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CHILD SAFE POLICY

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LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD

VERSION A

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Introduction

Preventing child abuse is a dual responsibility embraced by both individuals and the collective efforts of LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD. Our commitment to ensuring the safety of children stems from recognizing their inherent value in the eyes of God, and our duty as a church to nurture and protect them. Complementing this intrinsic responsibility, we adhere to external standards and regulations, such as the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Victorian Government's Child Safe Standards.

Our comprehensive Child Safe Policy, shaped by LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD's recommendations, unequivocally declares a zero-tolerance approach towards child abuse and advocates for the establishment of a secure and just environment. In conjunction with this policy, LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD operates under a framework of interconnected policies and procedures.

To provide clarity on the alignment of our policy with LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD Standards, the Victorian Child Safe Standards, and the Royal Commission Elements, a Compliance Matrix is presented in Appendix 1. Further guidance is available in Appendix 2, containing essential documentation. For a better understanding of the terminology used, definitions are outlined in Appendix 3, while additional information on child abuse can be found in Appendix 4.

LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD's Commitment: The Policy Statement

- All children participating in any of LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD's activities, services, events, or programs have the inherent right to experience a sense of safety. LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD is steadfastly committed to establishing secure environments wherein children are not only safeguarded but also treated with care, respect, nurturing, and sustained support.
- We maintain a policy of absolute intolerance towards any manifestation of child abuse and pledge to exert every effort to protect children from any form of mistreatment.
- LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD is dedicated to establishing and upholding a culture that prioritizes the safety and well-being of all children involved with the Church, ensuring their care and protection.
- Recognizing that abuse often flourishes in secrecy, our commitment to preventing child abuse involves the provision of transparent leadership and open governance. This approach aims to counteract the conditions that foster secrecy and promote a culture of accountability and openness.
- LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD unequivocally asserts its dedication to legal adherence, encompassing the obligation to promptly report any instances of abuse to the relevant authorities.

Our Faith and Believe: Theological Necessity

LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD holds the conviction that every individual, including children, is created in the image of God. Grounded in Christian principles, we affirm the belief that God extends love and acceptance to us, and accordingly, our interactions within the community should reflect values of love, care, and respect towards one another.

(Safe Place Position Statement prepared by the UCA Commission on Women and Men in 1997).

At the heart of embodying the Gospel is the imperative to love God and extend that love to others. As a faith community, we are dedicated to establishing secure environments for everyone, especially children, enabling them to experience the fullness

of life. Furthermore, we recognize and uphold the rights of children as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1990). This convention emphasizes the entitlement of children to protection from physical or mental harm, neglect, as well as safeguarding them from sexual abuse and exploitation (Article 19).

Regrettably, not every child is shielded from harm, as instances of abuse permeate all segments of society. Certain adults may actively pursue opportunities to establish relationships with children that can evolve into exploitative situations.

While it is crucial for children, parents, and the Church to be vigilant about 'stranger danger,' it is essential to recognize that a significant portion of those who sexually abuse children are acquainted with the victim through familial ties, friendships, educational institutions, sports groups, churches, and other community-based activities.

LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD strongly condemns the crime of child abuse and is unwaveringly dedicated to the care, protection, and well-being of the most vulnerable. The acknowledgment that innocent and trusting children have been victimized within the confines of churches is profoundly distressing. We are resolute in our commitment to take all necessary actions to pursue justice for those who have suffered abuse and to foster an environment where children can feel secure.

Objective: Who must follow to this policy

Every individual and ministry associated with LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD is required to follow to this policy. Through cultivating a shared understanding and commitment to a safe environment, each member plays an active role in ensuring the well-being and safety of children.

Individuals of the organisation include but are not limited to:

- Deacons and other appointed leaders
- Employees and volunteers
- Congregational members and adherents children, parents and carers Ministries of LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD include but are not limited to:
 - All congregations
 - LifeGame, LoveGame, Mission Game, Church Game, Gospel Game, Career Game, World Game and other related games that is created by LifeImpact Ministries©.
 - Table Talk
 - Small groups / Bible study groups / Fellowships

Policy Actions

We are committed to establishing a safe, fair and secure culture and environment for children in alignment with our theological imperative. We will adhere to our beliefs, incorporating relevant legislation and community expectations, including the Royal Commission's elements of child-safe organizations and the Victorian Government's Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme, into our programs and practices. Detailed information on how these standards are met can be found in the table titled "Child Safe Policy and Compliance with Victorian Child Safe Standards and Royal Commission Key Elements."

We must undertake the following measures to ensure the safety of children:

A. Foster robust leadership and governance, cultivating a culture centered on child safety.

- We maintain a zero-tolerance stance against any harm to children. The endorsement of the Child Safe Policy is integral to our commitment, and we ensure its accessibility for all individuals obligated to comply with it.
- Our leaders actively advocate for both individual and collective responsibility toward the safety and well-being of children. We cultivate a pervasive culture of child safety and meticulously implement policies and procedures to reinforce this commitment.
- Publicly committing to child safety, our leaders serve as models and advocates for child-safe policies, practices, and cultural norms. Transparent and honest communication is paramount, and we remain open to external feedback and advice to continuously improve our practices.
- Roles and responsibilities for executing child-safe strategies are clearly defined, and we diligently monitor our progress to ensure our unwavering commitment to being a child-safe organization.

B. Advocate for and uphold principles of access, equity, and cultural diversity.

- We acknowledge that certain children may be more susceptible to abuse based on factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and prior experiences of abuse or neglect.
- We extend a warm welcome to children and families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, recognizing that cultural identity and safety are foundational to a child's overall well-being and sense of security.
- We actively embrace cultural diversity and maintain a steadfast commitment to zero tolerance for discrimination.
- In addressing the needs of those who are most vulnerable:
- We pledge to foster responsive and culturally aware relationships.
- Our communication endeavours are open and inclusive, particularly with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- We approach child-rearing practices with sensitivity to variations stemming from personal or cultural beliefs.
- We acknowledge the importance of valuing the sense of self and identity for every Aboriginal child.
- Recognizing the vulnerability of children with disabilities due to communication challenges or increased personal care requirements, we collaborate with families to ensure these children are cared for and included in ways that best meet their individual needs.

C. Encourage and uphold standards of appropriate behaviour.

- We implement and enforce a transparent Code of Conduct that delineates appropriate interactions with children, establishing distinct behavioural boundaries between adults and children.
- We offer explicit guidance to children regarding our expectations for their interactions with peers, outlining acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. Recruit, train and supervise workers well

D. Recruitment and Screening of Staff and Volunteers

- We adhere to and implement evidence-based standards for the recruitment and screening of employees, as well as the engagement of volunteers and other individuals involved with children.
- Our recruitment procedures for any employee or appointed leader working with children incorporate position descriptions, interviews, and referee checks. All appointed leaders and staff directly involved with children must undergo a Working with Children Check/Registration, and, when deemed necessary, National Criminal History Checks are also conducted.
- We maintain updated and accurate records, aiding in the identification of areas for improvement, continuous monitoring, risk management, and the enhancement of child-safe practices. Our practices also align with legislative requirements regarding privacy and confidentiality.

E. Training and Supervision of Employees and Volunteers

A.

B. Establishing a child-safe culture necessitates individuals who are well-informed and supported, comprehending their role in guaranteeing a secure environment for children. During the induction process, we effectively communicate the Church's values and expectations, with a specific emphasis on those related to child safety, to newly appointed leaders and volunteers.

C. All appointed leaders and employees are mandated to attend regular training sessions to:

- Ensure comprehension of the prerequisites for maintaining a child-safe environment.
- Raise awareness of acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
- Foster awareness of child sexual abuse, grooming, and the reporting process.
- Enhance awareness of effective communication with children regarding their concerns.

D. Ensure comprehension of the procedures for addressing complaints and/or allegations.

E. Foster cultural awareness.

F. We maintain a zero-tolerance stance against any harm to children. Our supervision of staff and volunteers involves taking disciplinary action when there is non-compliance with established codes of conduct, policies, and practices.

G. We provide unwavering support to anyone who raises concerns about the safety of children or is impacted by child abuse within the Church. In meticulously planning and overseeing programs and activities involving children, we exercise careful supervision over the employees and volunteers participating. We diligently document any suspicious behaviours and strictly adhere to a comprehensive procedure for addressing complaints and concerns expressed by children or other adults. Additionally, we commit to implementing the requirements outlined in the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

F. Effectively manage risks, promote safety, and address concerns.

A. We actively monitor and assess risks to ensure the safety of children. Employing risk management strategies, we identify and mitigate risks, considering the specific nature of each environment, planned activities, and the unique

characteristics and needs of all children involved.

- B. We acknowledge the heightened vulnerability of children in the online environment and recognize that online grooming is illegal. Consequently, we prioritize identifying and minimizing this risk. Our clear procedure for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse empowers individuals to take prompt and appropriate action to protect children and promote safety.
- C. Anyone aware of or suspecting child abuse is mandated to report it to the authorities, irrespective of whether the situation involves Church staff or volunteers. In cases where a complaint of child abuse is discovered, immediate reporting to the police and child protection services occurs, and immediate steps are taken to minimize any further harm. Reportable Conduct is reported, as required, to the Commission for Children and Young Persons, with ongoing support provided to all parties involved.
- D. We meticulously document all instances of abuse and child safety concerns, along with the corresponding actions taken. These records are securely kept and retained indefinitely. Understanding the legal landscape in Victoria, we acknowledge the necessity for a Church to demonstrate that it did everything possible to prevent and report abuse in the event of a legal claim of child abuse (refer to 'The Wrongs Amendment Act 2017' in Appendix 2). Staff and volunteers are educated on their obligations regarding information sharing and record-keeping.
- E. We address breaches of the Code of Conduct promptly, ensuring that all those responsible for children are well-informed about appropriate behaviours and boundaries to maintain a safe environment for children.
- F. We acknowledge various types of child safety concerns that must be reported to the LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD Professional Standards Department. These concerns encompass (but are not limited to) the following:
 - ❖ Children's disclosures of abuse or harm
 - ❖ Any concerns indicating that children are at risk of harm
 - ❖ Development of inappropriate or exclusive relationships between any adult and a child
 - ❖ Breaches of the Child Safe Policy
 - ❖ Concerns related to a physical environment that may pose a risk to children
 - ❖ Any concerns regarding the potential commission of Reportable Conduct by a volunteer or employee
- G. We actively support investigations conducted by relevant authorities into concerns about children and/or allegations of abuse or harm towards children. Throughout the investigative process, we ensure that child protection measures remain in place.
- H. In collaboration with the police and other authorities, and with their approval, we may conduct our own inquiries to identify opportunities for improving child-safe practices.
- I. We maintain consistent, comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date records, adhering to legislative requirements for records management, access, privacy, and confidentiality.
- J. Promote Participation of Children, Families, and the Community
 - ❖ We offer children opportunities to share feedback about their participation in the life of the Church, and we actively respond to their input. It is ensured that children are informed on how to report any allegations of abuse or express concerns, and we create an environment where they feel safe and supported in doing so.

- K. We offer training to employees and appointed leaders to equip them with the skills to:
 - ❖ respond to any concerns children express
 - ❖ listen to, empower, and communicate with children
 - ❖ enable children to participate in decision-making that affects them
- L. We acknowledge that families bear the primary responsibility for the upbringing of their children.
- M. We foster open communication with families and communities regarding child safety and make our policies and procedures for ensuring the safety of children easily accessible through providing readily available information or enhancing and nurturing the family members through family discipleships.
- N. We acknowledge the significance of friendships and peer support in helping children feel safe and connected. We make sure that families have opportunities to provide feedback and feel comfortable raising concerns about the safety and well-being of their child(ren).

Assessment

This policy undergoes scheduled formal reviews and updates at intervals of no more than five years, with the overarching aim of consistently enhancing our child-safe policies and procedures. In response to the introduction of new research, guidelines, or standards by LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD or pertinent government authorities, we commit to promptly updating documentation and providing educational initiatives. Vigilant monitoring of the implementation of our child-safe policies and procedures is a fundamental practice. Furthermore, a rigorous examination of incidents and reports is undertaken to discern trends, manage risks, identify systemic issues, and effect improvements in our child-safe policies and practices.

APPENDIX 1 - Compliance Matrix

2.1 Encourage robust leadership and governance structures while fostering a culture centered on child safety.

This action satisfies the following criteria or requirements:

<i>LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD Standards</i>	Governance plays a pivotal role in executing child-safe policies. This involves establishing transparent, evidence-based policies and procedures. Implement strategies that ingrain a culture of child safety within the organization, employing effective leadership structures to achieve this objective.
<i>Victorian Child Safe Standards</i>	A child-safe policy, or a statement affirming the commitment to child safety, should be accompanied by strategies to instill a culture of child safety within the organization. This involves promoting robust leadership and governance practices that prioritize and actively foster an environment where the safety of children is paramount.
<i>Royal Commission Elements</i>	Child safe policy and procedures Child safety embedded in leadership, governance and culture

2.2 Encourage and enhance access, gender, and cultural diversity within the context of the organization's policies and practices.

This action satisfies the following criteria or requirements:

<i>LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD Standards</i>	Respect cultural diversity and respect the gender.
<i>Victorian Child Safe Standards</i>	Cultural Safety for Aboriginal and CALD children and safety for children with disabilities.
<i>Royal Commission Elements</i>	Equity is promoted and diversity respected

2.3 Advocate for and reinforce appropriate behaviours within the organization.

This action satisfies the following criteria or requirements:

<i>LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD Standards</i>	To implement the Good of Conduct.
<i>Victorian Child Safe Standards</i>	A code of conduct is instituted to set forth unequivocal expectations regarding appropriate behaviours in interactions with children.
<i>Royal Commission Elements</i>	Child-safe policy and procedures Staff and volunteers comply with a Code of Conduct that sets clear behavioural standards

2.4 Effectively recruit, train, and supervise personnel to ensure their competence and adherence to established

standards.

This action satisfies the following criteria or requirements:

<p><i>LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD Standards</i></p>	<p>Adopt clear evidence based policies and procedures Comprehensive investigation and reporting Review and continuous improvement</p>
<p><i>Victorian Child Safe Standards</i></p>	<p>Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse Keep good records Strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of abuse</p>
<p><i>Royal Commission Elements</i></p>	<p>Physical and Online environment Review and continuous improvement Processes for responding to complaints are child focused</p>

2.5 Effectively manage risks, prioritize safety, and promptly respond to any concerns or issues that may arise.

This action satisfies the following criteria or requirements:

<i>LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES</i>	Enable children and families to participate in decision making
<i>LTD Standards</i>	Provide an open environment
<i>Victorian Child Safe Standards</i>	Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children
<i>Royal Commission Elements</i>	children's participation and empowerment family and community involvement

APPENDIX 2 - Guiding Documentation

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990

The rights delineated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are foundational to the establishment of universally applicable child-safe protocols. The Convention explicitly acknowledges that children possess the right to protection from physical and mental harm, neglect, maltreatment, or exploitation, encompassing instances of sexual abuse.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has conducted inquiries into the responses of institutions, including churches, schools, agencies, and recreational clubs, to allegations of child sexual abuse. In the aftermath of the release of the Royal Commission's final recommendations in December 2017, the Keeping Children Safe policy will undergo a thorough review and will be amended as deemed necessary.

The Charter of Human Rights (Victoria)

Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities delineates the fundamental human rights applicable to all individuals and was enacted through the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. The charter affirms that children possess equivalent rights to adults, with additional safeguards designed to prioritize and protect their best interests.

The Betrayal of Trust Report (Victoria)

In 2012, the Victorian Government launched an inquiry into the management of child abuse allegations by religious and other organizations. The resulting report, known as "Betrayal of Trust," put forth several recommendations, a number of which have been implemented, which are:

- Reform in criminal law resulted in the establishment of offenses associated with grooming, failure to protect, and failure to disclose.
- Establishing Child Safe Organizations involved the implementation of mandatory minimum standards and the introduction of a reportable conduct scheme.

The three new criminal offences (all of which carry maximum penalties of imprisonment) introduced as amendments to the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) are:

- **Grooming offence:** This offense mandates that any adult is obligated to report predatory conduct aimed at facilitating sexual activity with a child. Grooming, whether carried out in person or online, encompasses interactions through various means, including social media, web forums, and emails.
- **Failure to protect offence:** An adult in a position of authority or responsibility will be deemed to have committed an offense if, through negligence, they fail to adequately mitigate or eliminate a significant risk to a child under the age of 16. This child may be under the care, supervision, or authority of a pertinent organization and could be vulnerable to sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult affiliated with the said organization. Additionally, an individual in a position of authority within the organization will be held liable for an offense if they possess knowledge of the risk but negligently neglect to take appropriate measures to reduce or eliminate it.
- **Failure to disclose offence:** Any adult who reasonably believes that an adult has committed a sexual offense against a child under the age of 16 is obligated to report this information to the police.

Victorian Government Child Safe Standards

The Victorian Government introduced compulsory child safe standards to improve the way organisations such as Baptist

churches prevent and respond to child abuse within their organisation. Complying with the standards is compulsory. They aim to drive positive cultural change so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers. This will assist organisations to prevent child abuse issues.

- o Encourage reporting of any abuse that does occur
- o Improve responses to any allegations of child abuse.

This policy recognises that all children are vulnerable due to their developmental status. Some children are particularly vulnerable - particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background and children with a disability. The incorporation of a Child Safe Policy that complies with the Victorian Government Child Safe standards is mandatory for all Christian related organisation within the LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD.

Reportable Conduct Scheme (Victoria)

The *Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017* amends the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 to establish a reportable conduct scheme (the **Scheme**). From 1 July 2017, the Commission for Children and Young People (**Commissioner**) administers the Scheme in Victoria.

Five types of 'reportable conduct' are covered by the Scheme:

- a. sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- b. sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- c. physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child;
- d. any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- e. significant neglect of a child.

Under the Scheme, any reportable conduct must be reported promptly by the "head of the organisation". **For LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD, The Directors of the organisation is "head of the organisation".**

Every individual or part of LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD who becomes aware of reportable conduct is required to notify the chair of deacons immediately after securing the safety of the child(ren) involved. The chair of deacons will decide whether an investigation is to be conducted by staff, an independent investigator or a Government authority.

LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD is responsible to maintain adequate records about child safety issues and allegations.

LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD must comply with requests made by the LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD, the Commissioner or an independent third party as part of an investigation.

If you are concerned about the safety of a child call 000.
If you are concerned a serious criminal offence or child sexual offence has occurred call 000 or your closest police station (depending upon circumstances)
Contact your relevant 'head of the organisation' immediately.

The Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017 amends the Wrongs Act 1958. From 1 July 2017, the "onus of proof" is reversed in child abuse incidents.

Thus, if a legal claim of child abuse is made against any individual of LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD, the Church must prove it took all reasonable steps to prevent the child from being abused. Reasonable steps may include ensuring all laws, policies and procedures were understood and complied with.

This change in law relates to all congregations of the LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD and requires more attention to record-keeping because:

- a) All congregations must keep detailed records of steps taken to prevent abuse, such as records of training and education and audits of compliance with law, policy and procedure; and
- b) Where relevant, inappropriate conduct must be investigated in compliance with Child Safe Standard and Reportable Conduct requirements (see Reportable Conduct Scheme).

Working With Children Check / Registration Policy and Protocols

This Policy outlines the requirement for appointed leaders and employees to have a Working with Children Check/Registration. The LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD's Professional Standards Consultant will inform the church what actions are required if an appointed leader refuses to apply for a WWCC/R and what action is required in the event a Negative Notice or refusal is received.

Safe Church Training Program

The Safe Church Training program has been formulated to guarantee that our leaders are well-informed and supported individuals who comprehend their responsibilities in establishing a secure environment for children actively engaged in the Church community. The content encompasses various subjects, including the implementation of child-safe policies, ministering to children and vulnerable adults, providing information for diaconates, and offering resources for congregational leaders.

It is mandatory for all ministers, appointed leaders, helpers, and volunteers to participate in Safe Church Training at least once every two years.

- APPENDIX 3 - Definitions

Aboriginal child	A person under the age of 18 who is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.
Appointed Leader	Appointed leaders are people who are in a position of trust, influence or authority because of their leadership role within the Church. This would include, but not be limited to, lay preachers, deacons, worship leaders, anyone involved in children and youth events/programs/activities, anyone commissioned by the diaconate to perform a leadership role, music leaders, organists, Bible study leaders, and 'home group' leaders.
Child Abuse	<p>This refers to both adult-to-child abuse and child-to-child abuse. Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical abuse - when a person purposely injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. • 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. • Family violence - when a family member, partner or ex- partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate the other. • Sexual abuse - any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child. • Grooming - predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity. • Neglect - where a child is harmed by the failure to provide the basic physical and emotional necessities. <p>Further explanation of these types of abuse is provided in Appendix 4.</p>
Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds	A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.
Child	A person who is under the age of 18 years.
Child safety	In the context of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.
Child safe organisation	In the context of the Child Safe Standards, a child-safe organisation is one that meets the Child Safe Standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.
Cultural abuse	Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community.

<p><i>Cultural safety for Aboriginal children</i></p>	<p><i>A culturally safe environment does not ignore, challenge or deny cultural identity. Cultural safety upholds the rights of Aboriginal children to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>identify as Aboriginal without fear of retribution or questioning</i> • <i>have an education that strengthens their culture and identity</i> • <i>maintain connections to their land and country</i> • <i>maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations</i> • <i>be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders</i> • <i>receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner</i> • <i>be involved in services that are culturally respectful.</i>³
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1 Victorian Government, *Cultural Responsiveness: Guidelines for Victorian Health Services* (2009)

2 Aboriginal Cultural Competence Framework 2008

3 Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, 2010, *Building Respectful Partnerships*

<p><i>Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds</i></p>	<p><i>An environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need.</i>⁴ <i>Efforts need to be made to ensure the culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and their families receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner, including in relevant community languages.</i></p>
<p><i>Children with a disability</i></p>	<p><i>A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities.</i>⁵ <i>A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are not.</i>⁶</p>
<p><i>Discrimination</i></p>	<p><i>The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.</i></p>
<p><i>Evidence Based Standards of recruitment</i></p>	<p><i>Evidence based standards of recruitment require the use of processes that have been proven by both research and practice, in this instance, to be appropriate for recruitment of people working with children. This will include, but is not limited to, the use of open-ended behavioural-based questioning through which both the applicant and any referees give insight into the applicant's values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability.</i></p> <p><i>Some useful questions may include:</i></p> <p><i>'Tell us about why you want to work with children?'</i></p> <p><i>'Describe a time when you had to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging?'</i> or</p> <p><i>'What did the applicant do when [for example, they had to comfort a distressed child]?'</i></p>

Grooming	<p>Grooming Grooming is a process by which a person develops a relationship, friendship and/or emotional connection with a child, adults significant to the child and the environment in order to gain the trust of child and parent(s) to facilitate later sexual abuse or gratification.</p> <p>Specific goals include gaining access to the child, desensitising the child in order to increasingly violate boundaries, gaining the child's silence, compliance and agreement to secrecy. This kind of predatory conduct is an offence. The offence applies where an adult communicates in this way in any form, including in person or by electronic means (online), with a child under the age of 16 years in Victoria, under the age of 17 years in Tasmania or under the age of 17 years if the person grooming the child has care, supervision or authority for the child. Grooming is an offence under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) and the Criminal Code 1995 (Cw/th). In Victoria, the crime of grooming may be committed without sexual abuse occurring.</p>
Organisation	<p>The Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 (the Act) will provide that the Child Safe Standards apply to 'applicable entities', which are defined in the Act as:</p> <p>an incorporated body or association</p> <p>an unincorporated body or association (however structured)</p> <p>an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities.</p> <p>Therefore, the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania is an organisation.</p>
Reportable Conduct	<p>The Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 (the Act) Reportable conduct means:</p> <p>(a) sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded;</p> <p>(b) sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of, a child;</p> <p>physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child;</p> <p>(c) any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or significant neglect of a child.</p>
Staff and Volunteers	<p>'Staff and volunteers' refers to all relevant (according to context) persons and may include, but not be limited to, deacons, employees, volunteers, parents, careers, congregation members, people in the specified ministries of LIFEIMPACT MINISTRIES LTD, and any other person with responsibility for the care of children.</p>

4 Williams, R. 1999, 'Cultural Safety - what does it mean for our work practice?' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, Vol 23, Issue 2, p213-214.

5 *Disability Act 2006*.

6 Department of Health and Human Services, "[About disability](#)"

Other Relevant Acts and Regulations:

- o *Child, Youth & Families Act (Vic)*
- o *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015*
- o *Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 (Tas)*
- o *Crimes Act 1914 (Cw/th)*
- o *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*
- o *Disability Act 2006 (Vic)*
- o *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*
- o *Personal Information Protection Act 2009 (Tas)*
- o *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cw/th)*
- o *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas)*
- o *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)*
- o *Working with Children's Regulations Act 2006 (Vic)*

APPENDIX 4 - Child Abuse Explained

What is child abuse?

The Child Safe Standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations. Under the Act, child abuse includes four categories of abuse as outlined below. While the standards apply specifically to child abuse, organisations should look to promote children's health and wellbeing in a broader sense.

Physical violence

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from non-accidental injury inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as belts and paddles).

Possible physical indicators:

- Unexplained bruises
- Burns and/or fractured bones

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Wearing long-sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)
- Fear of specific people
- Unexplained absences
- Academic problems

Sexual offences

Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.⁸

Possible physical indicators:

- Presence of sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy
- Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age
- Difficulty sleeping
- Being withdrawn

- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains
- Fear of specific people
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Displaying aggressive behaviour

Emotional or psychological abuse

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

Possible physical indicators:

- Delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development
- Physical signs of self-harming

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Exhibiting low self-esteem
- Exhibiting high anxiety
- Displaying aggressive or demanding behavior
- Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful
- Self harming

Neglect

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardized. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

Possible physical indicators:

- Frequent hunger
- Malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing

Possible behavioural indicators

- Stealing food
- Staying at school outside of school hours

- Aggressive behavior
- Misusing alcohol or drugs
- Academic issues

7 These definitions are based on the Victorian ***Child Protection Practice Manual***:
www.dhs.vic.gov.au/cpmanual/practice-context/child-protection

8 A new grooming offence commenced in Victoria on 9 April 2014. Further information is available on the Department of Justice Website: [www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting- children- and-families](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families)

APPENDIX 5 - Resources listed according to Policy Actions they support

The resources listed below can assist the Church in its safe church practices and in implementing the various actions in the Keeping Children Safe policy and are available at www.ucavictas.org.au/keepingchildrensafe/

Note: From time to time further resources will be available via the website and will be listed on document CC3 - Resources available to assist with implementing the Keeping Children Safe Policy Actions.

Resources listed according to Policy Actions they support

2.1 Promote strong leadership and governance and a culture of child safety

<i>Keeping Children Safe Policy (v3)</i>	KCS1
<i>Guide for Church Councils for Implementing KCS Policy</i>	CC1
<i>Guide for Church Councils for Implementing KCS Policy – Korean</i>	CC1K
<i>Resources available to assist with implementing the Keeping Children Safe Policy Actions</i>	CC3
<i>Our Statement of Commitment</i>	KCS3
<i>Model Minute for Church Councils</i>	CC2
<i>Guide for the prevention of sexual grooming</i>	CC10
<i>Social Media Policy for all Ministers</i>	CC11
<i>Person of Concern Information</i>	POC1
<i>Victoria's Child Safe Standards – an overview</i>	CSS1
<i>Keeping Children Safe Policy and compliance with Victorian Child Safe Standards and Royal Commission Key Elements.</i>	KCS8

2.2 Promote access, equity and diversity

<i>Safety of Children from Culturally & Linguistically Diverse backgrounds</i>	CSS4
<i>Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Children</i>	CSS2
<i>Safety of Children with a Disability</i>	CSS3

2.3 Promote appropriate behaviour

<i>Keeping Children Safe Code of Conduct</i>	KCS4
<i>Keeping Children Safe Code of Conduct with Individual Declaration</i>	KCS4A
<i>Code of Conduct for younger kids</i>	KCS6
<i>A Children's Code of Conduct</i>	KCS7

2.4 Recruit, train and supervise workers well

<i>Guide to Selecting Volunteer Leaders</i>	CC4
<i>Responding to and reporting child abuse</i>	CC5
<i>Reporting Abuse – Notification Form for Congregations</i>	CC6
<i>Statement of commitment to Induction and Training</i>	KCS5
<i>Working With Children Check/Registration policy</i>	WWC1
<i>Working With Children Check/Registration FAQs</i>	WWC2
<i>Guide to Adding the UCA to a WWCC Application</i>	WWC3
<i>Guide for Information to be Added by Contact Person</i>	WWC4
<i>Becoming a WWCC/R contact person</i>	WWC5
<i>Refusal to obtain a Working with Children Check/Registration Flowchart</i>	WWC6
<i>Working With Children Check Training Manual</i>	WWC7
<i>Recruitment, Screening and Selection</i>	SSL1
<i>Application Form and Declaration</i>	SSL2
<i>Volunteer Leader Interview Guide</i>	SSL3
<i>Volunteer Referee Check</i>	SSL4
<i>Letter of Appointment – Volunteer</i>	SSL5
<i>Volunteer Annual Review and Declaration</i>	SSL6
<i>Volunteer Development Plan</i>	SSL7

Volunteer Leader Interview Guide

SSL3

Volunteer Referee Check

SSL4

<i>Letter of Appointment – Volunteer - (Word)</i>	SSL8
<i>A Liturgy for the annual commissioning of leaders in children’s and youth programs</i>	SSL9
<i>Parental Consent Form for Photos (Word)</i>	SSL10
<i>Safe Church Training Attendance Record</i>	SCT2
<i>Disclosure Reporting Process – Flowchart</i>	SCT3
<i>Disclosure reporting process – Korean</i>	SCT3K
<i>Workshop Invitation (Fillable PDF)</i>	SCT4
<i>Safe Church Training – Facilitator’s Guide</i>	SCT5
<i>Safe Church Training – Participant’s Booklet</i>	SCT6
<i>Reportable Conduct Policy (Victoria)</i>	RCS1
<i>Reportable Conduct Policy (Victoria) - Korean</i>	RCS1K

2.5 Manage risk, promote safety, and handle concerns

<i>Disclosure Reporting Process</i>	SCT3
<i>Disclosure Reporting Process - Korean</i>	SCT3K
<i>Responding to and reporting child abuse</i>	CC5
<i>Reporting Abuse - Notification Form for Congregations</i>	CC6
<i>Standard Letting Form</i>	CC9
<i>Standard Letting Form - FAQs</i>	CC9A
<i>Occupational Health and Safety Manual</i>	SPSP1
<i>Attendance Record</i>	SPSP2
<i>Attendee Information Form</i>	SPSP3
<i>Driver information form</i>	SPSP4
<i>“Called to Preach” Lay Preachers Association Guide</i>	SPSP5
<i>Image Release Form</i>	SPSP6
<i>Reportable Conduct Policy (Victoria)</i>	RCS1
<i>Reportable Conduct Policy (Victoria) - Korean</i>	RCS1K

2.6 Child, Family & Community Participation

<i>Information Sheet for Parents and Guardians</i>	SPSP7
<i>Child Feedback Form</i>	SPSP8
<i>Youth Feedback Form</i>	SPSP9
<i>A Guide for Safe Ministry using digital media</i>	SPSP10
<i>OHS Incident Reporting Form</i>	SPSP11
<i>Program Feedback - Parents and Guardians form</i>	SPSP12
<i>Children and Young People Feedback</i>	SPSP13
<i>Culture of Safety Contact Person Role Description</i>	SCT1
<i>Culture of Safety Contact Person Poster Template</i>	SCT7

NOTE: The table that appeared in previous versions of this policy as Appendix 1 - Keeping Children Safe Policy and compliance with Victorian Child Safe Standards and Royal Commission Key Elements can now be found on the Keeping Children Safe webpage under Policy (KCS8)

<https://ucavictas.org.au/keepingchildrensafe/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/KCS8-Keeping-Children-Safe-Policy-and-compliance-with-Victorian-Child-Safe-Standards-and-Royal-Commission-Key-Elements.pdf>

Policy Version Control

Version Number	Date	Reason	Resolution Number	Approved
KCS1 v1	24/06/15	Review cycle- annually	SSC15.23.5 May 2017	Synod Standing Committee
KCS1 v2	15/02/17	Amended to incorporate Victorian Child Safety Standards		General Secretary
KCS1v3	24/05/17	Amended to align with UCA National Framework Child Safe Policy Framework		General Secretary
KCS1v4	01/11/17	Amended to incorporate Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme		General Secretary
KCS1v5	23/11/18	Amended to incorporate changes brought forward by a congregation		General Secretary
KCS1v6	06/02/19	Reformat		General Secretary

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