

04 MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

1 PURPOSE

This Policy establishes the underlying principles and obligations of Unichurch Qld Inc through the ministry of SLBC concerning the protection of all Members, children, regular attendants, and visitors of Unichurch Qld Inc. This Policy has been developed in accordance with:

- 1) the Constitution;
- 2) the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) (WHS Act) and relevant codes of practice, including:
 - a) Children and young workers Code of Practice 2006;
 - b) First aid in the workplace Code of Practice 2021;
 - c) How to manage work health and safety risks Code of Practice 2021;
 - d) Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination Code of Practice 2021;
- 3) the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (Privacy Act);
- 4) the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld) (WC(RMS) Act);
- 5) the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 (Qld).

This Policy applies to all employees working for Unichurch Qld Inc regardless of whether they are permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time, or casual employees. It also applies to other persons who perform work for Unichurch Qld Inc including contractors, students gaining work experience and volunteers. It also applies to all Members of Unichurch Qld Inc, regular congregation attendants and visitors of Unichurch Qld Inc, and affiliated groups, leaders, pastors, staff, and volunteers.

This Policy has been approved by the Board and is reviewed by the Board on an annual basis, in accordance with sections 171 and 172 of the WC(RMS) Act. 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 discussed and 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.

2 WORK HEALTH & SAFETY

With respect to risk management and work health and safety (WHS) of employees, consultants, contract workers, and volunteers, the Senior Pastor must not cause or allow jeopardy to health and safety.

Accordingly, the Senior Pastor is committed to uphold, observe and implement the requirements of the WHS Act.

All practical measures will be taken to ensure that the workplace (including offices, and meeting rooms) under the control of the Church is safe and that the behaviour of all persons under the supervision of the Church in the workplace is safe.

All Staff are responsible for WHS.

In order to achieve a safe workplace and safe practices, the Senior Pastor will:

- 1) Consult with Staff to determine the review and monitoring structures to be put into place in accordance with the WHS Act.
- 2) Develop, implement, monitor, and review policies, strategies, programs and procedures to minimise risk and seek to secure a safe and healthy working environment.
- 3) Provide information, education, and training necessary to ensure health and safety at work.
- 4) Ensure that the provision of equipment systems at work and physical working conditions are reviewed to minimise risk.
- 5) Ensure that physical working conditions in at risk work areas are reviewed at least annually.
- 6) Provide mechanisms whereby effective communication and action of health and safety issues can take place.

3 PRIVACY

3.1 Policy

Unichurch Qld Inc collects personal information such as a person's name, age, contact details, occupation and family details to facilitate ministry, but Unichurch Qld Inc may also collect other personal information. Unichurch Qld Inc uses the information it collects for the proper administration of the Church. To this end, when personal information is collected by Unichurch Qld Inc it will only be accessed by Staff and recognised volunteers for whom the information is relevant.

When Unichurch Qld Inc collects sensitive information, as defined in the Privacy Act, it will collect it with the consent of the person when required to do so by law.

Unichurch Qld Inc uses various physical and electronic security measures including firewalls and secure databases to keep personal information held on computer systems secure from misuse, loss, unauthorised use or disclosure.

Where appropriate, Unichurch Qld Inc will handle personal information relying on the small business exemption in the Privacy Act.

Generally, people can access personal information Unichurch Qld Inc hold about them. Unichurch Qld Inc may deny their requests in some circumstances and will inform them of why this is the case.

A person may access the personal details which Unichurch Qld Inc has collected or may make a complaint about the way that their personal information has been handled, by contacting the Administrator.

3.2 Privacy Statement

On all forms where personal information is collected, either the full text of the privacy policy will be included, or the following shorter message will be included:

"Unichurch Qld Inc respects your privacy, and this information will only be used for the purpose of Unichurch Qld Inc's ministry. Unichurch Qld Inc's privacy policy can be found at slbc.org.au."

4 ELVANTO ACCESS

Unichurch Qld Inc uses Elvanto as its online database which includes a rostering facility and functions as the internal website for those who call SLBC their home church. Unichurch Qld Inc grants those who are regular in attendance and in good standing with Unichurch Qld Inc access to its resources, which includes access to many resources including the Unichurch Qld Inc online directory and library of sermons.

A person is invited to join Elvanto if they are a full Member of Unichurch Qld Inc, or after 3 months of regular attendance, or sooner if they are known to a Staff Member or Elder.

On being invited to join Elvanto, a person will receive an email to grant them a username and password which they can change.

Upon logging into Elvanto, people will need to affirm their agreement with the Unichurch Qld Inc user agreement.

The user agreement will need to be affirmed by all current users as well as all future users, before being able to log into Elvanto, and may be changed from time to time as necessary.

See also Board Policy Handbook Appendix F – Elvanto User Agreement.

A person will only have access to Elvanto while they are a regular attendee and in good standing with Unichurch Qld Inc.

5 COMPLAINTS

5.1 Definitions

Harassment: There is no uniform definition of “harassment” under Australian law. Harassment is generally characterised under the Commonwealth legislation as unwelcome behaviour related to the race, disability, or sex of the subject of that behaviour, and which is conducted in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all circumstances, would have anticipated that the person who is the subject of that behaviour would be offended, humiliated, or intimidated.

Harassment may not always be intended e.g., behaviour that does not offend one person may offend another. A workplace without harassment is one where people respect and tolerate the rights and differences of others.

Harassment can take many forms and may be either direct (e.g., verbal vilification) or indirect (e.g. the creation of an environment in which a person is made to feel offended or humiliated without any behaviour being directed specifically at them), including:

<i>Verbal harassment</i>	<i>Non-verbal harassment</i>
1) sexual or suggestive remarks;	1) the placement of sexually suggestive, offensive or degrading material on walls, computer screen savers, email, etc;
2) making fun of someone;	2) suggestive looks or leers;
3) imitating someone’s accent;	3) unwelcome practical jokes;
4) sexual propositions;	4) displaying or circulating racist cartoons or literature;
5) spreading rumours;	5) mimicking someone with a disability;
6) obscene telephone calls or text messages, unsolicited letters, faxes or emails;	6) being followed (“stalking”);
7) repeated unwelcome invitations;	7) ignoring someone or being particularly cold or distant with them;
8) offensive jokes;	8) not sharing information;
9) repeated unwelcome questions about personal life;	
10) threats or insults;	

Verbal harassment	Non-verbal harassment
11) the use of language that is not suitable in the workplace; and 12) name-calling.	9) offensive hand or body gestures; 10) unnecessarily leaning over someone; 11) sending offensive material through computer, fax or email;
Physical harassment	
1) unwelcome physical contact (pinching, patting, brushing up against a person, touching, kissing, massaging, rubbing, hugging against a person's will); and 2) common and/or indecent assault.	12) wolf-whistling; and 13) continually ignoring or dismissing someone's contribution in a meeting or discussion.

Grievances are any problem, concern, or complaint - including harassment, which concerns the behaviour of Staff or a Member.

5.2 Policy Statement

Unichurch Qld Inc is committed to submitting all aspects of its life to the principles and commands of Scripture. We are people who have experienced the love of God for us through the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ. We are people called to love one another and to foster relationships in which people seek the good of others as their primary concern. Where disputes arise, Unichurch Qld Inc expects people to work towards resolution and so “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

In light of this, Unichurch Qld Inc is committed to:

- 1) as far as possible, creating an environment free from harassment and/or unnecessary grievances;
- 2) maintaining a fair and efficient process for dealing with complaints of grievances or harassment, if they occur; and
- 3) addressing grievance or harassment complaints, where substantiated, quickly, fairly, and comprehensively.

5.3 Procedure – Initial steps for resolution

In the first instance, complainants are encouraged to:

- 1) If possible, resolve the harassment or grievance directly with the person involved. Sometimes people will do or say things that hurt people without them having intended that hurt. Their lack of intention does not excuse their behaviour. However, it does mean that if you can, you could tell the person who has acted hurtfully or unsuitably that their behaviour is unacceptable, so as to give them the chance to stop or to change what they're doing.
- 2) Talk to another person about the harassment or grievance. If the first step fails or you feel unable to take it, it may be useful to talk to another person from a different context to either help you deal with the situation or deal with it on your behalf.

If these steps prove unsuccessful in resolving the issue it may be necessary to move to the following procedure.

5.4 Procedure – Making a complaint

Write to the Senior Pastor or an Elder (if the complaint is about the Senior Pastor or his family) and:

- 1) set out the details of the incident(s) including date(s), time(s) and place(s); and
- 2) indicate whether you are:
 - a) reporting this only and do not want any action to be taken; or
 - b) requesting an investigation and are willing for other Unichurch Qld Inc Elders to be informed of the alleged incident.

5.5 Procedure – Investigation

5.5.1 Investigation Principles

Unichurch Qld Inc will abide by the following basic principles in investigating any complaint of a grievance or harassment:

- 1) Confidentiality. Only the people directly involved in making or investigating a complaint will have access to information about it. Before any complaint is investigated, the permission of the person lodging the complaint or providing information will be sought.
- 2) Impartiality. Both sides in a dispute will have a chance to tell their version of events. No assumptions will be made, and no action will be taken until all relevant information has been collected and considered.
- 3) Ensuring freedom from repercussions. No action will be taken against anyone for making a complaint or helping someone to make a complaint. Unichurch Qld Inc will take all necessary steps to ensure that no victimisation occurs against anyone who makes a complaint.

5.5.2 Investigation Group

If a complainant requests an investigation, the recipient of the complaint should refer the complaint to the Investigation Group responsible for carrying out the investigation, as set out below:

Complaint made against	Investigation Group Members
Church Member	Elders
Board Member	Elders
Staff Member or Volunteer	Senior Pastor
Senior Pastor or his family	A delegated Board Member
Elder	Senior Pastor
Elder and Senior Pastor	A delegated Board Member

5.5.3 Investigation Process

The Investigation Group will undertake the following measures in a timely manner:

- 1) contact the complainant and inquire as to how they are coping with the situation;
- 2) explain the procedure of investigation to the complainant, which will include:
 - a) detailing the likely people who will investigate the complaint;

- b) estimating the length of time the investigation will take to complete;
 - c) outlining what may happen if there is or is not sufficient evidence to support the complaint;
 - d) providing details of where the complainant can go if they are unsatisfied with the way in which Unichurch Qld Inc deals or proposes to deal with the complaint; and
 - e) giving any further details that the Investigation Group feels to be useful in the circumstances;
- 3) if the written complaint involves a Staff Member, Volunteer, Elder, or Board Member, immediately notify the Board of the complaint. The confidentiality of the detail of the complaint should be maintained wherever possible, particularly where a Staff Member, Elder, or Board Member is involved;
 - 4) make a written report of the complaint and inform the complainant that they are free to examine the report to verify its accuracy before the procedure proceeds any further;
 - 5) meet with the person alleged to have committed the harassment privately to ascertain their version of events, informing them that anything they say that is not expressly agreed to be held in confidence may be reported to the complainant;
 - 6) make written and dated notes of all meetings with those involved in the investigation;
 - 7) discuss with the complainant what conflict resolution strategies they would like to see taken in the event that the complaint is substantiated.

5.5.4 Outcome

5.5.4.1 COMPLAINT IS SUBSTANTIATED

- 1) The Investigation Group is responsible for determining the appropriate disciplinary action to be taken in the event that a complaint is substantiated. The following is a non-exhaustive guide as to the sorts of actions open to them in this situation:
 - a) Request that the perpetrator write a written apology to the victim and/or meet with the victim to apologise for their behaviour, and/or
 - b) In the case of a Staff Member or Ministry Trainee, formally warn the perpetrator that further such incident may result in the termination of their employment with Unichurch Qld Inc. (the warning should also be followed up in writing), and/or
 - c) Refer the matter to the Police.
- 2) The Investigation Group must:
 - a) report the outcomes of the investigation and any consequent disciplinary action to the complainant; and
 - b) periodically assess the effectiveness of the conflict resolution strategies or disciplinary actions once they have been instituted.

5.5.4.2 COMPLAINT IS NOT SUBSTANTIATED

The Investigation Group must:

- 1) report the outcomes of the investigation to the complainant and the Board; and
- 2) continue to monitor the situation; and

In cases in which the allegation of harassment has not been substantiated but the negative personal issues surrounding the allegation remain such that the ministry of both the complainant and the accused are

adversely affected, the Elders and Senior Pastor or Investigation Group may consult with both parties to discuss mechanisms to avoid further such detriment e.g., relocation of Staff, etc.

5.5.5 Review

If a complainant or accused feels that the investigation procedure was not followed properly, or, in the event of the complaint is substantiated, that the action taken against the accused or perpetrator was in any way deficient; they may request a review of the outcome of the investigation to the relevant Review Group below:

Original Investigation Group	Review Group
Elders	Senior Pastor or Council of Reference Member
Senior Pastor	Council of Reference Member
A delegated Board Member	Council of Reference Member

The Review Group only has the power to review the execution of the investigation procedure and, in the event, they find the procedure has not been properly followed, they can appoint a new Investigation Group to investigate the complaint. They do not have the power to substitute the decision of the original Investigation Group with their own decision.

All review requests must be made in writing and should be submitted within one month of having received confirmation of the decision reached by the relevant Investigation Group.

If the Review Group finds that the Investigation Group was faulty in its execution then they must order that a fresh investigation into the complaint be made by a New Investigation Group:

Original Investigation Group	New Investigation Group
Elders	Senior Pastor or Council of Reference Member
Senior Pastor	Council of Reference Member
A delegated Board Member	Council of Reference Member

5.5.6 Board Involvement

The Biblical principles of [1 Timothy 5](#) will be maintained at all times.

The Board:

- 1) will be particularly prayerful in these circumstances;
- 2) limit its response through the Investigating Group only;
- 3) any individual Board Member, must not take any action that is not sanctioned by the Board;
- 4) must act on the recommendations of an Investigation Group in a timely and decisive manner.

5.6 Resources

Complainants are free at any stage of proceeding to seek the assistance of any external party of their choice. There are a broad range of external parties from which complainants could seek assistance.

Agencies	Contact Information
Queensland Humans Rights Commission	1300 130 670 qhrc.qld.gov.au

Australian Human Rights Commission	1300 369 711	humanrights.gov.au
Fair Work Commission	1300 799 675	fwc.gov.au

6 CHILD PROTECTION

The Member Protection Policy - Child Protection is Unichurch Qld Inc's risk management strategy developed in accordance with sections [171](#) and [172](#) of the [WC\(RMS\) Act](#), and Schedule 1 of the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Regulation 2020 \(Qld\)](#).

6.1 Definitions

Approved Child Worker means a person who has been approved to work with children under the Member Protection Policy;

Child Worker Register refers to the electronic register maintained by Unichurch Qld Inc which records the name of each Approved Child Worker;

Excluded Incident means an incident which is suspected to, or is reported as involving only minor Mistreatment, and which has one or more of the following characteristics:

- 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;
- 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;
- 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 Relevant Government Department;
- the suspected or reported Mistreatment is between child siblings, and the parents do not wish for the matter to be referred to the Relevant Government Department;

Grooming occurs when an adult person engages in conduct that exposes a child to indecent material or provides a child with an intoxicating substance or with any financial or other material benefit with the intention of making it easier to procure the child for unlawful sexual activity. It may consist of many separate actions that, in isolation, are not necessarily criminal or abusive. Grooming behaviour may not be obvious to the victim or to a bystander and can co-exist with behaviour that occurs in normal relationships between adults and children;

Mistreatment means any activity or inactivity (whether deliberate or careless) which causes harm to a person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing and includes any kind of abuse or behaviour causing harm, including:

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

Relevant Government Department refers to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs;

Safe Ministry Supervisor means a person approved by the Board to undertake a number of supervisory functions set out in the Member Protection Policy – Child Protection.

Child/Children means an individual under the age of 18.

6.2 Statement of Commitment

Unichurch Qld Inc is committed to creating a safe, nurturing and supportive environment, through the ministry of SLBC, for children to grow up in, to be taught by, and to be cared for.

Any behaviour 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.

Unichurch Qld Inc is committed to the safety of children at the Church and preventing Mistreatment of any kind and is committed to conducting itself in a manner so as to:

- a) ensure that all children are respected and valued;
- b) minimise the risk of Mistreatment of children at the Church;
- c) ensure that leaders and programs are safe for children;
- d) ensure that all cases of suspected Mistreatment and misconduct are handled thoroughly, with integrity and with the proper involvement of public authorities.

Unichurch Qld Inc fulfills these commitments by adherence to the policies and procedures set out in this Policy.

Unichurch Qld Inc is committed to minimising harm to children by:

- a) Vetting all persons (including Staff) before they are permitted to care for, or supervise, children at a Unichurch Qld Inc event.
- b) Maintaining a Child Worker Register of all Approved Child Workers.
- c) Requiring all persons (including staff) who undertake any role which involves the care or supervision of children at a Unichurch Qld Inc event to be an Approved Child Worker.²
- d) Applying a risk management process and mitigations for high-risk events
- e) Teaching and encouraging children:
 - that they should feel safe at all times.
 - about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in general.
 - that there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can't share with someone they trust.
 - to say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
 - to tell Staff of any suspicious activities or people.
- f) Letting children know who is in charge of taking care of them at Church events.

² For the avoidance of doubt, this includes Growth Group leaders who run Growth Groups catering specifically to children.

- g) Making sure children are safe by monitoring their activities and ensuring their environment meets all safety requirements.
- h) Taking anything a child says seriously and following up their concerns.
- i) Listening to and letting children know that Staff are available for them if they have any concerns.

6.3 Responsibilities

6.3.1 Board

The Board must:

- 1) appoint at least two Safe Ministry Supervisors and must always ensure that there are at least two Safe Ministry Supervisors, including one Senior Staff Member and one Board Member.
- 2) Undertake Board Member safe ministry training.

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

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

6.3.2 Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor must keep a record of every report which, at a minimum:

- 1) identifies the child affected and any alleged wrongdoer (by a pseudonym); and
- 2) contains a summary of the report made, omitting identifying details.

6.3.3 Safe Ministry Supervisors:

The Safe Ministry Supervisors must:

- 1) Complete "Board" level Safe Ministry training to maintain their positions.

6.3.4 Approved Child Workers

Approved Child Workers must:

- 1) hold a current Blue Card or an exemption card which has either been applied for through Unichurch Qld Inc or linked to Unichurch Qld Inc;
- 2) confirm in writing that they have read and agree to abide by the Member Protection Policy – Child Protection, sections 6.4 to 6.5.5. and obtain necessary references;
- 3) undertake initial (online) training before commencing to carry out the functions of an Approved Child Worker.
- 4) maintain up to date contact details on Elvanto and to be always able to be contacted via Elvanto (i.e. subscribed to receive Elvanto emails and not remove contact information, specifically phone number and email).
- 5) undertake approved training on child safety at least once every two years. Training is provided online at safeministrycheck.com.au (the "Online Course"). A person who has undertaken training through the Online Course will have that training automatically recorded and sent to the Church.

A person does not need to be a Member to become an Approved Child Worker.

6.3.5 Members

- 1) All prospective Members must be provided with a copy of this policy and declare that they have read this Policy, before being approved as Members.
- 2) All new Members are encouraged to apply for a Blue Card at the time they apply for membership.
- 3) All new Members (regardless of whether they undertake a role with children) are encouraged to complete the relevant approved level of safe ministry video training.

6.4 Code of Conduct – additional requirements for Child Safe Workers

The Code of Conduct provides an educative guide to the principles that help inform what is appropriate behaviours and conduct for those supervising and working with children at the Church, as Approved Child Workers. The Code of Conduct is not intended to govern the interactions between family members or private interactions between Church attendees (though many of the behaviours Unichurch Qld Inc expects are applicable in any event as they reflect appropriate Christian conduct).

The Code is not exhaustive and does not foresee every set of circumstances that may arise across the variety of Church events and activities. and if a person is in doubt about whether a behaviour is appropriate, that person should refrain from that behaviour or conduct unless and until advised otherwise by the child's parent, a Pastoral Staff Member, or a Safe Ministry Supervisor.

Unichurch Qld Inc values the social, relational, and interpersonal safety and well-being of children and young people. Unichurch Qld Inc values 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 Child 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-old child).

Approved Child Workers must also refer to the St Lucia Bible Church Leadership Expectations (see Appendices).

6.4.1 Expected & Encouraged Behaviours

Approved Child Workers are expected to:

- a) behave as a positive role model to children;
- b) treat all children with respect;
- c) refrain from showing favouritism;
- d) help provide an open, family-friendly environment for children;
- e) alert someone if an apparent breach of this code is witnessed or suspected;
- f) report suspicions of the Mistreatment of a child in accordance with this Policy; and
- g) respect and adhere to reasonable parental requests.

6.4.2 Inappropriate Behaviours

Approved Child Workers are expected to not:

- a) engage in inappropriately rough physical play with a child;

- b) touch a child in an age/culturally inappropriate manner;
- c) hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child, except where situationally appropriate e.g., to comfort a distressed child or to reassure younger children;
- d) spend time alone or remain in a confined or secluded space with a child;
- e) make sexually suggestive comments to a child, including inappropriate compliments about their physical appearance;
- f) show or share sexually suggestive material to a child in any form such as e-mail, text, movie, sound, or picture file;
- g) use profane language within earshot of children;
- h) assist children do things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves (e.g., go to the bathroom);
- i) use corporal punishment to discipline or control a child;
- j) take a child 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); or
- k) upload to the internet recorded photo or video of a child without the permission of that child's parents.

6.5 Procedure – Reporting & Investigation

6.5.1 Reporting Principles

The priority is ensuring the best interests of the child or young person. If a report of harm is made the safety and wellbeing of the child involved must be the first priority. If a child is at immediate risk of harm action must be taken to remove the danger immediately.

Children and young people can be protected from harm if Mistreatment is reported and dealt with quickly and effectively. Unichurch Qld Inc has adopted the following procedures to ensure that Staff respond as quickly as possible to any disclosure or report of:

- 1) Mistreatment of a child; or
- 2) a breach of the Code of Conduct or a Risk Management Plan; or
- 3) a concern that an adult at the Church may pose a risk to children, even if no actual Mistreatment is suspected to have occurred.

6.5.2 General Considerations

- a) Any disclosure or report of harm must be treated with the utmost seriousness.
- b) All ministry workers that become aware of a report should exercise confidentiality in relation to what they know.
- c) Allegations of child abuse can have serious effects on the ability of the Church to care for children and families involved and on the ministry workers they are made against.
- d) It is important that only those directly involved in reporting, assessing, and responding to report are aware of the process, as far as possible. Fair and complete resolution of reports can be put at risk, or the evidence of children and other witnesses can be contaminated if evidence is leaked.

6.5.3 Reporting incidents

If an Approved Children Worker or any other person at Church witnesses an incident resulting in an injury that is non-trivial, or highlights an unsafe practice or environment, they must ensure that someone records it on an Incident Response Form (Board Policy Handbook Appendix I – Incident Response Form) and submits the form to a Safe Ministry Supervisor who will report it to the Senior Pastor.

6.5.4 Reporting suspicion

If an Approved Children Worker or any other person at Church is concerned by any significant changes in behaviour or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries of a child or has any other reasons to have concerns or suspicions about possible Mistreatment or Grooming of that child, that person must report it to a Safe Ministry Supervisor. 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.

If a child or young person is a victim of Mistreatment, Grooming, or sexual abuse, they may show some or all of the following signs:

- 1) regular absences
- 2) developing an unusually close connection with an older person
- 3) displaying mood changes (hyperactive, secretive, hostile, aggressive, impatient, resentful, anxious, withdrawn, depressed)
- 4) using different language or copying the way a new friend may speak
- 5) talking about new friends who doesn't belong to their normal social circle
- 6) having large amounts of money, which they cannot account for
- 7) using a new mobile phone (possibly given to them by a new friend), excessively making calls, videos or sending text messages
- 8) being very secretive about their phone, internet, and social media use.

6.5.5 Disclosure

If a child discloses Mistreatment to an Approved Children Worker or any other person at Church, that person must report the disclosure to a Safe Ministry Supervisor or Pastoral Staff Member.

The adult to whom the disclosure of Mistreatment is made must report the matter directly, rather than asking another adult to report it on their behalf.

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

Disclosures of Mistreatment 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..."

When receiving a disclosure of harm:

- a) remain calm and find a private but visible place to talk

- b) 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
- c) 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
- d) do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.

6.5.6 Handling a report involving an adult at a church event

If an Approved Child Worker or other person at Unichurch Qld Inc is concerned that someone present at a Church event may pose a risk to children (including grooming behaviour), the person must report that concern to a Safe Ministry Supervisor.

- 1) If a Safe Ministry Supervisor receives a report, or has their own concern, that someone may pose a risk to children, they must report it to the Senior Pastor.
- 2) 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 refer the concern to the Board for consideration.
- 3) Where the Board considers, on reasonable grounds, that a Member 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, 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).
 - vi) After a report, training material will be audited by the Board. Based on this audit, the processes or procedures will be appropriately modified to mitigate situations where abuse could occur. Any changes to processes or procedures will be communicated to Approved Child Workers within 3 months of the report.

6.5.7 Record Keeping

Every stage of the Reporting and Investigation process must be 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.

If a report or disclosure is made, the Safe Ministry Supervisor or Pastoral Staff Member should listen carefully to what is said to them and record details of the matter. They should collect a written report from whoever received the original disclosure or raised the matter.

All records made for the purpose of recording the making of or responding to allegations or reportable conduct must be:

- a) stored securely by the person making them
- b) Retained for 30 years

The Senior Pastor must keep a confidential record of every report which, at a minimum (i) identifies the child affected and any alleged wrongdoer and (ii) contains a brief summary of the report made.

6.5.8 Investigation Group

If the Safe Ministry Supervisor receives a report or a disclosure, they must complete a Risk of Harm Form (Board Policy Handbook Appendix J – Risk of Harm Form).

The Safe Ministry Supervisor must refer the report to the Investigation Group responsible for carrying out the investigation, as set out below:

Report made against	Investigation Group Members
Church Member	Senior Pastor and Elder
Board Member	Senior Pastor and Elder
Staff Member or Volunteer	Senior Pastor and Elder
Senior Pastor or his family	Secretary and Treasurer
Elder	Senior Pastor and Elder
Elder and Senior Pastor	Secretary and Treasurer

The Safe Ministry Supervisor must also email the Secretary and the other Safe Ministry Supervisor(s), to notify them that a report has referred to the relevant Investigation Group, but not the detail of the report. The Secretary may notify and consult with the Church insurer around the management of the report.

6.5.8.1 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Investigations must be, and be seen to be, fair and unbiased. Fairness, and the perception of it, could be compromised if anyone involved at any stage in responding to the report are, or are seen to be, too closely associated with the accused, or seen to have an interest which may be contrary to the possible outcome of an investigation.

If the Investigation Group includes the Senior Pastor, the Investigation Group must, in consultation with the Safe Ministry Supervisor, determine whether the Senior Pastor has a conflict of interest in carrying out the investigation. If the Elder or the Safe Ministry Supervisor consider that the Senior Pastor has a conflict of interest, the report will be referred to the Secretary and Treasurer as the Investigation Group.

6.5.9 Investigation Process

- 1) The Investigation Group must decide whether the report is:
 - a) frivolous or trivial,
 - b) obviously untrue or false, or

- c) concerns an Excluded Incident.
- 2) If the Investigation Group determines the report is not something mentioned in point 1), it should refer the report to:
 - a) the Board (and if so whether to do so urgently, or at the next scheduled Board meeting), and
 - b) the Relevant Government Department.
- 3) If the report is not something mentioned in point 1, includes abuse or alleged abuse, the Investigation Group must inform the Police and Unichurch Qld Inc's insurer of the matter.
- 4) If the Investigation Group determines the report is not something mentioned in point 1) and the accused is an Approved Child Worker, they must direct the Administrator to update the Child Worker Register to:
 - a) suspended the accused as an Approved Child Worker pending the completion of the investigation.
 - b) record the fact of the report and the date of the report (but not any details of the report).
- 5) If the Investigation Group determines the report is not something mentioned in point 1), they must determine any further steps to be taken to identify and minimise any risks to:
 - a) any child(ren) who are the subject of the report or disclosure;
 - b) other children with whom the worker has contact;
 - c) the accused person;
 - d) the Church; and
 - e) the proper investigation of the allegation. As there may be limited information on which to base the initial risk assessment it should be reviewed as further information is obtained.
- 6) The Investigation Group must determine the form that investigation should take, including:
 - a) the Investigation Group may refer to the [National Office for Child Safety's Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people](#);
 - b) depending on the seriousness of the report, it may be appropriate to engage a competent external investigator who does not know the accused or others involved.
- 7) The Investigation Group should organise a support person for any children and families involved, the complainant and the accused. The support and pastoral care provided should be monitored by the Investigation Group to ensure it is adequate and ongoing.
- 8) The accused should be given the opportunity to respond to the report in a fair way. Once an investigation has commenced, the Investigation Group must write to the accused, informing them of the nature of the report and members of the Investigation Group (in consultation with the Relevant Government Department and Police, if applicable). The timing of this letter may depend on the circumstances of the report. It will generally be inappropriate to inform the accused before an investigation commences, unless this is necessary to explain action to reduce a risk that affects them. Notification must not be delayed so as to:
 - a) affect the ability of the accused to make representations about the nature of the report or the person appointed to investigate them,
 - b) to deny the accused procedural fairness in the way the investigation is conducted, or
 - c) to prevent the accused from receiving adequate support in relation to the allegations made against them.
- 9) The Investigation Group must prepare a written report of their investigation including their recommendations.

6.5.10 Board Involvement

- 1) The Board must:

- a) ensure that the report is, or has been, referred to the Relevant Government Department, unless the Board forms the unanimous view that the report is frivolous or trivial, the report is obviously untrue, or the report concerns an Excluded Incident.
- b) if the report does not include abuse or alleged abuse, determine whether to refer the report to the Police, taking advice from the Relevant Government Department.

6.5.11 Outcome

6.5.11.1 REPORT IS SUBSTANTIATED

- 1) If the report is substantiated, the Investigation Group must: :
 - a) remove the accused from the Child Worker Register;
 - b) require the accused to cease to have any contact with children at Church other than unavoidable incidental contact;
 - c) ask the accused to leave the Church;
 - d) report the matter to relevant government authorities;
 - e) inform Members of the Church about what has occurred.
- 2) The Senior Pastor, or Secretary with Board Approval, must:
 - a) write to:
 - i) the parents or carers of the child;
 - ii) the complainant, if appropriate; and
 - iii) the accused; and
 - b) inform the above parties of:
 - i) the outcome of the investigation, while respecting the privacy the parties involved;
 - ii) the action the Investigation Group intends to take;
 - c) include an offer to discuss the report, if appropriate.

6.5.11.2 REPORT IS NOT SUBSTANTIATED

- 1) The Investigation Group must decide what action to take, including if the accused is an Approved Child Worker, reinstating them from being suspended;
- 2) The Senior Pastor, or Secretary with Board Approval, must:
 - a) write to:
 - iv) the parents or carers of the child;
 - v) the complainant, if appropriate; and
 - vi) the accused; and
 - b) inform the above parties of:
 - i) the outcome of the investigation, while respecting the privacy the parties involved;
 - ii) the action the Investigation Group intends to take;
 - c) include an offer to discuss the report, if appropriate.

6.5.12 Review

- 1) If the complainant, the parents of the child affected, or the accused is dissatisfied with the result of the investigation, that person may write to the Secretary to request that the Board carry out a review. The review process will follow that detailed in Section 5.5.5.

- 2) After an investigation, the Senior Pastor and Safe Ministry Supervisor should conduct an evaluation to identify learnings that might require an improvement in procedures, which should include assessing and implementing any recommendations of the Investigation Group as appropriate.

6.5.13 Breaches

Any reported breach of this Policy must be reported to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor may seek counsel regarding the action to be taken.

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

- 1) counsel, or ask another Staff Member to counsel, the person responsible for the breach;
- 2) take no further action.

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

- 1) counsel, or ask another Staff Member to counsel, the person responsible for the breach;
- 2) consider whether the person should be removed from any current responsibilities for supervising or caring for children or, in consultation with an Elder, impose other consequence on the person, e.g., an Approved Child Worker who repeatedly breaches the Policy may be suspended or have their name removed from the Child Worker Register;
- 3) 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;
- 4) if 3) 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.

6.6 Delegations

6.6.1 Safe Ministry Supervisors

The Board delegates to the Safe Ministry Supervisors:

- 1) The ongoing recruitment and management of Approved Child Workers

6.6.2 Administrator

The Board delegates to the Administrator the responsibility for:

- 1) maintaining the Child Worker Register, with each entry to be retained for 30 years.
- 2) reviewing the Child Worker Register periodically to ensure that any Approved Child Worker, whose Blue Card or exemption card is to expire shortly, renews their Blue Card or exemption card.
- 3) ensuring that the Child Worker Register is kept up to date with the details of each Approved Child Worker's training details.
- 4) notifying any Approved Child Worker who 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 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.

6.7 Procedure – Recruitment

This procedure sets out the required steps to ensure that those working with children are appropriately screened for the ministry they will be performing.

The WC (RMS) Act provide a screening process for people working with children. The Act prohibits people convicted or found guilty of serious sexual offences from working with children.

This procedure applies to all persons who supervise, teach, or otherwise have responsibility for the care of children at a Church event, including all Staff.

6.7.1 Procedure – Approved Child Workers

- 1) Blue Card Check
 - a) If the Applicant does not hold a current Blue Card or current Blue Card exemption card:
 - i) the Applicant must complete and submit a Blue Card or exemption application to the Queensland Government.
 - ii) The Child Worker application does not further proceed until the person receives a positive Blue Card notice.
 - b) If the Applicant has a current Blue Card or exemption card, they must link their card to Unichurch Qld Inc with the Queensland Government by passing their date of birth and card number to the Administrative Staff Member who will complete the linking process.
 - c) Once the Applicant receives a Blue Card, an exemption card or their current Blue Card is linked to Unichurch Qld Inc, and they have completed the mandatory training, the Applicant may begin the duties of an Approved Child Worker.
- 2) Invite Application – Upon Invitation by a Senior Staff Member, a Safe Ministry Supervisor, or the Administrator, the Applicant must complete a Child Worker application form (Board Policy Handbook Appendix G – Child Worker Application Form) and submit it to a Senior Staff Member, a Safe Ministry Supervisor, or the Administrator.
- 3) Interview – the Senior Staff Member, a Safe Ministry Supervisor, or the Administrator interviews the Applicant for the ministry role, reviews the completed application form, and signs and dates the application form.
- 4) Reference Check – the Senior Staff Member, the Safe Ministry Supervisor or the Administrator contacts the Applicant's Character References and confirms that the References support the application and they do not have any concerns about the Applicant; signs and dates the form.
- 5) Review Application – The Pastoral Staff Member or Safe Ministry Supervisor checks and reviews the entire application, to ensure that the above steps have been completed and the Applicant holds a current Blue Card or Exemption Card before the application is submitted to the Board.
 - a) The reviewing Pastoral Staff Member or Safe Ministry Supervisor notes on the application form that the Applicant holds a Blue Card or Exemption Card and that the Applicant's photo identification (usually either a valid drivers' licence or passport) has been checked.
- 6) Board Approval – The Board reviews and, if everything is in order, approves the application. The approval is recorded in the Board meeting minutes and forwarded to the Administrator.
- 7) Finalises check and files record – The Administrator records the person's name in the Child Worker Register. The details to be recorded are:
 - a) Name of the Approved Child Worker (as appears on the Blue Card or Exemption Card);
 - b) Blue Card or exemption card number;
 - c) Person's date of birth;
 - d) Expiry date of the Blue Card or in the case of an exemption card, the expiry date of the underlying registration;
 - e) Approved Child Worker number (provided by the Secretary);
 - f) Date of approval as an Approved Child Worker.
- 8) Notify applicant – The Administrator notifies the Applicant that they are an Approved Child Worker.

- 9) Initial training – The Applicant must complete an initial child safety training session before they start work.
- 10) Start work – Once the applicant has completed the initial child safety training session they may start carrying out the functions of an Approved Child Worker.

6.7.2 Procedure – Pastoral Staff Member

A Pastoral Staff Member is taken to be an Approved Child Worker provided that:

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

6.7.3 Volunteers from other churches

People from other churches can provide care and supervision for children at Unichurch Qld Inc if the following are met:

- 1) Unichurch Qld Inc has:
 - a) received a copy of the person's church's Child Protection Policy and procedures and public liability coverage;
 - b) checked with its insurer that the person's church's public liability is appropriate;
 - c) verified the person's Blue Card is valid and not expired;
 - d) verified with the person's pastor that they have completed their church's requirements for working with children; And
- 2) The person is under the supervision of an Approved Child Worker.

6.8 Procedure – Risk Management Plan for High-Risk Activities & Special Events

Some activities involve higher risks to children. Special procedures apply to the holdings of activities of this kind. 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 via an effective risk management strategy plan.

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

6.8.1 Risk Management Process

A risk management plan for the activity needs to be created and approved by the Board, using the Board Policy Handbook Appendix H – Risk Management Plan for High-Risk Activity Template.

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:

- 1) Establish the Context (describe the activity)
- 2) Identify the Risks

- 3) Analyse the Risks
- 4) Evaluate the Risks
- 5) Manage the Risks and reassess, and
- 6) Review.

STEP 1 – ESTABLISH THE CONTEXT (DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITY)

- 1) what is the activity and what are your objectives;
- 2) where is the activity going to take place – what environmental factors need to be considered;
- 3) identify the stakeholders, Staff, parents, and children and young people involved in the activity; and
- 4) 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.

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 risk management strategy. These risks are physical, emotional, sexual, and cultural in nature, including the risks from:

- a) other children or young people
- b) someone outside the organisation
- c) an employee or volunteer, and
- d) 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:

- 1) How might harm occur? E.g.,
 - a) Running an activity where children and young people are required to change clothes, where the change rooms are unsupervised and open to the public.
 - b) Paid employees or volunteers spending long periods alone with a child or young person.
 - c) A coach offering special private sessions to a child or young person.
- 2) Why might harm occur? E.g.,
 - a) Inadequate recruitment and selection practices of paid employees and volunteers
 - b) Incorrect instructions given to employees working with children or young people
 - c) Not providing training to employees and volunteers
 - d) Inadequate attention to cultural considerations
- 3) When might harm occur?
 - a) Inadequate adult supervision
 - b) 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:

- 1) How likely is it that the risk will occur? (Likelihood)
- 2) 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.

- 1) Determine likelihood of the risk by using the left-hand column of the **Risk Analysis Matrix**
- 2) Use the impact information to determine the consequences level.
- 3) Combine the Consequences and Likelihood ratings to arrive at the **Risk Level** (i.e., Low, Medium, High, or Critical).

Risk Analysis Matrix

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:

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

Risk management involves assessing the options available to reduce the risk and the preparation and implementation of risk management plans, e.g.:

- a) Reduce the risk – will the proposed additional controls reduce the risk?
- b) 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.

6.9 Resources

6.9.1 Safe Ministry Supervisors

Michael Healy – Michael.healy@uq.edu.au

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

Carol Auld - carolauld@hotmail.com

6.9.2 Senior Pastor

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

6.9.3 External entities

Agencies	Contact Information
Child Safety Service Centre	Business Hours: 1 300 682 254 Outside Business Hours: 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999
Police (for emergencies)	000
Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs	secure.communities.qld.gov.au/cbir/home/ChildSafety

7 DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

7.1 Definitions

Domestic and family violence refers to acts of violence that occur between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship. The central element of domestic violence is an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling another adult through fear. For example, by using behaviour which is violent and threatening. In most cases, the violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics to exercise power and control over another person within the relationship, and can be both criminal, and non-criminal.

Domestic violence includes, but is not limited to, threatening, harassment, physical or sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, financial and economic deprivation, social or geographical isolation, or other behaviour, to control and dominate another person through fear and intimidation. For further clarification see the [*Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 \(Qld\)*](#).

Domestic and family violence can affect people of all cultures, backgrounds, age, gender, and social groups.

7.2 Policy Statement

Unichurch Qld Inc is committed to addressing and responding to domestic and family violence within the Unichurch Qld Inc congregations and affiliates, to protect vulnerable individuals and deal with cases of reported or suspected domestic and family violence.

Unichurch Qld Inc's priority is the safety of the victim, therefore, any disclosure of domestic or family violence will be taken seriously.

Committing domestic and family violence is contrary to the will of God and contrary to the conduct expected from followers of Jesus Christ.

Unichurch Qld Inc does not and will not condone any form of domestic or family violence and the bible must never be used as an excuse for violent conduct or to justify tolerance to such conduct.

Unichurch Qld Inc is committed to promoting and supporting safe and healthy environments of mutual respect and responsibility in marriages and families. Unichurch Qld Inc strives to follow good practice in protecting people in relationships by ensuring that concerns raised are responded to promptly and consistently. Unichurch Qld Inc acknowledges that in some situations, permanent separation or ending the marriage is the only safe option.

Unichurch Qld Inc does not tolerate violent behaviour. A person has the right to choose whether, when and to whom they disclose information about being affected by domestic or family violence. Once disclosed, Unichurch Qld Inc will not conceal instances of domestic and family violence within the Unichurch Qld Inc congregation from those entrusted with responsible for the wellbeing of the Church.

Unichurch Qld Inc will carefully consider any action to be taken to provide support for those seeking help to ensure it will not place them in an increased risk of further violence.

Unichurch Qld Inc does and will encourage any victim to seek assistance from professional services.

If the situation may constitute criminal conduct, the victim will be encouraged and supported to report the matter to the relevant authorities, including the Police and Child Safety Services.

Unichurch Qld Inc will cooperate and assist with statutory authorities such as the Police, child protection services and domestic violence services.

This Policy does not override any legal obligations to disclose information.

Unichurch Qld Inc is committed to raising awareness of domestic and family violence and its impact on individuals, families, children, and the community. It will do so by:

- a) Challenging inappropriate, abusive or violent behaviour;
- b) Adopting this domestic and family violence policy;
- c) Having procedures in place to respond to concerns about domestic and family violence;
- d) Providing information on domestic and family violence resources and support;
- e) Training church leadership to recognise and respond to domestic and family violent situations;

- f) Discussing domestic and family violence and raising awareness in an appropriate context such as marriage preparation, leadership training, men's groups, women's groups, and youth groups.

7.3 Responsibilities

7.3.1 Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is responsible for:

- 1) ensuring that the Unichurch Qld Inc Member Protection Domestic & Family Violence Policy and relevant documents are publicised to Members of the Unichurch Qld Inc congregation, and support contact details are provided.
- 2) raising awareness of domestic and family violence and the provision of relevant training on a regular basis.

If he believes a victim is in immediate danger the Police will be called on 000.

7.4 Procedure – Disclosure

7.4.1 Guidance for victims

Any person who is part of the Unichurch Qld Inc community who is a victim of domestic and family violence is strongly encouraged to speak to someone they trust and get help from those who specialise in dealing with family and domestic violence.

7.4.2 Receiving a disclosure

- 1) If a person discloses domestic and family violence to you, Respect and Listen:
 - a) Listen with respect and acceptance
 - b) Don't ask for proof
 - c) Assure the victim it is not their fault
 - d) Be honest about your ability to help
 - e) Reassure confidentiality will be maintained, but explain its limits
 - f) Do not suggest to the victim that they can improve the situation by changing their behaviour e.g., by loving their partner more or being less argumentative.
 - g) Do not ask the victim to forgive or to reconcile the relationship prematurely.
- 2) If there is an immediate risk of harm, Safety first:
 - a) Discuss with the victim, but call the Police 000;
 - b) Seek advice from 1800 Respect National Helpline 1800 737 732;
 - c) Help the victim to feel safe: this may mean arranging accommodation away from the home.
- 3) If there are children involved, Child Protection Procedures:
 - a) Call a Child Safety Service Centre:
 - i) Business Hours: 1300 682 254;
 - ii) Outside Business Hours: 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999;

- b) Remember that witnessing domestic abuse harms children and may be reportable.
- 4) If the victim or accused in a recognised leadership position:
- a) Keep Elders and Council of Reference informed
- 5) If further help has been requested:
- a) Record what was disclosed and your safety concerns, note your actions and from whom you received advice. Date the record and keep it confidential.
 - b) Advise that any intervention needs care and can heighten risk.
 - c) Be guided by what the victim wants.
 - d) Outline realistic options: Police AVDOs DV services, safety planning, GP counsellor, refuge...
 - e) Find out where to get help from those experienced in working with family and domestic violence.
 - f) Supply appropriate information/resources.
 - g) Encourage the victim to consult a service or make a referral on their behalf. You could arrange for individual counselling, for both parties if possible. If there is an established pattern of power and control, relationship counselling may not be suitable.
- 6) If further help has not been requested:
- a) Record what was disclosed and your safety concerns, note your actions and/ or advice. Date the record and keep it confidential
 - b) Reassure the victim that they have been heard and can reach out if they need to discuss again
 - c) You can't make a victim take action
 - d) You may be able to suggest seeing a counsellor, psychologist or GP, or that they contact a relevant support agency
- 7) In regard to the perpetrator:
- a) Do not talk with the perpetrator if the victim feels unsafe or asks you not to.
 - b) If you do speak with the perpetrator, expect them to minimise or deny that anything serious is happening.
 - c) Invite the perpetrator to take responsibility for their behaviour: this may mean attending a group program, getting individual counselling, moving out of home etc.

7.5 Procedure – Reporting

Suspensions, concerns, and allegations of domestic and family violence should be made to an Elder, Staff Member, Safe Ministry Supervisor or Senior Pastor. Unless the allegation is against the Senior Pastor, he should also be made aware of the situation.

Any report of suspicion, knowledge, or disclosure of domestic or family violence will be kept confidential, except to the extent that disclosure is required or permitted by law.

7.6 Procedure – Response to Report

Where Staff or Elders become aware of domestic or family violence within the Unichurch Qld Inc congregation or affiliated groups, the alleged perpetrator will be asked to meet with a designated Staff Member or Elder. They will be asked to explain the allegation and will be asked not to attend Church

services or events where the alleged victim will be present or is expected to attend, pending investigation and resolution.

The alleged perpetrator will also be encouraged to seek professional help and support.

Ongoing support from a Staff Member will be offered.

Unichurch Qld Inc supports people in violent situations by:

- a) Offering informed care; ensuring confidentiality and appropriate pastoral care is offered to anyone who is suffering domestic or family violence;
- b) Listening to and proceeding at the victim's pace by not pressuring the victim to submit to, or restore a relationship with the perpetrator;
- c) Understanding that reconciliation between the victim and the offender may not be possible. However, if there is to be any reconciliation, it will be wholly dependent upon genuine repentance, proven reformation of the offender, successful participation in professional support services such as counselling, therapy and similar programs, and on the willing grace of the victim;
- d) Ensuring that everyone has the same access to support and resources, including the Church leaders, Staff Members, and their spouses, and families.

7.6.1 A section specifically for staff

If an allegation of domestic and family violence is made against a Staff Member they will be placed on leave until the matter is proven. Should the allegation prove true, their position on staff is untenable and appropriate action will be taken.

7.7 Resources

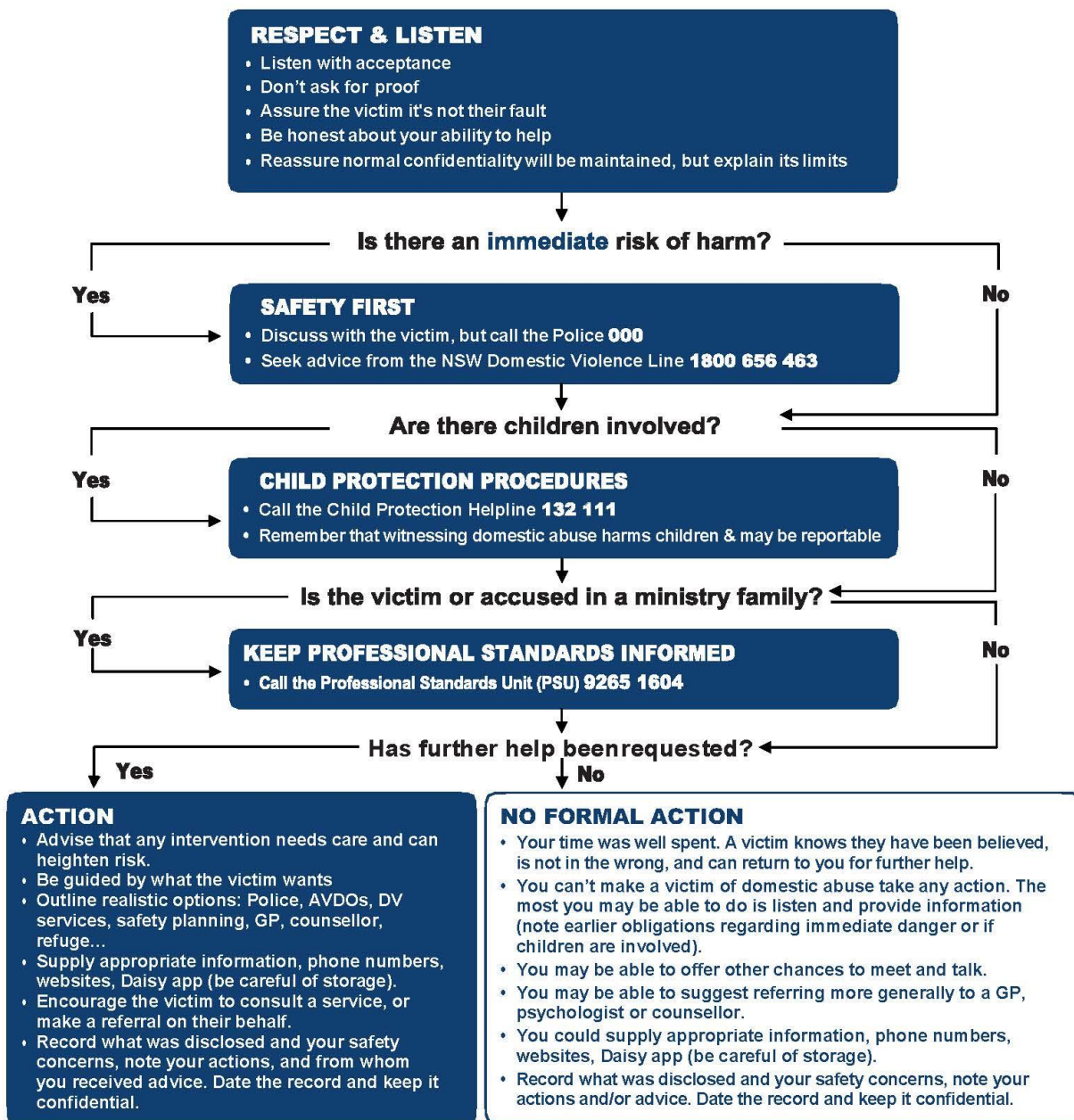
7.7.1 Domestic Abuse Flowchart

The flowchart on the following page is taken from the Sydney Anglican Safe Ministry documentation and should be consulted for guidance in conjunction with the policy above.

Domestic Abuse Flowchart

At any time in this process you can seek advice from a domestic violence professional. Within 48 hours of a disclosure you should debrief with such a professional.

A person discloses domestic abuse:



7.7.2 Support Organisations

Agencies	Contact Information
<p>1800 Respect National Helpline</p> <p>24/7 national number for sexual assault, family & domestic violence counselling and advice</p>	<p>1800 737 732</p> <p>1800respect.org.au</p>
<p>Brisbane Domestic Violence Services</p> <p>Free and confidential service for people in the Brisbane Metropolitan area who are affected by domestic and family violence</p>	<p>(07) 3217 2544</p> <p>bdvs.org.au</p>
<p>Daisy App</p> <p>Australia-wide domestic and family violence app for anyone experiencing domestic and family violence. Contains useful information including emergency contacts</p>	<p>Download from Apple App Store and Android Google Play</p>
<p>DV Connect Womensline</p> <p>24/7 number helps women to obtain safe refuge accommodation, confidential counselling and referral to other services in Queensland</p>	<p>1800 811 811</p> <p>dvconnect.org/womensline</p>
<p>DV Connect Mensline</p> <p>9 am to midnight, 7 days, provides confidential counselling, information and referral to men affected by domestic and family violence</p>	<p>1800 600 636</p> <p>dvconnect.org/mensline</p>
<p>Kids Helpline</p> <p>Private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service, specifically for children and young people aged between 5 and 25</p>	<p>1800 551 800</p>
<p>Lifeline</p> <p>24/7 crisis line, to help with crisis services nationally. Anyone in Australia experiencing a personal crisis or thinking about suicide can call</p>	<p>131 113</p> <p>lifeline.org.au</p>
<p>Suicide Call Back Service</p> <p>Free counselling 24/7, whether you're feeling suicidal, are worried about someone else, or have lost someone to suicide</p>	<p>1300 659 467</p>
<p>Translating and Interpreting Service</p> <p>Gain free access to a telephone or on-site interpreter in your own language. 24/7 immediate phone interpreting</p>	<p>131 450</p>
<p>White Ribbon</p> <p>Information, resources and contacts for domestic violence</p>	<p>whiteribbon.org.au</p>

7.7.3 Further Reading

- [Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022](#)
- [Moore College Domestic Violence Policy and Resources](#)
- [Anglican Diocese of Sydney Safe Ministry Domestic & Family Abuse Resources](#)