



C/2.4.2.1

Purpose

Provides 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.

Mandatory Reporting

The [Mandatory Reporting Process for Ministry Agents](#), and the [Mandatory Reporting Process for Lay Workers and Volunteers](#) outlines the steps to take when reporting incidents of suspected abuse, grooming or neglect using the [Template for Complaints and Allegations](#) and the [Guide for Reporting Child Safety Concerns](#) if required. This will ensure you are meeting your legal obligations and fulfilling your duty of care to the children involved in your activities. A copy of each of these documents is available on the synod [website](#).

Suggested steps for preparing and using the Sample Safe Spaces Agreement:

1. Create the Safe Spaces Agreement. A template for use is provided on the next page. Complete and print all pages except for this current page (page 1).
2. Consider the resources available within the Church and within the local community that could assist a person in need, including referrals to programs
 - Food ministry
 - Financial assistance
 - Accommodation assistance
 - Counselling support
 - Pastoral care
 - Clothing assistance
 - Homelessness programs
 - Personal support programs
3. Follow the guidelines in the procedure document [Responding to a Safety Concern](#).
4. Once finalised, provide a signed copy to the Church Council, the Synod office representative, and the presbytery. Note the mandatory requirement to report any suspected sexual abuse or grooming to police.
5. Information, advice and support is available via the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer on: 07 3377 9833 or safechurch@ucaqld.com.au
6. Keep a signed copy for your records.

Revisions

| Document number | | C/2.4.2.1 | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------------|---|
| Version | Approval date | Approved by | Effective date | Policy owner | Policy contact |
| 2.0 | 16.01.2024 | Strategic Risk Manager | 16.01.2024 | Strategic Risk Manager | Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer |
| Next scheduled review | | 23.02.2028 | | | |

Safe Spaces Agreement

BETWEEN

Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod

AND

(insert name) Presbytery

AND

(insert name) Uniting Church

This Safe Spaces Agreement is a memorandum of understanding to state the conditions required for the continued delivery of Church activities, programs and events, involving children and vulnerable persons, with (insert name) Uniting Church in (insert name) Presbytery of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod.

This Safe Spaces Agreement is not a legally binding document but failure to adhere to the Safe Spaces Agreement **must** result in the immediate cessation of all Church programs, activities and events involving children and vulnerable persons, until the Safety Concern is resolved.

Parties

The parties to this agreement are:

Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod represented by (insert name of Synod representative)

(Insert name) Presbytery represented by (insert name of Presbytery representative)

(Insert name) Uniting Church congregation represented by (insert name of congregation representative)

Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to state the conditions required for the continued delivery of Church activities, programs, and events, involving children and vulnerable persons, with the (insert name) Uniting Church congregation.

Definition

Behaviours of Concern: any or all of the following behaviours, including any behaviour which breaches the Statement of Personal Commitment:

- 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 persons, or whilst on Church property without express written permission from the Church.
- Taking images of any child, young person, or vulnerable persons 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.

Each representative to initial the bottom of each page

| Location | Representatives' initials |
|----------|---------------------------|
| | |

Acknowledgements

The parties commit themselves to abide by the provisions of this agreement to ensure the physical, emotional, and spiritual welfare and safety of all people involved in the life of the congregation and enable the continued delivery of Church activities, programs and events, involving children and vulnerable persons.

Nominate which of the following applies:

A) Person/s causing a Safety Concern: means a person or persons who have displayed or may display any or all of the Behaviours of Concern, AND one of the following applies:

- Is the recipient of an activity or program of the Church - for example a community outreach program.
- Is in or on Church property - for example, someone temporarily living on Church property due to homelessness
- Other: Please specify

B) Place/s with a Safety Concern: means a place or location with a likelihood of exposure to a person or persons displaying any or all of the Behaviours of Concern.

- For example: Inner city congregations, particularly those ministering to the marginalised.
- Other: please specify

1. Address the safety and basic needs of a specific person (person causing a Safety Concern)

The parties are committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people involved in the congregation. The following support has been offered to the person/s: *Tick all that apply*

The Church is offering or providing the following direct support:

- An offer of pastoral care
- Food assistance
- Accommodation assistance
- Counselling or emotional support
- Financial assistance
- Clothing assistance
- Other: please specify

The Church has made the following referrals for support:

- Food assistance
- Accommodation assistance
- Counselling
- Financial assistance
- Clothing assistance
- Other: please specify

2.Reporting requirements

Follow the [Mandatory Reporting Process for Ministry Agents](#), and the [Mandatory Reporting Process for Lay Workers and Volunteers](#) which outlines the steps to take when reporting incidents of suspected abuse, grooming or neglect using the [Template for Complaints and Allegations](#) and the [Guide for Reporting Child Safety Concerns](#) if required. This will ensure you are meeting your legal obligations and fulfilling your duty of care to the children involved in your activities. A copy of each of these documents is available on the synod [website](#).

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3. Safe entry and exit

The following arrangements are in place to ensure the safe entry, and exit of people to the Church location, including during general activities such as a worship service:

- A Risk Assessment has been completed for the activity or program and approved by the Church Council and includes information about this Safe Spaces Agreement.
- Monitors are present and know how to respond to an incident, and who to report to, including calling police in an emergency
- Publicly accessible entry and exit areas have been checked and cleared of potential hazards and risks prior to times of anticipated entry and exit
- Support systems are in place to offer debriefing for attendees, volunteers, and leaders, if an incident occurs.
- Other: please specify

4.Safe participation

The following arrangements are in place to ensure the safe participation of participants, volunteers, and leaders, for each activity or program involving children or vulnerable persons:

- A Risk Assessment has been completed for the activity or program and approved by the Church Council and includes information about this Safe Spaces Agreement.
- The activity or program is being held in a location free from potential hazards or risks to attendees, leaders, and volunteers.
- A minimum of two (2) monitors are present.
- Each monitor knows how to respond to an incident, and who to report to, including calling police in an emergency.
- All leaders and volunteers supporting the activity or program know the potential risks, and how to respond to an incident.
- Entry and exit areas have been checked and cleared of potential hazards and risks prior to times of anticipated entry and exit
- Support systems are in place to offer debriefing for attendees, volunteers, and leaders, if an incident occurs.
- Other: please specify

Note that failure to have **at least** two monitors available will result in the activity or program being cancelled.

5.High Risk areas

The following high-risk areas are present at the location:

- External toilets accessible to the public: Please specify number
- Secluded areas accessible to the public: Please provide details
- Publicly accessible areas with an obstructed line of sight: Please provide details
- Other: please specify

6.Increasing safety

The following changes have been made to reduce the risks identified:

- The visibility of a secluded or obstructed area accessible to the public, has been increased: Please provide details
- Other: Please provide details

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The following arrangements are in place for monitoring of the high-risk areas identified above:

- A minimum of two (2) monitors are present to for the monitoring of high-risk areas; AND
- A monitor will be present at each of the high-risk areas identified; OR a minimum of two monitors will rotate every 5 minutes across high-risk areas; AND
- Monitors know how to respond to an incident, and who to report to, including calling police in an emergency.
- Other: Please specify

Failure to have **at least** two monitors available for the monitoring of high-risk areas, will result in the activity or program being cancelled.

7.Response procedures

Clear response procedures are in place to respond to any observed Behaviour of Concern, and any incident:

- The Risk Assessment for each program or activity includes response procedures and includes information about this Safe Spaces Agreement.
- All leaders, and volunteers are aware of their roles and responsibilities, including how to respond to an incident.
- Support is in place to offer debriefing for attendees, volunteers, and leaders, if an incident occurs.
- Other: Please specify

8.Monitors

Additional supervision and support will be provided through monitoring. The following are appointed as monitors:

| Name of monitor | Position within the Church | Location or Task |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| (insert name of monitor) | (insert position of monitor) | (insert the location or the task that the monitor is responsible for) |
| (insert name of monitor) | (insert position of monitor) | (insert the location or the task that the monitor is responsible for) |
| Add additional monitors as required | | |

Disclosure

This agreement will be kept confidential and will only be disclosed in limited circumstances as determined by the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod.

This agreement or its contents may be disclosed to:

- Present and future ministry agents of the congregation
- Monitors and any other person undertaking supervision and support
- Persons responsible for the welfare and safety of children and/or vulnerable adults involved in the congregation
- Church council members
- Presbytery Minister
- The General Secretary or their delegate
- Synod professional and legal advisors
- Any congregation or presbytery member if deemed appropriate by the Chairperson of the congregation church council or Synod

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Termination

This agreement will be reviewed in 12 months.

Entire agreement and counterparts

This document as executed by the parties constitutes the entire agreement.

The parties may execute this agreement in counterparts, each of which is deemed an original and all of which constitute only one agreement.

Signatures

X

Full name
Synod Representative

Date: _____

X

Full name
Presbytery Representative

Date: _____

X

Full name
Congregation Representative

Date: _____

X

Full name
Church Council Chair

Date: _____

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