Volunteer Code of Conduct

The Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT values the contribution of each member of our community who volunteers their time and effort, as we work together to make a Jesus-shaped difference in the world. To assist us to providing a safe and positive environment, volunteers are expected to comply with church policies and procedures including the following Code of Conduct.

Our volunteers are asked to sign this Code of Conduct to indicate they have read and agree to abide by it.

The Code articulates how expected behaviours are aligned with our values, and will assist us to further our mission. All volunteers should be aware of the needs and welfare of others and should treat everyone in ways which are protective. Volunteers in leadership positions should be aware of their additional responsibilities to care for people and model this to others.

General conduct

Volunteers should consistently behave in a way that upholds the core values and integrity of the Synod, including showing integrity, respect, collaboration and compassion;

- Always work in the best interests of others, and set a positive example.
- Show respect for leadership, and follow church policies and reasonable decisions and directions given, and comply with the law
- Support ministers and staff in their duties, and assist them as necessary
- Leaders should model healthy relationships, make decisions impartially and ensure that they do not misuse their actual or perceived power
- Read, and ensure they understand, all information and instructions, and seek advice if in doubt
- Ensure appropriate stewardship in the use of church resources. Avoid waste or extravagance, and cooperate with measures to protect the environment.

Respect for others

- Volunteers should treat everyone with respect, courtesy, honesty and fairness, taking care to protect the interests, rights, beliefs and welfare of others
- Be respectful of difference including age, cultural background, sex, language, disability, religion, gender identity or any other status
- Assist in creating an environment free from fear, harassment, racism or exploitation.
- Deal with interpersonal conflict with humility, kindness, courage and forgiveness. Avoid gossip, and seek assistance from appropriate leaders in a timely way if support to resolve issues if needed.

Communication

Volunteers should be appropriate when engaging with others:

- Use non-discriminatory, respectful and non-judgmental language. Avoid blasphemy, or using offensive language
- Respect any boundaries people may have regarding their personal space, including social distancing. Take care not to intimidate or cause discomfort to others.
- Maintain confidentiality and don't disclose the personal information or contact details of others, except where it is mandatory, appropriate and/or protective to disclose (see 'required reporting' below)
- Use electronic resources appropriately, only accessing content and communicating in ways which are safe, legal, non-exploitative, considerate, and in line with the mission of the church.

Safety

Volunteers should:

- Work safely, observe any local safety procedures and seek to protect the safety of others
- Work within their ability
- Report any safety hazard or hazardous practice they observe, and any safety incidents
- Assist in implementing emergency procedures, and provide care to the injured or ill according to their ability and best efforts.

Working with children and vulnerable adults

Volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults are required to observe the following boundaries:

- Have a current clearance to work with children or work with vulnerable people, provide the details, update the church/entity of any changes to this status and fulfil reporting requirements
- Attend any required training for the role such as Safe Church Awareness Training and refresher courses as they come due.
- Volunteers are not to be alone with a child (unless they are the parent/carer) and always follow acceptable contact practice guidelines for engagement and communication with children
- Avoid physical contact except to keep a person from danger, or if instructed to give assistance
- Show respect for parental authority, and refer all behavioural concerns and discipline matters to be managed by the appropriate person (the parent/carer whenever possible).
- Not administer medication unless authorised to do so.

- Not take any photographs of children without consent of the supervising person, and the parents/carers, or post photos on social media.

Prohibited conduct

Volunteers must not:

- Use their position to take advantage of any child or vulnerable person.
- Bring harm of any kind or behave in a way which actually or apparently seeks to establish an inappropriate relationship with a vulnerable person.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs while on church property or performing a volunteer role. Leaders should set a positive example in this regard.

Required reporting

Volunteers must as soon as possible:

- Report any actual or apparent breaches of law, policy, or this code of conduct, to the appropriate person in relation to the issue (according to Synod or local procedures)
- Disclose any allegation of inappropriate conduct, or indicators of child abuse, to the ministry agent or to the Safe Church Unit (refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Reportable Conduct Policy and Guidelines)
- Notify the ministry agent (and/or the Safe Church Unit) immediately if they become the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO), or of a reportable child offence allegation or conviction.
- Declare and manage any conflict between personal interest and volunteer roles.

Volunteer Manual

- A copy of the Volunteer Manual is available from your volunteer contact person or activity leader. You may view the manual at any time or obtain a copy from the admin office.

Commitment

This Code of Conduct sets out the minimum expectations we have for all Uniting Church volunteers. A breach of this code will result in disciplinary action proportional to the conduct involved and the role of the volunteer. The matter may be reported to the relevant leadership, and a range of actions may taken to address the matter such as verbal or written correction, a change to duties, or withdrawal of the volunteer role.

Signing below indicates you have read, understood and will abide by this code of conduct.

Name of Volunteer: Signed:

Date

Witness name: Signed:

Office copy

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