



Mandatory Reporting for Ministry Agents

C/2.1.5.3

When to follow this process

This process must be followed each time a ministry agent reasonably suspects that anyone has been abused or is being groomed for abuse. This includes all concerns relating to:

- Breaches of the Code of Conduct (Statement of Personal Commitment)
- Current neglect and/or abuse of children or adults
- Previous abuse of children who are now adults
- Abuse committed by children
- Spiritual abuse, domestic and family violence, boundary violations, bullying or criminal misconduct

R.E.S.P.O.N.D. process and checklist

Note: the order of the steps may vary depending on the particular circumstances and situation.

- **Reassure** – Reassure the person: “I’m glad you told me”; “It’s important for this to be addressed” or similar words that welcome the information. Listen calmly, patiently, and supportively. Let the person or child use their own words. If someone has decided to talk to you, it is a sign that they trust you. You are helping them by listening respectfully to what they have to say. Let them know they are doing the right thing by speaking up, that you believe them, and you are taking what they say seriously.
- **Ensure** – Ensure immediate danger has been addressed. Address any concerns about their safety, especially if they are worried about the consequences of disclosing. Tell them that what happened to them is not their fault. If there is imminent danger call 000. You may need to ask a few questions to get enough information to be able to determine immediate safety concerns. However, do not investigate. An interpreter service or a communication aid may be required to assist the child or person to adequately disclose their concerns and allow clear communication to occur. Manage the child or person’s expectations by explaining to them what the next steps will be. Be clear that you may need to tell other people certain things about their experience. Explain you have a responsibility to report abuse concerns and allegations.
- **Statement** – The [template for complaints and allegations](#) must be completed with detailed notes. Do not investigate. You may need to ask a few questions to get enough information to be able to determine immediate safety concerns. Record those to whom you have reported your concerns, both within and outside the church. Take notes as you go, keep a copy for yourself and provide a copy to the Church. Ensure notes are secured and kept confidential. Keep a copy of your notes and who you’ve spoken with in a secure location and provide a copy of the report to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the Synod office – safechurch@ucaqld.com.au or call 07 3377 9833.
- **Plan** – Plan your next actions. Complete the reporting threshold test (included in the document) to help plan the appropriate action.
- **Obligations** – Obligations to report to both statutory and Church authorities must be met. Reporting is mandatory under both state legislation and Church policy.
- **Needs** – Needs for practical assistance and referral should be attended to. The reporting and referral guide will assist you to find the contact details. Ask the child or person what they need from you or the Church so they can feel safe and involved in the process. Offering a follow up phone call or personal visit or providing a phone number (your number or the person who will be supporting them) for them to call is an appropriate option to continue pastoral care. Consider whether pastoral care is required for the accused if they are also involved with the Church.
- **Debrief** – Debrief with other leaders and volunteers that have been involved in the process. Make sure to prioritise self-care and debrief with your supervisor or a trusted colleague, maintaining confidentiality. Your Presbytery Minister is also an option for debriefing and support.

NOTE: in the event of a reportable incident involving a child, follow the reporting process, and notify the parent or guardian, unless they are the alleged offender.



Reporting threshold test

Section 1: sexual abuse, physical abuse, grooming: children, vulnerable adults

1. Are there marks on the person or child's body that are evident to you (e.g. bruising) that appear suspicious, or do not appear to result from normal childhood activity?
 Yes
 No
 2. Has the person or child made a reasonably clear statement of sexual or physical abuse?
 Yes
 No
 3. Has the person or child made an indirect statement or behaviour (e.g. play) that suggests sexual or physical abuse?
 Yes
 No
 4. Are you concerned that an adult, another child, or colleague is engaging in grooming behaviours and/or sexual or physical abuse?
 Yes
 No
 5. Have you or someone else witnessed grooming, sexual or physical abuse of the person or child including via photos, videos, or other technology?
 Yes
 No
 6. Are you aware of someone with access to the person or child who is a known sex offender or who appears to be grooming the person or child?
 Yes
 No
 7. Is the child or vulnerable adult displaying behaviours that suggest harm resulting from sexual or physical abuse e.g. is engaging in sexualised play?
 Yes
 No
 8. Is the child under the age of consent (aged less than 16 years) and engaged in a sexual relationship? or is the adult vulnerable and you have concerns that they have been coerced into a sexual relationship?
 Yes
 No
- a) Is the child under the age of consent (aged less than 16 years) and engaged in the production or distribution of prostitution, child sexual exploitation material or pornography? And/ or
- b) Do you have information that the child is under the age of consent (aged less than 16 years) and has a sexually transmitted disease or is pregnant?
 Yes
 No



If you answered “yes” to any question in section 1 (above) and if you reasonably suspect that sexual abuse or grooming has/is occurring:

- Complete the [template for complaints and allegations](#) and send it to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the synod office safechurch@ucaqld.com.au or call 07 3377 9983
- For concerns about a child under 18, complete the [Guide for Reporting Child Safety Concerns](#). This guide will help you decide whether a report must also be made to child protection authorities.
- If you reasonably suspect that sexual abuse or grooming is occurring/has occurred, then a report **must** be made to the Queensland Police Service, contact details are listed in the [reporting and referral guide](#). All reports to Queensland Police and Queensland child protection authorities should be made online. More information is contained in the [reporting and referral guide](#).
- Where possible, support the adult victim or survivor to report the abuse themselves to authorities either in person or via the phone. In this case, record the steps you took to ensure that the abuse has been reported to authorities recording the date, and details of when and to whom the report was made, in the reporting section of the [template for complaints and allegations](#).

Section 2: Neglect

9. Do you have information that the parent or care giver has failed to provide the person or child with the conditions that are culturally accepted in our society as being essential for their physical and emotional development and well-being?
- Yes
 - No
10. Do you have information that the parent or care giver has failed to provide therapeutic intervention, medical assistance, medication, etc.?
- Yes
 - No

If you answered “yes” to any question in Section 2 (above):

- Complete the [template for complaints and allegations](#) and send it to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the synod office safechurch@ucaqld.com.au or call 07 3377 9983
- For concerns about a child under 18, complete the [Guide for Reporting Child Safety Concerns](#). This guide will help you decide whether a report must also be made to child protection authorities. All reports to Queensland Police and Queensland child protection authorities should be made online. More information is contained in the [reporting and referral guide](#).
- Where possible, support the adult victim or survivor to report the neglect themselves to authorities either in person or via the phone. In this case, record the steps you took to ensure that the abuse or neglect has been reported to authorities recording the date, and details of when and to whom the report was made, in the reporting section of the [template for complaints and allegations](#).



Section 3: Well-being concerns

11. After answering “no” to all previous questions, do you still hold concerns for the well-being of the person or child?
- Yes
 - No

If you answered “yes” to any question in Section 3 (above):

- Complete the [template for complaints and allegations](#) and send it to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the synod office safechurch@ucaqld.com.au or call 07 3377 9983
- For concerns about a child under 18, complete the [Guide for Reporting Child Safety Concerns](#). This guide will help you decide whether a report must also be made to child protection authorities. All reports to Queensland Police and Queensland child protection authorities should be made online. More information is contained in the [reporting and referral guide](#).

Section 4: Domestic and Family Violence (DFV)

12. Has a child made a reasonably clear statement or disclosure that they are experiencing or witnessing DFV - physical, sexual, emotional, social, verbal, spiritual or economic abuse - by a parent or family member?
- Yes
 - No
13. Do you reasonably suspect that a child is experiencing or witnessing DFV - physical, sexual, emotional, social, verbal, spiritual or economic abuse - by a parent or family member?
- Yes
 - No
14. Has an adult made a reasonably clear statement or disclosure that they are experiencing DFV - physical, sexual, emotional, social, verbal, spiritual or economic abuse - by a current or ex-partner, support worker or caregiver?
- Yes
 - No
15. Do you reasonably suspect that an adult is experiencing DFV - physical, sexual, emotional, social, verbal, spiritual or economic abuse - by a current or ex-partner, support worker or caregiver?
- Yes
 - No

If you answered “yes” to any question in Section 4 (above):

- Support and encourage the adult or child’s continued attendance or participation in Church activities. Contact with the Church may be the adult or child’s main source of safety, outside of the environment where the abuse or control is occurring. Maintaining contact with the Church, extends the adult or child’s safety and support network.
- Complete the [template for complaints and allegations](#) and send it to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the synod office safechurch@ucaqld.com.au or call 07 3377 9983.

Additional steps for adult victims of DFV

- The [reporting and referral guide](#) contains additional information about services to help you support the person and their family, safely.

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- Provide / offer pastoral care – some suggestions are provided below

Pastoral Care (Responding to victims of Domestic and Family Violence)

- **Listen** – Being listened to can be an empowering experience for a person affected by violence. Give them space to tell their story and be empathetic and compassionate, without judging. Stay in touch and maintain your support, especially following a separation. If the victim chooses not to leave the abusive relationship it is very important to stay connected and continue offering support. Give them the chance to speak in private. Be prepared to listen, but don't force them to speak if they are not ready. An interpreter service or a communication aid may be required to allow clear communication to occur.
- **Validate and believe them** – Often people are not confident to tell their story in case they are not believed. You can help a person feel stronger by showing you believe what they say, no matter what they share. Build their confidence, respect their decisions, and tell them about the services available for support.
- **Be clear that they are not to blame** - People who are experiencing domestic and family violence can often feel incredibly scared and unsure of themselves. You can say things like: 'Violence is unacceptable. You do not deserve to be treated this way.' Avoid asking: 'Why don't you leave?', 'What could you have done to avoid this situation?' and 'Why did they hit you?', as these might suggest they could control the violence by managing their behaviour. Don't make excuses for the person who has hurt them.
- **Protect their safety and your own.** For example, do not tell the abusive person where their partner is or how to get in touch with them. Understand that they may not be ready, or it may not be safe to leave. Don't try to force them to do what you think is best. Seek advice from support services so you can find out more about local assistance.

Section 5: Historical abuse

16. Has an adult made a reasonably clear statement of sexual abuse or grooming committed against them when they were a child - AND has given you permission to share their statement?
 - Provide pastoral care
 - Offer to support the person to make a complaint to the Child Protection Investigation Unit (CPIU) of the Qld Police Service. Where possible, support the adult victim or survivor to report the abuse themselves to authorities either in person or via the phone. In this case, record the steps you took to ensure that the abuse has been reported to authorities recording the date, and details of when and to whom the report was made, in the reporting section of the [template for complaints and allegations](#).
 - Offer to refer them to a suitable sexual abuse support service, contact details are listed in the [reporting and referral guide](#)
 - A report **must be** made to police, (if the victim or survivor has not already been supported by you to make a report themselves) - follow the steps to make a complaint to the Synod office AND police, completing the [Template for complaints and allegations](#) and forward it to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the Synod office.
17. Has an adult made a reasonably clear statement of sexual abuse or grooming committed against them when they were a child – and has NOT given you permission to share their statement?
 - a) Do you believe the alleged offender has access to children?



- Yes** – a report **must be** made to police - follow the steps to make a complaint to the Synod office AND police, about the perpetrator of the abuse, but **do not** disclose identifying details about the person that has disclosed to you. Keep them anonymous in the report as they have not given consent to have their identity disclosed. Complete the [Template for complaints and allegations](#) and forward a copy to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the Synod office.
 - No** (e.g. the alleged offender is deceased) – a report **is not required** to be made to police - Complete the [Template for complaints and allegations](#) and forward it to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the Synod office.
 - In either case, provide pastoral care, and
 - Offer to refer them to a suitable sexual abuse support service, contact details are listed in the [reporting and referral guide](#)
18. Has an adult made a reasonably clear statement that they witnessed sexual abuse or grooming committed against another adult who was a child at the time AND has given you permission to share their statement?
- Provide pastoral care
 - Offer to support the person to make a complaint to the Child Protection Investigation Unit (CPIU) of the Qld Police Service about their experience. Where possible, support the person report the abuse themselves to authorities either in person or via the phone. In this case, record the steps you took to ensure that the abuse has been reported to authorities recording the date, and details of when and to whom the report was made, in the reporting section of the [template for complaints and allegations](#).
 - A report must be made to police (if the person has not already been supported by you to make a report themselves) - follow the steps to make a complaint to the Synod office AND police, completing the [Template for complaints and allegations](#) and forward it to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the Synod office. You may disclose identifying details about the person that has disclosed to you, as they have given permission. However, only disclose the details about the perpetrator and de-identify the alleged victim, as you do not have the alleged victim's consent to share their identity.
19. Has an adult made a reasonably clear statement that they witnessed sexual abuse or grooming committed against another adult who was a child at the time and has NOT given you permission to share their statement?
- a) Do you believe the alleged offender has access to children?
 - Yes** – a report **must be** made to police - follow the steps to make a complaint to the Synod office AND police, about the perpetrator of the abuse, but **do not** disclose identifying details about the person that has disclosed to you. Keep them anonymous in the report as they have not given consent to have their identity disclosed. Complete the [Template for complaints and allegations](#) and forward a copy to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the Synod office.
 - No** (e.g. the alleged offender is deceased) – a report **is not required** to be made to police - Complete the [Template for complaints and allegations](#) and forward it to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the Synod office.
 - In either case, provide pastoral care, and
 - Offer to refer them to a suitable sexual abuse support service, contact details are listed in the [reporting and referral guide](#)



20. Are you aware of someone who is alleged to be a child sex offender of a survivor who is now an adult, and the alleged offender has access to a child within the Church AND you do not know whether the Church is aware of it?
- Yes – a report **must be** made to police - follow the steps to make a complaint to the Synod office AND police, about the perpetrator of the abuse, but **do not** disclose identifying details about the person that is the victim of abuse. Keep them anonymous in the report as they have not given consent to have their identity disclosed. Complete the [Template for complaints and allegations](#) and forward a copy to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the Synod office.
 - No – a report is not required.
21. Are you aware of someone who is a convicted child sex offender who has access to a child within the Church AND you do not know whether the Church is aware of it?
- Yes – a report **must be** made to police - follow the steps to make a complaint to the Synod office AND police. Complete the [Template for complaints and allegations](#) and forward a copy to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the Synod office.
 - No – a report is not required.

Section 6: criminal misconduct, bullying, spiritual abuse, boundary violations, breaches of required behaviour

22. Are you aware of spiritual abuse, boundary violations, bullying, breaches of behaviour identified in the code of conduct, or criminal misconduct committed by a ministry agent?
- Yes
 - No
23. Are you aware of spiritual abuse, boundary violations, bullying, breaches of behaviour identified in the code of conduct, or criminal misconduct committed by a member of a church council?
- Yes
 - No
24. Are you aware of spiritual abuse, boundary violations, bullying, breaches of behaviour identified in the code of conduct, or criminal misconduct committed by an appointed leader, helper, volunteer, or employee within the congregation?
- Yes
 - No

If you answered “yes” to:

Question 18 or Question 19 (above):

- complete the [complaints form](#) and send it to the Complaints Officer at the synod office complaints@ucaqld.com.au or call 1800 586 591; and
- report the matter to the Presbytery Chair;

Question 20 (above):

- complete the [Template for complaints and allegations](#) and send it to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the synod office safechurch@ucaqld.com.au or call 07 3377 9983; and
- report the matter to the Church Council Chair.

Note: contact details are listed in the [reporting and referral guide](#).

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Revisions

Document number	C/2.1.5.3				
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
7.0	16.01.2024	Strategic Risk Manager	16.01.2024	Strategic Risk Manager	Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer
Next scheduled review	06.11.2026				