



# Glossary of terms

C/2.1.5.6

## Glossary

1. **Abusive action:** an incident or interaction between adults or between an adult and a child characterised by wrong or improper action that is either physical or verbal and results in harm to the child or other person. For example, abusive actions would include sexual assault or rape by one adult to another, physical abuse or violence including strangulation from one adult to another, emotional or psychological abuse including coercion, and spiritual abuse. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse. *See also Behaviours of Concern, Bullying, Child abuse, Domestic and Family Violence, Emotional Harm, Grooming, Harm, Historical abuse, Sexualised behaviour, and Spiritual Abuse.*
2. **Act:** The *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (QLD)*
3. **Actions to Take (Risk Matrix):** *See also Consequence Scales and Risk Matrix*

Extreme	Activity must not proceed as planned. Final approval must be provided by the appropriate Executive responsible for Child Safety Implementation within the Synod after steps are taken to reduce the risk. Identify and plan additional risk mitigation measures then contact the Risk and/or Group Insurance team for guidance and to request approval to proceed.
High	Activity can only proceed if more risk control steps are taken to reduce risk. All steps taken must be documented and review of effectiveness of the mitigations should happen after the event.
Moderate	Activity can proceed with risk mitigation steps in place. All steps taken must be documented and review of effectiveness of the mitigations should happen after the event. In the event of the risk manifesting, the circumstances should be subject to review.
Low	Activity can proceed. Routine management procedures should still be in place to minimise the risk of even a minor incident occurring.

4. **Allegation:** a claim or assertion, without definitive proof, that a wrongdoing (i.e. abuse or grooming of a child) has happened or is likely to happen. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse. *See also Suspicion, and Mandatory Reporting.*
5. **Applicant Declaration:** All employees of the Church wishing to work or volunteer with anyone vulnerable aged 18 years or over, that do not hold a valid linked blue card or yellow card, must complete, and sign the 'Applicant Declaration' in the Volunteer Application Form, declaring that they are suitable to work with anyone vulnerable including children. The person must not be approved to work or volunteer in a role with anyone vulnerable aged 18 years and over and must not be appointed by the Church Council unless they have completed and signed the 'Applicant Declaration'. The 'Applicant Declaration' must be re-signed annually by each volunteer to maintain their suitability to continue working or volunteering with anyone vulnerable aged 18 years or over. *See also Mandatory Screening, and Suitability.*
6. **Behaviours of Concern:** any or all of the following behaviours, including any behaviour which breaches the Statement of Personal Commitment (*See also Mandatory reporting*):
  - Inappropriate physical contact, including physical contact with a child or vulnerable persons, and includes unwanted physical contact, threats of physical contact, or requests for physical contact



- Fighting, threatening violence, aggressive or bullying behaviour
  - Derogatory language including racial slurs, swearing, describing sexual acts, or requesting sexual acts
  - Exposing others to inappropriate images, including nudity and pornography
  - Exposing body parts to others, including sexual acts, or mimicking sexual acts with or without nudity
  - The consumption of harmful or illicit drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes when in the vicinity of children and vulnerable people, or whilst on Church property without express written permission from the Church.
  - Taking images of any child, young person, or vulnerable person without the express written permission of the parent, guardian or care provider of the child or person. Images includes photos or video images.
  - Behaviours that could be experienced as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or any kind of sexual misconduct. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse. *See also Abusive action, Bullying, Child abuse, Domestic and Family Violence, Emotional Harm, Grooming, Harm, Historical abuse, Sexualised behaviour, and Spiritual Abuse.*
7. **Breach:** any action or inaction by a person that fails to comply with the Safe Church Policy, resulting in a breach of the Safe Church Policy. A Breach Report must be completed and recorded in a Breach Register. Follow the Breach Procedure.
8. **Blue Card Check:** The blue card check is more than a police check. It looks for charges, convictions and any other information that may deem a person unsuitable to work with children and young people. All applicants and blue card holders are monitored daily by the Queensland Police Service with immediate notification if there is a change in a card holder's police information.
9. **Boundary violation:** inappropriate behaviour which falls outside the stated accepted behaviours outlined in the Statement of Personal Commitment, code of conduct. *See also Mandatory Reporting.*
10. **Bullying:** Bullying is when people (children or adults) repeatedly and intentionally use words or actions against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their well-being. These actions are usually done by people who have more influence or power over someone else, or who want to make someone else feel less powerful or helpless. Bullying is not the same as conflict between people (like having a fight) or disliking someone, even though people might bully each other because of conflict or dislike. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse. *See also Abusive action, Behaviours of Concern, Child abuse, Domestic and Family Violence, Emotional Harm, Grooming, Harm, Historical abuse, Sexualised behaviour, and Spiritual Abuse.*
11. **Child:** a child is defined under the *Child Protection Act 1999* as an individual under 18 years of age.
12. **Child abuse:** may be perpetrated by adults or children and refers to acts or omissions which put the health, welfare, or safety of a child at risk. Child abuse can be a single incident or can be several different incidents that take place over time. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse. Child abuse is commonly divided into four main subtypes:
- a) **Physical abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering, non-accidental physical trauma, or injury. Intention to harm the child is not relevant e.g. physical punishment resulting in bruising would be considered physical abuse. Physical abuse does not always leave visible marks or injuries. It is not how bad the mark or injury is, but rather the act itself that causes injury or trauma to the child. Physical abuse can include:
    - hitting
    - shaking
    - throwing
    - burning
    - biting
    - poisoning.
  - b) **Emotional abuse:** occurs when a child's social, emotional, cognitive, or intellectual development is impaired or threatened. When a parent/care giver does or says something many times that affects the



confidence and self-esteem of a child. It is also a pattern of failure to provide a child with adequate nonphysical nurture and emotional availability. It can include emotional deprivation due to persistent:

- rejection
  - hostility
  - teasing/bullying
  - yelling
  - criticism
  - exposure of a child to domestic and family violence.
- c) **Neglect:** occurs when a child's basic necessities of life are not met, and their health and development are affected. Basic needs include:
- food
  - housing
  - health care
  - adequate clothing
  - personal hygiene
  - hygienic living conditions
  - timely provision of medical treatment
  - adequate supervision.
- d) **Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse occurs when an adult, stronger child or adolescent uses their power or authority to involve a child in sexual activity. It includes child grooming which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child and a child's family, to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with a child. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal, or emotional and can include:
- kissing or holding a child in a sexual manner
  - exposing a sexual body part to a child
  - having sexual relations with a child under 16 years of age
  - talking in a sexually explicit way that is not age or developmentally appropriate
  - making obscene phone calls or remarks to a child
  - sending obscene mobile text messages or emails to a child
  - fondling a child in a sexual manner
  - persistently intruding on a child's privacy
  - penetrating the child's vagina or anus by penis, finger, or any other object (rape)
  - oral sex
  - rape
  - incest
  - showing pornographic films, magazines, or photographs to a child
  - having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner
  - forcing a child to watch a sexual act
  - child prostitution
  - includes the creation, possession, or distribution of child sexual abuse material
13. **Child and youth risk management strategy:** Is a legislative requirement and is a risk management strategy that must include eight minimum requirements:
1. A statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm.
  2. A code of conduct for interacting with children.
  3. Written procedures for recruiting, selecting, training, and managing staff and volunteers.
  4. Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines.
  5. A plan for managing breaches of your risk management strategy.
  6. Risk management plans for high-risk activities and special events.
  7. Policies and procedures for managing compliance with the blue card system.
  8. Strategies for communication and support



14. **Child-related activities:** activities or programs which are provided only or mainly to children. Note that worship services and other activities aimed at only or mainly families, are not child-related activities. A current blue card or exemption card is required for all persons working or volunteering in child-related activities. *See Child-related role.*
15. **Child-related role:** Under state legislation, child-related activities are those activities or programs which are provided only or mainly to children. All workers must comply with the Synod Wide Blue Card Policy, including workers that meet the following criteria:
- All First Aid Officers are required to hold a valid linked blue card or exemption card, in case emergency first aid treatment is required for anyone under 18 years of age.
  - All religious representatives, including persons studying to be a religious representative.
  - A worker that undertakes a child-related activity or task, on more than 7 calendar days per year.
  - A worker that is scheduled to undertake a child-related activity or task on a regular basis, ie is part of a roster for that volunteer task or activity.
  - Worship services and other activities aimed at only or mainly families, are not child-related activities, with the exception of some tasks that meet the threshold of a 'religious representative' defined below.

If your role is not a child-related role, but you start supervising a volunteer under the age of 18. For example:

- You coordinate the property maintenance. You do not usually need a blue card in this role, as this is not a child-related activity.
  - However, this year you have a volunteer aged 16 that has commenced volunteering, and whom you oversee.
  - As part of your duty of care to children and anyone vulnerable, you are now required to hold a Valid linked Blue Card whilst you remain in a role supervising a junior worker.
16. **Child sexual abuse material:** Child sexual abuse material consists of images, videos and live streamed footage that shows the sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of children. The content can range from children posing in sexually suggestive ways through to 'contact' offences involving direct sexual assault. The term 'pornography' implies a level of consent by the participants, and therefore DOES NOT apply to child sexual abuse material. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse.
17. **Code of Conduct or Statement of Personal Commitment (SOPC):** All employees of the Church must complete and sign a SOPC annually. The Statement of Personal Commitment includes a code of conduct for interacting with children and anyone vulnerable and follows the Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders. A code of conduct is also required to be completed and signed by all employees of all regulated businesses.
18. **Complaint:** a report (formal written or verbal report) of suspicion or knowledge of any concerns, including concerns about conduct within the Church, or a report of incidents of suspected abuse, grooming or neglect. A complaint may initiate an emergency, or critical incident. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report all complaints. *Refer to Mandatory Reporting.*
19. **Congregation member:** for the purpose of this process, congregation member refers to any person who attends the congregation or its activities irrespective of whether attendance is regular or occasional or whether they are a formal member of the UCA.
20. **Consequence Scales (Risk Matrix):** *See also Actions to Take, and Risk Matrix*

<b>Extreme</b>	Results in a fatality or permanent disability to one or more people, significant or total destruction to property and has a very severe reputational impact for the Church.
<b>Major</b>	Hospital admission and/or severe injury, major property damage is sustained, and it may have a major reputational impact for the Church.
<b>Moderate</b>	Paramedics or comparable medical treatment is required, moderate property damage occurs, and it may have some reputational impact for the Church.



## Glossary of terms

<b>Minor</b>	First aid is required, minor property damage is sustained and there is only a low reputational impact for the Church.
<b>Minimal</b>	Near miss with no injury or minor injury occurs, property damage is very limited and very limited chance of reputational impact.

21. **Crisis:** a time sensitive event or situation that impacts upon or has the potential to seriously impact upon an individual's ability to use successful coping mechanisms and make effective decisions. Often characterised observed confusion and anxiety taking the place of problem solving, effective decision-making and use of positive coping strategies. A crisis usually follows a precipitating event such as a perceived loss or traumatic event.
22. **Critical Incident:** an event which resulted in harm, abuse, damage, or loss causing a fatality or permanent disability to one or more people, significant or total destruction to property. Reputational damage to the Church. An event which may have moderate, major, or extreme consequences.
23. **Delegate:** under the Safe Church Policy and processes the Church Council can delegate certain responsibilities to individuals to undertake tasks and/or duties on behalf of the church council.
24. **Disclosure:** when someone, including a child, tells another person about an incident, including child abuse that has happened or is likely to happen. *See Mandatory Reporting.*
25. **Domestic and family violence:** when one person in an intimate personal, family, or informal care relationship uses violence or abuse to maintain power and control over the other person. It includes behaviour that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically, or economically abusive, threatening, coercive or aimed at controlling or dominating another person through fear. Exposure to domestic and family violence also has a detrimental impact to children over time. The perpetrator's coercive and/or controlling behaviour of the other parent, undermines and diminishes them as a parent, affecting their confidence and parenting skills, and can negatively affect the parent-child relationship over time. *See also Child abuse.* This behaviour includes:
  - Criticising the other parent, deflecting attention away from their own harmful behaviour and responsibility as a parent
  - displaying behaviour that is violent, aggressive, intimidating or threatening including physical or sexual assault and property damage
  - Sleep and food deprivation is also a form of physical abuse.
  - directly and indirectly hurting the child
  - behaviours that are detrimental to the wider functioning of the family (for example, in terms of housing, employment and social connections)
  - causing or exacerbating the other parent's substance or mental health issues or interfering with/ hindering their recovery. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse.*See also Abusive action, Behaviours of Concern, Bullying, Child abuse, Emotional Harm, Grooming, Harm, Historical abuse, Sexualised behaviour, and Spiritual Abuse.*
26. **Emergency:** requires an immediate response due to concerns about immediate danger or immediate safety concerns. The event may or may not have reputational damage to the Church.
27. **Emotional harm:** Psychological/emotional abuse/violence includes behaviour and/or comments that undermine a person's sense of self. It is abuse/violence that increases a sense of vulnerability around personal safety and mental well-being. It can leave people feeling a deep sense of worthlessness and helplessness, leading to significant mental health disorders. Verbal abuse will compound psychological/emotional abuse, the use of constant put downs, name calling and insults contributing to the sense of worthlessness. For children, emotional harm occurs when the child's social, emotional, cognitive, or intellectual development is impaired or at unacceptable risk of being impaired as a direct result of parental behaviour/attitude. This includes significant emotional deprivation due to persistent coldness, rejection, or hostility. The harm to the child may have a cumulative effect and/or be observable in behaviours such as severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, indicators of inappropriate attachment or bonding, self-harming behaviour, or aggressive behaviour towards others. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or



sexual abuse. *See also Abusive action, Behaviours of Concern, Bullying, Child abuse, Domestic and Family Violence, Grooming, Harm, Historical abuse, Sexualised behaviour, and Spiritual Abuse.*

28. **Employee:** *See 'Worker (paid and volunteer)'.*
29. **First Aid/ First Aid Officer:** All First Aid Officers are required to hold a valid linked blue card or exemption card, in case emergency first aid treatment is required for anyone under 18 years of age. When running a camp, it is a mandatory requirement that at least one first aid officer trained in CPR is available to support the participants, volunteers, and leaders for the duration of the camp. An up to date First Aid Kit, and a Snake Bite Kit for rural venues during summertime, must be easily accessible for use throughout the camp.
30. **Governing Body:** The board, committee, council, or body with management control of the organisation.
31. **Grooming:** refers to the process by which some people (who are responsible for the sexual abuse of children) groom people in the community, such as parents, carers, teachers, and children to establish trust and gain access to a child. These people spend considerable time targeting, enticing, and trapping a child for sexual purposes. Grooming involves the person responsible for the sexual abuse integrating themselves into places where they have access to children and then grooming the adults to create opportunities for the person to abuse their victims. Grooming behaviour can be difficult to identify as it can sometimes include appropriate behaviours as well. Grooming is a criminal offence in Queensland and must be reported to police. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse. *See also Abusive action, Behaviours of Concern, Bullying, Child abuse, Domestic and Family Violence, Emotional Harm, Harm, Historical abuse, Sexualised behaviour, and Spiritual Abuse and Mandatory Reporting.*
32. **Harm:** is defined as any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the person or child's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing (section 9 of the *Child Protection Act 1999*). For harm to be considered significant, the effect or impact on a person or child's wellbeing must be substantial or serious. The effect or impact must be observable in the person, or child's presentation, functioning or behaviour. Harm can be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance, or a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances. The most serious effects are likely to occur when no one takes action to stop the harm and protect the child or young person. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse. Children and young people may experience a range of emotional, psychological, and physical problems because of being harmed, including:
- low self esteem
  - increased fear, guilt, and self-blame
  - distrust of adults
  - depression
  - suicidal thoughts and self-harming
  - anxiety disorders
  - attachment disorders
  - post-traumatic stress disorder
  - learning disorders, including poor language and cognitive development
  - aggressive behaviour and other behavioural problems
  - developmental delay, eating disorders and physical ailments
  - delinquency and criminal behaviour including violent or aggressive behaviour
  - drug and alcohol abuse and high-risk sexual behaviour
  - permanent physical injuries or death
  - difficulty forming relationships with other adults
  - symptoms and behaviour that lead to them being singled out and victimised.





*See also Abusive action, Behaviours of Concern, Bullying, Child abuse, Domestic and Family Violence, Emotional Harm, Grooming, Historical abuse, Sexualised behaviour, and Spiritual Abuse.*

33. **Helper:** *See 'Worker (paid and volunteer)'.*
34. **Historical abuse:** a widely used term to describe abuse that has been committed against a child, and that child is now an adult. Although the abuse is not current, its impact on the survivor is current and real. The term is not used to discount or diminish the effects of the abuse on the survivor; in fact, people who experienced abuse as children are living with the impact of the abuse. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse. *See also Abusive action, Behaviours of Concern, Bullying, Child abuse, Domestic and Family Violence, Emotional Harm, Grooming, Harm, Sexualised behaviour, and Spiritual Abuse, and Mandatory Reporting.*
35. **Incident:** an event which resulted or could have resulted in harm, abuse, damage, or loss. May cause some reputational damage to the Church. An event which may have minimal, minor, or moderate consequences.
36. **Institution:** Any body whether incorporated or unincorporated established by or on behalf of the Synod for a religious, educational, charitable, commercial, or other purpose. Institutions include but are not limited to:
- UnitingCare Queensland
  - Wesley Mission Queensland
  - Dwell Community Hub
37. **Junior workers** - For more information about suitable roles and responsibilities, refer to the document 'Selecting and Supporting Leaders and Helpers', noting the following:
- A child or young person aged between 12 years and 18 years may undertake a volunteer activity as a junior worker after participating in a pre-appointment screening process suitable for their age, maturity, and ability.
- The flexibility that this role offers, may be utilised for adult workers that would otherwise be excluded from volunteering. Note that all adult volunteers undertaking a junior role **must** hold a valid linked blue card if they are working with children and complete a Junior Statement of Personal Commitment (SOPC).
38. **Lay Preacher:** A lay preacher is considered a 'religious representative' under the Act and requires a blue card. This person is also considered an employee for blue card purposes. The term Lay Preacher is defined under The Uniting Church in Australia Regulation 2.2.3. *See also Religious Representative.*
39. **Lay workers:** *See 'Worker (paid and volunteer)'.*
40. **Leader:** Under state legislation, this person is also considered an employee for blue card purposes. A person, often a volunteer, who has been approved and appointed by the church council to oversee or conduct specific activities or programs on behalf of the church. Lay leaders are accountable to the Uniting Church in Australia: Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders. Leaders have the same training obligations as Volunteers. *See 'Worker (paid and volunteer)'.*
41. **Leadership position (includes but is not limited to):**
- Standing for or accepting nomination for any leadership position in the congregation, Presbytery or Synod including membership of Church Council, Presbytery Standing Committee, or Synod Standing Committee, any committees or task groups of the Congregation, Presbytery or Synod
  - Membership of any Congregation/faith community task groups/portfolio working groups
  - Leading worship in any capacity including but not limited to saying grace, prayers, singing as an individual or member of a band/group/choir, bible reading, lighting candles, offering votes of thanks, carrying Communion elements or the Bible into the Church, serving Communion elements, addressing the congregation in any way, standing in the sanctuary space
  - Leader or helper role of any children or youth activities including but not limited to creche, Sunday School, Kids Group, youth group, days camps, fun days
  - Greater, welcomer, pastoral care visitor



- Key access to any Church property, afterhours access to any Church property, access to any Church computer equipment or technology
  - Leading bible studies, home/life/fellowship groups, organizing or hosting any Church events, activities or programs, involvement in religious education programs
  - Any other activity which a reasonable person might identify as acting in a leadership role/position with the Uniting Church
42. **LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual +):** The Church has a primary responsibility to care for children and those who are vulnerable in the Church; and ensure they are offered a safe Church environment. Safe Church and shared guardianship promote safe boundaries and respectful relationships for everyone. Having a conversation about safety, personal space, and boundaries with young people, including with young people identifying as LGBTQIA+, non-binary, transgender, or gender fluid is important to ascertain their individual needs, validate their feelings of safety, and ensure inclusion. *See also Transgender, Non-Binary, Gender Fluid.*
43. **Mandatory Ratios:**
- a) Minimum standards
    - A minimum of two leaders or volunteers must be always present for each activity, program, or event.
    - A minimum of two adult leaders must be always present with children in approved activities.
    - A minimum of two adult leaders must be always present when transporting children.
  - b) Child-related activities
    - A minimum ratio of one leader or volunteer for every six children in an activity for participants aged five years and over.
    - A minimum ratio of one leader or volunteer for every four children aged below five years.
    - The ratio of volunteers or leaders to children must be reduced (eg one leader to 2 or 3 children) if it is assessed that the children attending the activity, program or event require additional support for the activity to proceed safely.
  - c) Activities with anyone vulnerable
    - A minimum ratio of one leader or volunteer for every six participants in an activity, except in the case of each participant having their own or individual carer attend with them, in which case the minimum standards apply.
    - The ratio must be reduced to one leader or volunteer for every 3 or 4 participants if it is assessed that the participants attending the activity, program or event require additional support for the event or activity to proceed safely.
    - It may be necessary for the ratio to be one leader or volunteer per participant in some circumstances to enable an activity or program to occur safely for both participants and volunteers/ leaders.
44. **Mandatory Reporting:** it is a requirement of all employees of the Church – all workers (paid and volunteer), to report all suspected child abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, or grooming. The **Mandatory Reporting Process for Ministry Agents** and the **Mandatory Reporting Process for Lay Workers and Volunteers** outline the steps to take when reporting incidents of suspected abuse, grooming or neglect, including breaches of behaviour and boundary violations. Using the **Template for Complaints and Allegations** and the **Guide for Reporting Child Safety Concerns** if required will ensure the organisation is meeting their legal obligations and fulfilling their duty of care to the children involved in their activities. A copy of each of these documents is available on the synod website.
- Pursuant to Section 13E (1) of the *Child Protection Act 1999* all teachers and early childhood educators are defined as a 'relevant person' and a 'particular person' mandated to report reasonable suspicion of child abuse and neglect. All adults must report all suspected sexual abuse and grooming to police. The **Template for Complaints and Allegations** and the **Guide for Reporting Child Safety Concerns** outlines the steps to take to when reporting incidents of suspected abuse or neglect.





45. **Mandatory Screening:**

All workers **must** undergo pre-appointment screening and be appointed by the organisation's governing body. All child-related roles **also** require the worker to comply with the Synod Wide Blue Card Policy.

Pre-appointment screening is required for working with vulnerable people. All workers, are required to be deemed as suitable to apply for a Blue Card.

All persons with a negative notice or excluded or disqualified from requesting a Blue Card check from any state or territory of Australia **are not permitted to work** or volunteer with children and vulnerable people. See also *Applicant Declaration* and *Suitability*.

46. **Ministry agent & ministry agent candidate or student:** Under state legislation, this person is also considered an employee for blue card purposes and a religious representative. Ministry agents are required to complete Safe Church Training for Ministry Agents annually. A ministry agent may have a several titles, including Ministers (Minister of the Word and Ministry of Deacon), Pastors, Youth Workers, Chaplains, and Community Ministers. The ministries of Lay Pastor, Youth Worker and Community Minister were closed for entry by Assembly some years ago. This category also includes:

- a) Ministry agents who are available for supply or placement and conducting ministry functions for more than a cumulative total of seven days in a calendar year. For example:
  - Preach and/or lead worship in their own congregation; or
  - Preach and/or lead worship in any other worship services (including weddings and funerals); or
  - Preside at the sacraments; or
  - Perform any systematic pastoral care
- b) Ministry agents who are not in a placement but are engaged as an employee (and paid a wage) or ministry agents who are engaged on a volunteer basis.
- c) Ministry agents engaged in a covenantal relationship (remunerated or eligible to be remunerated by stipend)—this includes retired ministers who are available for supply, and ministry agents awaiting placement *See also Employee and Religious Representative*.

47. **Negative Notice:** A negative notice is issued when this assessment is concluded with the decision that it is not in the best interests of children for the applicant to hold a blue card.

48. **Organisation:** Is all regulated businesses and institutions of the Synod

49. **Parent/guardian:** mother or father including adoptive parents, someone else having or exercising parental responsibility for the child under a legal order, or someone who under cultural custom or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custom is regarded as a parent of the child.

50. **Person of Concern (POC):** means any person who wishes to participate in the life of a congregation or faith community of the Uniting Church in Australia and who has engaged in criminal **sexual** behaviour and /or is reasonably suspected of engaging in harmful **sexual** behaviour toward a child and/ or adult that has led to:

- criminal charges relating to sexual offences against children and/or adults
- conviction for sexual offences relating to children and/or adults
- placement on the Register of Sexual Offenders
- suspension of a Working with Children card
- negative notice for Working with Children card
- refusal of a positive Working with Children card
- not having a negative notice or a suspension revoked
- recording on the National Coordinated Criminal History Check
- concerns in the congregation, faith community, Presbytery or Synod that the safety of others is at risk

51. **Pornography:** printed or visual material intended to cause sexual excitement. This can present in various forms such as pictures, film, computer games or other electronic data. The term 'pornography' implies a level of consent by the participants, and therefore DOES NOT apply to child sexual abuse material. However, exposing someone to pornographic material is a form of sexual abuse.



52. **Privacy provisions:** the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) and the Queensland Synod Privacy Policy ([ucaqld.com.au](http://ucaqld.com.au)). The policy requirement is that all information be collected, stored, and used in accordance with these provisions.
53. **Register of Workers (RoW) or Register of Volunteers (RoV):** Is a register that contains details of the workers screening, appointment, training, and blue card requirements.
54. **Regulated Business:** Is a business that's usual activities may include health, counselling and support services, disability work, private teaching, coaching, or tutoring, education and care services, childcare services, outside school hours programs, religious services, child accommodation services, sport and active recreation and directors or authorised persons of non-state schools. Regulated businesses of the Synod include but not limited to:
- Presbyteries, congregations, and faith communities
  - Ministry agent in placement or providing supply
  - The Uniting Church in Property Trust (Q.) schools
  - Uniting Early Learning (UEL) childcare centres and outside school hour care services
  - UEL in home care services
  - UEL family day care services
55. **Regulated Employment:** Is a worker employed in a regulated business
56. **Religious Representative:** Under the Act, all persons considered to be a 'religious representative' must hold a valid linked Blue Card or Exemption Card. This includes a person who is training to become a religious representative. The roles of lay preacher and ministry agent both require a blue card, as under the Act these roles are defined as a 'religious representative'. *See Lay Preacher and Ministry Agent and Ministry agent candidate or student.*
57. **Reporting and Referral Guide:** contains the contact details of government authorities and secular organisations to make a report, a referral, or to receive advice and information.
58. **Reporting Threshold Test:** the levels at which a suspicion, allegation, or complaint about neglect, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse must be reported to either one or all of the following: the Synod Office, the Qld Police Service, the Child Safety Authority. The Reporting Threshold Test is located in the document - Mandatory Reporting Process for Ministry Agents.
59. **Risk Assessment:** a planning option for use by congregations and presbyteries when planning for safe programs, events, and activities for the Church. Use of the Risk Matrix with Consequence scales to determine the Actions to Take in planning safe activities. Refer to Risk Assessment Template or Safe Program Planning [Tool](#).
60. **Risk Management Strategy:** A risk management strategy is to help identify potential risks of harm to children and vulnerable persons and to implement strategies to minimise these risks. A well-developed strategy will:
- Address an organisation's commitment to creating a safe and supportive service environment,
  - Strengthen an organisation's capability to provide such an environment,
  - Assist an organisation to manage any particular concerns with respect to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who are involved with the organisation, and
  - Promote the consistency of an organisation's approach to risk management, both within the organisation and with respect to compliance with legislative requirements.
61. **Risk Matrix:** *See also Actions to Take, and Consequence Scales*

Likelihood		Consequence				
		Extreme	Major	Moderate	Minor	Minimal
	Frequent (Almost certain)	Extreme	Extreme	High	Moderate	Moderate
	Probable (Likely)	Extreme	Extreme	High	Moderate	Moderate



## Glossary of terms

Occasional (Possible)	Extreme	High	High	Moderate	Low
Uncommon (Unlikely)	Extreme	High	Moderate	Low	Low
Remote (Rare)	High	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low

62. **Risk of harm:** the probability or likelihood that a child or vulnerable person will be harmed (suffer physical, psychological or emotional harm) in the future e.g. observing a child engage in sexualised behaviour. *See also Child abuse.*
63. **Safe Spaces Agreement:** guidelines to follow when developing a written Safe Spaces Agreement in response to an identified Safety Concern. This document is a guide to assist with Responding to a Safety Concern. All programs, activities and events involving children and vulnerable persons **must not** proceed until a completed approved Safe Spaces Agreement is in place, **unless** Synod office approval has been obtained for the Risk Assessment to be used as a short-term measure whilst the Safe Spaces Agreement is completed.
64. **Safety Agreement:** The Safety Agreement informs the POC about any terms and conditions placed upon them. A POC must not participate in Church activity and must not be present on local church property until a Safety Agreement has been established and implemented. Refer to the POC Policy.
65. **Screening:** All workers must undergo screening which includes an interview and referee checks with the information recorded in the register of workers.
66. **Sexualised behaviour:** is behaviour which is significantly more advanced than you would normally expect for a child of a particular age and may indicate that the child has experienced harm, including sexual abuse or grooming. This behaviour may also be observed as behaviour which shows a lack of inhibition and may be displayed by persons grooming or offending against a child or a vulnerable person. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse.  
*See also Abusive action, Behaviours of Concern, Bullying, Child abuse, Domestic and Family Violence, Emotional Harm, Grooming, Harm, Historical abuse, and Spiritual Abuse.*
67. **Sleeping arrangements (Children's Camps) :** Mandatory ratios for adults and children must be maintained throughout the camp. It is not appropriate to have one leader alone with a child or children. This contravenes both UCA policy and the Safe Church Policy and impairs the safety of both the leader, and the children or young people. Adequate privacy and personal space must be available for sleeping arrangements, to accommodate the safety of all leaders, volunteers, and children and young people.
- If dormitory or group sleeping arrangements are planned, a minimum of two same-gender leaders must be present with each group of children or young people.
    - For example, in accommodation for six people, there will be two female leaders and four female children or young people.
    - In this example, it is **not** appropriate to have one female leader with five female children or young people in this accommodation.
  - Ensuring safe boundaries by enforcing adequate privacy and personal space will accommodate young people who identify as non-binary, trans, or gender fluid to safely participate in camp activities offered and run by the Church.
68. **Statement of Commitment to Safe Ministry:** All ministry agents must complete and sign a Ministry Agent Statement of Commitment annually, committing to the Safe Church Policy and Safe Ministry. Ministry agents are carrying on a child-related business and must have a current child and youth risk management strategy in place in each year. Failing to have a child and youth risk management strategy in place each year, while carrying on a child-related business is a breach of the Safe Church Policy as well as a breach of legislation. Completing and signing a Ministry agent statement of commitment annually, fulfills this requirement.



69. **Statement of Personal Commitment (SOPC):** *See Code of Conduct.*
70. **Spiritual abuse:** where emotional or psychological abuse is administered under the guise of religion, including harassment or humiliation, control, or domination. Refusing to allow a partner to practice or participate in their religion, or defiling religious images, using scriptures to justify control, violent or aggressive behaviour is spiritual abuse. Other examples would include the use of religious text:
- to force sexual acts
  - to exert control over the husband's/wife's/partner's decision making
  - to justify physical violence.
- See also Abusive action, Behaviours of Concern, Bullying, Child abuse, Domestic and Family Violence, Emotional Harm, Grooming, Harm, Historical abuse, and Sexualised behaviour.*
71. **Suitability:** Additional suitability checks are required for the following roles:
- Working or volunteering with children
  - Working or volunteering with anyone vulnerable
- See also Applicant Declaration, and Mandatory Screening.*
72. **Suspicion:** in the context of abuse, a suspicion occurs when reasonable concerns are held regarding behaviour, or unexplained injuries. Use the Template for Complaints and Allegations to record and report suspected harm, abuse, grooming or sexual abuse. Child abuse may be reasonably suspected if:
- observations or reports of behaviours of another person, are consistent with the definition of abuse
  - observations of the behaviour of a particular child, or knowledge of the child, generally lead them to suspect that abuse may be occurring
  - physical injuries are observed which could reasonably be attributed to abuse. *See also Allegation and Mandatory Reporting*
73. **Threshold as a 'religious representative'**
- a) Under the Act, all persons considered to be a 'religious representative' must hold a valid linked Blue Card or Exemption Card. This includes a person who is training to become a religious representative. The roles of lay preacher and ministry agent both require a blue card, as under the Act these roles are defined as a 'religious representative'.
  - b) Once the following threshold has been reached, the person is required to hold a Blue Card or Exemption Card as a religious representative and must complete additional Lay Training specific to this role. This requirement remains the same for congregations which do not offer child-related activities.
  - c) The threshold - Once a *volunteer* performs the following ministerial functions on more than seven days in a calendar year:
    - Preach and/or lead worship in their own congregation; or
    - Preach and/or lead worship in any other worship services (including weddings and funerals); or
    - Preside at the sacraments; or
    - Perform any systematic pastoral care
  - d) For example:
    - A person is not a lay preacher as defined under *The Uniting Church in Australia Regulation 2.2.3*. However, the person takes on one or more of the above tasks or roles (above) on a regular or ongoing basis as there is no ministry agent in placement at their congregation. This person must comply with the additional blue card and training requirements in *b)* above, as they are now considered a 'religious representative'.
74. **Transgender, Gender Fluid, Non-Binary:** Information about young people identifying as non-binary, trans, or gender fluid is an individual need for that child or young person and should be included as a factor when planning activities, to ensure safe inclusion for the child or young person.
- Having a conversation about safety, personal space, and boundaries with young people, including with young people identifying as non-binary, trans, or gender fluid is important to ascertain their individual needs, validate their feelings of safety, and ensure inclusion.



## Glossary of terms

- Ensuring safe boundaries by enforcing adequate privacy and personal space will accommodate young people who identify as non-binary, transgender, or gender fluid to safely participate in camp activities offered and run by the Church. *See also LGBTQIA+.*
75. **Transport:** If transport is being offered by the Church for children to travel to and from a Church activity including a Church camp location, then prior approval must occur using the Driver Information Form. Permission must also be obtained from each parent, for the transport to occur. Attendee information forms can also include permission for transporting the child to and from a Church activity. Completing a risk assessment if multiple vehicles and drivers are providing transport, is a good way to identify and address risk, and obtain approval from the Church Council for transport. Note the mandatory ratios required for children and adults, particularly when providing transport.
76. **Volunteer:** *See 'Worker (paid or volunteer)'.*
77. **Vulnerable** The following descriptions have been provided to assist in forming a shared understanding of 'vulnerable'. Vulnerability may occur at a specific point in time due to personal crisis, noting that some people may identify themselves as not being vulnerable. The list is not exhaustive but includes Children and young people under the age of 18 years and people:
- In need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect. Unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
  - Belonging to a group within society that is either oppressed or more susceptible to harm.
  - Aged 18 or older who have the functional, mental, or physical inability to care for themselves.
78. **Worker (paid or volunteer):** A person is a worker, if that person is aged over 18 years, and undertakes a paid or volunteer activity on a regular basis, including being scheduled on a roster to undertake a paid or volunteer activity.

## Information and support

Information and support can be obtained from the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer on 07 3377 9833 or [safechurch@ucaqlld.com.au](mailto:safechurch@ucaqlld.com.au)

Most training materials are now available online, using the Synod's Learning management System (LMS) [edUCate](#). For information or support to access online training, please contact the Learning and Development Team: 07 3377 9990 or [learning@ucaqlld.com.au](mailto:learning@ucaqlld.com.au)

## Revisions

Document number		C/2.1.5.6			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
5.0	16.01.2024	Strategic Risk Manager	16.01.2024	Strategic Risk Manager	Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer
Next scheduled review		16.07.2024			