

# Safe Church Training

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## Introduction

# Participant's Guide

# Welcome



The Uniting Church in Australia  
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

Welcome to this training module on Safe Church Introduction. This video is an acknowledgement of country. Please watch this as you begin your module. To do this, you can click on the link below, scan the QR code with your camera on your tablet or mobile phone, or you can manually type the URL below into your browser.

<https://vimeo.com/813041826>



## A message from the Moderator

**SAFE**CHURCH

This video is a welcome message from our Moderator. Please watch this as you begin your module. To do this, you can click on the link below, scan the QR code with your camera on your tablet or mobile phone, or you can manually type the URL below into your browser.

<https://vimeo.com/896403007>



## Learning Objectives

- Understand what **Creating a safe church** means and how it fits with our mission and values
- Be introduced to the concept of **Shared Guardianship** and your role in supporting it
- Understand **maintaining boundaries** and what to do if someone is violating those boundaries

## Pause and reflect



- What do you think is important to know about creating a safe church?
- What do you hope to get out of this session?

Throughout this training there will be opportunities to pause and reflect. This may take the form of a personal reflection, or a group discussion or activity. Please use these opportunities to jot down any personal reflections that you might like to look back on later.

## Cultural considerations


Whilst we are keen to ensure the Safe Church training is culturally respectful and relevant, there is no room for variations in the requirement that every congregation and church group must adhere to the policy and meet its requirements.

### **Cultural considerations**

Issues about safety may need to be discussed in different ways in different cultural contexts.

The Queensland Synod is keen to ensure the Safe Church training is culturally respectful and relevant. However, there is no room for variations in the requirement that every congregation and church group must adhere to the policy and meet its requirements.

Leaders and ministry agents in multicultural contexts are asked to help build appropriate bridges of understanding and compliance between policy and this training, and the communities in which it will be implemented.



# Vision and values

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## What do you value?



- The people?
- The relationships?
- The experiences?

### **What do you value?**

Think back to the things that connect you in a positive and strong way – does it have to do with:

- The people?
- The relationships?
- The experiences?



What is it about the church that makes it a safe and nurturing place for you?

- Nurturing relationships?
- Genuine Care?
- Respect?
- Trust?
- Fellowship?
- Safety?

## Pause and reflect



- What does this mean for your ministry and the ways in which you can contribute to keeping everyone safe?



## Compassion

We treat people, especially those who are vulnerable, with compassion and we recognise that young people are more vulnerable than adults.



## Respect

We respect the boundaries of the professional and personal relationships we have with young and vulnerable people, and we respect that everyone has rights, including the right to be safe and protected from harm.



## Justice

We will seek justice for those  
who have been harmed.




## **Working together**

We will create friendly and safe environments by working together to create a culture where young and vulnerable people are seen, listened to, valued and protected.



## Leading through learning

We will be leaders by continually improving what we do to offer safe and friendly spaces, programs, services and protect young and vulnerable people from harm.



Creating a culture of shared  
guardianship.

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## How do we create a safe church?

1. A positive culture
2. Environments that are safe and reduce opportunities for abuse
3. Systems which are robust and accessible

Safe church is a suite of documents: **policy, processes, tools and guides.**

The primary purpose of Safe Church is to support the Church's vision, mission and ministry with young and vulnerable people in the Queensland Synod.

### **The three core elements of Safe Church are:**

1. A positive culture in which individuals are welcome to participate; feel included in ministry and mission and feel confident to raise even small concerns
2. Environments that reduce opportunities for physical, social, spiritual or emotional abuse and are safe
3. Systems which are robust and accessible: policies, procedures, guidance notes and tools to assist you to conduct ministry safely and with accountability.

## Pause and reflect



What can you do in your current role to contribute to creating a culture of shared guardianship?

Every week, congregations in the Uniting Church conduct activities for young and vulnerable people and join to provide special events conducted by Presbyteries and the Synod. We recognise that everyone, including young and vulnerable people have the right to feel and be safe and we want each and every person to be safe and to feel safe and respected as they participate in these activities and events. We expect everyone, including young people and adults to help make sure this happens. This is what we mean by a culture of shared guardianship – it's a positive culture in which everyone plays an important role.

For that to happen, every event, program and activity must be planned to make sure they are as safe as possible. The people who lead and help with programs and activities must be screened and trained, and be committed to ensuring the physical, social, spiritual and emotional safety of all participants. To help make sure this happens in practice, all people must work together to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young and vulnerable people in our congregations. Everyone should feel confident to raise even small concerns about safety and wellbeing.

What does that actually mean for how we behave toward one another and toward young and vulnerable people?

Take a moment to think about your role and how you interact with young and vulnerable members of your church community and how your actions can contribute, or not, to creating a culture of shared guardianship.

Think of some ideas about what you can do in your current role to contribute to creating that culture.



What do we expect from you?

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## What do we expect from you?



- Appropriate physical contact
- Meeting leader to participant ratios
- Respecting rights of others
- Being a positive role model

No matter what your role is, or how old you are, we expect you to act in a way that is safe for others. You are responsible for your own conduct and behaviour, and you will be held responsible for it. To do this, we need you to have a clear understanding of what behaviour is acceptable, and how to interrupt and report behaviour that is not acceptable. Our range of acceptable behaviours are outlined in the [Statement of Personal Commitment](#), and are grouped as physical, emotional, behavioural and spiritual boundaries.

They include:

- Appropriate physical contact (non-sexual) in clear sight of others
- Meeting mandatory leader (18+) to participant ratios for all activities
- Respecting rights of others
- Being a positive role model

## What do we expect from you? (cont.)

- Avoiding activities that show disrespect
- Working as part of a team
- Not sharing inappropriate images or messages
- Being sober and drug free
- Using positive behaviour management strategies

- Avoiding activities that show disrespect, cause isolation or embarrassment
- Working as part of a team, within the approved plan and using approved content
- Not sharing inappropriate images or messages
- Being sober and drug free when working with young and vulnerable people
- Using positive behaviour management strategies with young and vulnerable people

## Pause and reflect



- Is there anything you've been doing that you need to stop or change?
- Is there anything that you should do more of?

Take a moment to look at the [Statement of Personal Commitment](#) and think about how you support this kind of culture in your congregation. If you have not already done so, you will need to sign a copy of this statement and return to your church.

Please take a moment to think about these questions:

- Is there anything you've been doing which you need to stop or change?
- Is there anything you have been doing which you should do more of?

## Interrupting and reporting violations

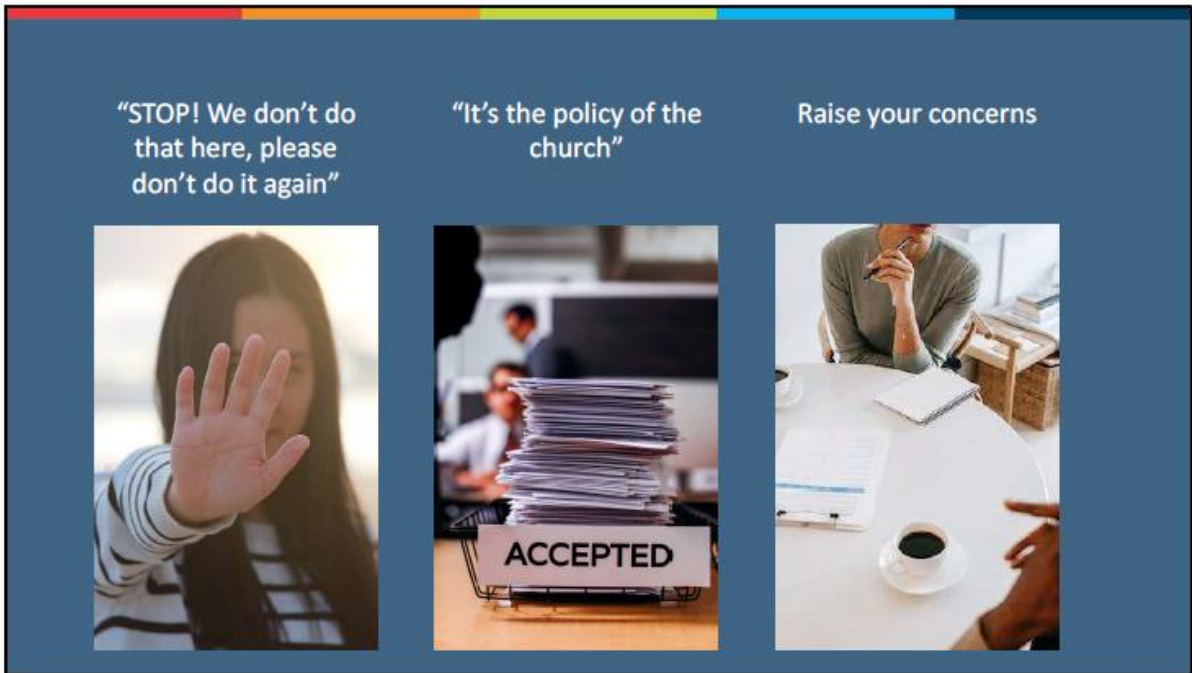
It can sometimes be difficult to stay within boundaries. Sometimes people will forget. At other times they may deliberately act in ways that are not within the boundaries. Our policy allows you to interrupt and remind others to remain in the Safe Church zone. It is primarily the responsibility of adults to protect young and vulnerable people from harm.

As well as making it clear what we expect from you, this will allow you to identify and draw attention to behaviour from others which steps beyond these boundaries – even if it's a close friend, colleague, or senior person in our church.

It is important to recognise that there is an imbalance of power in adult-child relationships and that it can be difficult or impossible for a child to call out a boundary violation. That's why we ask all adults to maintain a safe culture, by ensuring boundaries are maintained.

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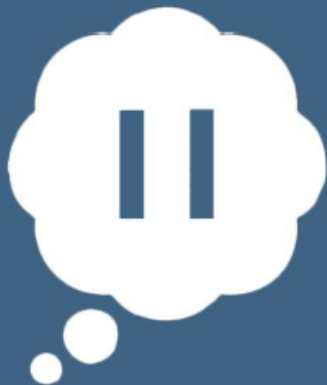




Here are some ideas on how you can respond if you recognise a boundary violation:

- Instruct the boundary violator to stop and ask them not to engage in the behaviour again ***“Stop. We don’t do that here, please don’t do it again”***
- If challenged, the observer should refer to the policy, and that the behaviour is not within the acceptable behaviours of safe church ***“It’s the policy of the church”***
- If you become aware of any concerning behaviour, raise it with your ministry agent (or someone else within the church that you’re comfortable talking to) as soon as possible.

## Pause and reflect



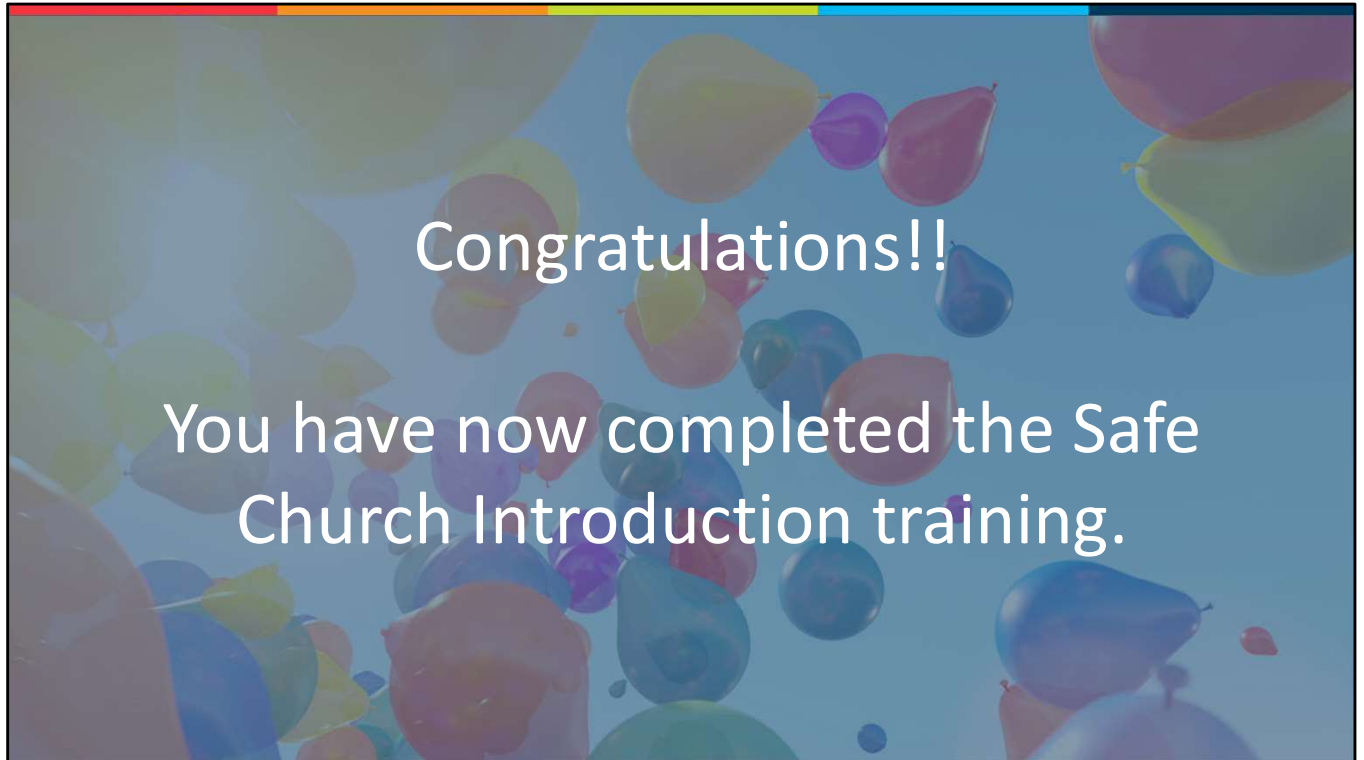
Please take some time to reflect on why Safe Church is important. You can use the worksheet provided to record your thoughts.



# Assessment

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Please complete the assessment sheet provided for each participant. You will need to keep these with your records to show that participants completed the assessment requirements.



Congratulations, you have now completed the Safe Church Introduction training.

Please take a minute to provide some feedback on this training (*Use the Quick Feedback facilitator guide for this activity*)