

Child Safety Policy

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all of our people in the Uniting Church in Australia – Synod of Victoria and Tasmania and its entities (See definitions below in the definitions section) along with the families, children and young people that engage with our activities, services and programs are aware of our commitment and obligation to creating a child safe organisation.

All children and young people who are involved in any of our activities, services or programs have a right to feel safe and be safe. We are committed to providing environments where children and young people are respected, nurtured and cared for.

We acknowledge that abuse, harm and neglect to children and young people may come from:

- parents/caregivers
- guardians or supervisors
- people engaged by the Synod and its entities
- members of the public
- other children or young people.

We aim to create a safe, culturally safe, and inclusive environment for all children and young people and actively promote:

- cultural safety of children and young people who identify as First Nations people
- cultural safety of children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

- the safety of children and young people with a disability
- the safety of children and young people who identify as LGBTQI+
- the safety of children and young people who do not live at home.

This policy intends to:

- articulate the commitment of the Synod and its entities to keeping children and young people safe.
- reinforce a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse, harm and neglect.
- document the key principles and components which help maintain a child safe environment.
- promote the rights, empowerment and diverse circumstances of all children and young people.
- raise awareness for our people (defined below) of their conduct and responsibilities when working with children and young people.
- identify risks of, and appropriate responses to concerns of child abuse, harm and neglect.
- protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, harm and neglect in the delivery of activities, services and programs.

This policy reflects the [Uniting Church Australia National Child Safety Policy Framework, 2022](#).

Scope

This Policy applies to all entities and individuals associated with the Uniting Church in Australia – Synod of Victoria and Tasmania who engage in child related services or activities. Entities of the Church include, but are not limited to: Congregations, Presbyteries, agencies, ministries, childcare services, out-of-home care services, family and community services, disability services, health services, camps and schools. It will be implemented by board/council members, employees, volunteers, children, 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.

Implementation across the Synod

Our Synod is required to develop suites of policies, practices, auditing programs and training modules regarding children and vulnerable adults in line with this Policy. In addition, some agencies and schools have mandated or legislated provisions under their accreditation and registration requirements. It is expected that clear linkages will be made between this Policy and these provisions.

Councils of the Church with oversight responsibilities should ensure that bodies within their oversight implement this Policy.

What we believe

The Uniting Church in Australia (the Church) believes that all people, including children, are made in the image of God. As a Christian community we believe that God reaches out to us in love and acceptance, and that our relationships with each other should express love, care and respect (*Safe Place Position Statement developed by the UCA Commission on Women and Men in 1997*). Central to living out the gospel is to love God and to love others. As a community of faith, we are committed to providing safe environments for all people including children, so that they may live life in all its fullness. We also acknowledge the rights of children as detailed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (*United Nations, 1990, Article 49*) that States shall protect children from physical or mental harm and neglect, including sexual abuse and exploitation.

Children are gifts of God to be received, welcomed and to be cared for responsibly and justly. The Gospel also directs us to listen to and learn from children. In *On the Way Together* (1998) it is affirmed that “children in the Uniting Church in Australia are nurtured in Christian faith and discipleship, experiencing relationships which promote trust, cooperation, honesty, positive valuing of persons, responsibility and Christian service.” It adds that the Church “affirms the value and the rights of children as human beings as it listens to, guides,

protects, advocates for, and empowers children within its own communities and the wider community.”

Unfortunately, not all children are protected from harm. Abuse occurs across all areas of society. Some adults will look to find opportunities to groom children by forming special relationships, which may become exploitative. Whilst children, parents and the Church should be aware of ‘stranger danger’, most people who sexually abuse children are known to the victim through family, friends, school, sports groups, church and other community activities.

Our Synod and the entire Church abhors the crime of child abuse. To know that innocent and trusting children have been preyed upon within the Church, which is devoted to the care, protection and wellbeing of the most vulnerable, is deeply distressing. We are committed to doing everything we can to achieve justice for those who have been abused and to create an environment where children are safe.

Some children in the care of the Church have been subjected to a variety of forms of abuse. Abuse can be perpetrated by an adult to a child or by children displaying harmful sexual behaviour. Abuse has occurred in agencies, schools, and congregations and during the conduct of associated activities.

In our Apology to the Forgotten Australians (2004) we stated:

On behalf of the Uniting Church and our agencies, we apologise unreservedly for any physical, psychological or social harm that might have occurred. We deeply regret that some children were let down while in the care of the Uniting Church and former Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches. The recent Senate Inquiry into children in Institutional Care highlighted a number of cases where children suffered at the hands of caregivers. The inquiry painted a disturbing picture of life for many young people who lived in institutional care. The Uniting Church through its agencies managed a number of these facilities and we accept that sadly some did not provide the love, nurturing and care that the children in them so rightly deserved. The Inquiry highlighted the flaws in institutional care models and the need to ensure they are never repeated.

The Uniting Church Values Statement issued by the Assembly Standing Committee (2013) affirms that:

We will not hide from the truth, however painful it may be, and we will seek, with compassion and humility, to address whatever issues and challenges may emerge for us. We will say "sorry" to anyone who was neglected and abused when in our care and, in consultation with those so affected, actively seek for ways to make amends for what happened in the past and identify how we can best offer support into the future.

In response to the National Apology to survivors of institutional child sexual abuse (2018), President Deirdre Palmer stated:

Our Church has some important commitments to live up to - to be a Church that listens to children and adults, to make our Church a safe place for all, and to take responsibility for the wrongs done in our name.

The Church has strong theological foundations for its commitment not to tolerate child abuse and to address the injustice of this abuse. Acknowledgement of wrongs is captured in the Basis of Union, which states: *"The Uniting Church prays that through the gift of the Spirit, God will constantly correct that which is erroneous in its life"* (Basis of Union, para.18).

Our values

The Uniting Church's values which apply to the care and protection of children include:

Compassion	We will deal with children compassionately and with an understanding of their vulnerabilities.
Respect	We respect the boundaries of professional relationships and respect the rights of every person to feel safe while in contact with our services.
Justice	We will seek justice for those who have been harmed.
Working together	We will work together to create a culture of individual and collective responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children and to create friendly, welcoming spaces for children.
Leading through learning	We will be leaders by ensuring our governance embeds a culture of safety and undertaking a continuous improvement approach to the safety of children and to offering child friendly services.

Child Safety Commitment Statement

All children and young people involved in any congregational or Synod activity, service or program have the right to feel and be safe. Accordingly, we commit to:

- doing all in our power to safeguard children and young people from all forms of abuse, harm and neglect.
- providing safe environments where children and young people are respected, nurtured and cared for.
- upholding the law including reporting abuse or allegations of abuse, harm and neglect to the appropriate authorities.
- ensuring policy, practice and decision making which affects the safety of children and young people places paramount consideration on child safety.

Synod Child Safety Framework – the five Pillars

Strong and committed leadership	Suitable and capable people	Safe and inclusive environments	Genuine engagement	Child focused and friendly processes
Good governance Child safe culture Effective policies and procedures Regular review improvement	Robust recruitment Screening and selection Ongoing education Support and supervision	Culturally safe environments for First Nations people Inclusive, sensitive and friendly spaces Suitable Physical Spaces Safe online spaces	Participation and empowerment of children, young people and families Community partnerships Equitable, diverse and culturally safe	Rights based practice Trauma informed practice Child focused complaint management
				

Forms of Abuse

The forms of abuse referenced in this policy include:

- Sexual abuse and misconduct
- Grooming
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Physical abuse
- Emotional and psychological abuse (inclusive of cultural abuse)
- Exposure to family violence
- Neglect

Refer **Annex A** for full definitions of forms of abuse.

Definitions - Refer **Annex B** for definitions related to child safety and this policy.

Roles and Responsibilities – Refer **Annex C** for the child safety roles and responsibilities of our people.

Frameworks and Legislation

The Synod’s policies and strategies align with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) and State and Territory based Child Safe Standards. We understand our compliance requirements to State and Territory based legislation in the jurisdictions we serve - refer **Annex D**.

Breaches

Any noncompliance or breaches of the Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct or related policies will result in disciplinary action and will be treated as a breach of the terms of employment or engagement with the Synod. This action may include termination of employment or engagement.

Policy Principles

Strong and committed leadership

Reference: National Principles for Child Safe Standards: 1, 9, 10

Victorian Child Safe Standards: 2, 10, 11

Tasmanian Child Safe Standards: 1, 9, 10

Good governance

Our governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of Child Safety Principles and Standards, our Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Code Conduct and related policies and strategies to enhance the rights and safety of children and young people. We ensure the roles, responsibilities and obligations of our people to keep children and young people safe are clearly defined, we are held accountable, and we are transparent with our actions.

Child safe culture

Our Synod believes that a child safe culture is led and modelled by our leaders and extends to all those with whom we come in contact. Our Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all of our people, and will be actively applied across all activities, services and programs as a part of everyday practice. Refer *Child Safety Code of Conduct*.

Effective policies and procedures

Our policies and procedures support us to be a child safe organisation and are reviewed on a regular basis, with community consultation. Our policies and procedures will be accessible to all of our people, children, young people, families and the broader community. All of our people must demonstrate practices and behaviours that support our policies and procedures, and our leaders will monitor the implementation and compliance of such.

Regular review and improvement

We aim to continuously improve our child safe and child friendly environments and actively seek feedback from our people, children, young people, and families to do so. We acknowledge that there are always enhancements to be made, ensure that we regularly review our child safety performance, execute improvement plans and provide adequate resourcing to do so. Refer *Continuous Improvement Procedure*.

Suitable and capable people

Reference: National Principles for Child Safe Standards: 5, 7

Victorian Child Safe Standards: 6, 8

Tasmanian Child Safe Standards: 5, 7

Robust recruitment

The Synod and its entities seek to recruit representatives who are safe to work with children and young people and are aligned to our work in creating child safe and child friendly environments. Robust processes will be applied to the recruitment process, and those responsible for recruitment will be adequately skilled and supported.

Screening and selection

All representatives will be screened as per legislative requirements (including National Crime Check and Working with Children Check/Registration to Work with Vulnerable People) and selected as being suitable to work with children and young people, via thorough interviews and reference checking processes that include child safety elements. Refer *Recruitment and Selection Policy, Synod Volunteers Policy, Recruitment, screening and supervision handbook* (hereafter, *Recruitment, screening and supervision handbook*).

Ongoing education

Our people will be adequately trained and supported to complete their roles in a child safe organisation, implement child safe standards, and support the rights of children and young people. All Appointed Leaders in the Synod and its entities will receive a child safety related induction and commit to upholding our policies, along with ongoing education to improve their child safety skills. Training will be appropriately resourced and recorded. Refer *Recruitment, screening and supervision handbook*.

Support and supervision

Ongoing supervision and people management will be provided and have a focus on child safety and wellbeing. The supervision, support and management of our people includes identifying child safety training needs and will support an ongoing assessment of our people's suitability to work with children and young people. Refer *Recruitment, screening and supervision handbook*.

Safe and inclusive environments

Reference: National Principles for Child Safe Standards: 2, 8

Victorian Child Safe Standards: 1, 9

Tasmanian Child Safe Standards: 4,8

Culturally safe environments for First Nations people

Our people will actively support and facilitate the participation and inclusion of our First Nations people, and recognise their achievements, communities and culture. We work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of this land. The Synod will not tolerate any form of racism and will ensure any examples of such are identified and appropriately addressed. Refer *Covenanting Guide, Acknowledgement of First Peoples in the UCA, Assembly Covenant Action Plan*

Inclusive, sensitive and friendly spaces

The Synod and its entities uphold the rights of children and young people to express their culture, celebrate diversity and appreciate the strengths of cultures. Our activities, services and programs must meet the needs of all children and young people (and their families) and provide environments that are inclusive, sensitive and friendly.

Suitable physical spaces

We recognise our responsibility to proactively identify and reduce or remove risks to children and young people. Risk management strategies are in place to identify, assess, and minimise child safety risks, and these risks are managed via a risk management plan and register. Wherever possible, children and young people will be involved in risk identification and mitigation strategies. Refer *Risk Management Tool*. Safe physical environments will be provided by the Synod and its entities. Safety assessments will be conducted on facilities/sites to ensure they are suitable and safe for activities services and programs with children and young people of the Synod and its entities, to occur. Refer *OHS Policy and Procedures*.

Safe online spaces

The Synod and its entities will ensure people have an awareness of safe practice when communicating with children and young people via online and electronic systems. Online risks will be considered in risk management planning, along with opportunities for children and young people to report any concerns about electronic/online communication. Refer *Guidelines for safe ministry using digital media*.

Genuine engagement

Reference: National Principles for Child Safe Standards: 2, 3, 4

Victorian Child Safe Standards: 1, 3, 4, 5

Tasmanian Child Safe Standards: 2, 3, 4

Participation and empowerment of children, young people and families

We promote the voices of children and young people and place a high priority on their participation and empowerment as community members. We believe in building an organisational culture based on what is in the best interests of children and young people at all times. We understand that children and young people are more likely to speak up about concerns if they know that their views are valued and welcomed by an organisation. Our people will ensure that children and young people are aware of their rights and are supported to exercise them. A child friendly version of this policy will be made available to children and young people. We will consult with children and young people wherever possible, and they will inform our decision making.

Importantly, we know that families, carers and guardians are key stakeholders, and play a role in maintaining safe environments for children and young people and supporting us to be a child safe organisation. We will work in partnership with families and facilitate regular communication and meaningful participation.

Community partnerships

We acknowledge that our activities, services and programs rely on strong community partnerships, and our role in maintaining child safe environments stretches to the broader community. Our commitment to child safety, along with relevant policies, procedures and information will be available to the communities in which we work, and the partnerships we form. We will ensure all partner organisations meet our child safety standards.

Equitable, diverse and culturally safe

We strongly believe all children and young people have the right to live safely and will not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment, harm or abuse. The wellbeing of *all* children and young people, including environments that are culturally safe is an indicator of a child safe organisation. Refer *UCA Disability Action Plan, Creating an Intercultural Space, Covenanting Guide, Pastoral Care with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people, The Church and homosexuality*.

We acknowledge the needs of children and young people from diverse backgrounds, including those:

- living with a disability
- who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or questioning) or Intersex (LGBTQI+)
- living away from home
- are First Nations people
- are culturally and linguistically diverse.

We will provide children and young people with access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

Child focused and friendly processes

Reference: National Principles for Child Safe Standards: 2, 6

Victorian Child Safe Standards: 3, 7

Tasmanian Child Safe Standards: 2, 6

Rights based practice

Our Synod supports the *United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child's* child rights approach. This approach recognises, respects and protects the

human rights of children and young people in the development and implementation of laws, policies, practices and decisions affecting them. It focuses on genuine engagement with children and young people, their right to know their rights, taking action to promote their right to safety and their right to have their views heard.

Trauma informed practice

We understand how trauma affects people's lives, especially children and young people.

We recognise we must respond appropriately to children and young people who are dealing with trauma and its effects, to ensure best outcomes for individuals and families. We will support our people to apply the principles of a trauma informed approach to all instances and concerns of child abuse, harm and neglect. Refer *Responding to and Reporting child abuse procedure*.

Child focused complaint management

Complaint management

The Synod and its entities will ensure clear and accessible complaint pathways are available for children, young people, their families, the broader community and all of our people. Refer *Children's Complaint Process*

All complaints will be treated seriously and responded to accordingly (in line with the Synod process for responding to, and reporting concerns of abuse, harm and neglect), and with the best interests of children and young people as the priority. The Synod will use the outcomes of complaints to review child safety policies, practice and culture. Refer *Synod Ministries and Operations Whistleblower Policy and Procedure*.

Responding to concerns, allegations and incidents

Our people are required to respond in sensitive and appropriate ways to concerns, allegations, disclosures and incidents of child abuse, harm and neglect and will be supported to do so. Children, young people and their families will be supported throughout the process and (where applicable) will be consulted to ensure their rights and participation in decision making is upheld.

The Synod and its entities commit to undertaking prompt and effective investigations into allegations against our people. Investigations will be conducted with the principles of procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy and the outcomes of investigations and any improvement/changes to practice will be communicated to stakeholders as appropriate. Refer *Reportable Conduct Policy*.

Reporting instances of child abuse, harm and neglect

Our Synod will ensure that all concerns, allegations and incidents are reported via internal and external pathways, as required by law, ethically and according to our policies. Our people will co-operate with authorities and ensure all reporting obligations are met, including reporting requirements mandated by law. A reporting procedure, along with training to clarify reporting roles and responsibilities will be made available to our people. Refer *Responding to and Reporting child abuse procedure*.

Privacy and confidentiality

All people involved in the handling of allegations of child abuse, harm and neglect will be mindful of the sensitive nature of the issue and take all reasonable steps to maintain confidentiality and to respect the privacy of all those involved. In order for the Synod to perform its functions under legislation, we may be required to collect personal information about people or children and young people and disclose that information to a third party. Refer *Privacy Policy* and *Information Sharing Policy*.

Record keeping

The Synod will ensure that accurate records of child safety related concerns are collected and stored in line with best practice standards. Refer *Record Keeping Policy*.

Historical allegations

As part of our work of being a child safe organisation and promoting the safety of children and young people, we may become aware of a disclosure of non-recent (historic) abuse, harm or neglect from those who have attended an activity, service or program of the Synod or its entities in the past. We commit to responding to such allegations in a sensitive and effective manner, noting that there may be a possibility that a person who abused a child or young person in the past may still be doing so, and criminal prosecutions may still take place even though the allegations are historical in nature. Refer *Responding to and Reporting child abuse procedure, Reportable Conduct Policy*.

Review and updates

We commit to reviewing the Child Safety Policy as required, and at a minimum, every three years or as required by legislation. Review of the Policy will include consultation with experts and key stakeholders, including children and young people. Changes to any child safety related policy, child safety code of conduct or procedure will be communicated to all parties.

Related Documents

- Continuous Improvement Procedure
- Recruitment and Selection Policy, Synod Volunteers Policy
- Recruitment, screening and supervision handbook
- Covenanting Guide
- Acknowledgement of First Peoples in the UCA

- Assembly Covenant Action Plan
- Risk Management Tool
- OHS Policy and Procedures
- Guidelines for safe ministry using digital media
- UCA Disability Action Plan
- Creating an Intercultural Space
- Pastoral Care with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people
- The Church and homosexuality
- Responding to and Reporting child abuse procedure
- Children's Complaint Process
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Information Sharing Policy
- Record Keeping Policy

Annex A – Forms of Abuse

Sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It includes a broad range of behaviours involving a sexual element that are committed against, with or in the presence of a child.

Sexual offences may involve contact, like touching or penetration. They also include acts that do not involve physical contact like ‘flashing’, possessing child abuse material or grooming.

Sexual misconduct

Sexual misconduct includes a variety of sexualised behaviours against, with or in the presence of a child. These behaviours may not meet the threshold for a sexual offence but can still pose a significant risk to children. Behaviours could include inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature, comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner, or in some cases, behaviour that crosses a professional boundary, such as having or seeking to establish an inappropriate or overly personal or intimate relationship with a child.

Grooming

Grooming behaviour can involve the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques used to build trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour. Grooming is often described as the ‘preparation’ phase of child sexual abuse, undertaken by the perpetrator to gain the trust of a child, and to establish secrecy and silence. Perpetrators may groom to gain access to a child, initiate and maintain sexual abuse of that child, and to conceal the sexual abuse from others who may identify it.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people and which may be harmful or abusive. It can be displayed towards younger children, peers, older children or adults. It is harmful to the children and young people who display it, as well as those it is directed towards.

Physical abuse

Physical violence can occur when a person intentionally or recklessly uses physical force against, with or in the presence of a child without their consent, which causes, or could cause, the child harm.

Physical violence can include hitting, punching, kicking, pushing or throwing something that strikes a child. It also includes the use of words or gestures that cause a child to believe that they are about to suffer physical violence.

Emotional or psychological abuse

Emotional and psychological abuse may arise in circumstances that involve persistent verbal abuse, coercive or manipulative behaviour, hostility towards a child, humiliation, belittling or scapegoating, conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or rejected, or causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger.

Cultural Abuse

Cultural abuse can cause emotional and psychological harm. Cultural abuse occurs when the culture of a people is ignored, denigrated or intentionally attacked. It can be overt or covert, for example, a lack of cultural sensitivity or absence of positive images about another culture. Cultural abuse is especially harmful for children 'because it strikes their sense of identity, self-esteem and connectedness to family and community'.¹

Exposure to Family Violence

Exposure to violent, threatening or other behaviour by a person that coerces or controls a member of the person's family (the family member) or causes the family member to be fearful. A child is exposed to violence if that child sees or hears family violence or otherwise experiences the effects of family violence.

Neglect

Neglect is a failure to meet the basic needs of a child (such as their wellbeing and safety). Neglect can arise as a result of a single event or a combination of different events. Some neglectful behaviours that can occur in organisations include:

- supervisory neglect (failure to appropriately exercise adequate supervision or control of a child)
- physical neglect (failure to meet a child's physical needs including the provision of adequate and appropriate food, clothing, shelter or physical hygiene)
- educational neglect (failure to ensure that a child's formal educational needs are being met)
- emotional neglect (failure to provide adequate nurturing, encouragement and support to a child).

References:

Victorian Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)– A guide for creating a Child Safe Organisation

National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

SNAICC - Keeping our kids safe: cultural safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) – Definition of Exposure to Family Violence

Annex B – Definitions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander – A person who is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait descent, identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.

Child Safe – An environment where children and young people’s safety and wellbeing is at the centre of values and actions and where there is an emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people. Conditions reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people, increase the likelihood of identifying any harm and responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

Child Friendly - Behaviour, conduct, practice, process, attitude, environment or treatment that is humane, considerate and in the best interest of child.

Child Protection – Statutory authority responsible for child protection, and all measures taken to minimize the risk of child abuse.

Code of Conduct – A document which specifies behaviours expected of all people of the organisation when engaging with children or young people.

Consultant - A person who provides expert advice professionally.

Contractor – A person or organisation that undertakes a contract to provide labor, a service or job.

Cultural safety – The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It is an environment which is socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.

Culturally and/or linguistically diverse background (CaLD) – Identification with particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of place of birth, ancestry or

ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of parents' identification on a similar basis.

Disability – Any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden.

Disclosure – A child or young person telling someone (through words, drawings or actions) that they feel unsafe or has been harmed.

Employee/Employees – Any individual employed by The Synod and its entities.

Entities of the Synod: include, but are not limited to: Congregations, Presbyteries, agencies, ministries, childcare services, out-of-home care services, family and community services, disability services, health services, camps and schools.

First Nations people - May refer to: Indigenous peoples, for ethnic groups who are the earliest known inhabitants of an area.

Harm - Damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child/young person, as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children/young people. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm.

Appointed Leaders – Appointed or religious leaders are people who are in a position of trust, influence or authority because of their leadership role within a congregation. Please see WWCC/RWVP Policy for further definition.

Our People- board/council members, employees, volunteers, children, 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.

Visitor – A person who is a member of the public, visiting a Synod or one of its entities site.

Volunteer – An unpaid member of the Synod or its entities supporting program

delivery or operations. Workers – Employees, consultants, contractors or volunteers.

Young Person – Any person under the age of 18 years (typically 13-18yrs).

Annex C – Roles and Responsibilities

The Synod and Synod Standing Committee

- Child Safety strategy and policy owners.
- Oversight of organisation-wide child safe practices.
- Ensure appropriate resourcing is allocated to implementing child safe practice.
- Advocate for child safe practices both within the Synod and its entities, as well as with partner organisations.
- Monitoring of organisational compliance to legislative requirements and key frameworks.
- Ensuring processes are appropriately followed when a concern of child abuse, harm and neglect

Leaders in roles in Councils of the Church, and in Synod Services

- Ensure Uniting Child Safety strategies and policies are implemented across the organisation.
- Prioritise child safe practices at an operational level.
- Ensure all workers are suitable, skilled and aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- Advocate for child safe practice with partner organisations.
- Ensure organisational compliance to legislative requirements and key frameworks.
- Role model an open and aware child safe and child friendly culture.

Our people:

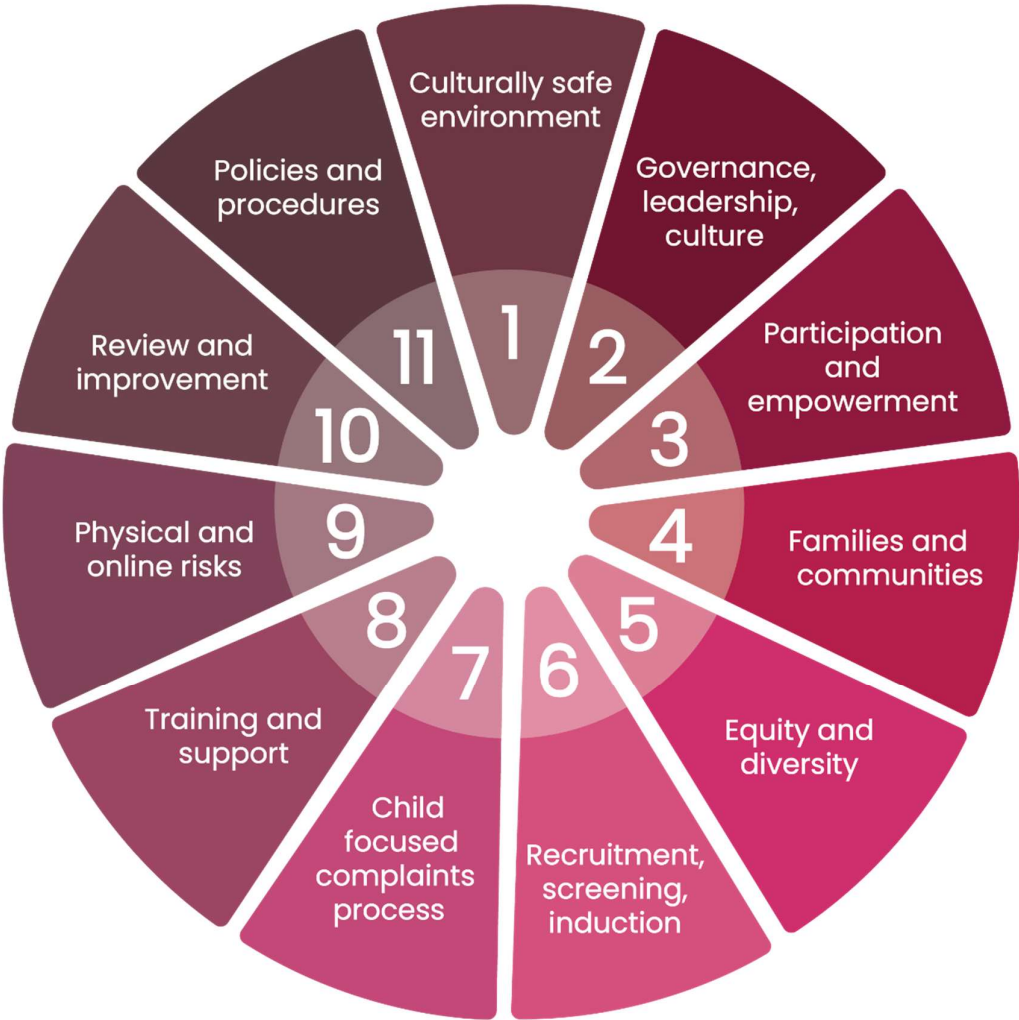
- Adhere to the Child Safety Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct and related policies.
- Promote child safe practice across the organisation.
- Ensure personal knowledge and education regarding child safety is current.
- Identify, mitigate and manage risks to children and young people.
- Ensure children and young people are engaged and are consulted about things that impact or affect them at Uniting/UCA.
- Recognise appropriately respond to and report concerns of child abuse harm and neglect

Annex D – Related Frameworks and Legislation

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

Victorian Child Safe Standards:



State and Territory Based Legislation

Organisational Liability	VIC , TAS , NSW , ACT , QLD , SA , NT , WA
Child Safe Standards	VIC , NSW , SA , TAS
Duty of Care, Voluntary and Mandatory Reporting	VIC , TAS , NSW , ACT , QLD , SA , NT , WA
Failure to Protect	VIC , NSW , ACT , QLD , SA
Failure to Disclose/Report	VIC , TAS , NSW , ACT , QLD , SA
Reportable Conduct Scheme	VIC , NSW , ACT , TAS
Grooming	VIC , TAS , NSW , ACT , QLD , SA , NT , WA
Age of consent	VIC , TAS , NSW , ACT , QLD , SA , NT , WA
Working with Children Checks	VIC , TAS , NSW , ACT , QLD , SA , NT , WA
Information sharing	VIC , TAS , NSW , ACT , QLD , NT , WA

Document Review History				
Version Number	Date	Reason	Created by	Approved
1	January 2023	Required to meet standards	Culture of Safety	General Secretary Jan 2023
1	August 2026	Regular review and reformatting for accessibility	Culture of Safety	N/A