



SAFE CHURCH POLICY

SAFEGUARDING INDIVIDUALS



'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

Mark 12: 31



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Safe Church, Safeguarding Individuals Policy

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy Statement

Lighthouse Church will do everything reasonably practicable to protect others from harm. Our duty of care is founded in Jesus' directive to "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31) and is therefore the foundation for Safe Church and Safeguarding Individuals.

Lighthouse Church will provide and operate in a safe and secure environment where people are cared for, nurtured, sustained and work. Lighthouse Church is committed to the care, protection and safety of all its ministers, leaders, members, employees and especially children, young people, the vulnerable and the elderly.

1.2 Lighthouse Church Commitment

We commit to being a Congregation which:

- Provides and maintains a welcoming and safe environment;
- Offers suitable and well equipped leadership;
- Provides a level of resourcing that reflects the value of all people;
- Provides clear and appropriate guidelines for managing the safety of people and programs and that each person understands and fulfills their obligations under this policy;
- Applies diligence in screening procedures;
- Acts promptly, with sensitivity and confidentiality;
- Ensures that any person who has concerns regarding suspected misconduct, sexual abuse or emotional, physical, psychological, social, financial, or spiritual abuse, or neglect, knows how to report it;
- Will work with the appropriate statutory body when an investigation into abuse or misconduct is necessary.
- Ensures that anyone receiving a disclosure of abuse knows how to report it;
- Provides support to those affected by abuse, or the disclosure of abuse;
- Believes the safety and well-being of children, vulnerable people and the elderly is paramount.

1.3 Objective

Safe Church is achieved as safe leaders in churches fulfill and integrate the pastoral, legal, insurance and risk management, denominational and ethical requirements of a church. This includes the implementation of policies and procedures in order to:

- Promote the safety and welfare of all people in the Lighthouse Church worshipping community;
- Identify, manage, respond to and mitigate risks and the impact associated with all forms of abuse, misconduct and /or neglect;
- Be accountable and transparent, being willing and able to show others how we care for people, and willing to be called to account;
- Give clear expectations to leaders, ministers, church workers, members of the Congregation and volunteers in relation to their role and appropriate conduct. Where appropriate, this will include induction into their role so that there is a clear understanding of what they are responsible for, and to whom they will report;
- Respond to allegations in a manner that is respectful, sensitive and confidential;
- Act in a fair and timely manner.

This policy & procedure document seeks to emphasise our collective responsibility as a Congregation to care for those who may be vulnerable to the risk of harm, injury or abuse.

1.4 Why the need for a policy

Certain people in society, whether they be children, vulnerable people or elderly people, may be considered to be susceptible to abuse or exploitation, based on factors such as their health status (mental or physical), age, grief, social isolation or financial hardship. We need to be aware of the issue of abuse, how to identify and respond to it, in order to ensure the safety of all people within, and who come into contact with, the Lighthouse Church Congregation.

Church workers and members of the Congregation are bound by legal obligations as prescribed by common law and legislation in Western Australia.

1.5 Review

We are aware that the Safe Church policy must adhere to on-going legal changes and obligations. Lighthouse Church's policy and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm will be reviewed and assessed regularly to ensure that the Lighthouse Church is continuing to provide a safe and supportive environment. A member of the Safe Church Team will produce an annual report on Safeguarding to Church Council to provide feedback, monitor, evaluate and review all protection issues.

2.0 WHAT IS ABUSE?

2.1 Definition

Abuse occurs when one person misuses the power they have in a relationship with a less powerful person.

Child abuse can be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual abuse and, or, neglect resulting in harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity, often in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. By law, a child is defined as being under the age of 18.

Elderly abuse and abuse of other vulnerable people can be any act which causes harm to that person. It can be emotional, psychological, social, physical, financial, sexual abuse or neglect. Typically it is perpetrated by someone with a position of trust, possibly through ignorance, negligence, deliberate intent or predatory actions.

People over the age of 18 have the right to make decisions, take risks, or refuse support and intervention, as long as they have the cognitive capacity to make informed decisions and can understand the consequences of those decisions.

We recognize that it can be difficult for people to disclose and deal with abuse by relatives and friends, because of the emotional and social ties that exist within these relationships. People who have been victims of abuse may be unwilling to report the abuse or prosecute the abusers, as they may believe the fault is their own, or feel a sense of shame that someone close to them is abusing them, be dependent on the abuser, worry about being estranged from children or a partner, and worry about their resultant financial or residential situation.

The supporting document, **Appendix 1 - "Indicators of Abuse"**, provides commentary on the types of abuse and indicators that children, vulnerable people and elderly may suffer.

2.2 Grooming

"Grooming" may be a precursor to abuse and refers to the process by which an individual manipulates those around them to provide opportunities for abuse and reduce the likelihood of being reported or discovered. While victims are 'groomed', this behavior may also involve a victim's family and other adults or carers. Perpetrators will often seek out adults and groom them in order to get access to their victim. The perpetrator can create a relationship built on trust or dependency and gain access to victims through it. Some befriend parents or carers who are facing difficulties or who are vulnerable themselves.

2.3 Bullying

Lighthouse Church Workplace Harassment & Bullying Policy & Protection Procedure is set out in Appendix 5. Lighthouse Church acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying could lead to consideration of abuse under these procedures.

3.0 COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

- Our worshipping community will comply with the Lighthouse Church Safe Church and Safeguarding Individuals Policy;
- Our worshipping community will comply with the requirement to obtain and maintain relevant records and other information as required by this policy.

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- Our worshipping community of the Lighthouse Church Congregation Church Council should appoint a Safe Church Concerns Team, consisting of The Council Chair, Operations Manager, Pastor, and two Church Council persons.
- Lighthouse Church will review this policy every two years.

3.1 Non-Compliance

Non-compliance with this policy will not be tolerated by Lighthouse Church and may result in disciplinary action, change of duties, termination of employment or other contractual agreements. Breaches of this policy will be reported to Presbytery, which may take disciplinary action in accordance with Presbytery policy.

3.2 Confidentiality

The Australian Privacy Act 1988 regulates the handling of personal or sensitive information about individuals. Confidentiality refers to protecting the rights and interests of all parties by not disclosing personal information to parties other than those who are addressed by a complainant. If it is deemed that others need to know this information, then permission is sought from the complainant to share that information. Confidentiality does not refer to keeping a crime a secret. Personal information may not be disclosed unless authorized or required by law. The disclosure of personal information may be permitted in a situation to lessen or prevent a serious threat to life, health or safety or in relation to suspected unlawful activity or serious misconduct.

Details of the person who made the report are to be kept completely confidential and will not be made available to the family or caregiver of the victim, or the person against whom the allegation has been made.

4.0 GENERAL DUTIES & PROCEDURES

4.1 Leaders

When a church appoints a person to a position of leadership, they are saying, "We trust this person to not make the Good News of Jesus into bad news by harming others." Having opportunities to use God-given gifts through leadership can be one of the most satisfying and growing experiences for a person in the life of the Church.

A leader is anyone in a position of trust or authority in a worshipping community or congregation, in a role of service in the church, either paid or unpaid. Safe leaders respect other people's boundaries, have other people's best interests at heart, are led by God, and are in accountable and transparent teams. Further clarification is in the "Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders".

Responsibilities include:

- Oversee implementation of policy & procedures including: recruitment, approval for ministry, health & safety issues, and critical incident management.
- Report abuse of children, vulnerable people and elderly, according to state legislation and via a transparent and accountable church process.
- Deal with complaints of misconduct, grievances and allegations or suspicions of abuse according to the principles of natural justice i.e. fairly and without bias & undue delay, no conflict of interest and in such a way as to ensure an outcome that is evidence based.
- Report serious incidents and injuries to the Church insurers.
- Seek Presbytery assistance in handling complaints against senior church leaders.
- Ensure those leading programs have been recruited, screened, appointed, inducted, and are supervised according to good practice.
- Provide a safe spiritual, emotional and physical environment for all people.
- Address complaints and allegations of abuse and misconduct according to Lighthouse Church Policy & Procedure.
- Ensure all church-authorized programs are well-planned, having had all foreseeable risks identified, reduced or negated.

4.2 The Body of Christ

Responsibilities include:

- Welcome all people and make our church a safe place for them, ensuring the safety of all people is paramount.
- Work as a team, sharing in ministry together, nurturing each other, entering into relationships with each other and receiving ministry from each other.
- Address complaints and allegations of abuse and misconduct in accordance with Lighthouse Church Policy & Procedure.

Those in positions of power and authority must have a sound understanding of, and must uphold, appropriate leadership boundaries so as to protect the less powerful person.

4.3 Safe Church Concerns Team

Lighthouse Church Council shall appoint a Safe Church Concerns Team, both for the reporting of child, vulnerable people and elderly protection concerns and for other Safe Church concerns. The team will provide leadership and oversight to the implementation and administration of policies and procedures supporting Lighthouse Church's aims to provide a safe church environment. Refer to 3.0 for compliance requirements.

5.0 DISCLOSURE

Whenever a person tells you that someone is harming them, this is known as a disclosure. The fact that a person tells you that they have been abused, means they have a high respect for you and that they trust you greatly. Disclosures are rare; therefore, it is important that the response is appropriate.

We recognise that a disclosure could be made by anyone, about anyone and to anyone, at any time.

Disclosures can relate to:

- Abuse which is happening in the present – the disclosure may be made by the victim or a person who is aware of the abuse;
- Historic abuse to the person making the disclosure;
- Historic abuse to someone other than the person making the disclosure.

5.1 Receiving a Disclosure:

Do:

- Remain calm and try not to express panic, shock or disbelief;
- Acknowledge that it can be difficult to talk about such things;
- Reassure that it is right to disclose and emphasise your belief in the person;
- Emphasise that the person is not to blame for the abuse;
- Assure the person that they have the right to feel safe;
- Accept what is said by the person;
- Communicate in terms that the person will understand;
- Listen to the person's story, acknowledge what they are saying, validate their feelings but do not add anything to what the person says;
- Write down what has been said exactly;
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in speaking to you;
- Ensure that the person is not in immediate danger;
- Report to the Safe Church Team/Pastor.

Do Not:

- Start an investigation into the information;
- Promise the person that the abuse will stop;
- Tell anyone who does not need to know;
- Make or express a judgement about the person;
- Promise not to tell, but do tell the person that the matter will be reported to the appropriate authority and dealt with confidentially;

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- Under any circumstances contact or comment to the media. In such circumstances, refer all media enquiries to your senior ministry leader, who in turn should consult the Uniting Church Safe Church/Royal Commission Officer.

See **Appendix 5 – Dealing with Disclosures** for guidance to individuals on how to respond to Disclosure.

Each type of abuse and the type of person who has been abused requires a different response. It is important that the information from the disclosure is communicated to the appropriate person and/or authority. Those, to whom a disclosure is made, have a responsibility to act upon it.

They do not have an investigative role or a responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred. Individuals should not confront a suspected abuser or intervene with the person’s family. Other authorities are best placed to deal with these tasks.

A list of referral and support agencies are contained in the supporting document, **Appendix 2 - “Abuse Referral & Support Agencies”**.

5.2 Disclosure of Historic Abuse

All details of the disclosure should be recorded, what was said by the adult, the responses given, timings, the location, persons present and what was said by all parties. Records should be dated and the authorship clearly identified.

The adult making the disclosure should be asked whether they want a police investigation. Any notes taken may be subject to disclosure to the Police. If the complainant does not report directly to the Police themselves, in order for Lighthouse Church to report to the Police, the complainant needs to provide their consent to their identity being revealed to the Police. If consent is not provided, the disclosure should be recorded and kept securely and confidentially. At a point in the future, should the Police subsequently request the identity of the complainant, then a further request for permission to disclose their identity is made to the complainant by the Church. (This may occur where the Police have information regarding other complaints about the same alleged abuser).

Withholding contact details of the complainant is over-ridden if there is risk of harm to another child or adult. In these circumstances, the Church should report the identity of the complainant to the Police, even without the complainants consent. If the perpetrator has, or is believed to have contact with children, the Department for Child Protection should also be notified.

6.0 REPORTING

6.1 Reasonable Grounds for Reporting:

You have reasonable grounds to report abuse if:

- A person tells you they have been, or are at risk of being abused;
- Someone else tells you that they know of a person who has been or is at risk of being abused;
- You have concerns that the person may have been, or is at risk of being abused based on their physical appearance or behaviour.

(See **Appendix 1** for a more detailed schedule of potential indicators of abuse)

6.2 Procedure

When a person discloses abuse, or discloses that they are at risk, or when reasonable grounds have been established, follow these steps:

1. Report to your Safe Church Team or Minister.
2. A Safe Church Team member will complete the Lighthouse Church Safe Church: Concern Referral Form, respecting privacy. The Safe Church Team member will provide the document to the Lighthouse Church Operations Manager for securing as per the Concern Referral Form.
3. The Safe Church Team member will then take appropriate steps as per Appendix 3 flow chart, including informing: Uniting Church Western Australia Safe Church/Royal Commission Officer the minister, reporting to police, Department of Child Protection or other relevant Government Department, or other church leaders, as appropriate.

4. Ongoing Support – It is now the role of the Church to provide as much support as is practical and possible. This includes debriefing for the Safe Church Team.

(A list of referral details and support agencies are provided at **Appendix 2**)

6.3 Self-Harm, Suicide & Immediate Danger

If a child, vulnerable person or elderly person discloses intentions of self-harm and/or suicide, this must always be taken seriously. If a person is threatening suicide or self-harm or other situations where the person's mental health may be placing themselves or others at risk of harm, contact the police / mental health crisis service.

6.4 Ministerial Misconduct

Allegations of serious ministerial misconduct or abuse by Church leaders needs to be reported: in instances of an allegation against an employee (e.g. a Minister), to the Uniting Church Safe Church/Royal Commission Officer (see Appendix 2 for contact details); in instances of an allegation against a Lighthouse church appointed Leader or volunteer, to the Safe Church Team; and in instances where the conduct also appears to be criminal, to the police.

6.5 Perception

Many people are hesitant about making a judgment about abuse occurring in case their perception is incorrect. In some cases, what may appear to be cause for concern could be a "cry for help" by the person. In some cases, their claims may even be fabrications. When investigations take place, the actual crisis is revealed and appropriate support can then be implemented.

7.0 ON-GOING SUPPORT

7.1 Supporting the victim

The church's role does not end here. This is only the beginning. It is now the role of the church to support the child / vulnerable person / elderly person and their family, as much as is practical and possible.

It is likely that you will continue to have contact with the person after a disclosure. It is important to recognise that the person has disclosed to you because they trust you and feel safe with you.

As you continue to nurture and / or minister to the person, it may be useful to be mindful of the following: create a calm environment, engage in appropriate relationships, continue to include the person, provide an ordered program, foster appropriate behaviours and focus attention on creating a safe space.

7.2 Care for people receiving a disclosure

Each person has a unique response to receiving a disclosure or witnessing abuse. There may be some common reactions such as: shock, anger, sympathy for the victim and frustration. As a leader it can be very distressing to find yourself in this situation.

It is important to debrief by verbally and emotionally unloading your feelings about what has been disclosed or witnessing abuse, with another member of the Safe Church Team, Lighthouse Church Pastor or Uniting Church WA Safe Church/Royal Commission Officer, adhering to the principles of confidentiality. You do not need to tell them the details of the abuse, simply how you feel about it, and how you feel about your role in supporting the victim.

If you do not debrief in these situations, it is possible that your effectiveness in your ministry could be negatively impacted.

Some people may have severe reactions to disclosure, which may in some cases have an invasive impact on their ability to function effectively within their ministry and life roles (e.g. eating and sleeping disturbances). If this occurs it is advisable to seek additional counselling support.

8.0 RECRUITMENT

8.1 Pre-Recruitment

Leaders should be appointed to clearly defined roles with clearly defined start and end dates.

A leader must be 18 years or older to be part of a leadership team with youth and children's ministry team responsibilities. A child or young person under 18 years of age can be a junior team member, if they work under the direct supervision of an adult leader.

A Working with Children Check is mandatory for all leaders, workers and volunteers, if working with minors under 18 years.

Rostered helpers	help on an ad hoc basis, and not part of the regular ministry team; must not be given responsibility for, or left alone with a group of children;
Team members	appointed by the church to be in a ministry team; must be 18 years or older if caring for minors, and are accountable to their team leader;
Junior team members	aged under 18, can take on roles under direct adult supervision and are accountable to their team leader;
Team leaders	have responsibility for a ministry team for a particular program or event; team leaders are accountable to their ministry co-ordinator;
Ministry co-ordinator	has an oversight role over many programs. A co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring all programs and events within an area operate according to policies and guidelines;
Senior Leadership	Church Council, committees, pastors, who are ultimately responsible to approve and oversee ministry leaders and events / programs.

8.2 Six-month Rule

If a person is not known to the Congregation, and has had no previous leadership experience that can be substantiated, it is advisable that they are part of the Congregation for at least six months before being considered for a leadership position within that Congregation.

8.3 Recruitment Process

Selection must take into account the applicant's

- Relevant leadership skills and experience;
- Personal standards;
- Ability to develop appropriate relationships;
- Maturity in faith;
- Awareness of and willingness to work within the Uniting Church and/or Lighthouse Church ethos;
- Awareness of and willingness to comply with Safe Church and Protection of the Individual policy and procedures.

1. *Safe Ministry Screening*

- Safe Ministry Check
- Working with Children / Police Clearance check
- Referee check (minimum 2 referees to be checked in person / telephone contact)

2. *Position Information & Suitability Interview*

- (For all except ad hoc helpers)
- Meet with team leaders to understand the role more fully and explore the applicant's suitability. This may be a conversation rather than a formal job interview conducted by a ministry group/ team, Co-ordinator, Minister and / or Church Council.

3. *Endorsement*

- All roles including Ad hoc.
- Name of applicant provided to a Senior Church Leader for endorsement.

4. *Appointment with Induction*

- Ensure all have received appropriate training and information to enable them to share in their ministry.

5. *Communicate*

- Communicate to the people that the person is an endorsed leader.

6. *Review*

- Appointments must be reviewed at intervals not exceeding two years.
- As part of the review process, the Church Council and/or leadership team must consider whether any further training is required.
- Working with Children and Police clearance checks must be renewed prior to expiry. It is up to the individual to apply for a renewal and to inform the Safe Church Concerns Person when they receive their renewal.

9.0 RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION & FORMS:

7.9a Safe Ministry and Protection of the Individual- Persons of Concern in the Congregation

7.9b Lighthouse Church Safe Churches Team/Operations Manager Role Summary

Appendix 1a & 1b: Indicators of Abuse

Appendix 2: Abuse Referral & Support Agencies

Appendix 3: Flowchart – Abuse relating to persons over 18

Appendix 4: Flowchart – Abuse relating to children (under 18)

Appendix 5: Lighthouse Church Workplace Harassment & Bullying Policy & Procedure

Appendix 6: Lighthouse Church Safe Churches Volunteer Agreement

Appendix 7: Dealing with Disclosure – guidelines for recipients.

Appendix 8: Lighthouse Church Safe Churches Concern Referral Form

Appendix 9: Lighthouse Church Safe Churches Poster

Safe Ministry Manual (Western Australian Edition) 2014

7.1 Duty of Care

2.2 Grievance Procedure

2.3 Equal Opportunity, Discrimination & Harassment Policy

2.3a Sexual Harassment policy & procedures

2.4 Code of Conduct

2.5 Recruitment policy & procedures

Lighthouse Church Volunteer Agreement

Uniting Church in Australia – Member or Adherent Sexual Abuse & Sexual Misconduct Complaints Management Policy

Safe Ministry and Protection of the Individual: Persons of Concern in the Congregation

Safe Ministry & Protection of the Individual – Persons of Concern in the Congregation (POC)

Objective

To provide a framework for the Church to uphold its duty of care to those who participate in all aspects of its life, so that the Church is a safe place for all people.

General Principles

1. The policy is about protecting the vulnerable and taking steps to prevent abuse.
2. When Lighthouse Church talks about vulnerable people, we acknowledge that people of all ages, from children to the elderly, may be vulnerable.
3. Lighthouse Church has a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to prevent harm.
4. All people are treated with dignity and respect at all times.
5. Determinations do not centre on the personal character of a person of concern. They relate to the level of risk of the behaviour of any person of concern.
6. The cooperation of any person of concern in supplying information is important. In the absence of information, the Lighthouse Church must follow a conservative path when determining the levels of risk.
7. All information received should be treated as highly confidential, unless otherwise stated.
8. If the risk level is judged as extreme, then the risk must be eliminated completely, unless options are available that reduce the risk to an acceptable level.
9. The Lighthouse Church will comply with all relevant legislative requirements.

We acknowledge:

- There are survivors of abuse in congregations and we seek to care for them effectively
- The high level of community concern about sexual abuse
- The duty of care to provide a safe environment for all people
- There is no typical person of concern, and so we require an individually tailored response to each one
- The issues of forgiveness and the person of concern's right to privacy
- The risk management and liability issues around a person of concern's reoffending
- Participation in the life of a congregation is not a guarantee against recidivism.

Who is a Person of Concern?

A Person of Concern (POC) is a person who has been convicted of or is alleged (pending charges) to have committed a sexual offence, or who has been released into the community after a period of imprisonment for sexual offences, and who wishes to establish, maintain or foster a relationship within the life of a Congregation or faith community within the Synod. The definition may also include a person where there are reasonable concerns that they are behaving or have behaved in a sexually abusive or inappropriate manner.

How does the policy work?

The intention of the policy is to include any POC in the conversation about how the Church might work together to place clear boundaries and expectations on their participation in order to manage the risk that their presence poses to children and vulnerable people. However, no two offenders have the same offending history, or the same level of re-offending. A *Safety Agreement* will be developed specific to each individual POC and will help the church provide appropriate, meaningful worship opportunities whilst keeping the congregation safe.

Lighthouse Church will not disclose the personal details of a POC to the congregation or general public. Lighthouse Church will however, ensure that the congregation is aware that a policy exists to manage POC.

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External consultants may be engaged by Lighthouse Church at any point in the process to provide specialist advice as required.

Safety Agreement

A *Safety Agreement* outlines the way the person may participate, and which includes people who agree to act as Monitors for the agreement.

A *Safety Agreement* is not a substitute for criminal proceedings or a tool to conceal offending behaviour. Nor is it intended to exclude the person from the life of the congregation, but rather to work with them to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the invitation for all people to encounter Christ's call to love and forgiveness within the life of the church can be offered with integrity.

A *Safety Agreement* offers clear expectations and firm boundaries with transparency and accountability.

Policy Constraints

This policy acknowledges that where an extreme risk is identified, it may not be possible to have a POC attend services or programs where children or other identified vulnerable persons are present, participate in church activities or programs or accept hospitality from within or connected to the congregation.

The church may also decide that the level of risk posed by the POC is unacceptable and therefore the POC cannot attend services or programs at Lighthouse Church.

Process

It is important for the Congregation to follow this process, so that vulnerable people connected to the congregation, the congregation as a whole, the Lighthouse Church and the POC can be protected from harm. It aims to do everything possible to protect vulnerable people from the known risk of harm.

Procedural Principles

The application of the policy will provide for:

1. Risk assessment procedures which identify potential and actual risks to the safety and well-being of vulnerable members of the congregation.
2. If the POC is an existing member of the congregation, the POC should stand aside from any decision-making role within the church and not attend any activity where vulnerable people may be present, until a risk assessment has been conducted.
3. The application of any relevant legal requirements in the formulation and implementation of a *Safety Agreement*.
4. Review of the *Safety Agreement* on at least an annual basis.
5. Follow up and learning process to improve policies, procedure and practice.

Minister's role

1. The minister will remain the main pastoral carer.
2. If the victim of the offence or alleged offence is in the congregation, it is important that the minister not accept the role of the main pastoral carer for both perpetrator or alleged perpetrator and victim. Other assistance needs to be sought.
3. At any stage of this process, the alleged perpetrator may choose not to participate further. If this includes declining to participate in a risk assessment or to sign the *Safety Agreement*, this would be interpreted as a rejection of the ministry the congregation is offering and the person would not be able to participate in any activity of the congregation, until the *Safety Agreement* is completed.

Risk Committee

Church Council should convene a Risk Committee, to include the Chair, a minister and two other members. Synod should be informed and appoint a person to the risk committee.

All involved should understand and accept that the process should be undertaken in as timely a manner as possible.

The tasks of the Risk Committee include development of an Interim Safety Agreement, Risk Assessment and a Safety Agreement and ensuring a review is carried out at least annually.

Interim Safety Agreement

Once the POC has been identified, Church Council will coordinate and produce an Interim Safety Agreement, to be put in place to control access to church activities until the risk assessment occurs, facilitating the full *Safety Agreement*.

Risk Assessment

This is a very important part of the implementation of this policy to thoroughly assess the level of risk the POC presents to the congregation. As a consequence of the serious nature of sexual offences, almost all risk levels will be high or extreme. The risk assessment allows the policy to be applied to a wide range of abusive behaviours.

The following information may be helpful in conducting the risk assessment and may be requested to be provided by the POC;

- Nature of offence(s)
- Date and place of offence(s)
- Penalties imposed
- Parole conditions
- Judges sentencing remarks
- Any relevant psychological reports
- Whether the person has been listed on the Sex Offenders Register
- Any other relevant information.

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A self-disclosure session with the POC is recommended.

Safety Agreement Procedures

The safety agreement is a two sided agreement between the congregation and the POC, based on four principles: personal accountability of the POC to manage their own risks, transparency of both parties, accountability, and the person's right to privacy. It establishes the terms and conditions for a POC's participation in the life of the congregation. Under the terms of the Safety Agreement, the POC is unable to take any leadership role in the congregation or wider church. Specific boundaries are set out and clear limits given. The POC is kept informed and when a draft document is available, their response is sought.

The Safety Agreement will be signed by the Minister/Pastor and Chair of Church Council and the POC.

Refer to the Sample Safety Agreement attached.

Monitor

Church Council will appoint a 'Monitor' with the task of ensuring compliance with the conditions of the Safety Agreement. Characteristics of a potential monitor would include:

- Understanding and agreeing with the policy & procedure
- Assertiveness, resilience and alertness to actual and potential boundary violations
- Ability to report without judgement

- Commitment & accountability
- Confidentiality
- Ability to maintain appropriate boundaries

Training and Professional Support

All parties to identify what training, pastoral support and professional counselling they require and attend or put in place, which could be a requirement/condition of the Safety Agreement

Monitors to be fully inducted into the role, checks undertaken as part of their recruitment and undergo regular and relevant professional development and training (e.g. grooming behaviours, offender characteristics and behaviours, working alongside sex offenders)

Monitors to have access to or be allocated pastoral and professional support/supervision (could be the Minister or the Church Council chair or a Synod Safe Church representative).

Oversight, Monitoring and Ongoing Management of any POC in the Congregation

Church council to have a regular agenda item to report and receive updates about:

- Processes: evidence they are being followed and working for all parties
- How the POC is adjusting/behaving,
- Evidence that the Safety Agreement is working or not and whether it needs changing
- Feedback from the Minister, monitor/s, pastoral support persons and any supervisors on how they are going
- Feedback from the congregation having a POC within their church – if they have been informed.

Safety Agreement

Safety Agreement

I acknowledge that the Lighthouse Church seeks to provide a framework for the Church to uphold its duty of care to those who participate in all aspects of its life, so that the Lighthouse Church is a safe place for all people.

Lighthouse Church is one congregation. This safety agreement relates to and facilitates access to worship services, events and activities at Lighthouse Church only. If the participant wishes to attend worship, events or activities at another venue, which is not noted in this agreement, permission must be sought in advance from Lighthouse Church Council and appropriate safeguards and chaperone arrangements put in place.

I recognise that my attendance as part of the Lighthouse Church family/congregation is a privilege extended to me to assist in meeting my spiritual needs. However, in doing so I understand that the following conditions are imposed for my attendance and I agree to abide by them. Therefore, as a condition of my participation in this worshipping community, I agree to the following restrictions and conditions:

Definitions

Chaperone - a mature adult of the appropriate gender as the Participant who is not related to the Participant. A Chaperone must be approved by the Church Council of the Lighthouse Church, and recorded in this Safety Agreement. The Participant agrees that each Chaperone will be given a copy of this Safety Agreement, advised of its content and the appropriate protocols should concerns arise. The Chaperone(s) approved under this Agreement is named on Appendix A hereto which is incorporated by reference. The Church reserves the right to change the name(s) of the Chaperone(s) at any time, at its absolute discretion.

Child / Young person - any person who is under the age of 18, including all children and young people regardless of whether such young person has indicated consent to any conduct.

Participant - the person who is a sexual offender who wishes to take part in church services and activities and agrees to be governed in his/her conduct under the terms of this Agreement.

Sexual Offender - any person who has been convicted of, admitted to, or is known by process of church discipline to have engaged in any unlawful sexual conduct or who has attempted, conspired, or solicited any sexual contact involving a minor.

Terms of Participation

I, the Participant and undersigned below, recognise the need to ensure a safe environment for the members, adherents and visitors of the Lighthouse Church and will fully cooperate with these efforts and agree to the following terms and conditions in order to allow my participation and attendance at services, events and activities of the Lighthouse Church:

- a) I understand that I may participate in worship, events and activities in the church, subject to the conditions set out herein.
- b) I agree to use the most direct route from the car park, bus stop or other method of transport to the main entrance to the church or its facilities without passing through any other parts of the church buildings. Any deviation from this route will require prior authorisation and accompaniment by one of the agreed Chaperones. I will meet an appointed chaperone at the entrance to the church and be accompanied by the chaperone at all times whilst on church property, including but not limited to; worship services, educational classes, activities and toilet breaks.
- c) I will not associate with any children or young people attending or participating in any church/school activity. I will not sit next to a child / young person and if a child / young person sits next to me, I will move.

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- d) I will not linger in areas where children / young people are present and will not go to any area where ministries for children / young people are being conducted. If I need to be where children / young people are meeting, I will only do so with a Lighthouse Church appointed Chaperone.
- e) At no time will I place myself in or remain in any location in or around the Lighthouse Church facilities that would cause undue distress to others. This prohibits me from being in or near, children's Sunday School, youth activities both at the Lighthouse Church facility and during activities that are not on the Lighthouse Church property or similar areas of the Church facilities.
- f) Under no circumstances will I take a child home with me or transport any child anywhere except in the case of an emergency and then only with another adult present at all times.
- g) I will not develop any special relationships with any child / young person or their parents.
- h) I will not go to a church member's home where a child / young person is present or is likely to be present, for any meals, Bible study, or social activities unless I have an approved Chaperone with me.
- i) I will not invite any child / young person into my home as a visitor.
- j) If I have a family (spouse and child) who would normally attend church functions for families, I will attend with my family but at no time will I leave the immediate proximity of my family or of one of my Chaperones.
- k) I agree it is my responsibility to maintain an accountability network with individuals as defined by the Lighthouse Church and make sure my whereabouts at church or church activities is monitored by one of my Chaperones at all times.
- l) I agree to meet with the Lighthouse Church Council at any reasonable time regarding the status of my compliance to this Agreement.
- m) I authorise the Lighthouse Church Council to obtain information regarding me from my parole officer, governmental agencies or other persons who might have information relative to my prior criminal convictions. Failure to agree to provide this information may result in the Participant's right to participate in Lighthouse Church activities.
- n) I agree to comply with any court-imposed restrictions, treatment, conditions and/or requirements and recognise that these take precedence over this Agreement.
- o) If I am on probation or parole, I will satisfactorily comply with and complete the terms of my probation or parole. I will provide the Lighthouse Church Safe Church Team with the name and contact information of my probation or parole officer.
- p) I understand that the provisions of this Safety Agreement do not create any personal and/or legal rights against Lighthouse Church or any other church entity, member, volunteer, agent or employee that would afford me any claim or right of redress in any legal or administrative proceedings, nor does this agreement in any way preclude the Lighthouse Church or any other church entity from exercising its right to freely exercise its faith as set out in the Basis of Union.
- q) I understand this Agreement may be reviewed periodically by the Church and will remain in effect as long as I am a member of or attend this Church. I will not request, seek access to, remove, or avail myself of any materials, photographs, files, directories, or rosters, or any other record listing children / young people in or associated with the congregation.
- r) Lighthouse Church does not represent that the restrictions set out in this Safety Agreement are a complete and exhaustive list as no document can foresee all possible issues. Accordingly, Lighthouse Church reserves the right to place additional conditions/restrictions on me as the need may, in the Church's sole discretion, arise from time to time.
- s) I have read and understand the above conditions and agree to abide by them. If at any point I fail to abide by any of the above conditions, I recognise that my participation at Lighthouse Church may be terminated or otherwise restricted. Such determination of failure on my part and setting additional restrictions to include terminating my right of participation in any church activities shall be at the sole discretion of the Lighthouse Church Council.

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- t) This Agreement shall remain valid as long as I attend and/or participate in the activities of the Church named in this document, and should I wish to transfer my attendance, participation, or membership to another Church, a copy of this document will be sent to that Church.
- u) I understand that a single violation of these conditions may result in an immediate termination of the Participants privilege to attend the church.
- v) I have read and understand the above conditions and agree to abide by them.

PARTICIPANT

NAME:
SIGNATURE:
DATE:

MINISTER/PASTOR:
SIGNATURE:
DATE:

CHURCH COUNCIL CHAIR:
SIGNATURE:
DATE:

Lighthouse Church Safe Church Team

Role Summary

Lighthouse Church Safe Church Team Summary

Document title	Safe Church Concerns Team summary	
Document owner	Operations Manager	
Approved by	Church Council	
Dates approved		
Revision date		
Amendments	Date:	Comment:

Introduction

The Church has a responsibility to pass on safeguarding concerns to the civil authorities, even if they do not concern Church personnel directly. The guiding principle is that the safety of the child or vulnerable person is always the most important consideration.

It is our aim for people disclosing concerns, that they feel comfortable about voicing the matter in a safe, supportive, understanding and sensitive environment.

When a concern is raised, whether suspected or disclosed, it should be brought to the attention of the Safe Church Team, who will implement the Safe Church procedures, and in turn, will advise the Church Operations Manager.

The procedure should be followed if any concern, allegation, suspicion or disclosure is made, whether current or historic.

What is the role of a Safe Church Team Member?

- Be a source of support, advice and information on matters of safeguarding children, vulnerable people and elderly in the church
- Be visible and known within the church as a first point of contact regarding safeguarding concerns
- Respond to safeguarding concerns in line with the Lighthouse Church policy & procedure, reporting those concerns to the appropriate person / agency.
- Raise the profile of 'Safe Church' in the congregation
- Assist with proactive measures to further the cause of Safe Church
- Assist in ensuring all statutory requirements are met in respect to safeguarding children, vulnerable people and the elderly.
- Attend any relevant training offered by Lighthouse Church, the WA Synod office or other bodies.

Who else in the Lighthouse Church / Uniting Church is involved in the Safe Church initiative?

1. The Lighthouse Church Operations Manager, or a person nominated by the Lighthouse Church Council, will act in the role of Lighthouse Church Safe Church Co-ordinator and provide leadership and oversight to the implementation and administration of policies and procedures supporting Lighthouse Church's aims to provide a safe church environment. The Lighthouse Church Safe Church Team includes the Operations Manager, Pastor/Minister, Youth Ministry Coordinator, Council Chair and two members from the Lighthouse Church Council to provide leadership.
2. Cindy Gorton is the Uniting Church Western Australia Safe Church/Royal Commission Officer, based at Edward Street, East Perth and is responsible for co-ordinating Safe Church policy within the Uniting Church in Western Australia. Ms Gorton works closely with Lighthouse Church.

Contact details are: Cindy Gorton - Uniting Church in Australia WA Safe Church/Royal Commission Officer.
cindy.gorton@wa.uca.org.au or (08) 9260 9846

Disclosure

Whenever a person tells you that someone is harming them, this is known as a disclosure.

Disclosures can relate to:

- Abuse which is happening in the present – the disclosure may be made by the victim or a person who is aware of the abuse;
- Historic abuse to the person making the disclosure;
- Historic abuse to someone other than the person making the disclosure.

Always remember – the safety of a child is the first and paramount consideration.

If you receive a Disclosure:

There are 5 key areas to dealing with 'Disclosure'

1. Receive
2. Reassure
3. React
4. Record
5. Support

(Please see the Lighthouse Church Safe Church Policy & Procedure - Appendix 5 'Dealing with Disclosures' for more information).

It is **not** your role to carry out an investigation but to report your concerns to the appropriate person or agency.

The flowcharts (Appendix 3 & 4 from the Lighthouse Church Safe Church – Safeguarding Individuals Policy) provide a guide to the reporting lines.

Reporting Procedures

Reporting a child abuse or neglect concern should be done without delay.

- Consult with the Minister or Lighthouse Church Safe Church co-ordinator. Inform the Uniting Church Safe Church Officer (unless the matter relates to ministerial misconduct). If the matter relates to Ministerial misconduct, it should be reported immediately to the General Secretary or the Uniting Church Safe Church officer, who will inform the General Secretary.
- Where there are reasonable grounds for concern, it should always be reported to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support. Following which, please inform the Uniting Church Safe Church Officer that a report has been made.
- Pass all notes to the Uniting Church Safe Church Officer for secure filing. The *Safe Church - Concern referral Form* is available from the Lighthouse Church office. This form will become the first entry in a file of information retained by the Uniting Church Safe Church Officer.
- Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm pending intervention. In the event of an emergency, where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot contact any of the appropriate people, then contact the Department of Communities and Family Support or the Western Australian Police.

Confidentiality

All information received in relation to a disclosure should be stored securely and confidentially.

Effective Safe Church protection depends on the willingness of Lighthouse Church Safe Church people and other personnel involved to share and exchange relevant information. It is critical that there is a clear understanding of professional and legal responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information.

All information regarding concern about abuse will be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

No undertaking regarding secrecy can be given. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to a person who wishes to speak about a situation of abuse or suspected abuse, although they can be assured that all information will be handled taking full account of legal requirements.

The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Appendix 1a - Indicators of Abuse / Harm to Children / Vulnerable People

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but as a tool for identifying those at risk. It is important to remember that one or two indicators in isolation do not mean that a child or vulnerable person is being abused. Indicators must be considered in the context of other indicators and the person's circumstances.

Physical abuse

- Bruises: note location, shape and stage of healing
- Burns that have a specific shape (e.g. cigarette)
- Fear of adults / particular gender
- Frequent absence, with or without explanation from parents or guardians
- Guarded or evasive answers to questions about the causes of obvious injury
- Hair missing in abnormal quantities
- Injuries that are not consistent with the child / vulnerable person's explanation
- Lacerations and abrasions to the eyes, lips, gums, mouth.
- Missing or loosened teeth
- Self-harm / mutilation
- Bed wetting

Emotional / psychological abuse

- Aggressive behaviour
- Attempted or suicidal suggestions
- Decline in academic performance
- Eating disorders
- Resistance to visitation by parent / step parent
- Evidence of drug abuse or dependence
- Excessively passive behaviour
- Isolation from community and support system
- Jealous, excessively restrictive and/or protective parent
- Lethargy and/or fatigue
- Low self-esteem
- Obsession with neatness and cleanliness
- Poor peer relationships
- Shyness or withdrawal
- Significant stress
- Mood changes

Sexual abuse

- Bloodstained underwear
- Disclosure or involvement in sexual activity
- External genital pain or discomfort in the genital area

- Frequent urinary or yeast infections
- Inappropriate expressions of affection
- Inappropriate interest in sexual matters
- Obsession with neatness and cleanliness
- Poor personal hygiene
- Possession of pornographic materials
- Pregnancy
- Presence of a sexually transmitted disease
- Promiscuity or behaving sexually towards others
- Reluctance to change clothes in front of others
- Reluctance to form close relationships
- Sexualisation of toys or at play
- Use of sexual language inappropriate for the child's age
- Wearing of clothes inappropriate for the child's age.
- Persistent running away from home

Neglect

- Abandonment of the child
- Developmental regression
- Emaciated or distended stomach
- Failure by the care giver to provide adequate nutrition
- Inadequate clothing
- Inadequate home supervision
- Stealing food / asking for food
- Lack of appropriate medical care
- Lethargy and fatigue
- Poor personal hygiene
- Untreated lice, injuries, skin disorders
- Voluntary disclosure of acts of abuse
- Poor skin colour with shadows under eyes
- Looks dejected

Appendix 1b - Indicators of Abuse / Harm to Elderly People

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but as a tool for identifying those at risk. It is important to remember that one or two indicators in isolation do not mean that a child or vulnerable person is being abused. Indicators must be considered in the context of other indicators and the person's circumstances.

Financial / material abuse

- Misappropriation of assets, money or valuables
- Forced changes to legal documents
- Denial of access to personal funds
- Forging signatures
- Misuse of a bank card or Enduring Power of Attorney
- Carer spending the older persons money on themselves
- Inadequate access to food, clothing, shelter or utilities
- Interference with mail
- Having less money to spend
- Fear, stress and anxiety

Neglect

- Malnourishment, hypothermia, overheating
- Clothing inappropriate for the season
- Injuries that have not been properly attended to
- Abandoned or left alone for long periods
- Lack of social, cultural, intellectual or physical stimulation
- Lack of safety precautions, or inappropriate supervision

Emotional / psychological abuse

- Verbal intimidation, humiliation, harassment and shouting
- Threats of various forms
- Withholding affection
- Removal of decision-making powers
- Inappropriate behaviour by a carer / guardian
- Shame, depression, anxiety
- Confusion
- Social isolation
- Marked passivity or anger
- Insomnia

Social abuse

- Prevention of contact with family
- Unexpected cancellation of services

- Disconnecting telephone without consent
- Living in / taking control over the elderly persons home
- Preventing the elderly person engaging in religious or cultural practices
- Withdrawal, apathy, lack of interaction with people
- Low self-esteem

Physical abuse

- Physically restraining
- Bruising, burns, pushing, tripping
- Over or under medicating
- Injuries at different stages of healing
- Frequency of visits to doctor / hospital
- Guarded or evasive answers to questions about the causes of obvious injury
- Hair missing in abnormal quantities
- Injuries that are not consistent with the elderly person's explanation
- Self-harm / mutilation

Sexual abuse

- Bruising around inner thighs / genitals
- Unexplained sexually transmitted disease
- Difficulty in walking or standing
- Sitting huddled and in fear of being touched
- Touching inappropriately
- Use of sexually offensive language
- Use of inappropriate materials / media
- Sexual harassment
- Torn / stained / bloody underwear

Appendix 2 - Abuse referral and support agencies

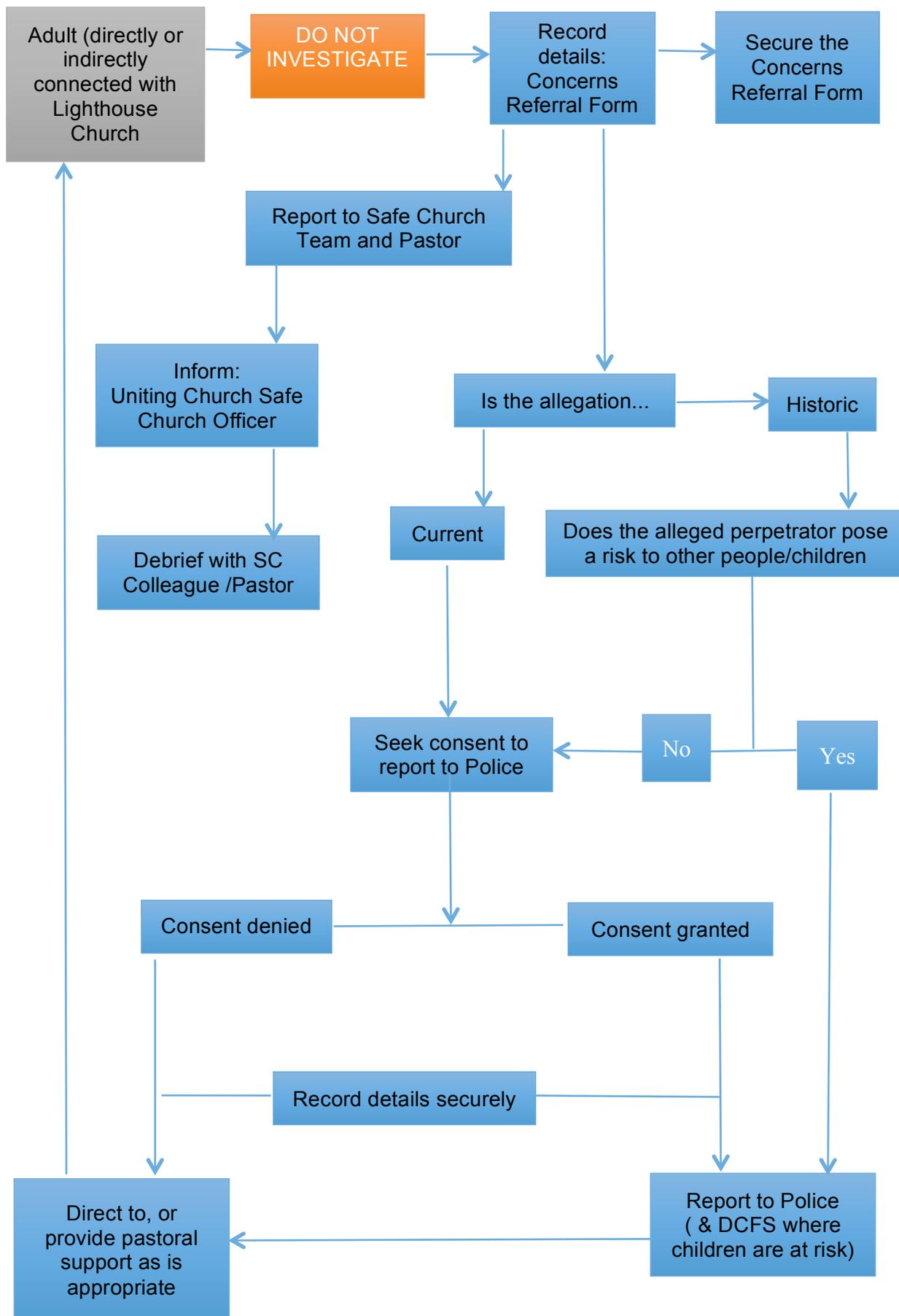
Agency	Contact	Assistance Provided
Uniting Church in Australia WA	Rosemary Hudson-Miller (08) 9260 9800 1300 736 692 Rosemary.miller@wa.uca.org.au	Denominational Safe Ministry Liaison Officer
	Rev Denise Savage Denise.savage@wa.uca.org.au	Pastoral Care Worker
	John Barendrecht John.barendrecht@wa.uca.org.au	Manager Pastoral & Placements Unit
Ambulance/Fire/Police	000	Emergency response
Police	131 444 www.police.wa.gov.au	Non-emergency response
Department of Child Protection	(08) 9222 2555 1800 622 258 www.dcp.wa.gov.au	The Department provides a range of child safety and family support services to Western Australia.
Royal Commission on Institutional Responses to Child Abuse	1800 099 340	
Crisis Care	(08) 9223 1111 1800 199 008 Family Helpline: (08) 9223 1100 1800 643 000 www.dcp.wa.gov.au/crisisandemergency/pages/crisiscare.aspx	Information and short-term counselling for people in crisis needing urgent help to ensure the wellbeing of a child, vulnerable or elderly person, escape domestic violence, information on refuge and accommodation options, emergency financial assistance and general counselling. The Family Helpline provides more targeted counselling and information for families with relationship difficulties.
Advocare	(08) 9479 7566 1800 655 566 www.advocare.org.au	Support and advocacy for older people who are being abused, or at risk.

Agency	Contact	Assistance Provided
Office of the Public Advocate	1300 858 455 www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au	Advice/ assistance with cases of elder abuse where a person who may have decision making disability is involved.
Older People's Rights Service	(08) 9440 1663 www.nsclegal.org.au/elder_law.php	Legal advice, information and legal advocacy; short term counselling.
Public Trustee	Wills, Deceased estate & enduring powers of attorney. 1300 746 116 Administration & represented persons: 1300 746 212 www.publictrustee.wa.gov.au	Independent, professional trustee and asset management services.
SARC – Sexual Assault Resource Centre	(08) 9340 1828 or 1800 199 888	Provides services to people aged 13 or over who have been sexually assaulted or abused.
Relationships Australia	9489 6363 or 1300 364 277	Provides services to support people affected by violence.
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800	A free and confidential telephone counselling service for 5 – 18 year old children in Australia.
Alzheimer's Australia WA	(08) 9388 2800 Dementia helpline: 1800 100 500 www.fightdementia.org.au	Specialist dementia education, information, training, counselling and support.
Carers WA	1800 242 636 Carer's counselling line: 1800 007 332 www.carerswa.asn.au	Represent interests of carers in WA. Confidential counselling service.
Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centres	1800 052 222 Emergency respite: 1800 059 059 www.commcarelink.health.gov.au	Government initiative providing information, support and referral to community and respite services for elderly people with disabilities and their carers.

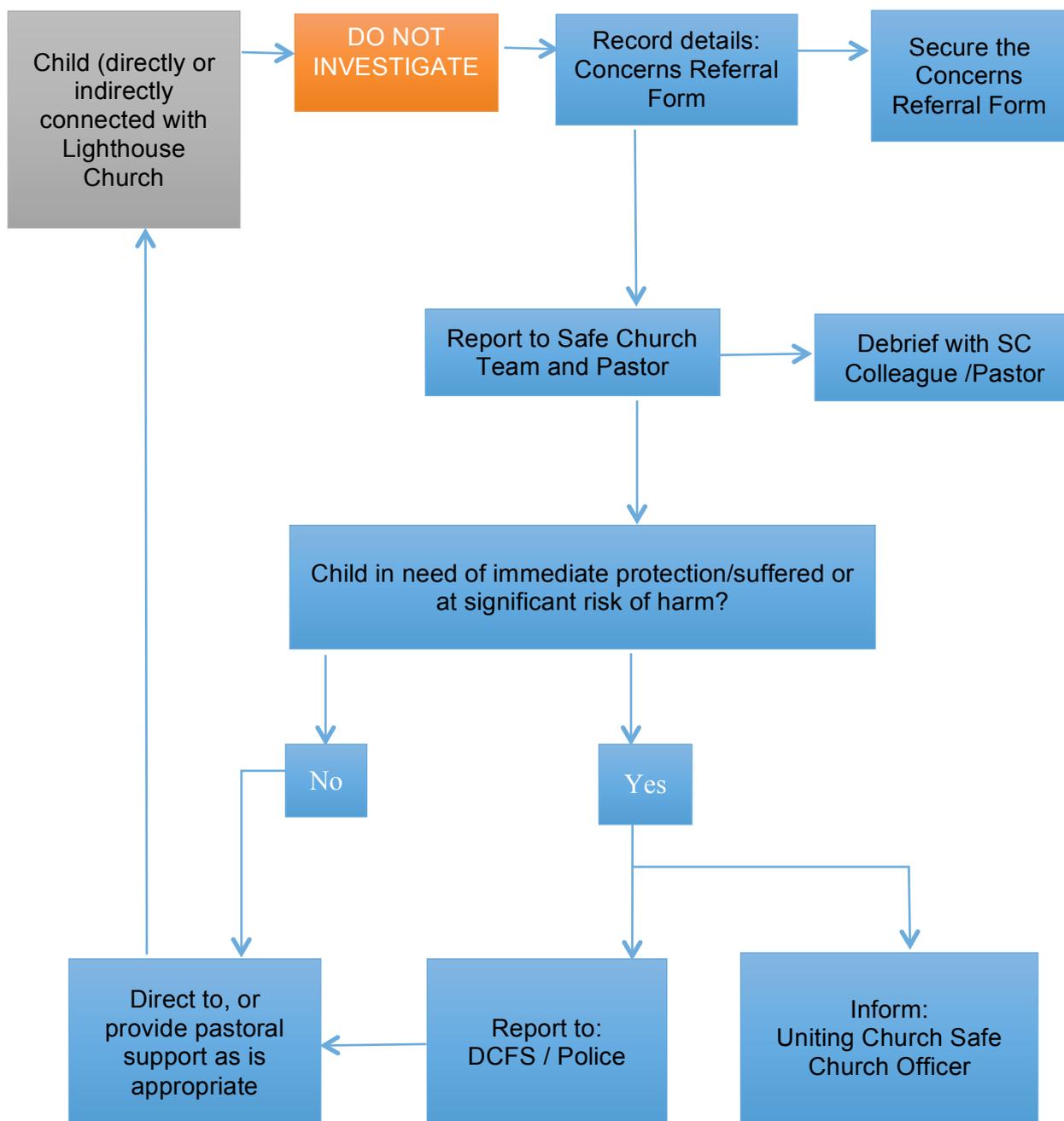
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Agency	Contact	Assistance Provided
Elder Abuse Helpline	1300 724 679	Available 8.30am – 4.30pm offering an ‘impartial ear’ for people to share their situation.
Working with Children Check	www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au	To obtain working with children clearance
Healthdirect Australia	1800 022 222	Providing access to trusted professional health information on the most appropriate care for health issues.
Mental Health Crisis Line	(08) 9224 8888 1800 552 002	Psychiatric emergency assessment & advisory service to assist mental health clients & their carers.
Translating & Interpreter Services	131 450 Enquiry line: 1300 655 082 Wwwtisnational.gov.au	Telephone and on-site interpreters for non-English speakers and interpreting for English speakers to communicate with non-English speaking clients.
Legal Aid WA	1300 650 579 www.legalaid.wa.gov.au	Information, advice and other help.

Appendix 3 – disclosure by an adult/vulnerable/elderly person



Appendix 4 – disclosure pertaining to a child



The safety of a child is the first and paramount consideration.

Appendix 5 - Lighthouse Church Workplace Harassment & Bullying Policy & Protection Procedure

Lighthouse Church is committed to providing its personnel with a safe work environment that is free from inappropriate behaviour and will take all reasonable steps to minimise any form of workplace harassment or bullying. This commitment is based on our Church's belief in the importance of individuals in God's eyes and their right to be respected, and kept safe from any harm.

This Policy and its attached Procedure is aimed at ensuring that personnel are not subjected to any unwanted workplace bullying or harassment. Bullying and harassment in the workplace decreases productivity, increases absenteeism and is also against the law. For these reasons workplace harassment or bullying by or towards any personnel contractor, supplier, customer, client or visitor in any work-related situation will not be tolerated by Lighthouse Church under any circumstances. This Policy and its attached Procedure applies to all personnel, staff and volunteers of Lighthouse Church.

Background

Bullying and harassment is **not acceptable**. It is **unlawful**, pursuant to State legislation (*Equal Opportunity Act 1984 and Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986*) and Federal legislation (*Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Racial Discrimination Act, 1975, Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*).

It is the responsibility of supervisors and management to provide a working environment free from bullying and harassment and to ensure that all complaints are treated confidentially, seriously and sympathetically and that appropriate action is taken whenever bullying and/or harassment occurs. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against anyone found to have harassed another employee.

No employee will be penalised or disadvantaged as a result of raising genuine concerns or complaints relating to bullying or harassment.

What is Unacceptable Conduct?

Behaviour of the following kinds is defined as "Unacceptable Conduct" by Lighthouse Church:

- Harassment
- Bullying
- Vilification
- Sexual Harassment
- Retaliation or victimisation against someone involved in a complaint

Each of these types of Unacceptable Conduct is defined below.

What is Harassment?

Harassment is any verbal, written or physical behaviour or conduct that is of an offensive, threatening, intimidating, abusive or belittling nature and that is unwelcome, unreciprocated, uninvited and usually, but not always, repeated.

It can also be based on race, disability, age, pregnancy, marital status, homosexuality, transgender, or HIV/AIDS status.

Workplace harassment usually consists of a pattern of unwelcome behaviour. However, it can consist of just one act where this is of a serious nature. Also, there is no requirement that the harasser intended to offend or harm in order for it to be unlawful. All that is required, under the law, is that a reasonable person would consider that the person being harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated by the behaviour in question.

Harassment in the workplace can create an unpleasant or even hostile environment. Harassment makes work difficult for everyone – the person being harassed, as well as personnel witnessing the

harassment. The harasser is not concentrating on their work when he/she engages in this type of behaviour.

What isn't Workplace Harassment and Bullying?

It is important for personnel to be aware that workplace harassment and bullying does not include the legitimate exercise of authority by an employer or manager/supervisor to direct and control how personnel perform their duties whilst at work, to monitor work flow or to provide feedback to personnel about their performance.

This also includes:

- Reasonable action taken in a reasonable manner by an employer to transfer, demote, discipline, counsel, retrench or dismiss personnel;
- A decision by an employer, based on reasonable grounds and consistent with the Lighthouse Church Recruitment and Selection Policy, not to award or provide a promotion, transfer, or benefit in connection with personnel employment;
- Reasonable administrative action taken in a reasonable manner by an employer in connection with personnel employment;
- Reasonable action taken in a reasonable manner under an Act affecting personnel.

Lighthouse Church recognises that workplace harassment and bullying may involve comments and behaviours that offend some people and not others. The management of Lighthouse Church acknowledges that individuals may react differently to comments and behaviour and therefore expects its personnel to maintain a standard of behaviour that is respectful of everyone at all times.

For the purposes of this policy, the following applies:

What is bullying?

'Bullying' as defined by the *Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986*, is behaviour that is directed towards a person or a group of persons, that is repeated and systematic, and that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten personnel to whom the behaviour is directed, creating a risk to health or safety.

Bullying has many similarities to harassment, but the reasons for bullying behaviour do not have to be based upon an unlawful or discriminatory ground.

What is vilification?

'Vilification' is publicly encouraging or inciting hatred, ill feeling or severe contempt for someone or a group of people on the basis of race and certain other personal characteristics.

What is Sexual Harassment?

'Sexual harassment' is defined in the *Uniting Church in Australia Constitution and Regulations, Section 7.7.4 (a)* as "any unwelcome sexual advance, or unwelcome request for sexual favours to a person, or engagement in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to that person, in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the person complaining would be offended, humiliated or intimidated." (Refer to the Sexual Harassment Policy)

Lighthouse Church advises that incidents of sexual harassment may, in fact, constitute a criminal offence, and therefore Lighthouse Church may report any such instances to the appropriate authorities.

What is aggression?

'Aggression' includes: verbal abuse; physical violence against an individual in the form of hitting, slapping, spitting, scratching, pinching, kicking; threats of violence; and physical violence against objects, such as kicking or throwing property.

What is occupational violence?

Safe Church Policy

'Occupational violence' can be defined as any incident where personnel is physically attacked or threatened in the workplace.

Lighthouse Church advises that incidents of occupational violence may, in fact, constitute criminal assault, and therefore Lighthouse Church may report any such instances to the appropriate authorities.

Within the above definitions, it is generally accepted that:

- **"repeated"** refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour, not the specific form of the behaviour. For example, the harassment or bullying may involve a variety of unreasonable and inappropriate behaviours such as verbal abuse, persistent and unwarranted criticism and open or implied threats of being demoted or terminated;
- **"systematic"** means having, showing or involving a method or plan; and
- **"risk to health or safety"** includes the risk to the physical or emotional health of personnel concerned.

Examples of harassing or bullying behaviour

Harassing or bullying behaviour may include (but is not limited to):

- offensive comments on physical appearance, dress or private life;
- unwanted physical contact such as patting, hugging, touching or unnecessary familiarity;
- sexual jokes, suggestive behaviour, sexual innuendo, spoken comments or offensive telephone calls, emails;
- demands for sexual favours or unwanted comments about a person's sex life;
- leering, wolf whistles, catcalls and obscene gestures;
- display of offensive posters, pictures, graffiti, or pornographic material;
- racially based jokes or comments;
- mimicking someone with a disability;
- isolating someone;
- unfair or excessive criticism;
- initiation 'rituals'; and/or
- using aggressive language.

It is up to each of us, if possible, to tell others in our workplace if their conduct is causing offence. Equally, if an issue is raised with us it is up to each of us to moderate our behaviour accordingly.

If a complaint of harassment/bullying is ignored or the behaviour condoned, it can lead to serious disciplinary action consistent with the process outlined below, both in relation to the employee initiating the behaviour and anyone who fails to act to stop the behaviour.

Any personnel found guilty of perpetrating or permitting workplace harassment or bullying will be appropriately disciplined, and may, in serious or repeated cases, be dismissed. Any person found guilty of making malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations of workplace harassment or bullying that are held to be unfounded, will also be appropriately disciplined and, dependent upon all the circumstances, may also be dismissed.

Lighthouse Church recognises the rights of the person accused of workplace harassment or bullying to be treated with natural justice. This includes the right to know full details of allegations against them, a right of reply to those allegations, a presumption of innocence until evidence against them shows otherwise and the benefit of any reasonable doubt.

As part of the Lighthouse Church commitment to minimising and eliminating instances of workplace harassment and bullying at work, Lighthouse Church will:

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- provide and make accessible, resources for all personnel relating to workplace harassment or bullying, including the attached Workplace Harassment and Bullying Procedure;
- distribute and regularly promote this Policy statement to all existing and new personnel;
- model appropriate behaviour and monitor the working environment to ensure that the appropriate standards of behaviour and conduct are observed at all times;
- treat all complaints of workplace harassment and bullying seriously and take immediate action to investigate and resolve any complaint quickly and fairly and with complete confidentiality, consistent with the attached Workplace Harassment and Bullying Procedure;
- ensure that personnel who make or support a complaint of workplace harassment or bullying are not subsequently subjected to victimisation; and
- take all reasonable steps to ensure there is no recurrence of the offence.

All personnel have a responsibility to take reasonable care to protect their own health, safety and welfare whilst at work and to avoid adversely affecting the health, safety and welfare of any other person at work as outlined in the *Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986*. Further, all personnel have a responsibility to comply with this Policy by ensuring that they do not commit or encourage workplace harassment or bullying in the workplace.

Personnel should be aware that they could be held personally liable for harassing or bullying another person or aiding, abetting, encouraging or condoning other persons to harass or bully.

To ensure that this Workplace Harassment and Bullying Policy is complied with, Lighthouse Church has appointed the Operations Manager as the Responsible Officer, who will be responsible for the education and training of all staff on workplace harassment and bullying issues, and assist with the implementation of this Policy.

If any personnel feel that they have been harassed or bullied, they may make a complaint in accordance with the attached Workplace Harassment and Bullying Procedure or other appropriate Lighthouse Church Procedures. If personnel are not satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Lighthouse Church, they have the right to refer the matter to an external party.

Workplace Harassment and Bullying Procedure

What do you do if you believe you are being harassed or bullied?

Allegations and incidents of workplace harassment and bullying can often be most effectively resolved if they are dealt with at an early stage, rather than left until the matter has become serious and attitudes entrenched. Therefore, Lighthouse Church encourages all personnel to report all allegations of workplace harassment or bullying as soon as they occur.

If personnel experience any behaviour that they find offensive or unacceptable, they must, if at all possible, tell the person concerned that their behaviour is objected to strongly and they do not want it repeated.

It is important that personnel focus on the specific behaviour concerned and explain why it is considered to be offensive.

More often than not, this is all that is required to put an end to the matter. Often a person is not aware that their behaviour is upsetting or intimidating and they will stop immediately once they are told.

However; if personnel feel that they are unable to resolve the matter by raising it directly or, if the behaviour does not stop, the matter should immediately be referred to the following support mechanisms:

Point of Contact: Safe Church Team Member/Contact Officer

A Safe Church Team Member or the Operations Manager will provide advice and support for any person who believes they have been harassed and/or bullied, even if they do not wish to take formal action.

SAFE CHURCH POLICY 2019

This person will not be involved in any way with the formal investigation or resolution of a complaint.

Personnel who believe that they are or have been harassed or bullied within the workplace should report the incident(s) to a Safe Church Team Member.

safechurches@lighthousegeraldton.com

Any personnel who require advice, information or support in relation to workplace harassment or bullying should contact their Safe Church Team Member to assist them in such matters.

What will happen if you make a complaint or report?

Any complaints or reports of harassment will be treated seriously and sympathetically and acted upon quickly. They will be investigated thoroughly, impartially and confidentially. Safe Church Team personnel must act immediately on any reports of harassment. Personnel will not be disadvantaged in their employment conditions or opportunities as a result of lodging a complaint.

What will happen to the person against whom personnel has made a complaint?

Appropriate action, where necessary, will be taken against anyone, including employees or independent contractors, who are found to have harassed or bullied personnel or any other person during the course of their employment.

This may include counselling, disciplinary action or termination of employment.

Confidentiality

While it is recognised that personnel who experience an instance of bullying or harassment may want to talk about their situation, they should not discuss it with their fellow team members or other personnel.

All personnel are advised that a complaint of harassment or bullying is a serious matter and where possible needs to be substantiated.

The principles of procedural fairness require that all parties to a complaint will have the opportunity to put their positions fully if an allegation is made. Procedural fairness also means that no decision will be made about the validity of a complaint until all parties have had a chance to respond. Personnel will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or harassment as a result of filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Any personnel who feel that they have been subjected to intimidation, victimisation or harassment as a result of filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation should advise their manager or Contact Officer immediately.

What happens if an employee breaches this Policy?

Lighthouse Church does not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. Anyone who engages in unacceptable conduct in breach of this Policy will face disciplinary action which may include a verbal or written warning and in serious cases, or cases of repeated behaviour, termination of employment or engagement.

Our commitment

Lighthouse Church is committed to providing an environment that is safe and free of harassment for all personnel and others with whom we associate at work.

This Policy has the full support and commitment of Church Council.

Please help us to help you by giving your support in monitoring and avoiding practices, attitudes and traditions that lead to harassment or bullying.

Review of Policy

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed and monitored on a regular basis to ensure it remains current and practical to Lighthouse Church and statutory requirements.

Appendix 6 – Safe Church Volunteer Declaration

Thank you for your desire to volunteer at _____.

This declaration is part of your church’s commitment to ensuring our duty of care to all people, and also to fulfil our insurance, health and safety requirements.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname:		First name:	
Any former names:		Date of Birth:	
Gender:		Email:	
Address:			
Home phone:		Mobile phone:	

CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK AND/OR WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

I hereby consent to obtaining an Australian Federal Police Check if one is considered necessary for my role. YES/NO

My state based Working With Children’s Check (or similar) details, where required are as follows:

Name on Card:		State of Issue:	
Notice Number:		Expiry Date:	

Please present your current WWCC to the church office to be sighted and photocopied as soon as possible.

CONSENT TO HOLD INFORMATION

I consent to the information contained in this application including the subsequent pages to be kept by our church. I understand that this information will be kept in a confidential file and used only for screening and disciplinary purposes. YES / NO

REFEREE CHECK (if you have been at the church for less than three years). Please nominate a character reference (i.e. Professional, Employer, Organization).

Name:	
Relationship:	
Contact:	

If you have been at Lighthouse church for less than three years:

Name of my previous Church and Pastor:	
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SAFE CHURCH POLICY 2019

Lighthouse Church wants to ensure that we are best able to support you to be able to productively and happily contribute to the volunteer ministry of the church.

With this in mind, do you have any condition or impairment that may affect your work?
 E.g. Physical, sensory, intellectual or psychiatric. YES/NO If yes, please give details.

Have you any allergies, medical conditions or recurring illnesses that we would need to be aware of?
 Eg. Epilepsy, diabetes, mental health issues, nut allergy, or other? YES/NO If yes, please specify.

DECLARATION

1. I understand that this church operates in an environment of numerous legal and ethical restrictions, and I will fully cooperate with the church in abiding by these. I assure the church, in considering me for a volunteer role that:
 - I have no health impediment that will put me or any other person at risk in the fulfilment of my designated role.
 - Other than those matters disclosed by me to the church (noted above) at the time of making this declaration, I know of no past behaviour that renders me unfit to serve as a volunteer or which detracts from the obligation of the church to operate as a place of safety to a minor or any other person. Such past behaviour may include being the subject of an allegation of sexual abuse (whether convicted or not), including any type of molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation.
2. I understand that if I am unclear as to any of the statements in this document, I will seek clarification from the Ministry team leader or church leader before signing.
3. I have provided this information, and any documents accompanying it in good faith and declare that they are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
4. I understand that any material misstatement in or omission from this questionnaire may render me unfit to hold a particular role in the church.
5. I have received a copy of the *Lighthouse Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct* and I agree to uphold it.
6. I understand that when considering whether there is an avenue for my voluntary services, my church may refer to the Lighthouse Church Safe Church Policy, guideline and position papers.
7. I will respect the decision of my church as to where I volunteer my services within the church, and whether my services are required, from time to time.
8. I understand that a Ministry Team leader will be available to me to discuss my service.

Prospective volunteer's signature:		Date:	
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(If under the age of 18, please have this form co-signed by your parent/guardian).

Parent/Guardian Name:		Signature:	
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Endorsement of church leadership for this person to volunteer:

Name:		Position:	
Signature:		Date:	
Office:		Date:	

Appendix 7 – Volunteer Church Worker’s Code of Conduct

Codes of Conduct are part of the Lighthouse Church Safe Church Commitment to safe emotional and physical environments, an expectation of our Child Protection Policy as per the Lighthouse Church Safe Church Policy and a commitment to providing appropriate duty of care, including health and safety considerations.

Volunteering in church life is a highly valued and important part of service to the church. This **Volunteer Church Worker’s Code of Conduct** outlines the standards of behaviour that are expected for all volunteer workers at Lighthouse Church.

Volunteer workers include all volunteers serving the local church in teams, on rosters and in any other way. Volunteer workers lives are on display and are subject to public scrutiny and as such these standards of behaviour should apply not only to your church life but also your personal life.

1. **SERVANT HEARTED:**

- Volunteer workers are servants of Christ, who should endeavour to become servant leaders, as modelled by Jesus (John 13:3-14). The misuse of authority can be a particular temptation when being given a position of trust and power, and a servant-hearted leader will seek to avoid any misuse of authority or privilege.

2. **COMMITMENT TO TEAM MINISTRY:** Volunteer workers:

- Will embrace the vision, values, and mission of the church, and continue to develop ministry skills through a variety of means including team meetings.
- Are accountable to their team, watch out for each other and protect each other’s integrity.

3. **BEHAVIOUR:** Volunteer workers:

- Will act in the best interests of those we serve.
- Must not be abusive in any way toward others, spiritually, emotionally, physically or sexually, including domestic and family violence.
- Will avoid the use of offensive language (i.e. swear words, sexual connotations, and racial or religious slurs).
- Will exercise caution with all potentially addictive behaviours and/or harmful substances. Drunkenness is never acceptable.
- Will refrain from using any illicit substances.
- Will use caution when initiating or receiving physical contact with those we serve, including gestures of comfort, as such gestures can be unwanted or misinterpreted.
- Will act with sexual integrity. Sex is a gift from God and integral to human nature. All inappropriate sexual behaviour is forbidden (i.e. sex outside of marriage). Sexual innuendos and harassment of a sexual nature are always inappropriate.
- Will report their concerns of abuse according to the Lighthouse Church Safe Church guidelines.
- Will treat all program participants fairly and in accordance with Lighthouse Church policies, guidelines and position papers.
- Will communicate with integrity, including accountable and wise use of electronic communication.
- Will not take or distribute photographs (including videos) of participants at Lighthouse Church events without explicit permissions being given by leadership and subjects, and will refrain from distributing any images by electronic transmission.
- Will acknowledge when they are out of their depth, do not possess the required skill set in difficult pastoral situations, such as helping a victim of abuse, or a person who needs professional counselling, and will seek help from a supervisor or church leader
- Will not take property belonging to others, including intellectual property (copyright).
- Will demonstrate integrity with all financial dealings. Volunteer workers must not seek financial gain from their church role.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY:

- Trust is essential in serving the church. Confidential information must not be disclosed, and must be treated with the utmost care. Exceptions include when disclosure is required by law, abuse notifications whether required by law or not, there are concerns for the safety of the person or others, or when the information is in the public domain. Disclosure is a serious matter and the assistance of a Safe Church team member should be sought.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

- Any breach of this code involving a criminal offence may lead to a report being made to the relevant authorities.
- Any breaches relating to the harm, or risk of harm, of a child or young person will be dealt with under the Lighthouse Church Safe Church Initiative. A copy of this policy should be provided to every volunteer who has a direct role with a child or young person.
- Any other breach will be considered in the light of the best interests of the volunteer and those we serve and may result in the volunteer being stood down either temporarily or otherwise.
- Volunteer workers need to be open to correction and humble enough to modify behaviours so as not to discredit the gospel.

SAFE CHURCH TEAM email: safechurches@lighthousegeraldton.com

Appendix 8 – Dealing with Disclosures

How to respond to a disclosure – guidance for the recipient

There are five key areas to dealing with Disclosure:

RECEIVE - REASSURE – REACT – RECORD – SUPPORT

RECEIVE

- Listen to the person. If you are shocked by what they tell you, try not to show it. Take what they say seriously.
- Accept what the person says. Do not burden them with guilt e.g. by asking “Why didn’t you tell me earlier?”

REASSURE

- Stay calm and reassure the person that they did the right thing in talking to you. It is essential to be honest with the person, do not make promises you may not be able to keep.
- Do not compromise confidentiality.
- Try to alleviate any feelings of guilt the person may display – e.g. tell them that they are not alone or not to blame.
- Acknowledge how hard it must have been to tell you.
- Empathise with the person – do not tell them what they should be feeling.

REACT

React to the person only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not to refer this matter, but do not interrogate them.

- Do not ask questions which are suggestive of any particular answer. Any questions should be open e.g. “Anything else to tell me? or, “Did anything else happen that you can remember?”
- Do not criticise the perpetrator.
- Explain what you have to do next and to whom you need to talk.
- Inform the Safe Church Concerns Person or other LC safeguarding person.

RECORD

- Make brief notes at the time. Ensure the notes are kept confidential and secure and are kept with all other documentation. Do not destroy your notes; they may be needed later in Court.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the person. Do not reinterpret any words used, use the actual words only.
- It is vitally important that you are objective in your recording; include statements and observable things. You must not include your interpretations or assumptions.

SUPPORT

- Make sure that the person is supported.

Get support for yourself, without disclosing confidential information.

To be completed by the person who hears a disclosure or wishes to report a child, young person or vulnerable person at risk of harm. The completed form should be given only to a Lighthouse Church Safe Church Operations Manager. A photocopy will be made & stamped COPY. Both copies will be placed in a dated & initialed sealed envelope and kept in 2 locations: 1. Locked filing cabinet at the LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH office and 2. Locked Document safe at LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH. The placement of such a document will be entered into an electronic numerical document file system index. This index will be password protected and accessible only by a Lighthouse Church Safe Church Operations Manager. The information will be used for reporting to the appropriate agencies if such a need arises.

Name of Church:

Date of disclosure/concern:

Time of disclosure/concern:

Method of disclosure/concern:

Details of Person reporting alleged abuse/risk of harm/concern

Name of Reporter:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Relationship to the alleged victim:

Details of child/alleged victim

Name:

DOB:

Address:

Phone:

Language:

Interpreter required:

Yes

No

Disability:

Yes

No

Special Needs:

Yes

No

Details of Parent/Carer (where appropriate)

Name:

Phone:

Address:

Relationship to Child/Victim:

Additional Information:

Please attach a separate page if there is insufficient space

Details of alleged perpetrator of the abuse (if known)	
Name:	Phone:
Address:	
Relationship to Child/Victim:	
Position/Leadership in Church:	
Current involvement in Church:	
Current contact with children if known:	
Any additional information:	
Details of concern, allegation or complaint	
Include dates, times, locations of the incident(s) & witnesses if known:	
<i>Please attach a separate page if there is insufficient space</i>	
Does the victim/child know this referral is being made?	Yes No
Action taken – Civil Authorities	
Has the matter been reported to the Civil Authorities?	Yes No
If YES, date:	Time:
If no, WHY not?	
To whom was the referral made?	
Organization name:	
Contact person:	
Position:	
Address:	
Phone:	Email:

Action Taken – LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH	
Has the matter been reported to the UCA Safe Church Officer/General Secretary (SYNOD)?	
If NO Explain why not:	
If Yes Date:	Time:
Contact person:	Position:
Address:	
Phone:	Email:

Next Steps
What action was agreed to, and who referred this matter to the Safe Church Officer or Civil Authority?
Are there any immediate child/victim protection concerns? Yes No
If YES, please record what they are, state what action has been taken and by whom:
<div style="font-size: small; margin-top: 100px;"><i>Please attach a separate page if there is insufficient space</i></div>

Details of person completing this form (if different from the person making the disclosure)	
Name:	
Address:	
Phone:	Email:
Relationship to child/victim:	

NAME:	SIGNATURE:	DATE:
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Protecting all people in the Uniting Church

LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH SAFE CHURCH INITIATIVE

Lighthouse Church is committed to:

- Protecting children, young people, vulnerable people and the elderly
- Implementing Safe Church Policies and Procedures throughout LC
- Assisting with your concerns about the safety of vulnerable people.

LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH SAFE CHURCH TEAM

For safety concerns about:

- A person in the congregation;
- A children protection or child safety issue

Discuss your concern with us or email the LCSC team directly:

safechurches@lighthousegeraldton.com

or call the Lighthouse Church Office 9964 6169



Bianca Allen



Chelsie Bunter



Beverley Hanrahan



Peter Hanrahan

Jon Paschke

For further information regarding the Safe Church Policy Initiative please contact:
Cindy Gorton – Uniting Church in Australia – WA Safe Church/Royal Commission Officer
cindy.gorton@wa.uca.org.au or (08) 9260 9846

In case of an emergency, contact the CPFS Child Protection & Family Support
(08) 9222 2555 or 1800 622 258 or dcp.wa.gov.au
Local: 45 Cathedral Avenue, Geraldton. 9965 9500