

We are called by God to be a prophetic witness in the city of Adelaide so that new life and vitality will be generated in our city and its people. We celebrate in our unity and diversity, our shared beliefs and past experiences, and value worship, teaching, creativity and justice.

CCP-08

SAFE CHURCH POLICY
(Based on UCA Child Safe Policy)

1. Introduction

Pilgrim Uniting Church affirms that all people are made in the image of God and commits itself to the care, protection and safety of all people with whom it comes into contact. As a community of faith, we are committed to providing a safe environment for both children and adults to encounter God, to develop relationships as part of a community and to grow in faith.

Pilgrim Uniting Church is committed to protecting the safety of all people within its programs, ministries and events.

Pilgrim Uniting Church promotes a way of life which embraces Christian values and ethics within its members and adherents. As a Christian community, we believe that God reaches out to us in love and acceptance and that our relationships with each other should express love and respect and not be abused.

Pilgrim Uniting Church believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them. (NB: Taken from Synod's Purpose of the Policy section as more relevant here.)

We will not tolerate harm, especially to a child or young person, or vulnerable people.

All people, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, disability and family or social background have equal rights to this protection.

All people (especially children and vulnerable people) have the right to be respected and valued as well as feel emotionally, physically and spiritually safe at all times.

Our policy has been developed to uphold this commitment to wellbeing and safety of children and vulnerable persons, and to adhere to National and State legislation and regulations.

2. Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1 To protect children, young people and vulnerable others who participate in the life of Pilgrim Uniting Church through its ministries, programs or activities.
- 2.2 To provide all with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.
- 2.3 To promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable others, and to keep them safe.
- 2.4 To ensure that all Federal and State legislation pertaining to child protection is strictly adhered to in the ministries, programs and activities involving children in Pilgrim Uniting Church and, where applicable, disability discrimination.

3. Our Policy aims to:

- Create a safe place for all people with focus particularly for children and young people, and vulnerable others.
- Eliminate the risk of abuse, misconduct and the misuse of positional power (see definitions).
- Ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- Ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- Ensure that all people are respected and valued.

4. Application of the Policy

This Policy applies to all Ministry practitioners, lay employees, lay leaders, members and volunteers working on behalf of Pilgrim Uniting Church.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, and is everyone's responsibility as outlined in the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.
- All people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some people, especially children, are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other organisations/agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

5. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

- 5.1 Pilgrim Uniting Church is committed to children and young people by providing an environment that is physically, emotionally and spiritually safe.
- 5.2 Pilgrim Uniting Church is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.
- 5.3 Pilgrim Uniting Church will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people by the following safeguarding measures:
 - National criminal history checks (WWCC)
 - Interviews, referee checks
 - Relevant
 - Training
 - Induction
 - Supervision
 - Reviews
- 5.4 In creating a safe church culture, Pilgrim Uniting Church will actively promote our awareness of Duty of Care and our commitment to due diligence undergirded by integrity, transparency, inclusivity, teamwork and fair process.

6. Legal framework

This policy reflects legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable people, namely:

National

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children "Protecting Children is everyone's Business" 2009 - 2020 (Commonwealth of Australia)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992

South Australian

- Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)
This Act will be repealed by Sch 1 cl 2A of Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 on 22.10.2018.
- Children's Protection Regulations 2010
- Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 & Regulations – awaiting assent
(Included at this stage as a reference)

Uniting Church policy and procedures

- Member or adherent sexual abuse and sexual misconduct complaints policy
- Policy on the prevention of vilification and harassment within the UCA
- Code of Conduct for lay leaders (UCA Assembly) 2016 & Guidelines for Implementing
- Code of Conduct for volunteers and leaders (UC SA)
- National Child Safety Policy Framework (UCNCSPF)

7. Definitions

Abuse

Child abuse is not usually a single act but takes place over time. It refers to both adult to child abuse and child to child abuse. Abuse includes but is not limited to the four categories of child abuse defined in the Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA):

Physical abuse – when a person purposely injures or threatens to injure a child or young person (i.e. a situation where a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by another person. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be an inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or aggression).

Sexual abuse – any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child (i.e. a situation in which a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity). This includes **Grooming** – predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity.

Emotional abuse – an attack on a child or young person's self-esteem such as bullying, name calling, threatening, ridiculing, harassing, intimidating or isolating the child or young person (i.e. a situation in which a person repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child and creates an emotional environment which significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development). This includes **Family violence** – when a family member, partner or ex-partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate the other.

Neglect – where a child is harmed by the failure to provide the basic physical and emotional necessities (i.e. a situation in which an adult fails to provide the child with the basic necessities of life to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed).

In addition, Pilgrim Uniting Church recognises:

Spiritual abuse – a situation in which a person misuses their power, leadership or influence to control, coerce or manipulate a child for seemingly religious purposes (e.g. involving children in spiritual activity against their will).

Bullying

Bullying is a form of persistent harassment that demeans, threatens, humiliates or intimidates a person.

Child

Legally, a child/young person is a person under the age of 18 years.

Complainant

Person who alleges and/or reports abusive or inappropriate behaviour.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying uses e-technology as a means of victimising others. It is the use of an internet service or mobile technologies - such as e-mail, chat room, discussion groups, instant messaging, web pages or SMS (text messaging) - with the intention of harming another person. Examples include communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down or humiliate the recipient.

Disclosure

A disclosure occurs when someone informs a person in authority/leadership (or a trusted adult) within the Uniting Church that they have been subject to abuse or knows of abuse.

Duty of Care Leadership Policy

Duty of Care means the legal responsibility that the local church has to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those who participate in its activities and services (i.e. to do everything reasonably practicable to protect others from harm). Church Councils are required to apply this to leaders who care for children and young people within the church. It should also be applied to leaders who care for vulnerable people.

Employees

Employees refers to those who work for and are paid by the church.

Leaders

Leaders are those who are given a position of trust or authority in the Congregation or in roles of service in the Church (i.e. they have oversight, supervision or key leadership responsibilities). They can be paid employees or volunteers. At Pilgrim this includes: Ministers; Lay preachers and leaders of worship; ministry coordinators; Church Council members; leaders of children's groups, committees and task groups, and volunteers, etc.

Ministry Practitioners

This includes those defined as Ministers (i.e. Candidates, Community Ministers, Deacons, Deaconesses, Interns, Lay Pastors, Ministers of the Word, Pastors, Youth Workers and Ministers from another denomination serving in an approved placement – *from code of Ethics definition*)

Positional power

In all relationships there is a power balance between the parties in the relationship. There is always a power imbalance in the relationship between adults and children or young people. Abuse occurs when the more powerful person misuses the power they have in a relationship with a less powerful person. When an adult is working with children or young persons the adult needs to consider how their actions will empower them whilst retaining the power imbalance because here the power imbalance is appropriate.

Staff and Volunteers

This refers to all relevant (according to the context in which it appears) persons, and may include, but not be limited to employees, volunteers, parents, carers, presbytery members, church council members, elders, congregation members, people in specified ministries of the Church, and any other person with responsibility for the care of children.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the leaders, helpers and assistants in positions and programs who are not paid.

Vulnerable person


Vulnerable person means: (a) a Child or Children; or (b) an individual aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.

Commitment

We are committed to reviewing our Policy at least every two years.

This Policy was last reviewed and approved on:

Church Council Chair:



11 March 2020

Review date: March 2020

SAFE CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Responsibilities

1.1 **All members and adherents** of Pilgrim Uniting Church are responsible for helping to create and maintain a safe and healthy spiritual environment at Pilgrim.

1.2 **Pilgrim Church Council** has very particular responsibilities for the well-being of the Congregation, its members and adherents. This includes:

a. Safe recruitment of leaders

Those volunteering or employed to lead (i.e. leaders), particularly those that involve children, are screened before they are appointed in accordance with the UC SA Duty of Care Leadership Policy (see definitions).

[UCNCSPF 7: Recruit well & 1: Promote strong leadership and governance and a culture of child safety]

b. Adequate training of leaders

Providing appropriate induction for leaders and then supporting and endorsing training requirements as outlined in the table in 2.1 below.

[UCNCSPF 8: Provide child safe focused orientation and training]

c. Clear Codes of Conduct

Adopting, implementing and strictly enforcing codes of conduct for all adults who interact with children, including setting clear boundaries of behaviour between adults and children, providing guidance to children about expectations of their interactions with other children and being clear about what is unacceptable behaviour.

[UCNCSPF 5: Having Clear Codes of Conduct]

d. Continued disciplining and mentoring of leaders

Providing ongoing training, supervision and support for leaders.

[UCNCSPF 9: Undertake strong planning and supervision]

e. Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious misconduct

- Reporting disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, according to the mandate of state legislation and as relevant to the Safe Church Committee.
- Listening to and taking seriously the concerns raised by children.
- Ensuring that procedures are clear and appropriate in responding to allegations of abuse.
- Prioritising support to the child where an allegation of misconduct is made against a person connected to the Uniting Church; offering support to the implicated person while still giving paramount consideration for the child.

NB: Report any concerns of reasonable suspicion of a child being at risk of or danger of child abuse or neglect. Report ASAP to **Child Abuse Report Line 13 14 17**

[UCNCSPF 11: Comprehensive investigation and reporting & UCNCSPF 10: Provide Support]

f. Responding to other disclosures of abuse

- Understanding the processes of responding to disclosures of abuse and harm, including self-harm and suicide ideation.
- Ensuring that appropriate training takes place to recognise and respond to indicators of abuse and neglect, and supporting all involved in the disclosure (including the leaders/volunteers).
- Understanding that abuse is not limited to children, but also includes adults within our programs who may be vulnerable at any given time when abuse could be present, and that everyone understands the most appropriate steps to take in supporting our vulnerable people within our community.

[UCNCSPF 11: Comprehensive investigation and reporting]

g. Providing an open safe environment

- Encouraging the voice of the child in our discerning and decision making.
- Affording participants a say in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas and encouraging participation.
- Creating a child-friendly environment, allowing people to raise their concerns in an appropriate manner.
- Obtaining appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.
- Ensuring that church-authorized programs for children are well planned, and have had all foreseeable risks identified, reduced or negated.

[UCNCSPF 3: Provide an open environment & 2: Enable children and families to participate in decision making]

h. Understanding and valuing diversity

- Being mindful in our approach to programs so that they are all inclusive for all people. This includes adapting programs for anyone with a disability to receive access to various programs, as well as providing adequate training for leaders.
- Being sensitive to those from 'Culturally and Linguistically Diverse' (CALD) backgrounds and those from within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with respect to our programs, information, support and services, as well as upholding respect to all cultures and encouraging the participation of all people, recognising their unique contribution to our community.

[UCNCSPF 4: Respect diversity and promote equity]

i. **Keeping good records**

- Observing legislative requirements regarding records management and access, privacy and confidentiality [i.e. Personal information collected and stored securely and confidentially; children cannot be identified in photos].
- Clearly documenting all incidents and action taken.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.
- Keeping consistent, full, accurate and up-to-date records and using this information to improve our child safe policies and practices.

[UCNCSPF 12: Keep good records and Pilgrim's Records Management and Privacy Policies]

j. **Appointing and training a Child Safety Coordinator/Contact Person**

This person is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and its associated procedures and must report to the Church Council quarterly on this. The person should be sufficiently senior within the Church to be able to ensure the implementation of this policy and associated procedures.

1.3 **Ministry practitioners** are required to:

- attend a Child Safe Environments (CSE) session
- maintain knowledge by participating in a refresher workshop every 3 years
- provide guidance to children about expectations of their interactions with other children and be clear about what is unacceptable behaviour.

1.4 **Leaders** are required to report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, attend additional specific training and agree to abide and comply with the relevant Code of Conduct:

- UC SA Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Lay Leaders
- Code of conduct for lay leaders (2016 Assembly)
- Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice (July 2009 corrected 2012)

2. **Procedures relating to the appointment of leaders**

Before appointing leaders Pilgrim Uniting Church Council must:

- Consider the six month guideline for voluntary leadership roles (people are only considered for leadership after they have been part of the congregation for 6 months).
- Arrange for the appropriate screening (this includes a national police history check through the UCA-SA Screening Unit - WWCC).
- Interview applicants.
- Request and check references.
- Ensure Safe Church training is carried out once every three years.

Role	Screening & Authority	CSE	Called to Care	Code of Ethics
Ministry leaders	M	M	R	M
Ministry of Pastors	M	M	R	M
Employees: Children, family, youth	M	M	R	
Employees: Administration roles	M	E	R	
Church Council members	M	E	E	
Elders	M	E	E	
Key Leaders & Volunteers in roles of responsibility	M	E	E	
Children, family, youth leaders	M	R	E	

KEY: M = Mandatory, required by Government legislation / regulations
E = Encouraged
R = Required by UC as best practice and with our compliance obligations
CSE = Child Safe Environments: Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect
(* full day course initially then refreshers triennially)

Related Synod Documents

- UCA-SA Code of Conduct
- UCA-SA Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Lay Leaders
- UCA-SA Called to Care Training & Resource Manual
- Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice (July 2009 corrected 2012)
- Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders (2016 Assembly)

Related Pilgrim Documents

- HR-07 Confidentiality Policy
- HR-09 Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures
- HR-10 Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy
- HR-11 Code of Conduct – Employees
- CCP-05 Code of Conduct – Members and Adherents
- CCP-07 Records Management Policy

Commitment

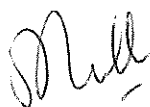
We are committed to reviewing our Responsibilities and Procedures at least every two years.

These Responsibilities and Procedures were last reviewed and approved on:

Church Council Chair:

11 March 2020

Review date: March 2020



Policies can be approved only by Church Council.
Procedures may be approved by the Operations Committee.