1.0 Policy Statement

UCA Synod recognises that many staff have both work and parenting responsibilities. Whilst children of staff members are welcomed to visit the Synod, the health and safety of the children and Synod staff must be taken into account, together with the operational requirements of the Synod.

All children who are involved in any of the Church’s activities, events or visit Church properties have a right to feel and be safe. The Church is committed to provide safe environments where children are cared for, respected, nurtured and sustained.

1.0 ETHOS AND VALUES OF UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

As an employer, we express the ethos of Christianity to love one another, to live justly and to seek the reconciliation and renewal of all creation by respecting ourselves and all whom we serve and employ. We strive to do so by:

- Being inclusive
- Acting and advocating for a just society
- Working for peace and justice in the World
- Having an openness to the wisdom of people of other faiths and views
- Implementing environmentally sustainable practices

In our workplace we value justice, inclusion, compassion, shared leadership, respect, integrity, wise stewardship and innovation.

The safety of children is a paramount consideration as well as the ethos and values in seeking guidance and interpretation surrounding this policy.

1.2 SCOPE

This policy is intended to apply to all permanent employees at the UCA Victoria and Tasmania Synod.

1.3 PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING PROCESS

a) Natural justice / procedural fairness
b) Safe Place
c) Understanding of Power
1.4 DEFINITIONS

**Child.** For this policy, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. (eg: Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997, Tasmania; The Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, Victoria.)

**Employee.** A person employed or contracted by the Synod.

**Infection illness.** Includes common childhood diseases (measles, mumps, chicken pox, German measles) as well as colds/flu and other readily transmissible diseases that are not chronic in their nature.

**Restricted access areas.** Work areas defined as workshop, print room, store room, kitchen or other similar higher risk work area where access is limited to authorised personnel who normally work in the area.

1.5 POLICY OWNER

This policy is implemented and maintained by Director People and Culture, UCA Synod.

1.6 FURTHER ASSISTANCE

The People and Culture team are able to assist you with interpretation or application of this policy.

1.7 POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if required.

1.8 RELATED POLICIES

Code of Conduct
Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy
Keeping Children Safe Policy

1.7 REFERENCES

*Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
*Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act, 1986 (Cth)*
*Occupational Health and Safety Act Victoria (2004)*
*Racial Discrimination Act, 1975 (Cth)*
*Sex Discrimination Act, 1984(Cth)*

2.0 Policy in Practice

2.1 The Synod is responsible for providing an environment that is safe and healthy for employees, visitors, contractors, and volunteers.
2.2 The safety of children is the paramount consideration in Synod activities.

2.2 A child visiting a Synod site must be under the supervision of a responsible adult, normally the child’s parent. The supervising adult is responsible for the behaviour and supervision of the child and must ensure that inappropriate disruptions to the workplace do not occur. Supervising adults should give consideration to the needs of other employees, and must adhere to Synod health and safety policies and procedures. This responsibility cannot be delegated to another person.

2.3 A number of areas have been identified as being potentially unsafe for children to have supervised access to. These include: printer/copier rooms;

- maintenance or other workshops;
- kitchens and other food preparation areas;
- storerooms or areas where hazardous substances may be kept; and
- construction sites and areas where any works or maintenance are being carried out;
- any other areas identified as unsuitable for children as a result of a risk assessment. Managers will inform parents/employees of such restrictions.

2.4 If a child who has been given approval to be present at a Synod site is responsible for causing damage to Synod property, or causing an accident, then the Synod may make a claim for restitution against the parent/employee responsible for the child (the ‘supervising adult’).

2.5 The Synod has substantial equipment and resources that have been purchased to facilitate the work of its employees. Equipment and resources made available for use by employees may not be used by unauthorised third parties, including a visiting child.

In all circumstances it is the responsibility of the supervising adult to ensure that a child is not permitted access to Synod equipment or resources that are intended solely for use by employees, particularly computers, and information and communication technology resources. No child may be left unattended in work areas or other areas where damage to expensive equipment or access to confidential information is possible.

All staff and the supervising adult must adhere to the code of conduct for all adults who interact with children, including setting clear boundaries of behaviour between adults and children.