



**CHILD PROTECTION
POLICY AND RISK
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

VERSION 3

8 JUNE 2017

Unichurch Qld Inc

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ABOUT THIS POLICY

Providing a safe, nurturing and supportive environment for children and young people to grow, learn and be cared for is a fundamental concern of Unichurch Qld Inc operating as St Lucia Bible Church.

This policy document sets out the principles and procedures which the Church has adopted in order to:

- 1) provide a safe and nurturing environment for children and young people;
- 2) protect children and young people from mistreatment; and
- 3) deal with cases of reported or suspected mistreatment.

This document is in two parts.

Part I provides a general overview of the policies of the Church in relation to:

- 1) the screening and approval of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people
- 2) the training and management of staff and volunteers;
- 3) acceptable behaviour towards and around children;
- 4) responding to reports of, or suspicions of, the mistreatment of children;
- 5) risk management for high risk activities; and
- 6) strategies for communication and support

Part II (which comprises a series of appendices) sets out the detailed procedures which relate to the above topics.

This policy document has been approved by the Board, and is reviewed by the Board on an annual basis at the May board meeting. It will also be reviewed by the Board after any significant incident (including any significant breach of this policy).

It is made available electronically (on the Church's website and on Elvanto) and is publicised at least once every 6 months – on the first Sunday in June and December at the regular services held by the Church - by referring to it in the Weekly Bulletin and providing physical copies at the service.

KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Some recurring terms used in this policy have special meanings set out in Annexure 6.

KEY PERSONNEL:

Safe Ministry Supervisors:

Karen Grenning – karen.grenning@slbc.org.au

David Abraham – dave.abraham@slbc.org.au

Senior Pastor

Roy Davidson – roy.davidson@slbc.org.au

KEY CONTACT DETAILS:

Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Web form:

<https://secure.communities.qld.gov.au/cbir/home/ChildSafety#>

Business Hours: 1300 682 254

Outside Business Hours: 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999

Police (for emergencies)

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PART I

POLICY SUMMARY

A. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

We are committed to creating a safe, nurturing and supportive environment for children to grow up in.

Any behavior which exploits the special position of trust and authority between an adult in a position of authority and a child or otherwise involves the mistreatment of a child is unacceptable and sinful.

We are committed to the safety of children at the Church and preventing mistreatment of any kind. To this end, we are committed to conducting ourselves at all times so as to:

- ensure that all children are respected and valued;
- minimise the risk of mistreatment of children at the church;
- ensure that leaders and programs are safe for children;
- ensure that all cases of suspected mistreatment and misconduct are handled thoroughly, with integrity and with the proper involvement of public authorities.

We fulfill these commitments by adherence to the policies and procedures set out in this document.

B. CODE OF CONDUCT

The Church's Code of Conduct appears at Annexure 1 to this policy.

Its purpose is to provide a guide on appropriate behaviours for those supervising and working with children at the Church.

The code is not exhaustive, and if a person is in doubt about whether a behaviour is appropriate, that person should refrain from that behaviour unless and until advised otherwise by the child's parent, a Pastoral Staff Member or a Safe Ministry Supervisor

C. WHO CAN SUPERVISE CHILDREN AT THE CHURCH?

The Board has adopted the following policy framework in relation to who may supervise children at the Church:

- 1) All prospective members must be provided with a copy of this policy, and read Part I and Annexure 1, before being approved as members of the Church.
- 2) All new members are encouraged to apply for a Blue card at the time they apply for membership.

- 3) All persons (including staff) who undertake any role which involves the care or supervision of children at a Church event¹ **must** be on the Child Worker Register. To be on the Child Worker Register a person must become an Approved Child Worker in accordance with the following procedure:
- (a) hold a current Blue Card or an exemption card which a Safe Ministry Supervisor or staff member (the **Reviewer**) has validated on the Blue card website;
 - (b) provide photographic ID to the Reviewer to prove the identity of the Blue Card or exemption card holder;
 - (c) in the case of an exemption card holder, provide to the Reviewer the original or a certified copy of their current registration entitling them to the exemption (e.g. teacher registration);
 - (d) confirm in writing that they have read and agree to abide by this policy and obtain necessary references;
 - (e) be approved as an Approved Child Worker by the Board;
 - (f) undertake training (see paragraph 6 below).
- *Note 1: a person does not need to be a member to become an Approved Child Worker.
- *Note 2: a person employed as a Pastoral Staff Member who has satisfied the requirements in (a) to (d) is taken to have been approved by the Board as an Approved Child Worker.
- 4) A person may also be entered onto the Child Worker Register on an interim basis (an **Interim Child Worker**), for no longer than 6 weeks, if they:
- (a) comply with steps (a) to (c) above;
 - (b) confirm in writing that they have read the Code of Conduct (Annexure 1);
 - (c) are approved by a Safe Ministry Supervisor.
- 5) An Interim Child Worker may only undertake a role involving the care or supervision of children at a Church event in a supporting role, under the supervision of an Approved Child Worker,
- 6) All Approved Child Workers are required to undertake approved training on child safety at least once every two years. All Church members (regardless of whether they undertake a role with children) are encouraged to undertake approved training.

¹ For the avoidance of doubt, this includes Bible Study leaders who run Bible Study Groups catering to children (that is, persons under 18 years of age).

Training is provided online at www.safeministrytraining.com.au.
A record is to be kept in the Child Worker Register of when
Approved Child Workers undertake training.

The detailed procedures for the recruitment, selection, training and managing of Approved Child Workers are set out in Annexure 1 to this document.

D. REPORTING CONCERNS

There are two main situations in which concerns should be reported. The ways to report are described below.

First, if a person is concerned that a child is suffering or has suffered mistreatment (whether from another person at the church or otherwise) this should be reported.

Secondly, if a person is concerned that an adult is or may be acting inappropriately around children (whether any mistreatment has occurred or not, this should also be reported).

There are two different reporting processes outlined below

I. Reporting suspicion of mistreatment

The Board has adopted the following policy framework:

- 1) The Board appoints Safe Ministry Supervisors to whom reports of harm or suspected harm should be made.
- 2) Any disclosure or suspicion of harm must be treated with the utmost seriousness.
- 3) The first priority whenever there is a report of harm is the safety and wellbeing of the child involved.
- 4) A person against whom an allegation is made should be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations in a fair way;
- 5) Unless the alleged offender is the Senior Pastor, all reports of actual or suspected abuse, harm or mistreatment of children are to be referred to the Senior Pastor immediately by the Safe Ministry Supervisor. The Safe Ministry Supervisor should also notify the Secretary in writing (by email) of the fact that a report has been made to the Senior Pastor, but not the detail of the report.
- 6) If the alleged offender is the Senior Pastor, the Safe Ministry Supervisor who receives the report should immediately notify the Treasurer and Secretary.

- 7) On receiving a report of actual or suspected mistreatment of a child, the Senior Pastor (or the Treasurer and Secretary as the case may be) must:
 - a. notify an elder of the report;
 - b. decide, in consultation with the elder, whether to:
 - i. refer the matter to the Board (and if so whether to do so urgently, or at the next scheduled Board meeting) and
 - ii. whether to refer the matter to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services;

Generally, unless the report is frivolous or trivial, the allegations are obviously untrue, or the report concerns an Excluded Incident, the matter should be referred to the Board and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. The Senior Pastor must keep a record of every report which, at a minimum (i) identifies the child affected and any alleged wrongdoer (by a pseudonym) and (ii) contains a brief summary of the report made, omitting identifying details.

If a matter is referred to the Board, unless the Board forms the unanimous view that the report is frivolous or trivial, the allegations are obviously untrue, or the report concerns an Excluded Incident, the Board must ensure that the report of harm is, or has been, referred to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. The Board should also consider whether the matter should be referred to the Police directly.

- 8) If the report involves a complaint against an Approved Children's Worker:
 - a. unless the Senior Pastor forms the view that the complaint is trivial or obviously untrue, the person's status as an Approved Child Worker is to be suspended until the report is resolved;
 - b. the fact of the complaint and the date of the complaint (but not any details of the complaint) are to be recorded in the Child Worker Register.
- 9) After an investigation has been carried out the Senior Pastor in consultation with an elder and an independent member of the church nominated by the Senior Pastor must decide what action to take including:

- a. if the complaint is found to have no basis, no further action (and if the person is an Approved Child Worker, reinstating them from being suspended);
 - b. removing the person against whom the complaint was made from the Child Worker Register;
 - c. requiring the person to cease to have any contact with children at the Church other than unavoidable incidental contact;
 - d. asking the person to leave the Church;
 - e. informing members of the Church about what has occurred.
- 10) If a person the subject of an investigation or the person who made a complaint is dissatisfied with the result of the investigation, that person may write to the Secretary to request that the Board carry out a review. Whether and how any review is carried out is entirely within the discretion of the Board.

II. *Reporting concerns about an adult (not involving mistreatment)*

- 1) If an Approved Child Worker or other person at the Church has a concern that someone present at a Church event may pose a risk to children, the first mentioned person should report that concern to a Safe Ministry Supervisor.
- 2) If a Safe Ministry Supervisor receives a report, or has their own concern that someone may pose a risk to children, he or she should report it to the Senior Pastor.
- 3) If the Senior Pastor has a concern that someone may pose a risk to children (whether because of a report or otherwise) he should take whatever immediate steps he considers appropriate (in consultation with an Elder) and also refer the concern to the Board for discussion.
- 4) Where the Board considers, on reasonable grounds, that a member of the church or another person who attends the church, may pose a risk to children (whether or not there has been a specific report of abuse, mistreatment or harm by that person while at the church, and whether or not that person holds a blue card) the Board must:
 - (a) if the person is an Approved Child Worker, remove that person's name from the register of Child Worker Register and require the person to cease carrying out the functions of an Approved Child Worker;
 - (b) consider whether:

- (i) to require that person's name recorded in a separate section of the Child Worker Register, as an unsuitable person to have contact with children;
- (ii) to inform the person that they are not permitted to have any contact with children at church events, save for unavoidable incidental contact;
- (iii) to require the person be in the presence of, and supervised by, a Pastoral Staff Member or Safe Ministry Supervisor at any Church event;
- (iv) to disclose the identity, and the fact that the Board holds a concern about the risk they pose to children, to other members and attendees of the Church, and if such disclosure is to be made, the manner and extent of such disclosure;
- (v) to take, or recommend the Senior Pastor take, any other step (including that the person be asked to leave the church and stop attending its events).

The detailed procedures for the handling disclosure or suspicions of mistreatment or other concerns about an adult appear at Annexure 3 to this document.

E. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

The procedures and consequences for breaching this policy (other than by actual mistreatment of a child) are set out in Annexure 4 to this document.

Any reported breaches of this policy are to be referred to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor may in his discretion refer a breach to the Board, but is not required to do so.

The Senior Pastor is to counsel, or arrange for another Pastoral Staff Member to counsel, a person who has breached this policy. The Senior Pastor may also decide, in consultation with an elder, to impose other consequences on a person who breaches this policy (in accordance with Annexure 4).

For example, an Approved Child Worker who repeatedly breaches this policy may be suspended or have their name removed from the Child Worker Register.

G. RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL

EVENTS

Some activities involve higher risks to children. Special procedures apply to the holdings of activities of this kind, as set out in Annexure 5 to this document.

H. STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

The policy will be announced at least once every 6 months – on the first Sunday in June and December at the regular services held by the Church.

Copies will be available at the back of the Church on that occasion and a reference to the policy will appear in the Weekly Bulletin.

Copies will be given to each person who applies to become an Approved Child Worker

An electronic copy will be available on the Church website and on Elvanto.

I. REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed annually by the Board at the May Board Meeting.

This policy is also to be reviewed after any major incident, including the report of any significant mistreatment or a significant instance or pattern of breaches of this policy.

PART II
CODES AND PROCEDURES

ANNEXURE 1 – CODE OF CONDUCT FOR APPROVED CHILD WORKERS

OVERVIEW

The Church values the social, relational, and interpersonal safety and well being of children and young people. We value the role of leaders and mentors in the lives of children and young people by promoting transparent, accountable relationships that promote trust and confidence in the Church and its programs. All Approved Child Workers and Staff in the Church working with children are required to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

Certain behaviours may be appropriate for Approved Children's Workers in relation to younger children (e.g. picking up and holding a 2 year old child who is crying) but cease being appropriate as children grow older (e.g. cuddling a 12 year child).

Breaches of the code of conduct will be dealt with as breaches of this policy in accordance with Section E of Part I and Annexure 4.

Note –

- (1) This code of conduct is directed to Approved Child Workers and staff acting in that role. It is not intended to govern the interactions between family members or private interactions between Church attendees (though many of the behaviours we expect are applicable in any event as they reflect appropriate Christian conduct).
- (2) This Code of Conduct is not exhaustive, and does not foresee every set of circumstances that may arise across the variety of Church events and activities. It should be viewed as an educative guide to the principles that help inform what is appropriate conduct when interacting with children. If in doubt about whether conduct is appropriate:
 - (a) refrain from the conduct; and
 - (b) seek guidance from a Staff Member.

BEHAVIOURS WE EXPECT AND ENCOURAGE

- Behave as a positive role model to children and youth.
- Treat all children with respect.
- Use positive and affirming language toward children and youth.
- Refrain from showing favouritism.

- Help provide an open, family-friendly environment for children.
- Alert someone if an apparent breach of this code is witnessed or suspected.
- Report suspicions of the mistreatment of a child in accordance with the Reporting Policy (see Annexure 3).
- Respect and adhere to reasonable parental requests.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS

- Engage in inappropriately rough physical play with a child.
- Touch a child in an age/culturally inappropriate manner.
- Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child, except where situationally appropriate for example, to comfort a distressed child or to reassure younger children.
- Spend time alone or remain in a confined or secluded space with a child.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, including inappropriate compliments about their physical appearance.
- Show or share sexually suggestive material to a child in any form such as e-mail, text, movie, sound, or picture file.
- Use profane language within earshot of children.
- Assist children do things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves (i.e. go to the bathroom).
- Use corporal punishment to discipline or control a child.
- Take a child or young person to your home/residence, or encourage private meetings outside of Church-sponsored activities save with the approval of the Senior Pastor or the Board (for Church activities) or the child's parents (for private activities).
- Upload to the internet recorded photo or video of a child without the permission of that child's parents.

Leaders should also refer to the general leadership Code of Conduct separately available on Elvanto.

ANNEXURE 2 – PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITMENT, SELECTING, TRAINING AND MANAGING THOSE WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to set out the steps which are to be performed to ensure that those working with children are appropriately screened for the ministry they will be performing.

The *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* creates a screening process for people working with children. The Act also prohibits people convicted or found guilty of serious sexual offences from working with children.

SCOPE

Except as set out below, this procedure applies generally to persons who supervise, teach or otherwise have responsibility for the care of children at a Church event, and includes all staff and MTS workers.

Some of the steps set out below do not apply to Interim Child Workers as defined in Part I, Section C above. The particular requirements for becoming an Interim Child Worker are set out in that section above.

The processes below do not apply in full to a person employed as a Pastoral Staff Member. A Pastoral Staff Member is taken to be an Approved Child Worker provided that:

- 1) A Blue Card check, as described in the table below, has been completed;
- 2) The person holds a current Blue Card or exemption card;
- 3) The person has read and agreed to abide by this Policy;
- 4) The person has completed the training described in this Annexure or has demonstrated to the Senior Pastor's satisfaction that they have carried out a higher level of training.

DEFINITIONS FOR ANNEXURE 2

"Elvanto" means the software database used by the Church.

"ID" means photo identification (usually either a valid drivers' licence or passport)

"WWCC" means a Working With Children Check conducted by the State government in order to issue a Blue Card

Part II - St Lucia Bible Church Child Protection Policy and risk management strategy

PROCEDURE – RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Step/Item	Who	Process
Invite Application	<i>Staff member/ Safe Ministry Supervisor</i>	<i>Ask prospective volunteer team members to complete a Child Worker application form. Applicant confirms they have read Part I and Annexure A of this Policy.</i>
Interview	<i>Staff member/ Safe Ministry Supervisor</i>	<i>Interview Applicant for the ministry role and review the completed application form. Sign and date form.</i>
Check References	<i>Staff member/ Safe Ministry Supervisor</i>	<i>Contact and speak to/email the persons listed as references in the application and confirm that they support the application and do not have any concerns about the applicant; sign-off and date the form.</i>
Complete Blue Card check	<i>Applicant, staff member, Safe Ministry Supervisor</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>If the applicant does not hold a current Blue Card or current Blue Card exemption card</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>the applicant is to fill out an application form and submit it to the Queensland Government.</i> b. <i>the applicant must be explicitly warned that that it is an offence for a 'disqualified person' to sign a blue card application form or renewal form.</i> c. <i>The application does not further proceed until the person receives a positive Blue Card notice</i> 2. <i>If the applicant has a current Blue Card or exemption card, the applicant must provide that card to a Safe Ministry Supervisor or Pastoral Staff Member, together with photographic ID (and in the case of an exemption card, a current registration certificate) for review.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>The staff member of Safe Ministry Supervisor must confirm that the Blue Card or Exemption card is current.</i> b. <i>The applicant must also fill out an authorization to confirm a valid card/application form and submit to the Queensland Government.</i> c. <i>Once a current card is validated, the applicant may begin the duties of an Approved Child Worker once they have completed training (but before being formally approved).</i>
Review Application	<i>Pastoral staff member or Safe Ministry Supervisor</i>	<p><i>The pastoral staff member or Safe Ministry Supervisor must check and review the application as a whole, and ensure that before the application is submitted to the Board the above steps have been carried out and the applicant holds a current Blue Card or Exemption Card.</i></p> <p><i>The reviewer notes on the application form that the applicant holds a Blue Card or Exemption Card and that the applicant's ID has been checked.</i></p>
Approval by Board	<i>Board</i>	<p><i>The Board reviews and, if everything is in order, approves the application.</i></p> <p><i>The approval is minuted and forwarded to the administrative staff member.</i></p>
Finalises check and files records.	<i>Administrative staff member</i>	<p><i>The administrative staff member records the person's name in the Child Worker Register. The details to be recorded are:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>The name of the Approved Child Worker (as appears on the Blue Card or Exemption Card);</i> 2) <i>The blue card or exemption card number</i> 3) <i>The person's date of birth</i> 4) <i>The expiry date of the card or in the case of an exemption card, the expiry date of the underlying registration;</i> 5) <i>The Approved Child Worker number (provided by the Secretary)</i> 6) <i>The date of approval as a child worker</i>

Part II - St Lucia Bible Church Child Protection Policy and risk management strategy

Notify applicant	<i>Administrative staff member</i>	<i>The applicant is notified that they are now an approved child safety worker.</i>
Initial training	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>The applicant must complete an initial child safety training session before they start.</i>
Start work	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Once the applicant has completed the initial child safety training session he or she may start carrying out the functions of an approved child worker.</i>

TRAINING

All Approved Child Workers are required to undertake training at least once every 2 years. All new Approved Child Safety Workers must undertake initial (online) training before commencing to carry out the functions of an Approved Child Worker.

The primary regular training for all Approved Child Workers is conducted online through the website www.safeministrytraining.com.au (the "Online Course")

The Church may also conduct other training sessions at different times.

The Church will meet the cost of each person's training.

A person who has undertaken training through the Online Course will have that training automatically recorded and sent to the Church.

The Church Administrator will ensure that the Register is kept up to date with the details of each child safety worker's training details.

The Church Administrator will notify the child safety worker if that person has not completed training for a period greater than 23 months. If the person still has not completed training for a period greater than 24 months, the Church Administrator will notify the Children's and Youth Pastor. If the person still has not completed training for a period greater than 26 months, the person will be suspended as an Approved Child Worker until they complete the training.

All Safe Ministry Supervisors must undergo additional ChildSafe training to maintain their positions.

ONGOING MANAGEMENT

The Child Worker Register is to be maintained by an administrative staff member.

The administrative staff member is to review the register periodically to ensure that any approved child worker whose blue card or exemption card is to expire shortly renews that blue card or exemption card.

It is expected that Approved Child Workers will maintain their own personal contact details to be up-to-date on the Church's Elvanto database and always able to be contacted via the Elvanto system (i.e. subscribed to receive Elvanto emails and not remove contact information, specifically phone number and email).

ANNEXURE 3 – PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING THE DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF MISTREATMENT

INTRODUCTION

Children and young people can only be protected from harm if it is reported and dealt with quickly and effectively. The Church has adopted the following procedures to ensure that staff respond as quickly as possible to an allegation or suspicion of harm or a breach of your risk management strategy. Having clear policies in relation to this matter will help ensure the best interests of the child or young person is always the first priority.

This section also details the reporting process where a person has a concern that an attendee at the Church may pose a risk to children, even if no actual mistreatment is suspected to have occurred.

MISTREATMENT

Mistreatment can take any of the following forms:

- *physical abuse*, for example, beating, shaking, burning, biting, causing bruise or fractures by inappropriate discipline, giving children alcohol, drugs or inappropriate medication
- *emotional or psychological abuse*, for example, constant yelling, insults, swearing, criticism, bullying, not giving children positive support and encouragement
- *neglect* for example, not giving children sufficient food, clothing, enough sleep, hygiene, medical care, leaving children unsupervised in an age-inappropriate way, and
- *sexual abuse or exploitation*, for example, sexual jokes or touching, or exposing children to sexual acts or pornography.

DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF MISTREATMENT

SUSPICION OF MISTREATMENT

You can suspect harm if you are concerned by significant changes in behaviour or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries. It is irrelevant whether the harm has been caused at a Church event or by a Church attendee, or at some other place by somebody unconnected with the Church.

DISCLOSURE OF MISTREATMENT

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened or is likely to happen.

Disclosures of harm may start with:

- “I think I saw...”
- “Somebody told me that...”
- “Just think you should know...”
- “I’m not sure what I want you to do, but...”

PROCEDURES TO MINIMISE MISTREATMENT

The Church works to minimise harm to children by acting in a manner that supports their interests and wellbeing, by:

- making sure that children know that they should feel safe at all times
- teaching them about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in general
- letting them know who is in charge of taking care of them at Church events
- making sure they are safe by monitoring their activities and ensuring their environment meets all safety requirements
- taking anything a child says seriously and following up their concerns
- letting them know there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can’t share with someone they trust
- encouraging children to say ‘no’ to anything that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- encouraging them to tell staff of any suspicious activities or people, and
- listening to and letting them know that staff are available for them if they have any concerns.

PROCEDURES FOR RECEIVING A DISCLOSURE OF MISTREATMENT

Any person who suspects, or to whom a child discloses, mistreatment must report the suspicion or disclosure to a Safe Ministry Supervisor or Pastoral Staff Member.

Reports by adults should be first-hand. In other words, the adult to whom the disclosure of harm is made, or who has the suspicion of harm, should report the matter directly, rather than asking another adult to report it on their behalf.

When receiving a disclosure of harm:

- remain calm and find a private place to talk
- don’t promise that you’ll keep a secret; tell them they have done the right thing in telling you but that you’ll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe

- only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter; probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries, and
- do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- It is extremely important that each stage of the reporting and investigation process is thoroughly documented. These records may be crucial to the way in which allegations are investigated and followed up whether or not allegations are sustained or acted on.
- Allegations of child abuse can have serious effects on the ministry workers they are made against and on the ability of the Church to care for children and families involved.
- Fair and complete resolution of allegations can be put at risk if evidence is leaked or the evidence of children and other witnesses can be contaminated. It is important as far as possible that only those directly involved in reporting, assessing and responding to allegations are aware of the process.
- All records made for the purpose of recording the making of or responding to allegations or reportable conduct must be stored securely by the person making them.
- All ministry workers that become aware of allegations relating to reportable conduct should exercise confidentiality in relation to what they know.

The following procedures are observed.

Step	Who	Process
<i>Report mistreatment</i>	<i>Child, person who observes inappropriate behavior or to whom Child makes disclosure</i>	<i>Report the matter directly to a Safe Ministry Supervisor.</i>
<i>Receive disclosure or observe inappropriate behavior</i>	<i>Safe Ministry Supervisor or Pastoral Staff Member</i>	<p><i>A Safe Ministry Supervisor or Pastoral Staff Member may become aware of a report when:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• a child or other person complains about the conduct of another person;</i> <i>• the Safe Ministry Supervisor or Pastoral Staff Member observes mistreatment, abuse or harm;</i> <i>• the Safe Ministry Supervisor or Pastoral Staff Member otherwise becomes aware of something which raises a reasonable suspicion of mistreatment, abuse or harm (whether caused by a person at the Church or otherwise).</i> <p><i>If a report or disclosure is made, the Safe Ministry Supervisor or Pastoral Staff Member should listen carefully to any allegations made to them and record details of the conduct which causes concern. They should the report the matter directly to the</i></p>

		<p><i>Senior Pastor (unless the allegation concerns the Senior Pastor, in which case the matter is to be referred to the Treasurer and Secretary of the Board, who carrying out the below functions as though they were the Senior Pastor).</i></p> <p><i>If a child is at immediate risk of harm action should be taken to remove the danger immediately.</i></p>
<i>Initial Assessment and reporting</i>	<i>Senior Pastor or Board</i>	<p><i>The Senior Pastor notifies an elder of the allegations or suspicion of mistreatment, abuse or harm.</i></p> <p><i>The Senior Pastor, in consultation with the elder decide whether the matter should be referred to the Board and/or the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and what further steps should be taken to identify and minimise any risks to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• any child(ren) who are the subject of the report or disclosure</i> <i>• other children with whom the worker has contact</i> <i>• if the report implicates an Approved Child Worker, the worker against whom the allegation has been made</i> <i>• the Church and</i> <i>• the proper investigation of the allegation.</i> <p><i>As there may be limited information on which to base the initial risk assessment it should be reviewed as further information is obtained.</i></p> <p><i>Unless the Senior Pastor forms the view that the allegation or suspicion of harm is trivial or obviously false, an Approved Child Worker who is the subject of a report will have their status as an Approved Child Worker suspended pending the completion of an investigation.</i></p>
<i>Notify Department of Communities if appropriate</i>	<i>Senior Pastor</i>	<i>Contact Details at start of policy document</i>
<i>Notify Board if appropriate</i>	<i>Senior Pastor</i>	<i>The Board should consider whether direct notification should be given to the Police.</i>
<i>Notify insurer if appropriate</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Notify and consult with the Church insurer around the management of the case.</i>
<i>Conduct an investigation</i>	<i>Senior Pastor and Safe Ministry Supervisor</i>	<p><i>Organise an investigation of the misconduct. Depending on the serious of the allegation it may be appropriate to consider engaging a competent external investigator who does not know the worker or others involved.</i></p> <p><i>Once the Senior Pastor has determined the form that an investigation should take, he should to write to the person conducting the investigation outlining the allegations he/she is to investigate and report on.</i></p> <p><i>Communicate with the ministry worker who is the subject of the investigation (in consultation with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and</i></p>

		<i>Disability Services and Police if a report has been made to them).</i>
<i>Pastoral Support and Care</i>	<i>Senior Pastor in consultation with elder</i>	<i>As appropriate, organise a support person for any children and families involved, for the reporter and the person the subject of the complaint. The support and pastoral care provided should be monitored by the Senior Pastor to ensure it is adequate and ongoing.</i>
<i>Complete Investigation</i>		<i>The investigator will complete a report with recommendations to the Senior Pastor.</i> <i>Assess and implement recommendations as appropriate.</i> <i>Regardless of the outcome of the investigation, if the complaint was made against an Approved Child Worker then the fact of the complaint and the date on which the complaint was made is to be recorded in the Child Workers Register.</i>
<i>Communication following investigation</i>	<i>Senior Pastor or Secretary (with Board Approval)</i>	<i>The Senior Pastor may write to the parents or carers, of the child, and the complainant, if appropriate, informing them of the outcome of the investigation. The letter(s) should take account of the privacy rights of the person who is the subject of the allegation. The letter(s) could include an offer to discuss the matter, if appropriate.</i> <i>The Senior Pastor will write to the person the subject of the investigation stating the outcome of the investigation and the action he intends to take. This letter could include an offer to discuss the matter, as appropriate.</i>
<i>Review request</i>	<i>Various</i>	<i>If the person who made the report, the parents of the child affected or the person about whom the complaint was made is dissatisfied by the result of the investigation they may write to the Secretary to request that the Board review the outcomes.</i>
<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Senior Pastor and Safe Ministry Supervisor</i>	<i>At the end of a process an evaluation should be conducted to identify learnings that might require an improvement in procedures</i>
<i>Conflict of interest</i>		<i>Investigation and follow-up of allegations and reports must be seen to be fair and unbiased. The perception of fairness could be compromised if people involved in responding to allegations at any stage are seen to be too closely associated with the person against whom allegations are made or seen to have an interest which may be contrary to the possible outcome of an investigation.</i>
<i>Communication with the ministry worker against whom allegations are made</i>	<i>Senior Pastor</i>	<i>Once an investigation has commenced, the Senior Pastor is to write to the person the subject of the investigation, informing them of the nature of the allegations and the person appointed to conduct the investigation. The timing of this letter may depend on the circumstances of the allegation. It will generally be inappropriate to inform the ministry worker concerned before an investigation commences, unless this is necessary to explain</i>

		<p><i>action to reduce a risk that affects them. However notification should not be delayed so as to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• affect the ability of the person concerned to make representations about the nature of the allegations or the person appointed to investigate them,</i><i>• to deny the person procedural fairness in the way the investigation is conducted, or</i><i>• to prevent the person from receiving adequate support in relation to the allegations made against them.</i>
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ANNEUXRE 4 – HANDLING BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Any breaches of this policy should be reported to the Senior Pastor.

If the Senior Pastor is of the view the breach is of a minor or insignificant nature the Senior Pastor may:

- (a) counsel or ask another staff member to counsel, the person responsible for the breach;
- (b) take no further action.

If the Senior Pastor is of the view that the breach is not minor or insignificant the Senior Pastor should:

- (a) counsel, or ask another staff member to counsel, the person responsible for the breach;
- (b) consider whether the person should be removed from any current responsibilities for supervising or caring for children or some other consequence should be imposed;
- (c) consider whether the breach suggests any deficiency in the current policies and implementation of those policies by Church, and if so, bring this concern to the attention of the Board;
- (d) if (c) does not apply, and the matter does not concern the Senior Pastor, consider whether the matter is nevertheless of such seriousness that it should be brought to the attention of the Board in any event.

ANNEXURE 5 – RISK MANAGEMENT FOR HIGH RISK EVENTS

A high risk activity or special event due to their nature will require extra planning and supervision.

Risk management involves identifying potential risks and taking steps to remove or minimise them.

Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events should be written documents and developed in conjunction with your stakeholders. At a minimum, these plans must be reviewed annually.

WHY DO I NEED TO MANAGE HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS?

It is important to identify risks in order to plan effective management strategies.

HOW DO I MANAGE RISK?

A risk management plan for the activity needs to be created and approved by the Board. A sample risk management plan follows to assist you to develop and implement an effective risk management plan for high risk activities and special events

A word version of this risk management plan is available for download on Elvanto.

Template Risk Management Plan for High Risk Activity:

In addition to occupational health and safety concerns, a child and youth risk management strategy should analyse the risk of 'harm' to children and young people.

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Describe the activity <i>Identify all elements of the event from beginning to end</i>	Identify Risks <i>Something that could happen that results in harm to a child or young person</i>	Analyse the Risk <i>(Likelihood/Consequences)</i>	Evaluate the Risk <i>The level of risk</i>	Manage the Risk <i>Assess the options</i>	Review <i>Nominate who will review after the event/activity</i>

Risk Management Process

The following is adapted from the Standards Australia's AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk management— Principles and guidelines.

There are six steps to consider in the development of an effective risk management plan:

- Establish the Context (describe the activity)
- Identify the Risks
- Analyse the Risks
- Evaluate the Risks
- Manage the Risks and reassess, and
- Review.

Step 1 – Establish the Context (describe the activity)

- what is the activity and what are your objectives
- where is the activity going to take place – what environmental factors need to be considered
- identify the stakeholders, staff, parents, and children and young people involved in the activity, and
- identify all elements of the event from beginning to end.

Step 2 - Identify the risks

Consider involving a wide range of stakeholders, including children and young people, to identify the risks associated with the high risk activity or special event. Checklists may identify general risks that should always be considered, however, it is important to brainstorm with your stakeholders to ensure all potential risks that might result in harm to a child or young person are identified.

Workplace health and safety processes consider environment and equipment risks. Once you have fulfilled the workplace health and safety requirements, you must assess the risks associated with the child and youth risk management strategy. These risks are physical, emotional, sexual and cultural in nature, including the risks from:

- other children or young people
- someone outside the organisation
- an employee or volunteer, and
- themselves.

In relation to potential risks of harm associated with the high risk activities and special events your organisation provides to children and young people, ask yourself questions such as:

How might harm occur?

- Running an activity where children and young people are required to change clothes, where the change rooms are unsupervised and open to the public.
- Paid employees or volunteers spending long periods alone with a child or young person.
- A coach offering special private sessions to a child or young person.

Why might harm occur?

- Inadequate recruitment and selection practices of paid employees and volunteers
- Incorrect instructions given to employees working with children or young people
- Not providing training to employees and volunteers
- Inadequate attention to cultural considerations

When might harm occur?

- Inadequate adult supervision
- A staff member giving a child a lift home

Step 3 - Analyse the risks

The purpose of risk evaluation is to make decisions, based on the outcomes of risk analysis. The level of risk will determine whether the high risk activity or special event is practical.

Consider here –

- How likely is it that the risk will occur? (Likelihood)
- What would happen if the risk did occur? (Consequences)

Step 4 – Evaluate the risks

The fourth step requires you to evaluate the level of risk, which will depend on your answers to the questions asked at Step 3. For example, if a risk is likely to occur and the consequences could result in major harm to a child, then this would be considered high risk.

Below is an example of a risk analysis matrix for *analysing* and *evaluating* risks in organisational activities. To determine the *likelihood* of risk using this matrix, refer to the left hand column of the risk analysis matrix. Then use the impact information to determine the level of *consequence*. Finally, combine the *consequence* and *likelihood* rating to arrive at the *risk level*.

Determine likelihood of the risk by using the left hand column of the <i>Risk Analysis Matrix</i> (below). Use the impact information to determine the consequences level. Combine the Consequence and Likelihood ratings to arrive at the Risk Level (i.e. <i>Low, Medium, High</i> or <i>Critical</i>). CONSEQUENCES					
LIKELIHOOD	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
Very likely Expected to occur in most circumstances	Medium	Medium	High	Critical	Critical
Likely Will probably occur in most circumstances	Low	Medium	High	High	Critical
Possible Might occur at some time	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely Not expected to occur	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare Occurs in exceptional circumstances only	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Step 5 - Manage the risk

Standards Australia's *AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk management—Principles and guidelines* describes risk treatment as “a cyclical process of:

- *assessing a risk treatment;*
- *deciding whether residual risk levels are tolerable;*
- *if not tolerable, generating a new risk treatment; and*
- *assessing the effectiveness of that treatment.”*

Risk management involves assessing the options in order to reduce the risk and the preparation and implementation of risk management plans, for example:

- Reduce the risk – will the proposed additional controls reduce the risk?
- Retain the risk - some risks will have to be retained and will require close monitoring.

Risk management options should consider the values and perceptions of stakeholders and the most appropriate way to communicate with them.

You now should consider how likely it is for the risk to occur after control measures have been put in place, and how bad the outcome would be if the risk was to occur. If you assess that a risk is still highly likely to occur and the outcome could result in harm to a child then you may need to rethink the activity.

Step 6 - Review

Ongoing review is essential to ensure that the risk management plan your organisation develops for your high risk activity or special event is effective. Reviewing controls and responsibilities can be useful for future planning. You should consider who will review the risk management plan after the event or activity.

Each stage of the risk management process should be recorded appropriately.

ANNEXURE 6 – KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

“*Administrative Staff Member*” means a person employed directly by the Church in an administrative rather than pastoral role.

“*Approved Child Worker*” means a person who has been approved to work with children under this Policy and includes each staff member.

“*Board*”, “*Elder*” and “*Senior Pastor*” have the meanings given by the Unichurch Qld Inc Constitution.

For the purposes of the body of this policy document a “*child*” is a person under the age of 18 years and “*children*” has the corresponding meaning.

The “*Child Worker Register*” is an electronic register maintained by the Church which records the name of each Approved Child Worker, their child worker number, their blue card number and expiry date, the name of the staff member who has sighted their Blue card ID, and their training record.

“*Church*” means Unichurch Qld Inc operating as St Lucia Bible Church

“*Excluded Incident*” means a incident which is suspected to, or is reported as involving only minor mistreatment, and which has one or more of the following characteristics:

- (a) the suspected or reported mistreatment had no physical or sexual element and the age difference between the child and the alleged offender is less than 2 years;
- (b) the suspected or reported mistreatment is between two children, has no sexual element, involved no serious injury, and the difference in age between the two children is less than 2 years;
- (c) the suspected or reported mistreatment has no sexual element, the child who has suffered the mistreatment is 15 years or older, and neither the parent nor the child wish for the matter to be referred to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services;
- (d) the suspected or reported mistreatment is between child siblings, and the parents do not wish for the matter to be referred to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

“*Member*” has the meaning given in the Constitution of Unichurch Qld Inc (in general a person approved as a full member by the Board of Unichurch Qld Inc).

“Mistreatment” mean any activity or inactivity (whether deliberate or careless) which causes harm to a person’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing and includes and kind of abuse or behavior causing harm.

An *“MTS worker”* is a person undergoing training with the Ministry Training Strategy organisation who performs duties at the church.

“Pastoral Staff Member” means a person employed directly by the Church and does not include an MTS worker.

An *“Safe Ministry Supervisor”* is a person approved by the Board to undertake a number of supervisory functions set out in this policy. There must always be at least two Safe Ministry Supervisors.

A *“staff member”* means a pastoral staff member or an administrative staff member and excludes and MTS worker; *“staff”* has a corresponding meaning.

Senior Pastor means Roy Davidson, and when Roy is away on leave, David Pitt.