



## Planning Safe Programs

C/2.1.8

### Purpose

Outlines specific obligations to comply with the Safe [Church Policy](#), [Privacy Policy](#), and the Synod [Wide Blue Card Policy](#), to plan programs which meet mandatory minimum requirements and best practice recommendations, keeping volunteers and participants safe.

### Scope

Applies to all lay workers (paid and volunteer) in congregations, faith communities, and presbyteries of the Church.

### Prior Approval

#### 1. Formal approval

- 1.1. All activities must be considered and given prior endorsement by a Church Council or Presbytery Committee or other relevant governing body as confirmation of correct processes and approvals.
- 1.2. In the event of an incident or injury and any subsequent insurance or legal action, the approval and [risk assessment](#) documentation may be used as a reference. Throughout this document, where reference is made to 'council' it includes all relevant governing bodies unless otherwise stated.

### Risk levels and obligations

#### 2. For activities with a final risk level of Extreme:

- 2.1. The 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 level.
- 2.2. Identify and plan additional risk mitigation measures then contact the Risk and/or Group Insurance team for guidance and to request approval to proceed.

#### 3. For activities with a final risk level of High:

- 3.1. The activity **must not** proceed as planned. The activity can only proceed if more risk control steps are taken to reduce the risk level to Moderate or Low (preferred). All steps taken must be documented and a review of the effectiveness of the mitigations must happen after the event.

#### 4. For activities with a final risk level of Moderate:

- 4.1. The activity can proceed **with** risk mitigation steps in place once approval is obtained from the council. All steps taken must be documented and a review of the effectiveness of the mitigations must happen after the event. In the event of the risk occurring, the circumstances must be subject to a review.

#### 5. For activities with a final risk level of Low:

- 5.1. The activity **can** proceed once approval is obtained from the council. Routine management procedures should still be in place to minimise the risk of even a minor incident occurring.

### Mandatory Ratios

#### 6. Minimum standards

- 6.1. A minimum of two leaders or volunteers must be always present for each activity, program, or event.
- 6.2. A minimum of two adult leaders must be always present with children in approved activities.

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6.3. A minimum of two adult leaders must be always present when transporting children.

6.4. All volunteers must stay within the line-of-sight of each other

**7. Child-related activities**

7.1. A minimum ratio of one leader or volunteer for every six children in an activity for participants aged five years and over.

7.2. A minimum ratio of one leader or volunteer for every four children aged below five years.

7.3. 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.

**8. Activities with anyone vulnerable**

8.1. 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.

8.2. 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.

8.3. 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.

## Roles and responsibilities: Activity leaders

**9. Responsible for:**

9.1. Completing and submitting [Risk assessment](#) sheets for all planned activities to the Church Council (or their delegate) for approval before the activities are due to take place, including assessing and managing reasonably foreseeable risk (See risk assessment section and checklist questions below).

9.2. Consulting with Synod Support Services if activities with a risk level of extreme are being considered and incorporating recommendations into plans. The Queensland Synod Group Insurance team can assist with insurance requirements and the Strategic Risk Manager can assist with risk management queries.

9.3. Ensuring team members are aware of their responsibilities under the approval of the council.

9.4. Conducting activities in line with the approval of the council.

9.5. Documenting and reporting to the council, any hazards/risks identified during the planning process.

9.6. Ensuring that leaders and helpers for the activity are from the pool of people who have been previously screened, trained and approved by the council.

9.7. Maintaining an appropriate ratio of leaders to participants for all activities.

## Roles and responsibilities: Church Council or Presbytery or their delegate

**10. Responsible for:**

10.1. Developing the Emergency Response Plan to be followed in the event of an unforeseen natural or man-made event (for example flood, fire, car crash) which would impact the safety of the event

10.2. Managing all reported hazards—eliminating and/or controlling them to ensure minimal risk

10.3. Maintaining property (checklist) and (supplementary information)

10.4. Assessing, amending and approving Risk assessment sheets before the activities are due to take place, clearly communicating any issues or changes required before the approval is given

10.5. Ensure that all risk assessments or program plans submitted for approval maintain an appropriate ratio of leaders to participants, following the guidelines above in *Sections 14, 15 & 16*.

10.6. Minuting approvals (or endorsing approvals made by the delegate) in council meeting minutes



- 10.7. Considering and approving the curriculum to be taught to children within children's ministries under their oversight (e.g. Sunday School lessons)
- 10.8. Ensuring that individuals who seek to work with children within the Church (including transport) have been screened, trained and receive oversight and support
- 10.9. Ensuring appropriate reporting of incidents and near misses
- 10.10. Delegating tasks under this responsibility appropriately

### Risk assessment process

#### 11. List the activities

- 11.1. List the activities which are planned—write them in a risk assessment sheet (e.g. Safe Programs Planning tool, WHS risk assessment tool)
- 11.2. For each activity, anticipate what might happen that could affect what the activity is trying to achieve, i.e. consider what could go wrong—these are the 'risks'
- 11.3. Write these under the 'Risks' column heading on the risk assessment sheet (see example below).

#### 12. Determine the likelihood for each risk

- 12.1. Refer to the likelihood descriptors and choose the one that best suits. This is the 'likelihood'. Write this in the 'Likelihood' column.

#### 13. Determine what the potential consequences are for each risk

- 13.1. Refer to the consequence descriptors and choose the one that best suits. This is the 'consequence'. Write this in the 'Consequence' column.

#### 14. Determine the risk level, for each risk

- 14.1. Refer to the risk matrix and find the intersection of your risk consequence and likelihood to determine the Risk Level. Write this in the Risk Level column.

#### 15. Determine the mitigations required to address or reduce each risk

- 15.1. Refer to the Actions to Take and find the corresponding action for the risk level
- 15.2. Based on the Action for 15.1, consider and undertake the appropriate mitigation and note this in the Risk assessment sheet. Include additional mitigation measures you may have identified
- 15.3. Write the Mitigations in the How to reduce risk column.

#### 16. Determine the revised risk level, for each risk

- 16.1. Think about how the risk likelihood will change because of the mitigations you put in place. This is the revised likelihood if the mitigations are implemented
- 16.2. Refer to the risk matrix and find the intersection of your risk consequence and the revised likelihood to determine the revised risk level
- 16.3. Write the revised risk level in the Revised Risk Level column.



### Risks and mitigations to control for them (examples)

| <b>Risks</b><br><i>What could go wrong during these activities?</i>                                    | <b>Likelihood</b><br><i>Check the descriptors</i> | <b>Consequence</b><br><i>Check the descriptors</i> | <b>Risk level</b><br><i>Check the Risk Matrix</i> | <b>How to reduce risk</b><br><i>Check the 'actions to take' 'mitigations'</i><br><i>Do not alter Risks or Risk Ratings for shaded items a–d below. Mitigations are dictated in policy and process documents. Non-shaded Risks and Mitigations are suggested for consideration.</i> | <b>Revised Risk Rating</b><br><i>(mitigations in place) Summarised in 5.A</i> |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| a. Person(s) conducting activity is not safe to work with children or vulnerable people                | Possible  | Major  | High  | All volunteers are screened and approved   | Moderate  |
| b. Person(s) conducting activity acts inappropriately towards children or vulnerable people            | Possible  | Major  | High  | All volunteers are trained, work in pairs, sign Statement of Personal Commitment and supervised  | Moderate  |
| c. Person(s) conducting activity does not follow the plan for the activity                             | Possible  | Minimal  | Low   | Volunteers are skilled for the task and well briefed on the purpose  | Low   |
| d. Person(s) conducting activity becomes aware of grooming, abuse or neglect and does not respond well | Possible  | Major  | High  | Volunteers are aware of mandatory reporting processes and have received training   | Moderate  |

### Likelihood scales

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Frequent (Almost certain)</b> | Is expected to occur again either immediately or within a short period of time (likely to occur most weeks or months) |
| <b>Probable (Likely)</b>         | Will probably occur in most circumstances (several times a year)  |
| <b>Occasional (Possible)</b>     | Probably will occur at some time (May happen every 1–2 years)   |
| <b>Uncommon (Unlikely)</b>       | Possibly to occur at some time in 2–10 years  |
| <b>Rare (Remote)</b>             | Unlikely to occur only in exceptional circumstances (May happen every 10–30 years)                                    |



## Consequence scales

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <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.                           |
| <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.  |

## Risk matrix

| Likelihood |                           | Consequence |          |          |          |          |
|------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|            |                           | Extreme     | Major    | Moderate | Minor    | Minimal  |
|            | Frequent (Almost certain) | Extreme     | Extreme  | High     | Moderate | Moderate |
|            | Probable (Likely)         | Extreme     | Extreme  | High     | Moderate | Moderate |
|            | Occasional (Possible)     | Extreme     | High     | High     | Moderate | Low      |
|            | Uncommon (Unlikely)       | Extreme     | High     | Moderate | Low      | Low      |
|            | Remote (Rare)             | High        | Moderate | Moderate | Low      | Low      |
|            |                           |             |          |          |          |          |

## Actions to take

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>Extreme</b>  | 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. |
| <b>High</b>     | 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.  |
| <b>Moderate</b> | 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.  |
| <b>Low</b>      | Activity can proceed. Routine management procedures should still be in place to minimise the risk of even a minor incident occurring.  |



## 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)

The preferred method of completing Safe Church training is online, using the Synod's learning platform [edUCate](#). Please contact the Learning and Development Team: 07 3377 9734 or [learning@ucaqlld.com.au](mailto:learning@ucaqlld.com.au) for more information or to obtain this access.

## Revisions

| Document number       |            | C/2.1.8                               |                |                                       |   |
|-----------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Version number        | Date       | Approved by                           | Effective Date | Policy owner                          | Policy Contact                            |
| 8.0                   | 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                            |                |                                       |   |