



Safe Church Breach Procedure

C/2.1.14

Purpose

A plan for addressing any actions or inactions by individuals that do not comply with the [Safe Church Policy](#), leading to a breach of the policy.

Scope

Applies to all workers (paid and volunteer) in congregations, faith communities, and presbyteries of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod.

Delegation and oversight

1. Communicate the Safe Church Policy

- 1.1. The Safe Church Policy does not just apply to all employees and volunteers. The Safe Church Policy applies to everybody who is involved with your congregation including children, parents, contractors, and all other people relevant to your congregation.
- 1.2. It's important to communicate the Safe Church Policy to everyone relevant to your congregation.
 - 1.2.1. Display a copy of your statement of commitment in a prominent location
 - 1.2.2. Display posters that show your commitment to a safe church for everyone
 - 1.2.3. Display information about how to make a report, and the details of who to speak to about a concern or complaint.

2. Responsibilities and delegations

- 2.1. Each Church Council has the oversight responsibility for their congregation. The Church Council Chair may delegate a person to have or take on the responsibility of managing breaches of the Safe Church Policy.
- 2.2. Presbytery Committees may have oversight responsibility for Faith Communities within the Presbytery. The Presbytery Chair may delegate a person to have or take on the responsibility of managing breaches of the Safe Church Policy for a Faith Community, within their Presbytery.

Definition of a breach

3. A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the organisation, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of the Safe Church Policy which includes:
 - 3.1. All presbytery committees and church councils must formally adopt the Safe Church Policy annually as their risk management strategy
 - 3.2. All workers, must:
 - 3.2.1. Undergo pre-appointment screening, including:
 - An initial interview
 - Referee checks
 - 3.2.2. The validation and linking of blue cards for all child-related roles
 - 3.2.3. Complete mandatory Safe Church training
 - 3.2.4. Annually sign a Statement of Personal Commitment (SOPC) by all lay workers or a Statement of Commitment (SOC) by all ministry agents



- 3.2.5. Be approved and appointed by the Presbytery Committee or Church Council before commencing in a Church role (paid or volunteer).
- 3.3. Systems are in place to address breaches of the strategy, plan safe programs (including high-risk activities), and respond to concerns. This includes the obligation for all adults to report any suspected sexual abuse or grooming to the police.
 - 3.3.1. Each activity or program has a risk assessment completed and approved by the Church Council or Presbytery Committee
 - 3.3.2. All concerns and complaints are recorded and reported using the Mandatory Reporting Processes – R.E.S.P.O.N.D. or B.C.A.L.M.
- 3.4. Communication, ongoing training, and support is in place for all people working and volunteering, within the Synod.
 - 3.4.1. A New-Starter Check-In occurs for all new workers, workers appointed to new roles, or workers changing roles
 - 3.4.2. An Annual Well-Being Check-in occurs for all workers.

Breach Categories

- 4. The type of breach corresponds to the requirements of the Safe Church Policy:
 - 4.1. Adopt the Safe Church Policy
 - 4.1.1. Inaction - failure to adopt the Safe Church Policy
 - 4.1.2. Inaction - Statement of Commitment to the Safe Church Policy has expired
 - 4.2. Code of Conduct
 - 4.2.1. Inaction - no SOPC or SOC has been signed
 - 4.2.2. Inaction - SOPC or SOC has expired
 - 4.2.3. Action - a breach of the code of conduct has occurred (eg a boundary violation or breach of behaviour)
 - 4.3. Blue Cards
 - 4.3.1. Inaction - failure to update contact details with Blue Card Services and the Church:
 - de-link a person from the regulated organisation
 - advise of a change in police information
 - advise of a change in regulated employment
 - advise of a change in organisation contact person
 - advise of opening/ closing of a regulated organisation.
 - 4.3.2. Action - failure to produce a valid Blue Card when requested
 - take reasonable steps to confirm a card holder's identity
 - verify a card holder's number
 - 4.3.3. Action - Evidence of a Negative Notice
 - 4.3.4. Action – No Card No Start – commence working or volunteering in a child-related role, without a linked valid blue card or exemption card
 - 4.3.5. Inaction - No Card No Start – failure to renew an expired blue card or exemption card
 - 4.4. Mandatory Training
 - 4.4.1. Inaction - mandatory training has not been completed
 - 4.4.2. Inaction - role specific training has not been completed
 - 4.4.3. Inaction - training has expired
 - 4.5. Pre-appointment screening
 - 4.5.1. Inaction – no Initial interview undertaken
 - 4.5.2. Inaction – no reference checks undertaken
 - 4.6. Role appointment
 - 4.6.1. Inaction – role has not been approved by the Church Council



- 4.6.2. Inaction – volunteer has not been appointed to the role by the Church Council
- 4.7. Risk Assessment
 - 4.7.1. Inaction – a risk assessment has not been completed for events, activities, or programs
 - 4.7.2. Inaction – consultation has not occurred with Synod support services for events, activities or programs assessed with an outcome risk level of 'High' or 'Extreme'.
- 4.8. Ongoing support
 - 4.8.1. Inaction – regular support is not recorded or not occurring
 - A New Starter Check-in has not occurred
 - No evidence of regular supervision (regulated businesses)
 - 4.8.2. Inaction – annual review or feedback is not recorded or not occurring
 - No evidence of an annual performance review (regulated businesses)
 - An Annual Well-Being Check-in has not occurred
- 4.9. Record-keeping
 - 4.9.1. Inaction – failure to maintain a Register of Workers (RoW)
 - 4.9.2. Inaction - Failure to maintain a blue card register
 - 4.9.3. Inaction - Failure to maintain a breach register

Breach Actions

- 5. The consequences are based on the degree of seriousness of the breach. The consequences may involve one or more of the actions listed below, in order to reduce the risk posed by the breach.
 - 5.1. Emphasising the relevant component of the Safe Church Policy, for example:
 - 5.1.1. Reading the Safe Church Policy, and formally adopting the Safe Church Policy
 - 5.1.2. Re-reading and re-committing to the SOPC.
 - 5.1.3. Reading the Managing People procedure
 - 5.1.4. Reading the Planning Safe Programs procedure
 - 5.2. Providing closer supervision and support, for example:
 - 5.2.1. Implementing a support plan for a period of up to 3 months
 - 5.2.2. Implementing a support plan for up to 6 months
 - 5.3. Providing further education and training for example:
 - 5.3.1. Completing a module/s of ministry agent training again.
 - 5.3.2. Completing a mandatory training session/s before resuming duties
 - 5.3.3. Completing a role specific training session/s before resuming duties
 - 5.4. Mediating between those involved in the incident (*where appropriate*) following the Performance Improvement Process
 - 5.5. Disciplinary procedures (*if necessary*) using the Performance Improvement Process **including**:
 - 5.5.1. Being temporarily stood aside from child-related activities, or activities including vulnerable people
 - 5.5.2. Being temporarily stood aside from all volunteer or leadership activities
 - 5.6. Following the Responding to Complaints and Concerns procedure and making a report of suspected child abuse, grooming or neglect (*if necessary*):
 - 5.6.1. Provide a copy of the report to the Synod office
 - 5.6.2. Make a report to child protection authorities
 - 5.6.3. Make a report to police.
 - 5.7. Making a report to Blue Card Services (*if necessary*):
 - 5.7.1. A person commenced working or volunteering in a child-related role without a valid linked blue card or exemption card
 - 5.7.2. A person has provided advise of a change in their police history



Process for reporting breaches

6. Reporting a breach

- 6.1. All concerns relating to a breach of the Safe Church Policy must be reported in writing, using the Breach Report.
 - 6.1.1. The Breach Report details aspects of the incident such as names of parties involved, description of the incident, date, time, and action taken.
- 6.2. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times to protect the privacy of the person or persons referred to in the Breach Report.
- 6.3. All breaches must be reported to the Safe Church Coordinator and the Church Council (or Presbytery Chair) or their delegate for each congregation.
 - 6.3.1. If the breach relates to the Church Council Chair, then the breach must be reported to the Presbytery Chair.

Process for recording breaches, including outcomes

7. Breach Register

- 7.1. All breaches must be recorded in the [Breach Register](#) and must be reported to the Safe Church Coordinator and the Church Council (or Presbytery Chair) or their delegate.
- 7.2. The actions taken and any outcomes must also be recorded in the Breach Register, for each breach.
- 7.3. A copy of the register must be provided annually as part of the Annual Safe Church Audit.

Information and support

Information and support can be obtained from the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer on 07 3377 9983 or safechurch@ucaqld.com.au

The [Safe Church training](#) can be completed online, using the Synod learning platform, [edUCate](#). Please contact the Learning and Development Team at learning@ucaqld.com.au or 07 3377 9734, for more information or to obtain this access.

Revisions

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Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
2.0	16.05.2024	General Manager Risk and Safeguarding	16.05.2024	General Manager Risk and Safeguarding	Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer
Next scheduled review		16.05.2026			