

## UCA - Gungahlin Uniting Church

### Volunteer Policy

#### Approved by Church Council

| Date of Meeting | Chairperson | Secretary |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------|
|                 |             |           |

#### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide Gungahlin Uniting Church (GUC) and the people who volunteer their services with an understanding of their obligations and responsibilities towards each other.

#### Scope

**Volunteer:** means a person who provides, at no cost, services to GUC, who participates in a GUC event for the benefit of the church and others.

They include, but are not limited to

- members of Church Council
- leaders and Helpers of Church Ministries including
  - Playgroup
  - Boys and Girls Brigade
  - Food Pantry
  - Oasis
  - Billabong
  - Other church groups
- young people's Mentors
- members of Church committees
- members of ministry teams.
- those who assist with maintenance of church facilities

#### Background

Many people voluntarily contribute their time and skills to Uniting Church organisations. Synod has developed volunteer policies and forms to ensure both volunteers and church organisations understand and agree to their obligations and responsibilities. This document operationalises this framework at the congregational level.

## **Policy**

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

Both the volunteer and the church have responsibilities to each other. The volunteer offers to provide services and the church agrees to provide the volunteer with a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

In return, each has the right to some basic expectations of the other.

#### **Volunteers have the right to:**

- Be asked for their permission before any job-related reference, police or other checks are conducted.
- A task or job worthwhile to them
- Know the purpose and “ground rules” and culture of both the and the Church or groups.
- Appropriate orientation and training, such as but not limited to WHS, fire and emergency evacuation for the job.
- A safe place to volunteer their services in and suitable tools.
- Reimbursement of agreed expenses.
- Be heard and make suggestions.
- Volunteer Personal Accident insurance cover.

#### **The Church has a right to:**

- Select the best volunteer for the job by interviewing and screening all applicants.
- Expect volunteers to adhere to their duty statements/outlines and the Church’s code of practice.
- Expect volunteers to undertake training provided for them and follow directions in relation to work health and safety.
- Express opinions about poor performance in a diplomatic way.
- Expect loyalty from volunteers and only constructive criticism.
- Expect clear and open communication from the volunteer.
- Negotiate work assignments.
- Release volunteers under certain circumstances

### **Procedures for Engaging**

The members of Church Council and the wider Church can be held liable for the actions of its volunteers. It is therefore imperative that only persons who are recognised by Church Council and are authorised to act as an agent of the church be permitted to volunteer with the church.

#### **General considerations:**

1. The Church and the Church Council must:
  - formally recognise and authorise all volunteers
  - establish and communicate policies for the recruitment and engagement of volunteers
  - inform volunteers of the churches policies and procedures
  - have clear lines of accountability and authority for persons appointed to volunteer roles and

- confirm lines of accountability and authority with volunteers through specific lists of duties and letters confirming volunteer status.
2. Legislation relating to anti-discrimination and equal opportunity also applies to volunteers.
    - The Church has a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of their volunteers.
  3. Oversight for volunteer work will ultimately rest with Church Council and whoever Church Council deem to be an appropriate coordinator for the voluntary task that they are undertaking.

### **Volunteer application and agreement forms**

1. As a minimum, a volunteer application form should be completed by any volunteer who is required to hold a Working with Vulnerable People card under GUC's Safety and Protection Policy and who is not, or has not been, a regular attendee at GUC for at least two years. A copy of a volunteer application form can be found at <https://nswact.uca.org.au/shared-resources/industrial-relations-employment/engaging-volunteers/>
2. All volunteers who are required to hold a Working with Vulnerable People card under GUC's *Safety and Protection Policy*, or who are otherwise requested by Church Council, should complete a volunteer agreement covering their volunteer activities. A new volunteer agreement is required every three years or where there has been a change in the volunteer's role.
3. A volunteer agreement shall include:
  - the rights and responsibilities of volunteers
  - details such as the tasks to be undertaken; to whom the volunteer reports to; the period of the voluntary service, if applicable; procedures to claim "out of pocket" expenses; code of behaviour and reference to grievance procedures.
  - an acknowledgement that the volunteer understands and agrees to the GUC *Safety and Protection Policy*
  - an acknowledgement that the volunteer understands and agrees to the *Uniting Church in Australia Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders*.

A copy of a volunteer agreement can be found at

<https://nswact.uca.org.au/shared-resources/industrial-relations-employment/engaging-volunteers/>

### **Before engaging a volunteer:**

1. Church Council or their delegate will assess any volunteer application and determine whether the person is suitable to undertake the voluntary duties.
2. Church Council will formally recognize and authorize all volunteers by:
  - approving all volunteers
  - advising volunteers of their, and GUC's, rights and responsibilities
  - providing volunteers with access to relevant policies and procedures
  - ensuring that a volunteer application form and/or a volunteer agreement is in place where required, as outlined above.
3. The volunteer must hold a working with vulnerable people card where required under Gungahlin Uniting's Safety and Protection Policy. This includes all volunteers working with the aged, children and vulnerable people; and people who may be regarded as leaders within the church. Unless a

volunteer holds this clearance they cannot volunteer in programs which involve working with children and vulnerable persons.

4. Provide a system which allows volunteers to share any such concerns with a representative of the organisation, so that all concerns will be followed up.
5. Provide volunteers with orientation and training where required. This may include training about the tasks required of the volunteer, how supervision will take place, WHS and emergency procedures, confidentiality, duty of care, child protection matters, first aid procedures and code of behavior for volunteers.
6. The church or church group must state clearly its expectations regarding services to be performed by the volunteer. When developing volunteer roles and responsibilities, the organisation should consult the volunteer.
7. The Church's volunteer injury and accident insurance policy does not cover volunteer's private vehicles. It is essential that volunteers are made aware of this and that any private vehicle driven by a volunteer in the course of their providing voluntary services must be comprehensively insured to provide a reasonable level of insurance coverage for the volunteer.

**Other:**

1. Volunteers receive no monetary reward.
2. The church or group should acknowledge services provided by volunteers. This should be done in a form that is meaningful to the volunteer.
3. The church or church group should provide reimbursement for "out of pocket" expenses.
4. If a volunteer is not satisfactorily meeting the requirements set out in the list of duties, applicable church or group procedures should be followed.
5. Volunteers are required to respect the confidentiality of the people with whom they work.

**Attachments**

1. Sample email recognising and authorising volunteers
2. Volunteer and safe church requirements

**Resources**

The following resources are available at <https://nswact.uca.org.au/shared-resources/industrial-relations-employment/engaging-volunteers/>

- UCA Synod of NSW and ACT Volunteer Policy
- Volunteer Application form
- Volunteer Agreement

A copy of the Uniting Church in Australia Code of Conduct is available at [https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/resources/Regulations\\_Policies/UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA - CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LAY LEADERS.pdf](https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/resources/Regulations_Policies/UNITING_CHURCH_IN_AUSTRALIA_CODE_OF_CONDUCT_FOR_LAY_LEADERS.pdf)

For information on volunteers contact the Risk and Compliance section of Uniting Resources on 8267 4365.

## Version Tracking

| <b>Version #</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Author(s)</b>                 |
|------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1                | 27.11.2019  | Pauline Loughhead & Bruce Warren |
| 2                | 05/01/2020  | Bruce Warren                     |
| 3                | 28.01.2020  | Narelle Dodd                     |

Draft for consultation

## Email recognising and authorising volunteers

Dear

On behalf of Church Council, thank you for volunteering your services to support the mission and activities of Gungahlin Uniting Church (GUC) in 20xx. We rely on the generous support of GUC's members and the wider community as we seek to follow the way of Christ and to be part of caring and inclusive community. Your services were formally approved by Church Council at our [xxx] meeting.

Some volunteers may be required to hold a current Working with Vulnerable People card; complete a volunteer agreement and/or undertake safe church training. You will be contacted separately if this is the case.

In the meantime, please find attached an outline of the commitments and obligations of volunteers within the Uniting Church and, in return, of the Uniting Church to you, as a volunteer. Please read this carefully.

Gungahlin Uniting has a number of written policies, including Volunteer; Safety and Protection; Workplace Health and Safety; Fire Evacuation; and Information Management. These can be found on the GUC website at [www.gungahlinuniting.org/xxxxx](http://www.gungahlinuniting.org/xxxxx) It is important that you familiarise yourself with these policies.

If you have any questions, please contact our lay pastor Darren Wright or Church Council Chairperson [name].

Once again, thank you for your generous support.

# Volunteering in the Uniting Church

## Commitments and Obligations of Volunteers

### ***Work Health and Safety (WHS):***

The health and safety of all workers is paramount. Volunteers are regarded as workers under work health and safety legislation. As a volunteer you have WHS obligations to:

- take reasonable care of your own health and safety
- work in a manner that is safe for you, other volunteers, employees and others within the workplace
- comply with instructions so far as you are reasonably able – if unsure seek advice
- co-operate, within reason, with notified policies and procedures
- undertake WHS training as required
- report any hazard, incident or injury immediately it occurs or as soon as practicable.

A copy of GUC's WHS policy can be found at [www.gungahlinuniting.org](http://www.gungahlinuniting.org)

### ***Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality:***

You may have access to personal information about individuals or financial and other confidential matters. It is a condition of your engagement as a volunteer that you will not disclose personal, confidential or sensitive information that you may receive or to use it in a way that may cause injury or loss to the GUC, the Uniting Church or its entities.

### ***Child, Aged Care and Disability Protection Obligations:***

If you are volunteering your services in the provision of face to face services with children you are required to:

- hold a working with children and/or vulnerable persons clearance prior to commencing volunteering and ensure that it is valid at all times
- acknowledge that you understand and agree to GUC's *Safety and Protection Policy* and the *Uniting Church in Australia Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders*
- undertake safe church training every three years to ensure you are familiar with and undertake your responsibilities in accordance with current and future child, aged care and disability protection legislation.

### ***Inducements:***

You cannot accept any payment, financial reward or other pecuniary benefit of any kind from any person as an inducement or reward for any act or forbearance in

connection with any matter or business transacted by or on behalf of either the organisation, the Uniting Church or its entities.

***Use of organisational facilities:***

You are permitted to use email and internet services and landline telephones to make or receive short personal messages in an emergency. Facilities must not be used to access, download, copy, circulate, distribute, send, receive or otherwise communicate:

- material that is hateful, abusive, offensive, defamatory in nature
- material that would offend anti-discrimination and/or harassment laws
- confidential material to unauthorised third parties
- pornography

Breaches will be treated seriously and can result in prosecution by the relevant authorities.

***Use of Private Motor Vehicle:***

If you are required to use your private motor vehicle in the course of volunteering your services, you must hold a current driver's licence.

Approval for you to use your private motor vehicle is contingent upon:

- the vehicle being maintained in good and safe working order at all times
- the vehicle being registered and comprehensively insured at all times
- your insurer being made aware of the proposed use of your vehicle for volunteering purposes
- you providing us annually with a copy of your current driver's license, registration papers and comprehensive insurance coverage
- you being liable for any traffic infringements (parking or traffic offences) that occur during the course of your voluntary services
- you immediately notifying both us and your insurer if your private motor vehicle is involved in an accident whilst you are volunteering.

**Commitments and Obligations of the Uniting Church**

***Background Checks:***

Except where limited by law, GUC reserves the right to conduct background and/or medical checks on you as is necessary.

***Out of pocket Expenses:***

You will be reimbursed for pre-approved out of pocket expenses that you incur in the course of volunteering your services. You are required to provide documentation to



substantiate the expenses incurred and these should be claimed through your supervisor or the GUC Treasurer.

***Insurance:***

As a formally recognised volunteer you are covered under the Synod's Volunteer Personal Accident Policy, in the event that you are injured during the course of volunteering your services.

This insurance cover does not extend to damage incurred when using your private motor vehicle. You are personally responsible for all costs incurred if your private motor vehicle is damaged.

Draft for consultation

## Volunteer and safe church requirements

| <b>Group/role/ position</b>               | <b>WWVP card</b> | <b>Safe church awareness training</b> | <b>Volunteer agreement</b>           |
|---|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Church Council                            | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Food Pantry Management Committee          | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Safe Church coordinator                   | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Creative Worship Team                     | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Music & Singing (coordinator only)        | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Welcomers                                 | not required     | not required                          | not required                         |
| Preaching                                 | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Worship Leading                           | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Bible Reading: English & 1st language     | not required     | not required                          | not required                         |
| Prayer for Others                         | not required     | not required                          | not required                         |
| Tech: Computer & Sound                    | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Morning Tea                               | not required     | not required                          | not required                         |
| Communion Prep                            | not required     | not required                          | not required                         |
| BBQ                                       | not required     | not required                          | not required                         |
| Offering Counting                         | not required     | not required                          | not required                         |
| Singing Group & Male Trio                 | not required     | not required                          | not required                         |
| Flowers                                   | not required     | not required                          | not required                         |
| Pastoral care team                        | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Property & Maintenance (coordinator only) | required         | required                              | required                             |
| TnT Team (coordinator only)               | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Spice Kids (coordinator only)             | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Hospitality- Funerals, Conferences        | not required     | not required                          | not required                         |
| Presbytery Representatives                | not required     | not required                          | not required                         |
| Community Food Garden                     | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Playgroup                                 | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Oasis Leaders & Support                   | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Billabong Leaders & Support/Mentors       | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Boys' Brigade                             | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Girls' Brigade                            | required         | required                              | required                             |
| Lead Bible/Faith Studies                  | required         | required                              | required                             |
|   |                  |                                       | MS= Mustard Seed Volunteer Agreement |
| Pantry- Bread Pick Up                     | required         | not required                          | MS required                          |
| Pantry- Wednesday Prep & Support          | required         | not required                          | MS required                          |
| Pantry- Thursday Team & Café              | required         | coordinator required                  | MS required                          |
| Shelf Stacking/Cleaning                   | required         | not required                          | MS required                          |
|   |                  |                                       |                                      |