

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SERVICE POLICY

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### Mandatory – Quality Area 7

Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited is the Approved Provider of children's services known in these policies as Uniting Early Learning.

### Overarching Policy Statement:

The *Keeping Children Safe Policy* of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania (refer to *Sources*) is the overarching whole of church policy to be implemented by individuals and entities involved with or connected to the Uniting Church. All children who are involved in any of the Church's activities, events or programs have a right to feel and be safe. The Church is committed to provide safe environments where children are cared for, respected, nurtured and sustained.

### POLICY STATEMENT

Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited is committed to ensuring that there are appropriate systems and processes in place to enable:

- good governance and management of the organisation
- accountability to its stakeholders
- compliance with all regulatory and legislative requirements placed on the organisation
- the organisation to remain solvent and comply with all its financial obligations.

### PURPOSE

This policy outlines the duties, roles and responsibilities for the governance of Uniting Early Learning.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider - Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited and [Click here to enter text.](#); the Parent Advisory Committees of each member kindergarten and all subcommittees.

### BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

#### Background

The governance of an organisation is concerned with the systems and processes that ensure the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of a service. The [Click here to enter text.](#) and the Parent Advisory Committee are responsible for setting the directions for the service and ensuring that its goals and objectives are met in line with its legal and regulatory requirements governing the operation of the business are met.

Under the National Law and National Regulations, early childhood services are required to have policies and procedures in place relating to the governance and management of the service, including confidentiality of records (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

Attachment 1 contains relevant legislation and sources.

### PROCEDURES

#### The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that the service has appropriate systems and policies in place for the effective governance and management of Uniting Early Learning.

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## **CORE ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNANCE MODEL**

The following are the core elements of the governance systems at the Cluster for which the Board is responsible:

### **Stewardship/custodianship**

Ensure:

- each service pursues its stated purpose and remains viable
- budget and financial accountability enable ongoing viability and make best use of the service's resources
- the services manage risks appropriately

### **Authority, accountability and control**

- Monitor and oversee management including ensuring that good management practices and appropriate checks and balances are in place.
- Be accountable to members of the services.
- Maintain focus, integrity and quality of services.
- Oversee legal functions and responsibilities.
- Declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest (refer to Definitions and Attachment 2 – Sample Conflict of interest disclosure statement).

## **LEGAL LIABILITIES OF MEMBERS OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited board member, delegates or subcommittee are responsible under delegation to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the laws and regulations relating to the operation of the services are observed. Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited, delegated officer or subcommittee are responsible for ensuring that:

- adequate policies and procedures are in place to comply with the legislative and regulatory requirements placed on the services
- appropriate systems are in place to monitor compliance
- reasonable care and skill is exercised in fulfilling their roles as part of the governing body of the services
- they act honestly, and with due care and diligence
- they do not use information they have access to, by virtue of being on the Board improperly
- they do not use their position on the Board for personal gain or put individual interests ahead of responsibilities.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited board member, delegated officer or subcommittee are responsible for:

- developing coherent aims and goals that reflect the interests, values and beliefs of the members and staff, and the stated aims of the services, and have a clear and agreed philosophy which guides business decisions and the work of the services
- ensuring there is a sound framework of policies and procedures that complies with all legislative and regulatory requirements, and that enables the daily operation of the services to be geared towards the achievement of the service's vision and mission
- establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities for delegates or subcommittee members, individually and as a collective, management and staff, and clearly articulate the relationship between the Board, staff and users of the services

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- developing ethical standards and a code of conduct (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*) which guide actions and decisions in a way that is transparent and consistent with the goals, values and beliefs of the services
- undertaking strategic planning and risk management on a regular basis and having appropriate risk management strategies in place to manage risks faced by the services
- ensuring that the actions of and decisions made by the CFM Board, delegated officer or subcommittee are transparent and will help build confidence amount users and stakeholders
- reviewing the service's budgets and monitoring financial performance and management to ensure the services are solvent at all times, and have good financial strength
- approving annual financial statements and providing required reports to government
- setting and maintaining appropriate delegations and internal controls
- appointment all staff and monitoring their performance
- focusing on the strategic directions of the organisation and avoiding involvement in day-to-day operational decisions, particularly where the authority is delegated to staff within the services.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited board member, delegated officers or subcommittee members who gain access to confidential, commercially-sensitive and other information of a similar nature, whether is the course of their work or otherwise, shall not disclose that information to anyone unless the disclosure of such information is required by law (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited board member, delegated officers or subcommittee members shall respect the confidentiality of those documents and deliberations at Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited, delegate or subcommittee meetings, and shall not:

- disclose to anyone the confidential information acquired by virtue of their position on the CFM Board, delegated officer or subcommittee
- use any information so acquired for their personal or financial benefit, or for the benefit of any other person
- permit any unauthorised person to inspect, or have access to, any confidential documents or other information

This obligation, placed on Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited board member, delegated officers or subcommittee members, shall continue even after the individual has completed their term and is no longer on the Board of Management, a delegated officer or subcommittee member.

The obligation to maintain confidentiality also applies to any person who is invited to any meetings of the Board of Management or subcommittee as an observer or in any other capacity.

## ETHICAL PRACTICE

The following principles will provide the ethical framework to guide the delivery of services at Uniting Early Learning:

- treating colleagues, parents, children, suppliers, public and other stakeholders respectfully and professionally at all times
- dealing courteously with those who hold differing opinions
- respecting cultural differences and diversity within the services, and making every effort to encourage and include all children and families in the community
- having an open and transparent relationship with government, supporters and other funders
- operating with honesty and integrity in all work
- being open and transparent in making decisions and undertaking activities, and if that is not possible, explaining why
- working to the standards set under the *National Quality Framework* and all applicable legislation as a minimum, and striving to continually improve the quality of the services delivered to the community

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- disclosing conflicts of interest as soon as they arise and effectively managing them (refer to Attachment 2 – Sample *Conflict of Interest disclosure statement*)
- recognising the support and operational contributions of others in an appropriate manager
- assessing and minimising the adverse impacts of decisions and activities on the natural environment.

## MANAGING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Conflicts of interest, whether actual, potential or perceived (refer to *Definitions*), must be declared by all Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited members, delegated officers or subcommittee members, and managed effectively to ensure integrity and transparency (refer Attachment 2 – Sample *Conflict of Interest disclosure statement*).

Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited board member, delegated officer or subcommittee member has a continuing responsibility to scrutinise their transactions, external business interests and relationships for potential conflicts and to make such disclosures in a timely manner as they arise.

The following process will be followed to manage any conflicts of interest:

- whenever there is a conflict of interest, as defined in this policy, the member concerned must notify the Chair of such conflict, as soon as possible after identifying the conflict
- the member who is conflicted must not be present during the meeting of the Board, delegated officers or subcommittee where the matter is being discussed, or participate in any decisions made on that matter. The member concerned must provide the Board, delegated officer or subcommittee with any and all relevant information they possess on the particular matter
- the minutes of the meeting must reflect that the conflict of interest was disclosed and appropriate processes followed to manage the conflict.

A *Conflict of Interest disclosure statement* (Refer to Attachment 2) must be completed by each Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited Board member, delegated officer or subcommittee member upon his or her appointment and annually thereafter. If the information in this statement changes during the year, the member shall disclose the change to the Chair, and revise the disclosure statement accordingly.

All violations of the requirement to disclose and manage conflicts shall be dealt with in accordance with the By Laws of the Commission for Mission.

## EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Board of Management will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

**Actual conflict of interest:** One where there is a real conflict between a Parent Advisory Committee members' responsibilities and their private interests.

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**Conflict of interest:** An interest that may affect, or may appear reasonably likely to affect, the judgement or conduct of a member (or members) of the Parent Advisory Committee or subcommittee, or may impair their independence or loyalty to the service. A conflict of interest can arise from avoiding personal losses as well as gaining personal advantage, whether financial or otherwise, and may not only involve the member of the Parent Advisory Committee subcommittee, but also their relatives, friends or business associates.

**Ethical practice:** A standard of behaviour that the service deems acceptable in providing their services.

**Governance:** The process by which organisations are directed, controlled and held to account. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship, leadership, directions and control exercised in the organisation (Australian National Audit Office, 1999).

**Interest:** Anything that can have an impact on an individual or a group.

**Perceived conflict of interest:** Arises where a third party could form the view that a Parent Advisory Committee members private interests could improperly influence the performance of their duties on the Parent Advisory Committee, now or in the future.

**Potential conflict of interest:** Arises where a Parent Advisory Committee member has private interests that could conflict with their responsibilities.

**Private interests:** Includes not only a Parent Advisory Committee members' own personal, professional or business interests, but also those of their relatives, friends or business associates.

## AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by Uniting Victoria and Tasmania Limited on: 1/7/2017

## REVIEW DATE: DECEMBER 2017

This policy should be read in conjunction with::

- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

## Attachment 1: Legislation and Sources

### Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)*, as applicable to the service
- *Corporations Act 2001*, as applicable to the service
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*

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- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulation 168(2)(l)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management
  - Standard 7.3: Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

### Sources

- *ELAA Early Childhood Management Manual, Version 2 2013*
- Our Community: [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)
- Justice Connect: <http://www.justiceconnect.org.au/>

