Statement of Personal Commitment

C/2.1.2.7

Purpose

The Statement of Personal Commitment is to be signed by all lay workers (lay staff, lay preachers, helpers and volunteers) who have been approved by the church council to assist, lead or coordinate activities and programs, including child-related activities and programs. The document is to be signed upon appointment and then annually. A copy of the signed statement is to be kept on file by the church council, and the date of signing and other personal information contained in this form recorded and kept updated in the Register of Workers.

The Statement of Personal Commitment

I agree to my appointment to the following role(s), and I am accountable to the <insert name of church> under the oversight of the person/s listed for each role:

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| --- | --- |
| **Role(s)** | **Oversight provided by** |
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I will carry out my role to the best of my ability and in line with the expectations of the Uniting Church in Australia (the Church). I agree to complete the required training and ask for help when I need it.

I will put the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable people first, and I will encourage others to do the same. My words and actions will reflect Christian values and principles, both publicly and privately, and will be in line with the requirements of legislation and the Code of Conduct outlined below. I will work as part of a team and be accountable for my own actions. I will ask for help, guidance and support when I need it, and respond constructively to correction and guidance. I will respond to concerns, incidents, accidents, and suspicion or knowledge of abuse in a timely and appropriate way which is in line with the church’s mandatory reporting process.

I will treat other people, their personal details and sensitive information, with respect and dignity.

I will uphold the following Code of Conduct with respect to the physical, emotional, behavioural and spiritual boundaries that support the maintenance of a safe ministry environment:

Code of Conduct

Physical boundaries:

I will be mindful of the imbalance of power that exists in relationships with vulnerable people, including adult-child relationships. I will build appropriate, transparent and accountable relationships with those who are vulnerable, including children and their families, and only use appropriate physical contact which is responsive to the person or child’s needs, initiated by the person or child, in full view and non-sexual.

I will refrain from the use of physical restraint unless in circumstances where there is a clear risk of danger or physical harm and it is deemed reasonable and necessary in order to prevent an accident or injury, or to stop a fight or bullying behaviour. I will record and report all instances of physical restraint.

I will play my part to ensure a minimum of two leaders is present in all child-related activities and that the leadership ratio is achieved for all activities with children: a ratio of one worker for every six children in an activity for participants aged five years and over, and one worker for every four children aged below five years. Regarding transportation for children: a minimum of two adult helpers or leaders present with children during any transporting.

Emotional boundaries:

I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person, regardless of the person’s abilities, gender, religion or cultural background, without favouritism or prejudice.

I will conduct myself in a way that sets a positive example, ensuring that my attitude and language affirms dignity and self-worth.

I will avoid activities that may cause embarrassment, show disrespect or cause isolation.

Behavioural boundaries:

I will abide by the Synod’s social media policy and code of conduct.

I will work under the leadership of others (as appointed), be accountable to leaders within the church, and work as part of a team to fulfil my role and the tasks given to me.

I will engage in respectful, transparent and accountable ways in all communication, ensuring others are not subject to inappropriate images/material (including pornographic material) or invasive use of any type of technology, and direct all correspondence (especially electronic or social media) to parents—rather than directly with the child or children e.g. text messages, emails, Facebook, Snapchat, or other.

I will refrain from consumption of harmful or illicit drugs, alcohol and cigarettes when working with children.

I will not take, store or use images of any child or young person unless within the dictates of the written permission of the parent or care provider of the child, and never do so for personal use.

I will maintain group behaviour by positive strategies such as restating behavioural expectations and consequences, use of diversion techniques, maintaining a safe distance and retaining line of sight, supervised time-out, and providing opportunities to discuss issues and problems.

I will show others what healthy relationships look like by modelling them.

I will avoid behaviours that could be experienced as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse, sexual abuse or any kind of sexual misconduct.

I will be aware of and careful not to abuse any social or professional power that comes with any personal attribute, or role or position held in the Church or professionally or in the community.

Spiritual boundaries:

I will be mindful of the spiritual development of children and other vulnerable people and interact in a manner which is appropriate to their stage of development.

I will act to enhance a positive relationship with God as a God of grace, love, acceptance, trust and forgiveness; avoiding language and actions which create fear, ongoing guilt, and self-loathing or self-blame.

When involved in a teaching role (e.g. Sunday School) I will adhere to the use of teaching materials which have been approved by the church council and remain within the theology of the church.

Acceptance

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| --- | --- |
| Name: | Signature: |
| Date of birth: | Date: |

Confirmation

I affirm that the person named has been appointed as outlined above, by the church council, in accordance with the Safe Ministry with Children policy and process, and the Uniting Church Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders.

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| --- | --- |
| Name: | Signature: |
| Position:  | Date: |
| Church council meeting date:  | Minute reference number: |

Revisions

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| --- | --- |
| Document number | C/2.1.2.7\_v2.0 |
| Version | Approval date | Approved by | Effective date | Policy owner | Policy contact |
| 2.0 | 02.01.2020 | Risk and Compliance Manager | 30.01.2020 | ED Risk and Assurance | Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer |
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