



The Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of South Australia

## Code of Conduct for Volunteers & Lay Leaders

The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are made in the image of God and as such we should accept every individual regardless of race, age, creed or gender.

As a Christian community, we believe that God reaches out to us in love and acceptance and that our relationships with each other should express love and respect and not be abused.

As a community of faith, we are committed to providing a place in society where human beings can explore what it means to be made in the image of God.

As an expression of this commitment, the Uniting Church in Australia recognises its responsibility to provide worshipping and pastoral communities that are free from abuse and that provide safe environments for all people to explore and express their faith in the Gospel.

UC SA Safe Church Policy (*Safe Place statement written by the Assembly Gospel and Gender Committee 1993*)

The Church's missional & pastoral effectiveness, reputation, and credibility can be put at serious risk where we (irrespective of motive) fail to conduct ourselves in an appropriate manner.

***This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour and ethical conduct expected of volunteers and leaders as representatives of the church. This should be signed upon appointment of a role as a volunteer/leader.***

## General lifestyle expectations

The following expectations are not an attempt to legislate holiness or be legalistic, but rather to reinforce the biblical responsibilities that accompany the privilege of volunteering and leading.

It is expected that (UCSA) volunteers & leaders minister out of a healthy relationship with God. Volunteers and leaders are encouraged to:

- Actively participate in the life and ministry of the Church
- Study the Scriptures and pray regularly
- Give of their time and finances to the work of the Church as an expression of their gratitude to God.

### **(UCSA) Volunteers and Lay Leaders serve others in the context of healthy relationships by:**

- Loving and caring for all people and paying attention to the effect of ministry on them
- Treating others with respect and exercising authority respectfully
- Resolving conflict in an appropriate way
- Not disclosing to anyone (including a spouse), any confidential information without the consent of the person providing the information (there is an exception where there is a legal obligation or a duty of care issue)
- Being a team player and cooperating with other ministry leaders as well as watching out for each other and protecting each other's integrity
- Using words that build up and do not ridicule or embarrass people.
- Actively participate in an appropriate induction process when commencing in a new role
- UC SA Screening and Authority Check completed as required



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**(UCSA) Volunteers and Lay Leaders set an example by:**

- Obeying the law
- Not taking property belonging to others, including intellectual property (copyright) and knowingly making false, misleading or deceptive statements
- Not engaging in bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, sexual abuse or spiritual abuse of any person, including their own family.
- Not acting violently or intentionally provoking violence
- Not using any prohibited substances and not volunteering under the influence of alcohol
- Expressing their sexuality in a healthy and God honouring way
- Not seeking personal advantage or financial gain from this position
- Disclosing to the church leadership if they are being or have been investigated for any criminal offences.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name) have read and undertake to conduct myself in accordance with the principles of the (UCSA) Volunteers and Leaders Code of Conduct.

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***What do I do if I find myself in conflict with another volunteer/leader or I believe there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct?***

Differences of opinion can be the making of a mature, healthy and diverse community. We encourage all volunteers/leaders to work through conflict resolution by using Biblical principles.

The Bible clearly encourages us to be concerned with each other's spiritual wellbeing and teaches us to resolve issues in love.

The principles taught in Matthew 18:15-17 should be used to resolve any offenses or relational conflict within the church. It is the responsibility of a Volunteer/Leader to approach the other person promptly when they have been offended or when they have reason to believe they may have done the offending.

This approach should be carried out with an attitude of love, concern and humility and should be motivated by the sincere desire to see resolution and restoration of relationships.

**In practical terms, what does this look like?**

If conflict arises, take the following steps as required: *if this is not successful move to the next step*

Step 1: Speak to the other person to try to resolve the complaint: *if this is not successful move to the next step*

Step 2: Speak to the Minister, Pastor, Ministry Team Leader, Safe Church Contact Person or the Chair of Church Council: *if this is not successful move to the next step*

Step 3: Lodge a complaint with the Synod

In each of these steps if the issue is resolved to the satisfaction of both parties there is no need to progress to the next step. However if a resolution cannot be achieved that both parties agree to, the next step should be taken.

**What if the issue is more serious than just a conflict or disagreement?**

If the issue is a matter of serious misconduct or there is an allegation of abuse it is appropriate that a complaint be made and the grievance process be initiated. Breaches of the law should be reported to the Police and the Synod should be notified by contacting the Chair, Safe Church Committee; GPO Box 2145, Adelaide (L2, 212 Pirie Street) or by phoning 08 8236 4200 or 1300 274 151

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