

SCOPE

The policy applies to all people within the bounds of the Queensland Synod conducting child-related activities as part of the ministries of Uniting Church congregations and faith communities, presbyteries and Synod.

Exclusions:

This policy is not intended to apply to the agencies, regulated businesses, colleges and schools of the church. These entities are required to ensure that they comply with their respective statutory and regulatory obligations and to maintain policy, process and resources relating to child protection and safety which are specific to their context.

All ministry agents who have a placement within the bounds of the Queensland Synod office including Trinity College Queensland, Raymont Residential College and the Alexandra Park Conference Centre are bound by Social Media Policy POL-PEO-14. Where their work intersects within the scope of the current policy, all measures must be taken to ensure compliance.

Related policies

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Safe Ministry with Children Policy](#)

[Social Media Policy POL-PEO-14](#)

[Code of ethics and ministry practice](#)

[Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders](#)

Related documents

[Guidelines for Safe Ministry with Children using Digital Media](#)

[Image release form](#)

[Attendee information form \(short\)](#)

[Attendee information form \(long\)](#)

[Mandatory Reporting Process – lay workers](#)

[Mandatory Reporting Process – ministry agents](#)

Policy statement

Developing and maintaining healthy relationships in ministry with children is a core component of Safe Ministry with Children. Online ministry environments are an extension of 'real world' ministry environments. People working with children are encouraged to use digital and social media (e.g. Facebook), subject to this policy and consistent with the Social Media Guidelines for Safe Ministry with Children.

Principles

All online ministry with children conducted within the scope of this policy, must be conducted in a manner which is consistent with the Safe Ministry with Children policy and the following principles:

Principle 1: Online engagement must enhance face-to-face community and engagement. It must be conducted in such a way that its use does not marginalise or exclude.

Principle 2: Online engagement must be conducted in an open, transparent and age-appropriate manner.

Principle 3: Online engagement must create an environment in which all children feel safe and are cared for, respected, nurtured and sustained.

Principle 4: Online practices must be conducted in accordance with all relevant legislation and church policy and process.

Definitions

Child	A child is defined under the <i>Child Protection Act (1999)</i> as an individual under 18 years of age.
Digital media	Refers to any technological application or virtual place where individuals can converse, exchange or broadcast ideas through visual, audio or written means
Queensland Synod	Means the work and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia performed within the bounds of the Queensland Synod
Ministry agent	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.
Social media	Social media uses digital media to build new connections, friendships and do business.

Document Review History

Version Number	Reason	Author/reviewer	Consulted	Approved by	Date of Approval
1.0	Guidelines for ministry in a digital context created on request of General Secretary via Safe Ministry (children) administrator	Digital Youth Discipleship Project Officer	Presbytery (Safe Ministry) reference group Legal counsel Associate general secretary Safe Ministry (children) administrator		
1.1	Collaborative review of first draft	Safe Ministry, Legislative and Compliance Officer	Senior Legal Officer ED Risk (Acting) Manager, Communications and Marketing Manager, Group Insurance	Associate General Secretary	29.8.2017
Due	Annual review cycle				29.8.2018