

Keeping Children Safe Code of Conduct



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Keeping
Children
Safe



(Name of congregation/ entity) _____ expects all employees, appointed leaders, volunteers and people in specified ministries to abide by this Code of Conduct.

Employees, volunteers and people in specified ministries **will**:

- Consider the safety and needs of children as paramount.
- Treat all children with respect and demonstrate a zero tolerance of discrimination.
- Read and abide by relevant policies and procedures for keeping children safe.
- Behave in a manner which is consistent with the values of the Uniting Church in Australia.
- Encourage open communication between all children, parents, staff, vulnerable adults, volunteers and people in specified ministries through the use of empowering and supportive language.
- Enable children to participate in the decisions that affect them, in ways that are appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Model appropriate behaviours and redirect unwanted behaviours of children, at all times using appropriate behaviour management strategies.
- Respond to any concerns or suspicions of child abuse, and speak up if you see colleagues behaving in ways that concern you.
- At all times be transparent in our actions and whereabouts, and remain aware of each child and the adults who are with the children.
- Seek advice, support and assistance for child protection matters where needed.
- Participate in required training so as to understand our role in ensuring a safe environment for children.

Employees, volunteers and people in specified ministries **will not** unless otherwise formally authorised¹:

- Be alone with a child.
- Sleep in the same room as a child.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes.
- Without prior parental/guardian consent, seek to make contact and spend time alone with any child outside program times, including through personal social media networks or face-to-face and phone contact.
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians.
- Disclose information unless specifically required by law or policy.

¹ There may be settings and events where some variation to the following is required. Such variation will need to be authorised by the board/council/committee that adopts the policy. If you have any questions regarding this please contact the Culture of Safety Unit cultureofsafetycontact@victas.uca.org.au or 03 9251 5288.

Employees, volunteers and people in specified ministries *will not* under any circumstances:

- Engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children.
- Use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language when speaking with a child.
- Sleep in the same bed as a child.
- Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary, uninvited, or culturally insensitive way in public or isolation.
- Behave provocatively or inappropriately with a child and/or in a way that could be considered as 'grooming'.
- Develop a sexual relationship with a child or a relationship with a child that may be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of a child which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of a child.
- Smack, hit or physically assault a child.
- Physically restrain or remove/isolate a child or children unless the child's or children's behaviours endanger themselves or others.
- Have inappropriate conversations with a child either in person, through social media or in any other way.
- Use the Entity's computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras inappropriately or for the purpose of exploiting or harassing a child.
- Make a complaint that they know to be untrue, malicious or improper.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary measures or, if required by law, reporting to the authorities.

Organisational declaration:

This Code of Conduct has been adopted for use by:

Name of Congregation/ Entity _____

Name and title of person responsible _____

Signature _____

Date agreed at Church Council _____