



Glossary of terms

1. **Abusive action:** a state of affairs 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. 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 policy. The policy describes the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and provides the impetus for boundary violations to be interrupted by anyone who observes them. All instances of boundary violations shall be interrupted immediately so that people can interact in a safe way.
 4. **Bullying:** repeated, unwelcome and unsolicited behaviour towards a person who considers it offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening; and which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would consider to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening. To find out more visit qld.gov.au/youth/being-safe-knowing-your-rights/bullying-facts
 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 is commonly divided into four main subtypes:
 - a. **Physical abuse:** the non-accidental use of physical force against a child, which results in harm to the child. Intention to harm the child is not relevant e.g. physical punishment resulting in bruising would be considered physical abuse.
 - b. **Emotional abuse:** when a parent/care giver does or says something many times that affects the confidence and self-esteem of a child. It is a pattern of failure to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurture and emotional availability. Can also be referred to as psychological abuse.
 - c. **Neglect:** the failure by a parent or care giver to provide a child with the conditions that are culturally accepted in a society as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing. Neglect includes non-provision of therapeutic intervention e.g. speech therapy, counselling, etc. (Department of Child Safety)
 - d. **Sexual abuse:** 'Any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with a child.' (Interim Report, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2016)
- For more information about child sexual abuse and to download a copy of the booklet Child sexual abuse – Things you need to know visit communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/protecting-children/what-child-abuse/child-sexual-abuse
7. **Congregation member:** for the purpose of this process, congregation member refers to any person who attends the congregation or its activities.
 8. **Delegate:** under the Safe Ministry with Children 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.
 9. **Disclosure:** when someone, including a child, tells another person about child abuse that has happened or is likely to happen.
 10. **Domestic and family violence:** when a family member, partner or ex-partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate the other. Exposure to domestic and family violence is defined as 'a child being present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse or psychological maltreatment, or is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member's violent behaviour' (Higgins, 1998). Exposure to domestic or family violence often relates to physical and/or emotional abuse.



11. **Emotional harm:** 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.
12. **Employee:** the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 defines an employee as a paid or unpaid worker (volunteer) within an organisation. In relation to the Safe Ministry with Children policy this definition is taken to include all people who have the approval of the church council to assist with the conduct of specific activities or programs within the congregation.
13. **Grooming:** 'actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with the child, to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with a child' (Interim Report, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2016). Grooming is a criminal offence in Queensland.
14. **Harm:** any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional well-being. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect, or sexual abuse or exploitation. Harm can be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances (Child Protection Act 1999, section 9).
15. **Helper:** a person who has the approval of the church council to assist with the conduct of specific activities or programs within the congregation.
16. **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.
17. **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.
18. **Leader:** a person who has the approval of the church council to oversee the conduct of specific activities or programs within the congregation.
19. **Ministry agent:** in accordance with Regulation 2.2 of the Uniting Church in Australia Regulations, a ministry agent is defined as Ministers (of the Word and deacons), pastors, lay pastors, lay preachers, youth workers and community ministers. The ministries of lay pastor, youth worker and community minister were closed for entry by Assembly some years ago. However, anyone still operating in one of the now closed ministries is covered by this policy.
20. **Parent/guardian:** mother or father including adoptive parents, someone else having or exercising parental responsibility for the child under legal order, or someone who under cultural custom or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custom is regarded as a parent of the child.
21. **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.
22. **Privacy provisions:** the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) and the [Queensland Synod Privacy policy](http://ucaqld.com.au) (ucaqld.com.au). The policy requirement is that all information be collected, stored and used in accordance with these provisions.
23. **Risk of harm:** the probability or likelihood of a child suffering physical, psychological or emotional harm in the future e.g. observing a child engage in sexualised behaviour.
24. **Sexualised behaviour:** sexualised 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. For example, a preschool child who talks about sex acts or uses adult language or a 12-year-old who masturbates in public. (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children webpage 2017).
25. **Spiritual abuse:** where abuse is administered under the guise of religion, including harassment or humiliation, control or domination, misuse of religion and/or faith for selfish ends or gratification.



26. 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:

- a. observations or reports of behaviours of another person, or material related to another person, are consistent with the definition of abuse
- b. observations of the behaviour of a particular child, or knowledge of the child, generally lead them to suspect that abuse may be occurring
- c. physical injuries are observed which could reasonably be attributed to abuse.

27. Volunteer: see 12. Employee.

Document Review History

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1	Created to support Safe Ministry with Children policy	Safe Ministry (children) administrator	Presbytery (Safe Ministry) reference group Presbytery Ministers' Nominee – Royal Commission Task Group Legal counsel Risk and Insurance manager Associate general secretary	General secretary	24.05.2017
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