



Uniting Church
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT

Culture of Safety



Ministry Engagement Form

If printing this form, please print this cover page
and attach it to help preserve private information

Thank you for volunteering to serve your church and community.

The Christian life is marked by service. Jesus taught about it and modelled it and then commanded his followers to go and do it. He called leaders in his church to be servant leaders. That is to lead, not for their own benefit but for the benefit of those they lead. Therefore, servant leaders must be safe leaders.

Our community and our governments also expect us to be safe leaders. In NSW on 1st February 2022 and in the ACT on 1st August 2024, the 10 Child Safe Standards became mandatory for churches.

Standard 5 involves the screening and appointment of leaders (*paid & volunteer*). If an appropriate screening and appointment process is followed by ALL leaders it can help weed out unsuitable leaders, discourage potential abusers and protect healthy leaders.

The Uniting Church in NSW/ACT has therefore developed a **Screening Policy** that applies to “*all Uniting Church organisations and employees, contractors and volunteers in NSW and ACT*”. This policy sets out the basic screening requirements for all leaders (*paid & volunteer*). These include:

Application ➡ Interview ➡ References ➡ Code of Conduct ➡ Screening Questions*

This **Ministry Engagement Form** includes the application, nomination of referees, screening questions* and the Code of Conduct. Please complete and sign this form (*including the Code of Conduct*) and return it to your minister or church council. A brief chat with them about your answers and what is expected of you in your role can be considered as your ‘interview’.

If you have any questions regarding this document or the policy/process of screening, please contact the synod **CULTURE of SAFETY** team at cultureofsafety@nswact.uca.org.au

* for any paid worker or volunteer who will be engaged in a governance role, or child-related work, or regulated work with vulnerable people.



Ministry Engagement Form*

Congregation, Admin or Office use only

WWCC Verified by (NSW only)	(name) _____	on (date) ____ / ____ / ____
Entered onto Safe Church Register by	(name) _____	on (date) ____ / ____ / ____
Interviewed by	(name) _____	on (date) ____ / ____ / ____
Referee Check 1 conducted by	(name) _____	on (date) ____ / ____ / ____
Referee Check 1 conducted by	(name) _____	on (date) ____ / ____ / ____

* Includes screening questions for those engaged in pastoral ministry, Church Council, child-related work and/or work with vulnerable adults (whether paid or unpaid)

Personal Details

Surname: _____ Given Name/s: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Gender: _____

Address: _____

Contact number(s): _____

Email: _____

Role/Ministry: _____ Start Date: _____

Do you have any health conditions that we should know about?

Please list the churches you have attended regularly in the last three years

Name of church	Location	When (Month/Year)	Any positions held

Referees

Please provide details of two referees who are over eighteen years of age and able to give a verbal report on your character and suitability for ministry. Referees may be part of the church.

Referee 1: ☐ Minister/Pastor ☐ Church Council ☐ Friend ☐ Other _____

Name: Phone:

Referee 2: ☐ Minister/Pastor ☐ Church Council ☐ Friend ☐ Other _____

Name: Phone:

Working with Children Check, Working with Vulnerable People Check and/or National Police Check

WWCC / WWVP Number (if required): _____ ☐ I consent to National Police Check
(for staff only)

☐ CULTURE of SAFETY Training Date ____ / ____ / ____



For anyone in pastoral ministry, Church Council, child-related work and/or work with vulnerable adults (whether paid or unpaid)

Please tick either **YES** or **NO** for each of the following questions. If you answer YES or choose not to answer any of the questions, this does not necessarily prevent you from engaging in ministry, but we will need some extra information. Please give details on a separate page or discuss with the relevant leader. Please note that, if you disclose any potentially criminal actions, the church may need to report this information to the police or other relevant government authorities.

(Leaders can contact the Synod Culture of Safety Team for advice at any time)

1. Have you ever been charged with and/or convicted of a criminal offence? ☐ YES ☐ NO
2. As an adult (18+ years) have you ever engaged in any of the following conduct:
 - use, possession, production or distribution of child abuse material? ☐ YES ☐ NO
 - sexual contact with a person under the relevant age of consent ☐ YES ☐ NO
3. To your knowledge, has there ever been any allegations made against you regarding any abuse of a child, physical abuse or sexual misconduct? ☐ YES ☐ NO
4. Have you ever had an apprehended violence order, order for protection or the like issued against you as a result of allegations of violence, abuse, likely harm, harassment, stalking, etc? ☐ YES ☐ NO
5. Has your membership of another church ever been suspended or revoked? ☐ YES ☐ NO
6. Have you ever had permission to undertake paid or voluntary work with children or other vulnerable people refused, suspended or withdrawn in Australia or any other country? ☐ YES ☐ NO
7. Has a child or dependent young person in your care ever been removed from your care by relevant authorities? ☐ YES ☐ NO
8. Have you ever been prevented from holding a leadership role in another church? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Consent to Hold Information

- ☐ I consent to the information contained in this application, including any subsequent pages, to be kept by the church. I understand that this information will be kept in a confidential file and used only for screening purposes.

Declaration

- I, _____ sincerely declare that:
- The information I have provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
 - I understand that if I provide false or misleading information or withhold relevant information from this questionnaire, the church leadership may determine that I am unsuitable to serve in any role in the church.
 - I have received a copy of the Code of Conduct and am willing to uphold it.

Applicants Signature:

Date:



*The Code of Conduct is binding regardless of whether an individual has signed it.
Nevertheless, obtaining signature from every individual is an important part of ensuring awareness.*

1. Purpose

The Uniting Church of Australia Synod of NSW and ACT is committed to providing an ethical, safe and inclusive environment. This Code of Conduct outlines the behavioural expectations for Ministers, employees, volunteers and contractors across the Synod.

2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees (permanent, fixed-term and casual), volunteers, independent contractors, temporary agency staff and Ministers across Synod Mission Services, Uniting Financial Services, Secretariat, boards, committees, Presbyteries, and Congregations.

The Code of Conduct extends to all places where work, or work-related activity, is carried out, whether within or outside of working hours. This includes:

- at an Individual's usual workplace;
- where an Individual is working remotely or at an alternative location, including when the Individual is working from home or is attending church or a community member's premises in the course of work; and
- where an Individual is representing the Synod or UCA or engaging in work-related activity such as community consultation, conferences, training, business trips, social events whether or not on Synod or Church owned or run premises.

The Code also extends to all written and verbal communication, both inside and outside the workplace, including, but not limited to, letters, reports, email, instant messaging, text messages and social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media where content can be shared and/or comments made.

For anyone subject to a relevant Reportable Conduct Scheme, the Code of Conduct also applies outside of working locations and hours, as far as required by the relevant legislation.

3. Our Values

Our values guide the important work we do, defining our approach with our people and with those we serve. We are guided by:

- **Compassion:** We treat those we serve and support with empathy and kindness.
- **Respect:** We treat others in the way we want to be treated.
- **Collaboration:** We work together to create positive outcomes.
- **Integrity:** We have the courage to do the right thing.

4. Commitments

- 4.1. Respect the mission, beliefs and values of the Uniting Church in Australia
- 4.2. Uphold the Policies and Procedures of the Synod of NSW and ACT
- 4.3. Participate fully in any required training.
- 4.4. Treat others with respect and communicate with integrity regardless of race, colour, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, health status, national, ethnic or social origin, culture, property, ability or other status, for example by:
 - 4.4.a. Actively promoting a culture of safety and inclusion;
 - 4.4.b. Giving consideration to power imbalances in personal and professional relationships;
 - 4.4.c. Not communicating information that is false or in ways that could be misleading;
 - 4.4.d. Not engaging in or tolerating bullying, harassment, discrimination or abuse of any kind;
 - 4.4.e. Not acting violently, provoking violence or engaging in behaviour that would reasonably be expected to cause isolation or intimidation;
 - 4.4.f. Not communicating or behaving in ways that are likely to humiliate, frighten or distress others;
- 4.5. Raising a concern where I become aware of any other person engaging in bullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse, violence, intimidation, or other inappropriate behaviours.

4. Commitments *(continued)*

- 4.6. Act with financial integrity, including:
 - 4.6.a. Maintaining transparent records for all financial transactions;
 - 4.6.b. Not taking the property of other individuals or organisations (including intellectual property);
 - 4.6.c. Not using property for purposes other than as intended;
 - 4.6.d. Not seeking to use my position for improper personal gain, or improper gain for those close to me;
 - 4.6.e. Not engaging in fraud, bribery, or corruption;
 - 4.6.f. Not accepting any gift or benefit that is given with the expectation or understanding of favourable treatment for the giver or a third-party.
- 4.7. Uphold my responsibilities to contribute to a safe and healthy workplace, including:
 - 4.7.a. Reporting any hazards I become aware of, including physical and psychological hazards;
 - 4.7.b. Maintaining an awareness of Work health and Safety Policies and my responsibilities.
- 4.8. Uphold the Child Safe Standards, including:
 - 4.8.a. Upholding the **Statement of Commitment to Child Safety** and Culture of Safety policies and procedures;
 - 4.8.b. Reporting any allegations or information about risks of harm according to the relevant policies and procedures;
 - 4.8.c. Not engaging in sexual offences or sexual misconduct with children or young people under the age of 18;
 - 4.8.d. Not engaging in any behaviour that is likely to constitute ill-treatment, neglect, emotional abuse or grooming of any child or young person;
 - 4.8.e. Disclosing any prior misconduct relating to children;
 - 4.8.f. Communicating with children in an age appropriate and realistic manner;
 - 4.8.g. Not engaging in any inappropriate, offensive, or sexualised communication with children or young people;
 - 4.8.h. Not engaging in one-on-one text, online communication (or similar) with any child or young person except as outlined in the Childrens Ministry Guide or Youth Ministry Guide;
 - 4.8.i. Not developing any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as grooming or favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment;
 - 4.8.j. Maintaining clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between myself and a child;
 - 4.8.k. Always being willing to listen and respond appropriately to a child's views and concerns;
 - 4.8.l. Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any complaints made by a child or related to a child.
- 4.9. Not using prohibited substances.
- 4.10. Uphold confidentiality (except where there is a legal or ethical obligation to disclose).
- 4.11. Communicate appropriately, including:
 - 4.11.a. Not representing the UCA and/or Synod to any third-party media organisation without express permission from the Communications Team;
 - 4.11.b. Not using Synod devices for an inappropriate purpose;
 - 4.11.c. Complying with all relevant legal requirements;
 - 4.11.d. Following all reasonable directions;
 - 4.11.e. Raising a concern if I become aware of anyone committing a serious breach of this Code of Conduct.

5. Consequences

- 5.1. I accept that any complaint or allegation made against me will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant Complaints Policy and Complaints Procedure and I commit to participating in any investigative process and being bound by the outcome of such a process even if it includes disciplinary action.
- 5.2. I accept that some complaints or allegations may require that I be stood down or given alternative duties while the matter is investigated and I commit to following the directions of the General Secretary or Moderator (or their delegate) in relation to such matters.

Signature

I have read this Code of Conduct and commit to abide by its terms:

Signed: _____ Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

