



Refresher: Mandatory Reporting for Lay Workers, Lay Preachers and Volunteers

C/2.1.7.3

Purpose

Provides a record that all lay workers, lay preachers and volunteers confirm their understanding and commitment to the Safe Church mandatory reporting process and may be used in response to a Breach of the Safe Church / SMC Policy. A space to sign this document is located on page 2.

Scope

Applies to all lay workers and volunteers and includes all lay preachers. Ministry agents should instead refer to the [Refresher: Mandatory Reporting Process for Ministry Agents](#).

When to follow this process

This process must be followed each time a lay preacher, volunteer, or lay employee suspect that anyone has been abused or is being groomed for abuse. This includes all concerns relating to:

- Breaches of the Statement of Personal Commitment (Code of Conduct)
- 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

B.C.A.L.M. Process and checklist

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

- **Breathe:** Using a quick calming technique can help you engage your thinking brain. Suggest the child or person making the disclosure “take a deep breath” and count for them as they breathe in and out a few times. Listen calmly, patiently, and supportively. Let the child or person 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.
- **Calm:** Calm the child or person. The words you use will have a profound and lasting impact on them. Use words like “You’ve done the right thing by telling me”, “I’m glad you told me”, “I believe you”, “It wasn’t your fault”. Let them know they are doing the right thing by speaking up, that you believe them, and you are taking what they say seriously. 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.
- **Assess:** Assess whether there is any immediate danger. 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. Ask them what they need from you or the Church so they can feel safe and involved in the process. If there is immediate danger, or if in doubt, call 000 and ask for Police to attend. You may also need to seek support from another leader or your ministry agent to ensure the physical safety of yourself and the person making the disclosure.
- **Let:** Let them know what your obligations are. 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. You could use words like: “I will need to tell someone about this so that we can get some help for you. I’m going to have to make a report.”
- **Make a report:** Make a verbal report immediately. Report your concerns immediately to your ministry agent, supervisor, or team leader, respecting the privacy and dignity of all parties. You **must** make a report to the police in all cases where you suspect that sexual abuse or grooming has occurred. Your ministry agent, team leader or supervisor can help you with this reporting process.

THIS DOCUMENT IS UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED.



Follow up by making a written report including who you've spoken with, using the [Template for Complaints and allegations](#). Keep your report in a secure location and provide a copy of the report to your ministry agent, team leader or supervisor, as well as to the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer at the Synod office – safechurch@ucaqld.com.au or call 07 3377 9833.

What if? You may also report your concerns online – complaints@ucaqld.com.au

Your concern is about:	Report your concern to:
your ministry agent or their family member	Complaints Officer complaints@ucaqld.com.au or 1800 586 591 and presbytery chairperson
a member of the Church Council	
presbytery chairperson or their family member	Complaints Officer complaints@ucaqld.com.au or 1800 586 591

Signature

Name:

Date:

Revisions

Document number	C/2.1.7.3				
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
6.0	17.01.2024	Strategic Risk Manager	17.01.2024	Strategic Risk Manager	Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer
Next scheduled review	17.01.2024 Retired				