2A of [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#) on 22.10.2018.

Children's Protection Regulations 2010

Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 & Regulations 2018 awaiting assent (included at this stage as a reference)

Uniting Church policy and procedures

- [Member or adherent sexual abuse and sexual misconduct complaints policy](#)
- [Policy on the prevention of vilification and harassment within the UCA](#)
- [Code of Conduct for lay leader \(UCA Assembly\) 2016](#) & [Guidelines for Implementing](#)
- [Code of Conduct for volunteers and leaders \(UC SA\)](#)
- [National Child Safe Policy Framework \(UCNCSPF\)](#)

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, and is everyone's responsibility as outlined in the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other organisations/agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.



We commit to

- a. **Safe recruitment of leaders.** We will screen all prospective leaders in our programs, before they are appointed in accordance with the UC SA Duty of Care Leadership Policy (see definitions) (*UCNCSPF 7 Recruit well & 1 Promote strong leadership and governance and a culture of child safety*)
- b. **Adequate training of leaders.** (UCNCSPF 8 Provide child safe focused orientation and training)
We will support and endorse the training requirements as outlined.
We require all ministry practitioners to attend a Child Safe Environments session and maintain knowledge by participating in a refresher workshop every 3 years.
We require all leaders to attend additional specific training. (See table in definitions)
- c. **Have clear Codes of Conduct.** (UCNCSPF 5)
We will adopt, implement and strictly enforce codes of conduct for all adults who interact with children, including setting clear boundaries of behaviour between adults and children.
We will provide guidance to children about expectations of their interactions with other children and be clear about what is unacceptable behaviour.
All leaders will agree to abide and comply with the relevant Code of Conduct.
 - UC SA Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Lay Leaders
 - Code of Conduct for lay leaders (2016 Assembly)
 - [Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice](#) (July 2009 corrected 2012)
- d. **Continued discipling and mentoring of leaders.** (UCNCSPF 9 Undertake strong planning and supervision)
We commit to ongoing training, supervision and support for leaders.
- e. **Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious misconduct.** (UCNCSPF 11 Comprehensive investigation and reporting & UCNCSPF 10 Provide Support)
All leaders will report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, according to the mandate of state legislation and as relevant to the Safe Church Committee. We will listen to and take seriously the concerns raised by children.
We will ensure that procedures are clear and appropriate in responding to allegations of abuse.
Where an allegation of misconduct is made against a person connected to the Uniting Church, we will prioritise support to the child. We will offer support to the implicated person but our paramount consideration is for the child.
- f. **Responding to other disclosures of abuse.** (UCNCSPF 11 Comprehensive investigation and reporting)
We will understand the processes of responding to disclosures of abuse and harm including self-harm and suicide ideation.
We will ensure that appropriate training takes place to recognise and respond to indicators of abuse and neglect and receive support for all involved in the disclosure (including the leaders/volunteers).
We understand that responding to abuse is not limited to children, but also includes adults within our programs who may be vulnerable at any given time where abuse could be present and that everyone understands the most appropriate steps to take in supporting our vulnerable people within our community.
- g. **Provide an open safe environment.** (UCNCSPF 3 Provide an open environment & 2 Enable children and families to participate in decision making)
We will encourage the voice of the child in our discerning and decision making.
We will afford participants a say in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering

NB: Report any concerns of reasonable suspicion of a child being at risk of or in danger of child abuse or neglect.
Report ASAP to **Child Abuse Report Line**
13 14 17



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and valuing their ideas and encouraging participation. We will be accountable and transparent. We will create a child-friendly environment, allowing people to raise their concerns in an appropriate manner. We will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.

h. Understand and value diversity. (UCNCSPF 4 Respect diversity and promote equity)

We will be mindful in our approach for all programs to be inclusive for all people. This includes adapting programs for anyone with a disability to receive access to various programs, as well as provide adequate training for leaders.

We will be sensitive to those from 'Culturally and Linguistic Diverse' (CALD) backgrounds and those within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with our programs, information, support and services, as well as upholding respect to all cultures and encourage the participation of all people and recognise their unique contribution to our community.

We are committed to reviewing our Policy and good practice annually.

This Policy was last reviewed on: August 2018

Signed: Rex Groswood

This should be signed by the Chair of Church Council of CoroUniting church

Definitions

Child: Legally refers to anyone under the age of 18 years.

Child / Young person is common term used to describe those deemed legally a child

Abuse: refers to both adult to child abuse and child to child abuse. Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to:

- Physical abuse – when a person purposely injures or threatens to injure a child or young person.
- Emotional abuse – an attack on a child or young person’s self-esteem such as bullying, name calling, threatening, ridiculing, harassing, intimidating or isolating the child or young person.
 - Family violence – when a family member, partner or ex-partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate the other.
- Sexual abuse – any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child.
 - Grooming – predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity.
- Neglect – where a child is harmed by the failure to provide the basic physical and emotional necessities.

Disclosure: a disclosure occurs when someone informs a person in authority/leadership (or a trusted adult) within the Uniting Church that they have been subject to abuse or knows of abuse.

Ministry Practitioners : include those defined as “Ministers”, i.e. Candidates, Community Ministers, Deacons, Deaconesses, Interns, Lay Pastors, Ministers of the Word, Pastors, Youth Workers and Ministers from another denomination serving in a an approved placement (*from Code of Ethics definition*)

‘Staff and volunteers’ refers to all relevant (according to the context in which it appears) persons, and may include, but not be limited to, board/council members, employees, volunteers, parents, carers, presbytery members, church council members, elders, congregation members, people in the specified ministries of the Church, and any other person with responsibility for the care of children.

Safe Church Leadership policy

Church Councils are required to apply this to leaders who care for children and young people within the church. It should also be applied to leaders who care for other vulnerable people.

Before appointing leaders the Church Council must:

- consider the six month guideline for voluntary leadership roles (where people are only considered for leadership only after they have been part of the congregation for six months)
- arrange for the appropriate screening (this includes a national police history check conducted through the UC SA Screening Unit)
- interview applicants
- request and check references

Safe Church training expectations

It is expected that the following is carried out once every three years

| Role | Screening and Authority | CSE | Called to Care | Code of Ethics |
|--|-------------------------|-----|----------------|----------------|
| Ministry leaders | M | M | R | M |
| Ministry of Pastors | M | M | R | M |
| Employees: Children Family & Youth | M | M | R | |
| Employees : Admin roles | M | E | R | |
| Church Council members | M | E | E | |
| Elders | M | E | E | |
| Key Leaders & Volunteers <i>in roles of responsibility</i> | M | E | E | |
| Children, family and youth leaders | M | R | E | |

KEY: **M** = Mandatory required by Government legislation / regulations **E** = Encouraged

R= Required by UC as best practice and with our compliance obligations

CSE = Child Safe Environments: Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect (* full day course initially then refreshers triennially)