



**Uniting Church
in Australia**

National Principles for Education and Training 2020



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Purpose

The Uniting Church in Australia's ongoing commitment to be a safe church for all people is embodied in the establishment of the National Safe Church Unit in 2019 to support and guide the Church to deliver against that commitment.

The Unit is charged with coordinating the development and delivery of a suite of nationally consistent actions and resources that grow and sustain a culture of safety across the life of the Church. Education and training are a key part of achieving this and the National Principles for Education and Training (national principles) have been developed to guide the development, delivery and review of the education and training resources required.

The national principles are underpinned by the values base of the Uniting Church in Australia. This asks us to live out our covenant as First and Second Peoples, to deliver on our commitment to be an inter-cultural and inter-generational Church and our commitment to the mutuality and equality of women and men in ministry, to value the participation and ministry of all people of God, to be orientated towards justice, to value scholarly enquiry and informed faith, and to engage constructively with ecumenical and inter-faith partners to provide a safe place for all people.

The national principles are also informed by the recommendations of the [Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#) and the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

How we use the national principles

Scope

The national principles apply to the development, delivery and review of education and training for all entities associated with the Uniting Church in Australia who engage in child related services or activities.

Entities of the Church include, but are not limited to: Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods, the Assembly, agencies, ministries, childcare services, out-of-home care services, family and community services, disability services, health services, camps and schools. Board/council members, employees, volunteers, children, parents, carers, presbytery members, church council members, elders, congregation members, people in the specified ministries of the Church, and any other person with responsibility for the care of children are empowered by the national principles to collaborate with the National Safe Church Unit and colleagues across the Church in the development of education and training resources.

Supporting documents

The National Child Safe Policy Framework supports a suite of policies and tools which guide the Church in its operations. In addition to the framework, other supporting documents include the National Person of Concern policy, Professional Standards and Codes of Conduct for all staff, including Ministry Agents and lay staff.

Implementation across the Church

The National Safe Church Unit is charged with coordinating the development of a suite of education and training resources to support individuals and groups across the life of the Church to understand the particular vulnerabilities, risks and protective factors that are associated with the participation of children and vulnerable people in the life of the Church, and the actions, supports and mechanisms that can and need to be put in place to reduce those vulnerabilities, manage risks and prevent harm from occurring. These national principles provide direction and points of reference to that work.

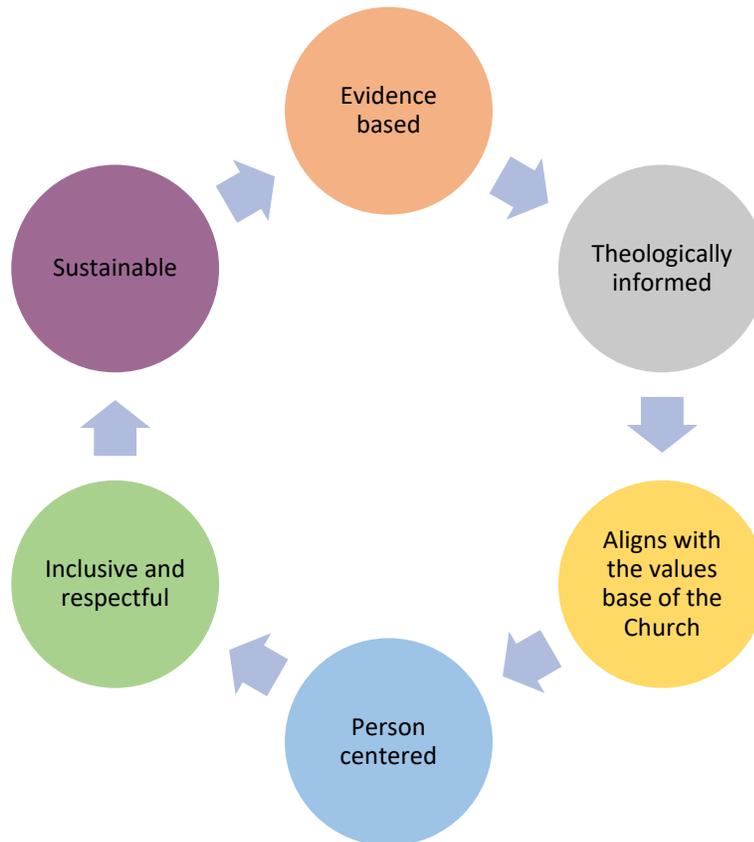
The National Safe Church Unit will provide appropriate guidance and support to enable Synod and Church entities to access and use the education and training resources and help to embed the national principles in the delivery of localised education and training regarding the safety of children and vulnerable people.

Each Synod and their associated entities are encouraged to adopt the national principles in the development of their own education and training resources.

The National Safe Church Unit will enable regular audits of the national suite of education and training resources to assess continued alignment with the national principles. The Unit will review the principles and update as required.

National Principles for Education and Training

The National Principles for Education and Training have been developed by the National Education and Training Project Stakeholder Group in consultation with other advisory and governance groups which support the work of the National Safe Church Unit. These groups represent each of the Synods of the Church.



1. Evidence based

This principle identifies the expectation that education and training resources will be developed in line with best practice. It enables the National Safe Church Unit and collaborators to consider existing practices within and outside the Church and requires them to research data and information from different sources.

Key action areas

- Definitions of safety and vulnerabilities for different cohorts
- The development of resources is informed by identifiable sources
- Resources can be clearly linked to 'what works'

Indicators that this principle is upheld

- Shared understanding and agreed definitions across the life of the Church
- Sources are identified in resources and are accessible to users
- Examples of success are available

2. Theologically informed

This principle ensures that theological consideration is foundational to the development process and provides space to ensure proposed resources are the right fit within the context of the Church.

Key action areas

- Theological reflection underpins the development of resources

Indicators that this principle is upheld

- Users can identify resources as being informed by theological reflection
- Resources uphold and communicate theological learnings

3. Aligns with the values base of the Church

This principle is central to the work of the National Safe Church Unit and provides foundational guidance to that work.

Key action areas

- The values base of the Church is fundamental to the development, delivery and review of resources

Indicators that this principle is upheld

- Resources uphold the values of the Church
- Resources support groups and individuals to further align with the values base of the Church

4. Person centred

This principle means that all people across the life of the Church are invited to be equal partners in the development, delivery and review of the education and training resources developed by the National Safe Church Unit. Those who choose to participate are appropriately supported to do so. The development of resources includes that they are trauma informed.

Key action areas

- Pathways to enable individual and group voices to inform the development of resources
- The safety needs of vulnerable people are clearly defined and addressed by the resources created

Indicators that this principle is upheld

- Different people and groups participate in the development of resources
- Vulnerable people identify that resources meet their safety needs

5. Inclusive and respectful

This principle ensures that education and training resources are accessible to everyone across the life of the Church and do not exclude, offend or stigmatise anyone or anyone's experience.

Key action areas

- Pathways are created to support different people to contribute to the development of resources
- The language, format, content and delivery of resources considers how different people will use each resource
- Action is taken to test and trial resources with different people and groups
- The NSCU Collaboration Framework and decision-making process is used to seek appropriate approval of resources

Indicators that this principle is upheld

- Resources are used across the life of the Church
- Users report resources are helpful, understood and accessible
- Resources are formally approved and endorsed

6. Sustainable

This principle will help to ensure that resources support long-term learning, can be adapted to respond to change nationally and locally, and are delivered within identified budgets and agreed timeframes.

Key action areas

- Confirm budget and timeframes for each resource
- Monitor and review use of resources and respond to changes in the education and training environment
- Monitor and respond to changes in delivery technology
- Review resources with regard to new or emerging best practice and evidence with regard to the safety of vulnerable people

Indicators that this principle is upheld

- Budgets are adhered to and delivery timeframes are met
- Review records are clear, and updates are noted

Version control

Version No.	Written by	Approved by	Date Approved	Review Date
1	National Safe Church Unit	NSCU Governance Committee	April 2020	April 2021
2	National Safe Church Unit *branding update	National Safe Church Unit	August 2020	April 2021
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