



Lutheran Church
of Australia

SAFE PLACE

Policy

Responding to sexual abuse
and sexual harassment by paid
and voluntary Church Workers

THE LCA SAFE PLACE POLICY

WHAT THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA (LCA) SAYS ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

When we are participating with our Church family we would like to think that our physical, emotional and spiritual safety is assured because of the very nature of our beliefs. In a perfect world this would be the case, but history has demonstrated that the Church is a place of grace and not of perfect morality. Although we emphasise worship, healing and love, we are also aware that we are part of a society where sexual abuse and sexual harassment do occur. In this respect the very nature of our Church may make it a target for predators.

The term *A Safe Place* has been adopted to cover the LCA District and National Committees, Policies and Procedures. The name reflects the Church's aspiration that we should be a safe place for all, where the grace of God is active and where healing can occur when a wrong has been committed.

THE LCA CLEARLY STATES THAT SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT ARE UNACCEPTABLE.

POLICY STATEMENT

Sexual abuse or sexual harassment by people in positions of trust has a destructive impact on other people's lives. Such abuse and harassment is totally unacceptable to the LCA.

In observing Christ's command to love one another we are to treat each other with respect and dignity. In honouring people, we are fulfilling our responsibility under the law of the land. The LCA is committed to implementing processes to ensure the Church is a safe place.

The LCA is committed to hearing and responding to people who feel that they have been subjected to sexual abuse and sexual harassment in any form.

Those who hold positions of trust in the Church are called to guard with great care the trust placed in them. They have an absolute responsibility to avoid all forms of sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

THE INTENTION OF THIS POLICY

In observing Christ's command to love one another we treat our community with respect and dignity. In honouring people, we fulfil our responsibility under the law of the land.

The LCA is committed to ensuring the Church is a safe place. For this reason it wants to hear and respond to those who feel that they may have been subjected to sexual abuse or sexual harassment. It recognises that this can be an area where mandatory reporting to government authorities may be required, as in Schools or Aged Care Facilities. It is important that we work together as Christian sisters and brothers to settle our differences and resolve issues on the basis of Biblical principles.

It should be noted that even where legislation around mandatory reporting exists the Church can play a role in the reconciliation of those affected by sexual abuse or sexual harassment.

The LCA framework is in three parts; to require mandatory Police or criminal checks for those in leadership positions, to develop an educational awareness program and to establish a process for the notification and management of complaints. It is anticipated that these processes will assist Church members to respond with justice, compassion, and awareness to the needs of all parties involved.

The LCA expects that its Safe Place Policy will be known throughout the Church because it provides a blueprint for creating a safe place for our community and an avenue for notification and redress for

wrongs that may be perpetrated. For this reason every Pastor and Congregational office must have copies of all the necessary documentation, and must ensure the availability of brochures and materials for Church members. It is the responsibility of Pastors and Congregational leaders to ensure that the Policy and Procedures are known, understood and utilised in all cases where allegations of sexual abuse or sexual harassment are made.

Church members are encouraged to report if they believe sexual abuse or sexual harassment has occurred, recognising that confidentiality will always be respected.

WHAT AREAS ARE COVERED

This Policy and Procedures only covers the areas of sexual abuse and sexual harassment related to adults. However there are similar policies that cover children (*Child Safe*) and the LCA is developing a process for the reporting of general bullying, harassment and professional misconduct involving Leaders of the Church.

A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

For Lutherans, the Safe Place Policy is based on the understanding that we are part of the fellowship of God's baptised people in Jesus Christ. As part of the Body of Christ, we are a community which we know is loved and forgiven. In this community we commit to serve each other in love, and to serve in particular, in relation to this Safe Place Policy, those who have been abused by others within the family of God and who as a result of this abuse are fragile, vulnerable, marginalised and oppressed. In essence we witness to God's provision for peace and wholeness in the world.

The Safe Place Policy recognises that within our Christian community every person is at the same time *saint* and *sinner*. This means that our community includes those who may violate and oppress others through an abusive use of power, as well as those who have been sinned against, hurt and violated.

It is important that we, as God's people take sin seriously and properly use Law and Gospel to deal with it. This means that through the Law we name and condemn sin, but through the Gospel we encourage a sincere desire for forgiveness and reconciliation. By naming and condemning the sin, we also recognise the seriousness of the abuse and its impact on the Victim. It is our hope and desire that the application of law and gospel will result in the healing of hurt and the restoration of broken relationships.

Pastoral care is fundamental to the Safe Place Policy because the person who is sinned against (the Victim) must be offered acknowledgement of their hurt and the injustice which they have experienced and support, understanding, care and counselling to allow for healing and reconciliation. On the other hand the sinner (the Perpetrator) needs to be cared for in a way that provides for truthful confrontation, support, counselling and mercy, with a view to achieving repentant change, healing and reconciliation.

This process challenges society's normal notions of justice, which are framed in the language of punishment, retribution, vengeance, and which we as Christian people may be tempted to pursue. However it is imperative that the way we practice justice recognises justice under the cross of Jesus Christ, and is based instead in the concepts of mercy and restorative justice.

As Lutherans we understand that under God's so-called 'left hand' through which God maintains peace and good order in society, we are all subject to the laws of the land and face the likelihood of prosecution, arrest and conviction for abuse perpetrated against others. If the sins committed are of such significance that one of our members faces the full force of the law we must, never the less, be committed to provide Pastoral care and support with the hope of forgiveness and reconciliation.

The *Safe Place Policy* is not a legal document, nor a moral prescriptive. It is a way of providing mechanisms and procedures, based on the Word of God, by which we can work through painful and

serious matters. It provides for the care and support of the Victim and the attempt to address the hurt and injustice which they may have experienced and to reach reconciliation within the family of God. Ultimately, all such matters are encapsulated in our worship life especially within the practice of confession and absolution.

EXTENT OF THE POLICY

It is intended for Congregations, businesses related to, and auxiliaries of the Church. This includes Pastors, committee members, other staff and volunteers. The Safe Place Policy and Procedures cover predominately adult to adult abuse. They apply within the LCA and the Lutheran Church of New Zealand.

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Means a Police Check or in those States where these are not able to be obtained a criminal check approved by the LCA

Church Leaders:

Are people who guide or lead others, and who hold a position of trust within the LCA.



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Policy and Procedures

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MAKING A COMPLAINT ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

PRINCIPLES

The Policy assures us that the LCA is committed to ensuring that the fear of sexual abuse or sexual harassment should not interfere with the development of healthy relationships.

Those who hold positions of trust in the Church are called on to guard with great care the trust placed in them. They have an absolute responsibility to protect members against all forms of sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

To ensure everyone in a Church leadership position is aware of the obligations of this Policy a mandatory educational program is conducted at District level. Mandatory Police or criminal checks are also required by the LCA for those in leadership positions.

Complaints involving a minor (person under 18 years of age) must be reported as required under appropriate State or Federal mandatory notification legislation.

Every person making a complaint will be heard and taken seriously and each situation will be dealt with confidentially. Equally each person against whom a complaint is made will be heard and will receive natural justice.

We also acknowledge that Complainants have the right to seek appropriate legal or industrial action, but may consider other courses of action before doing so. Both the Complainant and the Respondent will be offered Pastoral support and care.

RECOGNISING SEXUAL ABUSE OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual abuse or sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance or request for sexual favours which is coercive, either in verbal or physical form. It can include conduct which is sexual in nature and creates an offensive, hostile or intimidating environment for an individual thus interfering with their ability to worship, trust and seek Pastoral care, work or learn and relate to others. Such behaviours occur along a continuum of violation from insults and sexual innuendo to the most extreme expression of sexual power – sexual assault.

Examples of these behaviours include verbal sexual harassment/innuendo, the invasion of personal space, leering stares, wolf whistles, catcalls, and obscene gestures, telling of jokes with sexual connotations, sending explicit or offensive emails or text messages. There may be an unnecessary request for information about personal matters (questions of a sexual nature), encouragement to look at or pose for pornographic photos or voyeurism. Physically there can be touching, pinching, patting, fondling, kissing, receipt of sexual advances during a time of vulnerability, forced masturbation, oral/genital contact or penetration with penis or object into the Victim's vagina/mouth/anus.

Sexual harassment does not require a repetition of advances and requests. The issue centres on whether or not the person concerned feels pressured to comply with the requests at that time. The outcome can be a feeling of offence and/or threat, causing reactions ranging from annoyance and embarrassment to intimidation, humiliation, distress, anxiety, fear and ill-health. Distress can be caused by conduct which is intentional or unintentional. Unwanted sexual contact is a criminal offence. This includes contact with persons judged legally incompetent to consent. The sexual behaviour may also contradict the moral teachings of the Church even though it may not be defined as a criminal or civil act.

MAKING A COMPLAINT ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE AND/OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Although we recommend people formally report any incidents they feel uncomfortable about, they are under no obligation to do so. If they would like advice or would like to make a formal complaint we ask

that they contact the 1800 number noted below as this is a specific LCA phone service for reports of sexual abuse or sexual harassment. It is never used for other purposes.

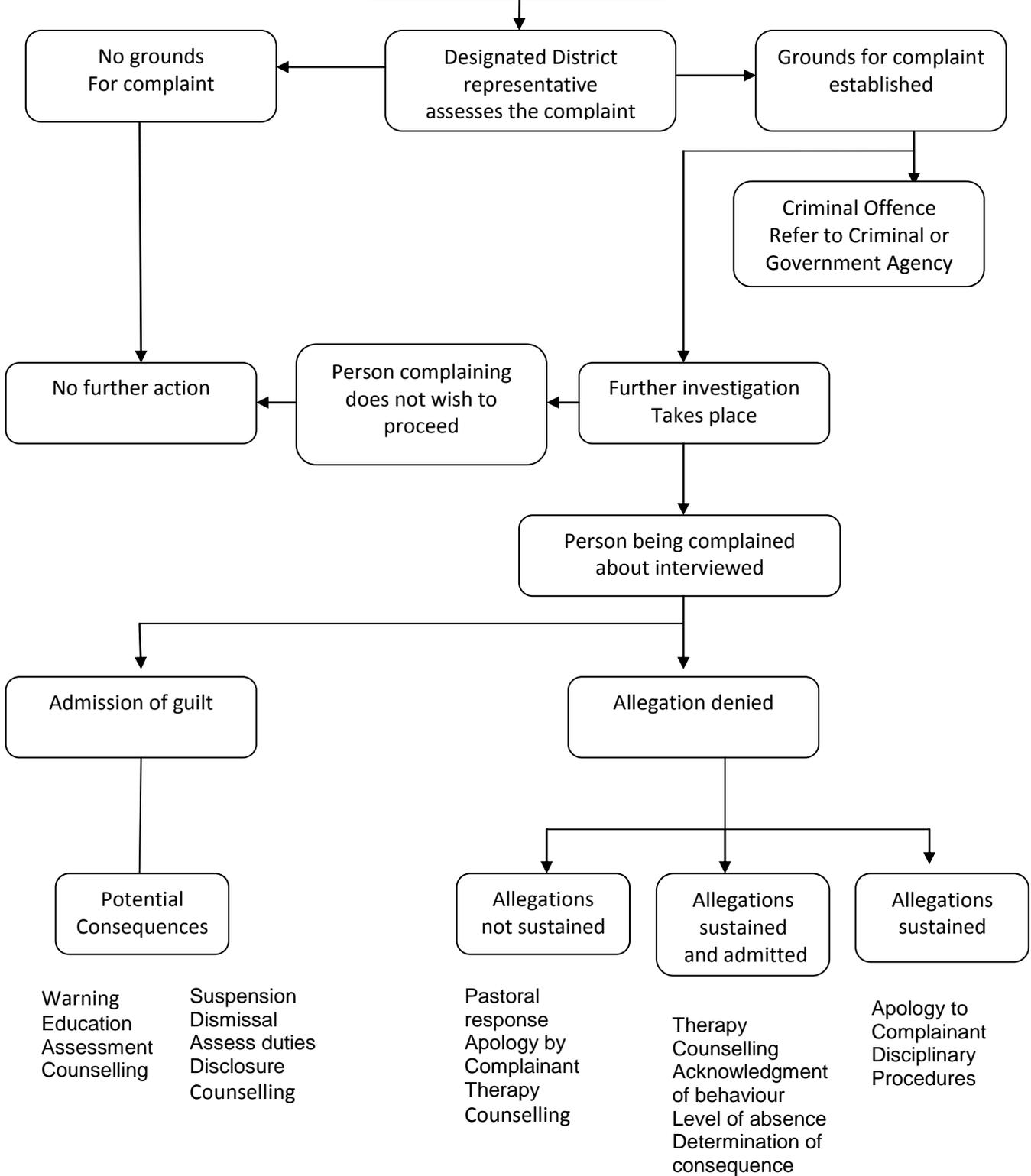
The contact number throughout Australia is 1800 644 628 and in New Zealand 0800 356 887. The address by mail is PO Box 519, Marden, South Australia, 5070. The LCA e-mail address for notification of abuse is report.abuse@safeplace.lca.org.au in Australia and in New Zealand.

After a phone call is made the Safe Place Case Manager or a designated person in the District concerned makes contact with the person wishing to gain advice. She/he determines firstly if the nature of the complaint is such that a mandatory notification needs to be made to the Criminal or another Government authority. This would occur, for example if there is an allegation of a criminal offence, in relationship to an older person in residential care, or to a minor.

Once a discussion has taken place the person making the complaint has the option to leave the matter or to pursue it. If it is pursued further information will be required and the person who is subject to the complaint notified so that the matter can be addressed. The chart on the next page describes action that will be taken if a person wishes to pursue a formal complaint.

**SAFE PLACE
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

COMPLAINT LODGED
Toll Free 1800 644 628 Aus
0800 356 887 NZ
Email:
report.abuse@safeplace.LCA.org.au
PO Box 519 Marden, SA, 5070



COMMITTEES THAT MANAGE THE SAFE PLACE PROCESS

THE NATIONAL SAFE PLACE COMMITTEE

The Committee reports to General Church Council (GCC) and is responsible for establishing, developing and clarifying all matters of Policy and Procedure, for responding to emerging issues of sexual abuse and sexual harassment and for monitoring implementation of the Policy and supporting activities on a national basis. District committees are primarily responsible for implementation and for providing feedback to the National Committee.

In addition it must:

- keep itself informed on matters relating to sexual abuse and sexual harassment issues, including emerging issues within the community, changes in legislation and developments within other Churches as they relate to members of the LCA and to specific groups such as Aboriginal people, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities and people with disabilities
- make recommendations to GCC about responding to emerging issues relating to sexual abuse and sexual harassment
- monitor and advise on the implementation of legislation relevant to the Policy;
- submit an annual report to the GCC
- ensure ongoing review of the Policy in order to maintain all necessary pastoral and legal requirements, and recommend changes to the Policy as required
- ensure that the Church has in place a procedure whereby all people in a position of trust in the Church complete regular training regarding the sexual abuse and sexual harassment Policy
- ensure that the Church has in place a discreet and confidential sexual abuse and sexual harassment referral system where complaints may be received, investigated and resolved
- ensure that resources for training are prepared for the Church
- ensure that information regarding the sexual abuse and sexual harassment Policy is disseminated throughout the Church
- administer the funds entrusted to its control in accordance with the Policy laid down by the General Synod
- arrange Forums for National and District Committee representatives to meet
- ensure that all departments and bodies of the Church keep a register of those who have completed training in accordance with the Policy
- undertake any other duties as required by the Church from time to time.

DISTRICT SAFE PLACE COMMITTEES

The role of District Safe Place Committee is to:

- Assist the National Committee to develop Policies and Procedures
- Assist and advise the National Committee on matters of mutual interest
- Appoint key staff within the District/State
- Train Safe Place Advisors, Pastoral Carers and Training Facilitators
- Manage the education of staff, auxiliaries and agencies
- Respond to and investigate allegations of sexual abuse or sexual harassment
- Monitor and record education and attendances
- Provide the National Committee with statistics and reports as requested
- Nominate an accredited¹ person to support accredited Safe Place educators in their District
- Nominate representatives to attend each National Forum
- Nominate representatives to the local inter-denominational bodies dealing with sexual abuse and sexual harassment

¹ Accredited in Safe Place

OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

The President of the LCA will appoint a member of the National Safe Place Committee to represent LCA on the National Council of Churches Australia Safe Place Project.² This opportunity allows Lutherans to learn from the experiences of other Churches and to contribute to that learning. Representatives from District committees are also encouraged to participate in local ecumenical networks and training.

AWARENESS AND TRAINING FOR THE SAFE PLACE POLICY

THE ROLE OF COMMITTEES IN AWARENESS RAISING

District Safe Place Committees are to assure themselves that there is an awareness of the LCA Safe Place Policy by the persons in leadership positions, with the material outlined in the document 'A Safe Place for All' regarded as a minimum.

The exception to this rule is where legislation related to sexual abuse, sexual harassment and mandatory reporting relates to organisations. If this is the case the organisation must seek to respond to the legal obligations through their own processes but must refer to Safe Place processes as options for mediation for those in their employ or under their care.

THE ROLE OF TRAINERS

- NATIONAL TRAINER (to train District Trainers). Responsible and accountable to the National Safe Place committee.
- LCA DISTRICT TRAINERS – one for each District of the LCA (may have other roles in Professional standards, or in Safe Place e.g. Safe Place Case Manager, Child Safe etc). District Trainers to train local trainers (formerly called Facilitators). Appointed by local LCA Districts and accountable to District Safe Place committees.
- LOCAL TRAINERS to offer the 2 hour level 2 & 3 training. Accountable to LCA District committee through the LCA District Trainer.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR AREAS WHERE LEGISLATION DOES NOT EXIST

It is required that every adult staff member and volunteer within the LCA in a position of trust must undergo the Level 2 training and subsequent updates. Those who have participated in the Valuing Communities training in schools will have addressed the issues contained in Safe Place and are therefore exempt from attendance at other training in the level 2 and 3 training.

TRAINING LEVELS

- **Level 1** – a 20 minute briefing during induction for all staff and volunteers offered as soon as possible after or during orientation/induction by management until the new volunteer or staff member can attend more formal training. Certificates will therefore last only for about 3 months
- **Level 2** – a 2 hour compulsory training or orientation in a seminar conducted throughout the LCA to equip all (especially those in positions of trust) to respond appropriately within relationships, understand the nature of sexual abuse and sexual harassment and know when to call for assistance for themselves or others.
- **Level three** - a one hour refresher course conducted after 3 years
- **Level four** – a whole day training workshop (train the trainer) for those who offer the Level 2 training – local trainers (authorised by the National Safe Place Committee, arranged by each LCA District but sometimes conducted through the Lutheran Community Care Centre for Learning in SA)

² A Forum which discusses sexual abuse and sexual harassment within Churches

CERTIFICATES

- These are issued by the person offering the presentation or course, recognising that there are no competency standards required for levels 1-3. Certificates can only be provided where participants have attended the full training.
- Training is valid for 3 years (except level 1) after which a refresher update course must be undertaken for Levels 2 and 4. Level 3 will follow level 2 and Level 4 local trainers must undergo further training at Level 4

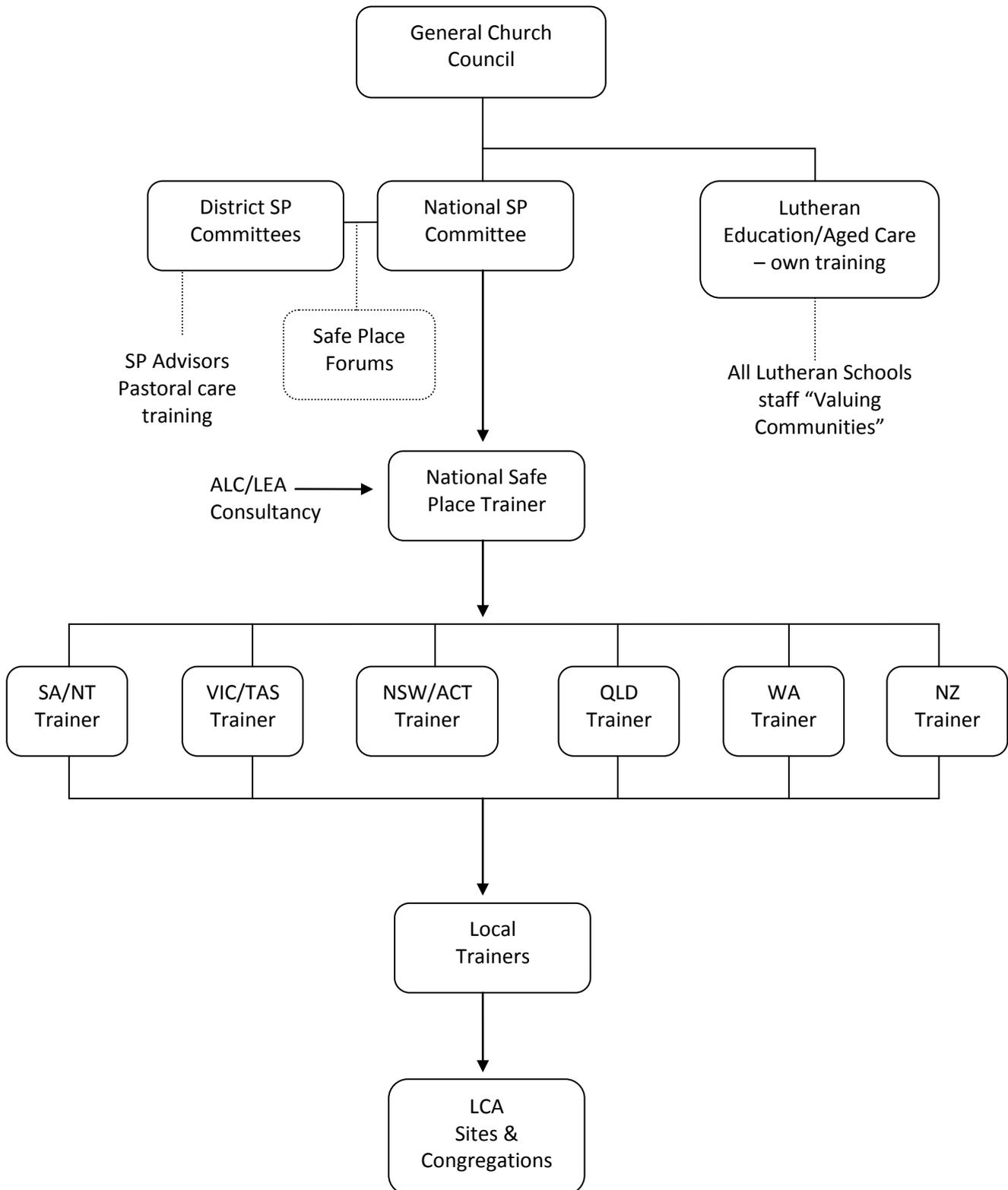
RECORDS OF PARTICIPATION

- Level 1 records kept on site for the purposes of local management
- Level 2 and three training records are kept by the presenter who provides certificates to the local organisation/congregation who requested training and to provide information to the District for their periodic audits.
- Level 4 training records are kept by District Trainers

SAFE PLACE TRAINING FOR CASE MANAGERS AND SAFE PLACE ADVISORS

District Committees offer their own internal training for Case Managers and Advisors. This is complimented by training organised at the time Forums occur and Case Manager Meetings take place.

**SAFE PLACE
TRAINING FLOW CHART
LEVEL 2,3,4**



TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR AREAS WHERE LEGISLATION DOES EXIST

Where the response to sexual abuse and sexual harassment is mandated by legislation and/or regulations, it is required that those in responsible positions are made aware of the Safe Place Policy and Procedures. Key concepts of Safe Place mediation should be covered in training about sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

All other LCA Contexts includes staff, workers and volunteers in

- Aged Care facilities, Retirement Villages and their residents and family members
- Australian Lutheran College and its students
- Australian Lutheran educational facilities
- Community Care Centres and their clients
- Child and Youth camps and events
- Aboriginal Ministry
- Chaplaincy appointments

CLIENTS, STUDENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

- Each new client, student or family member should have access to a copy of *A Safe Place For All*,
- Each Facility reception area or meeting room is to have displayed a poster with the Free Call number, email address and mail address on a notice-board

STAFF, CONTRACTED WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- The Staff Handbook is to have a statement on the LCA Safe Place Policy along with the Free Call number, email address and mail address
- Each new staff member, contracted worker or volunteer is to be given a copy of *A Safe Place For All* as part of the orientation materials
- The main staff, contracted worker and volunteer notice-board is to have displayed a poster with the Free Call number, email address and mail address
- Volunteers or contracted workers acting in a one-off basis for an activity are to be given a briefing on the LCA Safe Place Policy using the brochure *A Safe Place for All* by the leader of the activity (Level 1 Training). The leader of the activity must have received the initial training in the LCA Safe Place Policy (Level 2 Training).

POLICE OR CRIMINAL CHECKS

It is a requirement of the LCA that employed Pastors or those who are still active in the LCA, and Church Leaders must have Police or criminal checks every three years.

CONGREGATIONS

SAFE PLACE COORDINATORS

A major role for Congregations and Auxiliaries is to provide information and training to their members. Congregations should appoint Safe Place Coordinators, and support them to:

- Ensure their Congregational Handbook or Members and Friends Address List contain statement on the LCA Sexual Abuse Policy with the Toll Free Number & email address. They should display the 1800 644 628 number, email address: abuse@safeplace.lca.org.au and the mail address, PO Box 519 Marden SA 5070.
- Provide each new member a copy of the brochure *A Safe Place for All* as part of their welcome/orientation materials. Provide them also with a copy of the brochure *A Safe Place for All* as part of orientation materials. Families are to be given a copy of local child protection information.
- Place *A Safe Place* Poster on their noticeboard with the Toll Free Number, email and mail addresses
- Ensure their Staff Handbook and main staff notice board has a statement on LCA Sexual Abuse Policy with the contact details
- Keep a current record of all Congregational Leaders who require Police or criminal checks
- Provide training by an accredited person to all staff and volunteers and assist them to attend these LCA or equivalent sessions every three years
- Provide or source briefings for Congregational members on a yearly basis.
- Ensure all new staff/volunteers have a Criminal Check and that this is repeated every three years.

EDUCATION OF PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERS

All Congregational staff and volunteers in a position of trust are to take part in a Level 2 training session. This includes:

- Chairperson of the Congregations Church Council
- Elders/Lay Assistants
- Church Council members
- Sunday School Teachers and Leaders
- Youth Leaders
- Regular Volunteers
- Home Worship Group Leaders
- Ministry Leaders in Pastoral Care and all persons in a position of trust

COMMUNITY & WELFARE SERVICES

Where community care and welfare services have an existing Policy on dealing with sexual abuse and sexual harassment, governing bodies need to check to see that their Policy fits with current legislative requirements and the LCA Safe Place Policy. All those involved in each service should also be made aware of their right to have access to the Church-appointed Case Manager and to the Church's processes.

All cases of suspicion of alleged assault which are reported to the authorities must be reported to the facility's insurer.

AGED CARE SERVICES

Residents of Aged Care Facilities (ACFs) or their community are entitled to care that respects and protects their dignity. This means that staff must ensure that residents and their families feel free to raise any concerns they may have about abuse or possible abuse and have confidence that those concerns will be dealt with appropriately.

Sexual abuse or sexual harassment of people can occur in any setting, but older people are especially vulnerable, because of cognitive deficits such as dementia and, because of their physical frailty.

The LCA recognizes that the vast majority of people who work in aged care are committed to providing quality care for residents. However, awareness of the possibility of abuse is essential in order to ensure that residents' rights are upheld and their safety is maintained. It also needs to be recognised that Perpetrators of abuse in Residential Aged Care Facilities or the community may be other residents, family members, others visitors, volunteers, staff or others.

It is particularly important that staff or family members do not dismiss what a resident with memory loss or dementia tells them because they assume their comments are related to their condition.

INFORMATION TO RESIDENTS, FAMILIES AND STAFF

Residents and families are to be provided with information about their options for the management of abuse and harassment either through the organisations Policies and Procedures or through pamphlets provided by the LCA. Where an organisation has its own documentation it is to refer to LCA mediation through Safe Place as an option (but this mediation does not replace the obligation of mandatory reporting).

EDUCATION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Staff and Volunteers are to be provided education on the nature of sexual abuse and sexual harassment and informed of the LCA's Safe Place processes at orientation and during subsequent training programs.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Lutheran facilities that provide care to the elderly must have a formal Policy consistent with all relevant legislation and with references to LCA Policy, including the option of mediation or support through it. However LCA mediation through Safe Place cannot be allowed to interfere with Criminal or Department of Health and Ageing (DHA) investigations of any reported abuse. For this reason it is important for Safe Place to be offered after Criminal or DHA investigations are completed or where it is assured that they do not interfere with legislated Investigative Procedures.

REPORTING ABUSIVE SITUATIONS

Staff are obliged to report abusive situations as described by Government in the Aged Care Act and Regulations. Failure of a staff member to report any abusive situation must result in disciplinary action. If they observe, or become aware of abuse and do not report it to their supervisors they will be considered to have colluded in the abusive action and will be subject to disciplinary or legal action. The Aged Care Act requires providers of care to report all allegations or suspicion of any type of physical and sexual abuse of a resident to the Criminal and Commonwealth Officers. Reports must be made to both Criminal and the Department of Health and Ageing within 24 hours of an allegation of assault.

MANAGING ABUSIVE SITUATIONS

Because of the legislative and legal requirements that dictate the way in which allegations of abuse or harassment are reported and investigated Senior Management must lead the process. They will liaise with Criminal, Government agencies, families, residents and staff to ensure the situation is managed appropriately. If the LCA Safe Place process of reconciliation is used they will assist the parties concerned.

SUPPORT FOR REPORTERS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Organisations must have in place Policies and Procedures to protect whistle blowers; ensure natural justice is observed and offer counselling if requested to those accused during the investigative process.

INSURANCE

All cases of suspicion of alleged assault which are reported to the authorities must be reported to the Facility's Insurer.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Lutheran schools and educational facilities are required to comply with governmental procedures and legislation. For this reason they have internal complaint processes, including those for sexual abuse or sexual harassment

INFORMATION TO STAFF

Staff or volunteers are to be provided with information about their options for the management of sexual abuse and sexual harassment either through the schools Policies and Procedures or through pamphlets provided by the LCA. Where the school has its own documentation it is to refer to LCA mediation through Safe Place as an option (but this mediation does not replace the obligation of mandatory reporting).

EDUCATION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Staff and Volunteers are to be provided education on the nature of sexual abuse and sexual harassment and informed of the LCA's Safe Place processes at orientation and during subsequent training programs.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Lutheran schools must have formal Policies consistent with all relevant legislation and with references to LCA Policy, including the option of mediation or support through it.

MANAGING ABUSIVE SITUATIONS

Because of the legislative and legal requirements that dictate the way in which allegations of sexual abuse or sexual harassment are reported and investigated Schools staff must ensure the situation is managed appropriately. Use of the LCA Safe Place process of reconciliation may, if used, assist the parties concerned.

INSURANCE

All cases of suspicion of alleged assault which are reported to the authorities must be reported to the Schools Insurer.

FOR CHILDREN -CHILDSAFE

Situations of sexual abuse and harassment against minors (persons under 18 years of age) are dealt with under the LCA's ChildSafe system.

The ChildSafe Safety Management System is designed to promote the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing of young people, their families and caregivers. It is a commercial product which had its origins in the Scripture Union Movement. It is a highly regarded programme in the Australian community and has the endorsement of the LCA insurers.

ChildSafe was officially adopted by the LCA in March 2007 in response to the need to provide a method of managing our approach to young people's ministry that meets our duty of care, community expectations, various state legislation and the requirements of our church insurers. In addition, some districts use the ChurchSafe supplement to bring content in line with National Council of Churches in Australia national standards for ministry to all age groups in Australian churches.

Mandatory reporting requirements differ according to various state legislations, but ChildSafe practices require all LCA members to report any cases of suspected abuse and any instances of disclosure or knowledge of disclosure to the statutory body in each state. ChildSafe training covers this process.

All persons in the LCA who are involved in ministry to minors must complete ChildSafe training which includes topics such as the rationale for safe churches, duty of care, the screening, recruitment and supervision of personnel, child protection, managing safe environments, conducting safe programmes and an emergency response process.

For further information contact www.childsafe.org.au

GAINING MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS POLICY

Further information about this Policy and Procedures can be gained from your District Safe Place Committee or Officer.