

Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of Victoria and Tasmania



# KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE POLICY



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SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



Culture of Safety

Find us on [www.victas.uca.org.au](http://www.victas.uca.org.au)

This brochure introduces you to the **Keeping Children Safe Policy**, an overarching whole-of-church policy that is the Uniting Church's binding and public commitment to the provision of safety for children. It builds on the good work already done to develop our church communities and establishments as safe places for children.

It is important that we continually review how we as a whole Church are placed in implementing our commitment to being a child-safe organisation across all our activities.

As a community of faith, we are committed to providing safe environments for all people, especially children, so they are welcomed and cared for responsibly and justly in order to live life in all its fullness.

The Uniting Church abhors the crime of child abuse. We are determined to make every effort to put in place procedures and practices that maximise our ability to keep children safe and protected from physical or emotional harm and neglect, including sexual abuse and exploitation.



All children who are involved in any Uniting Church activities, events or programs have a right to feel and be safe. Though children may not be regularly involved in your congregation or part of the Uniting Church, there may still be times when children visit on an irregular basis. This is why everyone involved in activities of the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania needs to be familiar with the **Keeping Children Safe Policy**. The Church clearly affirms that we are subject to upholding the same legislation and processes as prescribed by law. This includes the requirement to report abuse.

The Church will provide a safe environment for children by ensuring that we:

- **Provide an open environment**
- **Have a clear Code of Conduct**
- **Adopt clear procedures**
- **Recruit well**
- **Provide orientation and training**
- **Undertake planning, supervision and record keeping**
- **Provide support**
- **Report**
- **Review**

The **Keeping Children Safe Policy** provides template procedures and guidelines to assist you with implementing the policy. These cover:

1. **Our Statement of Commitment**
2. **Code of Conduct**
3. **Recruitment and selection**
4. **Induction and training**
5. **Assessment of risk**
6. **How to respond to and report disclosures of abuse**
7. **How alleged offenders will be treated**
8. **Mechanisms for appeal**

## **How can I access the Keeping Children Safe Policy, the templates and guidelines?**

These can be found on the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania website at [www.victas.uca.org.au/keepingchildrensafe](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/keepingchildrensafe). The information can be downloaded and printed.

### **I don't have access to a computer.**

If you are unable to access the information from a computer please telephone our Safe Church Educator on **03 9340 8810** to organise a copy of the Policy.

### **I don't know what to do with the templates.**

The website ([www.victas.uca.org.au/keepingchildrensafe](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/keepingchildrensafe)) has an introduction to explain which templates different sections of the Church and its organisations need to implement. If you are still unsure or cannot access a computer, please phone **03 9340 8810**.

### **Do church councils need to use any of the templates?**

Yes, there are specific templates which can be found at [www.victas.uca.org.au/keepingchildrensafe](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/keepingchildrensafe). If you are still unsure or cannot access a computer, please call **03 9340 8810**.

### **I attend church now and then. Am I still expected to know about the Policy?**

We ask all who participate in activities of the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania to be familiar with the Keeping Children Safe Policy. The Church is determined to make every effort to put in place procedures that maximise our ability to keep children safe and protected.

### **I work for the Uniting Church/an agency of the Uniting Church, but not in an area that involves children. Do I need to look at the Policy?**

It is an expectation of the Synod that all employees have knowledge of the Keeping Children Safe Policy, its templates and guidelines. Children often visit our locations on school excursions. Children and grandchildren also visit our services. Your area of work may already have government legislated policies in place covering care of children. As part of the Uniting Church, the Keeping Children Safe Policy now forms a further section of your existing policies.

### **I need to share the policy with people where English is not their first language.**

Please email our **Safe Church Educator** - [safechurchpolicies@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:safechurchpolicies@victas.uca.org.au) so we can help.

### **Contact details for Keeping Children Safe Policy advice and information:**

Safe Church Educator, Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania,  
[safechurchpolicies@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:safechurchpolicies@victas.uca.org.au)  
or call **03 9340 8810**.

