



Glossary of terms

C/2.1.5.6

Glossary

1. **Abusive action:** an incident or interaction between adults or between an adult and a child characterised by wrong or improper action that is either physical or verbal and results in harm to the child or other person. For example, abusive action would include a parent's failure to protect a child from harm caused by another person.
2. **Allegation:** a claim or assertion, without definitive proof, that a wrongdoing (i.e. abuse or grooming of a child) has happened or is likely to happen.
3. **Boundary violation:** inappropriate behaviour which falls outside the stated accepted behaviours outlined in the [Safe Ministry with Children: Providing Safe Ministry Policy](#) (SMC Policy), code of conduct.
4. **Bullying:** Bullying is when people (children or adults) repeatedly and intentionally use words or actions against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their well-being. These actions are usually done by people who have more influence or power over someone else, or who want to make someone else feel less powerful or helpless. Bullying is not the same as conflict between people (like having a fight) or disliking someone, even though people might bully each other because of conflict or dislike. Find out more at <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/commission-general/bullying-know-your-rights-violence-harassment-and-bullying-fact-sheet>
5. **Child:** a child is defined under the Child Protection Act 1999 as an individual under 18 years of age.
6. **Child abuse:** may be perpetrated by adults or children and refers to acts or omissions which put the health, welfare or safety of a child at risk. Child abuse can be a single incident or can be a number of different incidents that take place over time. Child abuse is commonly divided into four main subtypes:
 - a) **Physical abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering, non-accidental physical trauma or injury. Intention to harm the child is not relevant e.g. physical punishment resulting in bruising would be considered physical abuse. Physical abuse does not always leave visible marks or injuries. It is not how bad the mark or injury is, but rather the act itself that causes injury or trauma to the child. Physical abuse can include:
 - hitting
 - shaking
 - throwing
 - burning
 - biting
 - poisoning.
 - b) **Emotional abuse:** occurs when a child's social, emotional, cognitive or intellectual development is impaired or threatened. When a parent/care giver does or says something many times that affects the confidence and self-esteem of a child. It is also a pattern of failure to provide a child with adequate nonphysical nurture and emotional availability. It can include emotional deprivation due to persistent:
 - rejection
 - hostility
 - teasing/bullying
 - yelling
 - criticism
 - exposure of a child to domestic and family violence.
 - c) **Neglect:** occurs when a child's basic necessities of life are not met, and their health and development are affected. Basic needs include:



- food
 - housing
 - health care
 - adequate clothing
 - personal hygiene
 - hygienic living conditions
 - timely provision of medical treatment
 - adequate supervision.
- d) **Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse occurs when an adult, stronger child or adolescent uses their power or authority to involve a child in sexual activity. It includes child grooming which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child and a child's family, to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with a child. For more information about child sexual abuse visit <https://bravehearts.org.au/what-we-do/education-and-training/for-parents/resources-for-parents/>. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional and can include:
- kissing or holding a child in a sexual manner
 - exposing a sexual body part to a child
 - having sexual relations with a child under 16 years of age
 - talking in a sexually explicit way that is not age or developmentally appropriate
 - making obscene phone calls or remarks to a child
 - sending obscene mobile text messages or emails to a child
 - fondling a child in a sexual manner
 - persistently intruding on a child's privacy
 - penetrating the child's vagina or anus by penis, finger or any other object
 - oral sex
 - rape
 - incest
 - showing pornographic films, magazines or photographs to a child
 - having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner
 - forcing a child to watch a sexual act
 - child prostitution.
7. **Child-related activities:** activities or programs which are provided only or mainly to children. Note that worship services and other activities aimed at only or mainly families, are not child-related activities. A current blue card or exemption card is required for all persons working or volunteering in child-related activities.
8. **Children and Vulnerable adults:** children and adults with disabilities, the elderly, children and adults experiencing domestic and family violence, children and young people. Usually referred to in relation to Safe Ministry practices. *See also 32 Vulnerable adults.*
9. **Congregation member:** for the purpose of this process, congregation member refers to any person who attends the congregation or its activities irrespective of whether attendance is regular or occasional.
10. **Delegate:** under the SMC Policy and processes the church council is able to delegate certain responsibilities to individuals to undertake tasks and/or duties on behalf of the church council.
11. **Disclosure:** when someone, including a child, tells another person about abuse, including child abuse that has happened or is likely to happen.
12. **Domestic and family violence:** when one person in an intimate personal, family or informal care relationship uses violence or abuse to maintain power and control over the other person. It includes behaviour that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive, threatening, coercive or aimed at controlling or dominating another person through fear. Exposure to domestic and family violence also has a detrimental impact to children over time. The perpetrator's coercive and/or controlling behaviour of the other parent, undermines and diminishes them as



a parent, affecting their confidence and parenting skills, and can negatively affect the parent-child relationship over time. This behaviour includes:

- Criticising the other parent, deflecting attention away from their own harmful behaviour and responsibility as a parent
 - displaying behaviour that is violent, aggressive, intimidating or threatening including physical or sexual assault and property damage
 - Sleep and food deprivation is also a form of physical abuse.
 - directly and indirectly hurting the child
 - behaviours that are detrimental to the wider functioning of the family (for example, in terms of housing, employment and social connections)
 - causing or exacerbating the other parent's substance or mental health issues, or interfering with/hindering their recovery
13. **Emotional harm:** Psychological/emotional abuse/violence includes behaviour and/or comments that undermine a person's sense of self. It is abuse/violence that increases a sense of vulnerability around personal safety and mental well-being. It can leave people feeling a deep sense of worthlessness and helplessness, leading to significant mental health disorders. Verbal abuse will compound psychological/emotional abuse, the use of constant put downs, name calling and insults contributing to the sense of worthlessness. For children, emotional harm occurs when the child's social, emotional, cognitive or intellectual development is impaired or at unacceptable risk of being impaired as a direct result of parental behaviour/attitude. This includes significant emotional deprivation due to persistent coldness, rejection or hostility. The harm to the child may have a cumulative effect and/or be observable in behaviours such as severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, indicators of inappropriate attachment or bonding, self-harming behaviour or aggressive behaviour towards others.
14. **Employee:** The *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* defines an employee as a paid or unpaid worker (volunteer) within an organisation. The definition of an organisation includes a 'church, club, association or similar entity'. However, further definitions, roles and responsibilities specific to the Uniting Church are described in section 15, 18, 19 and 20. All volunteers, lay staff, and ministry agents meet this definition under Queensland legislation.
15. **Grooming:** refers to the process by which some people (who are responsible for the sexual abuse of children) groom people in the community, such as parents, carers, teachers and children to establish trust and gain access to a child. These people spend considerable time targeting, enticing and trapping a child for sexual purposes. Grooming involves the person responsible for the sexual abuse integrating themselves into places where they have access to children and then grooming the adults to create opportunities for the person to abuse their victims. Grooming behaviour can be difficult to identify as it can sometimes include appropriate behaviours as well. Grooming is a criminal offence in Queensland.
16. **Harm:** For children, harm is defined as any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing (section 9 of the *Child Protection Act 1999*). For harm to be considered significant, the effect or impact on a child's wellbeing must be substantial or serious. The effect or impact must be observable in the child's presentation, functioning or behaviour. Harm can be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances. The most serious effects are likely to occur when no one takes action to stop the harm and protect the child or young person. Children and young people may experience a range of emotional, psychological and physical problems as a result of being harmed, including:
- low self esteem
 - increased fear, guilt and self-blame
 - distrust of adults
 - depression
 - suicidal thoughts and self-harming
 - anxiety disorders
 - attachment disorders
 - post-traumatic stress disorder
 - learning disorders, including poor language and cognitive development



- aggressive behaviour and other behavioural problems
 - developmental delay, eating disorders and physical ailments
 - delinquency and criminal behaviour including violent or aggressive behaviour
 - drug and alcohol abuse and high-risk sexual behaviour
 - permanent physical injuries or death
 - difficulty forming relationships with other adults
 - symptoms and behaviour that lead to them being singled out and victimised.
17. **Helper:** Under state legislation, this person is also considered an employee for blue card purposes (*see 12. Employee*). A person, usually a volunteer, who has been approved and appointed the church council to assist with specific activities or programs on behalf of the church. Helpers have the same training obligations as lay workers (*see 20. Lay workers*).
18. **Historical abuse:** a widely used term to describe abuse that has been committed against a child, and that child is now an adult. Although the abuse is not current, its impact on the survivor is current and real. The term is not used to discount or diminish the effects of the abuse on the survivor; in fact, people who experienced abuse as children are living with the impact of the abuse.
19. **Incident:** an event which resulted or could have resulted in harm, abuse, damage or loss e.g. failure to comply with a health and safety direction.
20. **Leader:** Under state legislation, this person is also considered an employee for blue card purposes (*see 12. Employee*). A person, often a volunteer, who has been approved and appointed by the church council to oversee or conduct specific activities or programs on behalf of the church. Lay leaders are accountable to the Uniting Church in Australia: Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders. Leaders have the same training obligations as lay workers (*see 20. Lay workers*).
21. **Ministry agent:** Under state legislation, this person is also considered an employee for blue card purposes (*see 12. Employee*). Ministry agents are required to complete Safe Ministry with Children (SMC) Training for Ministry Agents annually. A ministry agent may have a number of different titles, including Ministers (Minister of the Word and Ministry of Deacon), Pastors, Youth Workers, Chaplains and Community Ministers. The ministries of Lay Pastor, Youth Worker and Community Minister were closed for entry by Assembly some years ago. Anyone still operating in one of the now closed ministries is covered by this policy. This category also includes:
- a) Ministry agents who are available for supply or placement and conducting ministry functions for more than a cumulative total of seven days in a calendar year. For example:
 - Preach and/or lead worship in their own congregation; or
 - Preach and/or lead worship in any other worship services (including weddings and funerals); or
 - Preside at the sacraments; or
 - Perform any systematic pastoral care
 - b) Ministry agents who are not in a placement but are engaged as an employee (and paid a wage) or ministry agents who are engaged on a volunteer basis.
 - c) Ministry agents engaged in a covenantal relationship (remunerated or eligible to be remunerated by stipend)—this includes retired ministers who are available for supply, and ministry agents awaiting placement
22. **Lay workers:** Under state legislation, this person is also considered an employee for blue card purposes (*see 12. Employee*). This category includes Church Councillors, elders, worship leaders, chairs of committees, team/activity leaders, lay preachers, lay pastors. That is, any lay person who accepts a volunteer or leadership role within a congregation, presbytery, Synod or Assembly. It does not apply to those ministry agents holding paid positions, in placement or receiving stipend (*see the definition for ministry agents*). Lay workers must complete SMC Training for lay workers every two years. Retired ministers who are providing volunteer services which include activities with children, or are active above the threshold, should also follow the instructions for lay workers, including the mandatory reporting process for lay workers. This category includes ministry agents who are not available for supply or placement, and not conducting ministry functions for more than a cumulative total of seven days in a calendar year. For example, a retired minister who is not available for supply and does not perform the following ministerial functions on more than seven days in a calendar year:



- Preach and/or lead worship in their own congregation; or
 - Preach and/or lead worship in any other worship services (including weddings and funerals); or
 - Preside at the sacraments; or
 - Perform any systematic pastoral care
23. **Parent/guardian:** mother or father including adoptive parents, someone else having or exercising parental responsibility for the child under a legal order, or someone who under cultural custom or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custom is regarded as a parent of the child.
24. **Pornography:** printed or visual material intended to cause sexual excitement. This can present in various forms such as pictures, film, computer games or other electronic data.
25. **Privacy provisions:** the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) and the [Queensland Synod Privacy Policy](https://ucaqld.com.au/privacy-policy) (ucaqld.com.au). The policy requirement is that all information be collected, stored and used in accordance with these provisions.
26. **Register of Workers:** Queensland legislation requires that an 'employee register' be developed and implemented which records all: pre-employment and pre-volunteering screening, appointment by the church council, dates that training has been completed, and support processes, as well as linked blue cards and exemption cards. These records are usually kept in a 'Register of Workers'. The Register of Workers contains records about all lay staff and volunteers from each church council or presbytery.
27. **Risk of harm:** the probability or likelihood that a child will be harmed (suffer physical, psychological or emotional harm) in the future e.g. observing a child engage in sexualised behaviour.
28. **Sexualised behaviour:** is behaviour which is significantly more advanced than you would normally expect for a child of a particular age or which shows a lack of inhibition. It is important to consider these behaviours within a developmental and social context. For example, a preschool child who talks about sex acts or uses adult language or a 12-year-old who masturbates in public. For more information visit <https://bravehearts.org.au/what-we-do/education-and-training/for-parents/resources-for-parents/>
29. **Spiritual abuse:** where emotional or psychological abuse is administered under the guise of religion, including harassment or humiliation, control or domination. Refusing to allow a partner to practice or participate in their religion, or defiling religious images, using scriptures to justify control, violent or aggressive behaviour is spiritual abuse. Other examples would include the use of religious text:
- to force sexual acts
 - to exert control over the wife's/partner's decision making
 - to justify physical violence.
30. **Suspicion:** in the context of child abuse, a suspicion occurs when reasonable concerns are held regarding behaviour, material or unexplained injuries. Child abuse may be reasonably suspected if:
- observations or reports of behaviours of another person, or material related to another person, are consistent with the definition of abuse
 - observations of the behaviour of a particular child, or knowledge of the child, generally lead them to suspect that abuse may be occurring
 - physical injuries are observed which could reasonably be attributed to abuse.
31. **Volunteer:** Under state legislation, this person is also considered an employee for blue card purposes (*see 12. Employee*). A volunteer may hold a position as a lay worker, a helper, or a leader; however, must be first approved and appointed by the church council. Volunteers have the same training obligations as lay workers (*see 20. Lay workers*).
32. **Vulnerable adults:** adults with disabilities, the elderly, adults experiencing domestic and family violence. Usually referred to as '*children and vulnerable adults*' in relation to Safe Ministry practices. *See 8. Children and vulnerable adults.*



Revisions

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2.0	02.01.2020	Risk and Compliance Manager	30.01.2020	ED Risk and Assurance	Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer
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