

Keeping Children Safe at High Street Uniting Church

Does High Street Uniting Church want to keep our children safe? Of course we do! That's why our congregation made a commitment to implement the Keeping Children Safe policy, which has been adopted by the Uniting Church at all levels. The basis of this policy is that all children who are involved in any of the Uniting Church in Australia's activities, services, events or programs have a right to feel and be safe. Further, that the Uniting Church in Australia is committed to provide safe environments where children are cared for, respected, nurtured and sustained.

To keep our children safe, we need safe leaders! That's why all our congregation members in leadership positions have been required to provide a current Working With Children Check. This includes everyone involved in children's activities, and also ministers, pastors, lay preachers, and other "leaders" such as elders, church councilors, worship leaders, music leaders and organists, and bible study leaders (even if they don't have direct contact with children). Our leaders have also all had Safe Church Training in relation to Keeping Children Safe policy and procedures, to ensure everyone is up to date and familiar with what is required of us from now and into the future.

In addition, there are new procedures for new volunteers coming into various "leadership" positions, including holding a current Working with Children's Check, and providing references who can confirm the person's suitability in terms of safety around children. This careful screening is something we need to keep in mind whenever somebody new commences in a particular role. The Guidelines for selecting new Volunteers will be placed on the noticeboard in the foyer near the church office for reference.

To keep our children safe, we need safe programs! That's why for all our children's activities, such as playgroup, Sunday School, and youth groups, there are procedures in place which are being followed including safety risk assessments, and ensuring appropriate parental permissions are received. Our Playgroup Co-ordinator, Emma, and Youth Co-ordinator, Hannah, are doing a great job with this.

Where do I find out more? The full range of information on policy and procedures for Keeping Children Safe and Working with Children Checks can be found on the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania website, www.ucavictas.org.au/keepingchildrensafe. We have also placed some of the important documents in a folder kept in the Church office if you would like to have a look at them there.

Please feel free to contact either Mandy Lake, or Rev. David Fotheringham or Hannah Dungan if you have any queries at all about this information, or wish to discuss any aspect further. We are all more than happy to talk with you!

Mandy Lake, Culture of Safety Contact Person

