

IMPORTANT



ACC Safer Churches QLD



NEW QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

The Queensland Government has adopted new child safeguarding laws – the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*. These laws are overseen by the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC). This new legislation changes the requirements of churches and other organisations that provide ministries and services to children in Queensland. In short, it will:

- 1. Introduce 10 Child Safe Standards and a Universal Principle** for organisations that will bring us into line with the 10 national standards that most other states have already adopted. These will seek to help organisations protect children and vulnerable people by putting in measures that prevent this from happening.
- 2. Introduce a Reportable Conduct Scheme.** This scheme will lay down some standards and obligations for organisations to investigate and respond to cases of child abuse when it happens.



ACC Safer Churches QLD

Overview

Under Queensland's new child safeguarding laws - the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024, churches that provide services or spaces specifically for children are required to introduce the following:

10 Child Safe Standards and a **Reportable Conduct Scheme**.

Churches, under the Act are known in the legislation as "child safe entities".

The law comes into effect at different stages for commencement of compliance with the Act. As a church, you are required to commence compliance on the following dates:

The Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle

The good news is that ACC Churches are largely already compliant because of our National Safer Churches requirements introduced in 2016.

You should also review your child protection policies and procedures to ensure you are indeed compliant with the Child Safe Standards. And you must check that you are compliant with the Universal Principle. Details in the following pages.

1 April 2026

Churches must demonstrate that they are working towards becoming compliant with the 10 Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle

Reportable Conduct Scheme

ACC already requires reporting of these matters through Safer Churches however these laws add another layer of investigation and reporting to the Queensland Family and Child Commission

1 July 2026

All Churches will need to be compliant with the Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle

Universal Principle	A child safe entity must provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons
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What this means for us in ACC is we uphold this principle in accordance with the ACC Doctrinal Statement and Position Statements

10 Child Safe Standards	
1	Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the entity's organisational leadership, governance and culture
2	Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3	Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
4	Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
5	People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
6	Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused
7	Staff and volunteers of the entity are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training
8	Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed
9	Implementation of the child safe standards is regularly reviewed and improved
10	Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children

Reportable Conduct Scheme

Below is a summary of the key elements of the Scheme

What is the Reportable Conduct Scheme?

The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires organisations to report and investigate allegations of child abuse and misconduct **by their workers**. It requires organisations to take all concerns seriously and respond appropriately.

The scheme requires organisations to complete an investigation in response to concerns about a worker's behaviour towards children. In addition to incidents that require reporting to police, the scheme plays a critical role in identifying behaviour that is concerning but doesn't reach the threshold for a police response.

The scheme is designed to connect information across organisations, regulators and sectors to identify people who present a risk to the safety of children.

What is Reportable Conduct?

Reportable conduct includes:

- A child sexual offence
- Sexual misconduct committed in relation to, or in the presence of a child
- Ill-treatment of a child
- Significant neglect of a child
- Physical violence committed in relation to, or in the presence of a child
- Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

Reportable conduct may be one or a series of acts. It does not need to have occurred as part of the worker's employment – conduct that occurs while the worker is off duty or out of hours is still reportable.

A more detailed definition of these types of conduct is provided below:

Detailed definitions of reportable conduct

Conduct type	What does this mean?
A child sexual offence	This includes child sexual abuse in all its forms, including grooming and child sexual exploitation material.
Sexual misconduct committed in relation to, or in the presence of a child	Conduct that is sexual in nature, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inappropriate touching • voyeurism • use of sexual language or conversations that violate boundaries.
Ill-treatment of a child	Cruel, humiliating or inhuman conduct, including verbal abuse, making excessive or degrading demands or using inappropriate forms of behaviour management.
Significant neglect of a child	Deliberate or reckless failure to meet the basic needs of the child. It can be a single serious failure to meet a child's basic needs, or from an ongoing pattern of repeated failure to meet a child's needs. Significant neglect of a child or young person does not include neglect that is a direct result of the child's family or carer experiencing poverty or financial hardship.
Physical violence committed in relation to, or in the presence of a child	Physical harm or force that causes or risks injury. This includes physical intimidation where a child or young person is scared that they will be harmed. A reckless application of physical force means the worker or volunteer may have not intended to use physical force but was reckless about the impact their actions could have on a child.
Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child	Conduct that has serious, ongoing effects on a child's emotional wellbeing and/or development. This includes harm that is serious in nature (not trivial) and is observed or professionally assessed through changes in behaviour distress, anxiety, withdrawal or a diagnosis.

Who can an allegation be made about?

A concern can be raised about any worker of an organisation that is required to comply with the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

A worker is a person who performs work of any kind for the organisation, including:

- Employees in all capacities
- Volunteers
- Contractors & Subcontractors
- Consultants
- Labour-hire workers
- Trainees, interns and work experience employees
- Religious leaders

Reportable Convictions

A further requirement is that you must report what is termed a 'Reportable Conviction'.

A worker has a reportable conviction if they have been convicted for an offence against a law of any state or territory in the Commonwealth of Australia that may involve reportable conduct. This is not an allegation as the matter has already been established by the Courts but must be notified to QFCC

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

1. Read this document carefully & familiarise yourself with the requirements
2. Read and access resources from QFCC (Qld Family & Child Commission) including free webinar training as per the information below
3. Review and update child safety policies, including reportable conduct procedures
4. Ensure all staff and volunteers are trained in recognising and reporting concerns
5. Maintain secure, shareable records of allegations and outcomes

Resources and Points to Note

Link to QFCC Resources:

[Register for Queensland Family and Child Commission webinars | Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

Points to Note:

- QFCC are very helpful and doing all they can to support and assist the religious sector in the rollout of these requirements
- We have been advised that with regard to reporting requirements QFCC are happy for us to use our existing Safer Churches reporting documentation rather than impose different paperwork upon us. We are currently reviewing our Safer Churches report forms to ensure that these meet the requirements and you will be updated accordingly.
- The designated 'head of organisation' is responsible to manage investigations (Note: Whilst functions can be delegated, the legal responsibility rests with the Senior Pastor)
- A further email will be sent to you from our ACC State Office closer to the 1 July implementation date. This will provide further details as we are advised by QFCC.