

UCA - Gungahlin Uniting Church

Information Management Policy

Approved by Church Council

Date of Meeting	Chairperson	Secretary
06-06-2022	Bronwyn Asquith Jenelle Martin	Bruce Warren

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to guide and direct the creation and management of information, and to clarify staff responsibilities.

Scope:

Gungahlin Uniting Church's information management policy gives direction and assigns responsibility for creating, capturing and managing information to satisfy business, legal and Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) requirements.

The policy:

- sets out the information management practices, processes and systems that will support efficient and ethical records management
- explains the benefits of good information management
- outlines roles and responsibilities
- demonstrates commitment to meeting business, legislative and regulatory requirements
- contributes to an environment that values the integrity and accessibility of the information to support the efficient and ethical delivery of the church's mission.

The policy applies to Gungahlin Uniting Church staff, Church Council members and leaders of church groups collecting records and covers information in all formats including documents, email, voice messages, memoranda, minutes, audio-visual materials and business system data.

The policy covers all business applications used to create, manage and store information, including the official information management systems, email, websites, social media applications, databases and business information systems.

All business information created and received will be kept into endorsed information systems and must not be maintained in email folders, shared folders, personal drives or external storage media such as social media applications and mobile devices as these lack the necessary functionality to protect this information over time.

This policy covers information created and managed in-house and off-site.

Girls and Boys Brigade records are kept separately and are managed by the individual Brigades.

Background:

Gungahlin Uniting Church is committed to establishing and maintaining information management practices that meet its mission needs, accountability requirements and congregation, community and UCA expectations.

The benefit of complying with this policy will be trusted information that is well-described, stored in known locations and accessible to staff and clients when needed.

Gungahlin Uniting Church will create and keep accurate and reliable information to meet reporting requirements, including legislative requirements and requirements defined by the UCA, in particular those relating to outcomes of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Volume 8, Record keeping and information sharing recommendations); see *Attachment 1*.

Information is a shared resource to which all staff and church officers may have access, except where the nature of the information requires restriction to protect individual staff or client privacy and sensitive material.

Policy

1. **What Records are Collected and Kept:** The range of records collected and kept by Gungahlin Uniting Church are grouped into:
 - a) **Management Records** - track decisions taken and records of meetings and includes meeting minutes and agenda for Church Council, Church committees, Annual General Meeting and all general church meetings such as budget endorsement meetings.
 - b) **Financial Records** - track cash flow, prepare your tax return and informs understanding of overall financial position and include documents such as:
 - receipts and invoices for goods and services bought and sold
 - contracts with suppliers and other contractors
 - bank statements
 - a register of business assets
 - depreciation schedules
 - tax documents including activity statements and annual tax returns
 - insurance payments
 - documents showing how the church is financed e.g. business loans.
 - c) **Legal records** - are documents that relate to the operation of the church and can include business registration documents, leases, contracts with suppliers and other clients and insurance policies.

- d) **Employee records** – ensures employees are paid correctly and the church meets tax and super responsibilities. It includes:
 - staff rosters, leave tracking, attendance and pay records
 - financial records, such as bank accounts, tax file numbers and superannuation details
 - contact details, such as addresses, phone numbers and emergency contacts
 - work performance and history, including any performance issues or workplace injuries.

- e) **Volunteer records** – captures all records relevant to Gungahlin Uniting Church's volunteers. It includes Volunteer agreement forms and a register of volunteers with working with vulnerable people card.

- f) **Property records** – records relating to property management. Documents relating to property expenses and income will be kept in Financial Records. It includes periodic property checks such as fire safety, property maintenance schedules, facility bookings and contact details, such as addresses, phone numbers and emergency contacts for alarm responses.

- g) **Policy and procedures** - outline management of the day-to-day operation of the church and includes workplace health and safety plans, sexual harassment policies and operation manuals.

- h) **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse** – to comply with Volume 8.4 Principle 2 full and accurate records will:
 - be created about all incidents, responses and decisions affecting child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse
 - identify incidents of grooming, inappropriate behaviour (including breaches of institutional codes of conduct) or child sexual abuse and all responses to such incidents.
 - be clear, objective and thorough and created at, or as close as possible to, the time the incidents occurred, and clearly show the author (whether individual or institutional) and the date created.

2. **How long are records kept:** records and documents are kept for different amounts of times depending on the government department or organisation that needs the information.
- The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) requires employee records to be kept for seven years.
 - The Australian Taxation Office Requires records to be kept for five years after the records are created. For example, a document used in the 2016 financial year

must be kept until the end of the 2021 financial year. Records pertaining to Capital Gains Tax may need to be kept longer.

- Church management records will be kept for seven years.
- Records kept in accordance with recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse need to be kept for 45 years.

- 3. Methods of Keeping Records:** The preferred method of keeping records at Gungahlin Uniting Church is electronic. Electronic records will be a true and clear copy of the original.
- 4. Retention or destruction:** Church information is destroyed or archived when it reaches the end of its required retention period.
 - Attachment 2 outlines Historical Records Preservation Policy & Administrative Retention & Disposal Schedule
 - For other records such as incident reports, accident reports, Workcover and personal liability claims and all personnel records consult Presbytery. These documents are not kept as part of historical records but may need to be permanently retained in secure storage.
 - Some information can be destroyed in the normal course of business. This is information that is of a short-term, facilitative or transitory value, which is destroyed as a 'normal administrative practice'. Examples of such information include rough working notes, drafts not needed for future use, or copies of information held for reference.
- 5. Roles and responsibilities:** All staff, Church Council members, Church committee members or leaders of church groups are responsible for the creation and management of information as defined by this policy.
- 6. Security Classification:** Information is a shared resource to which all staff and church officers may have access, except where the nature of the information requires restriction to protect individual staff or client privacy and sensitive material.
- 7. Communication and training:** The policy will be communicated to staff, Church Council members, Church committee members or leaders of church groups, and that training will be provided on aspects of the policy, in particular proper use of the directory tree.
- 8. Monitoring and review:** This policy will be updated as needed if there are any changes in the business or regulatory environment. It is scheduled for a comprehensive review by 2022. Church Council will initiate this review and the information governance committee will conduct it.

Attachments:

Attachment #	Title
1	Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: Volume 8, Recordkeeping and information sharing recommendations
2	Historical Records Preservation Policy & Administrative Retention & Disposal Schedule

Version Control:

Version #	Date	Author(s)
1	09.11.2019	Matt Grudnoff & Chris Dodd
2	06.06.2022	Approved by Church Council

Attachment 1: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: Volume 8, Record keeping and information sharing recommendations

8.1 To allow for delayed disclosure of abuse by victims and take account of limitation periods for civil actions for child sexual abuse, institutions that engage in child-related work should retain, for at least 45 years, records relating to child sexual abuse that has occurred or is alleged to have occurred.

8.2 The National Archives of Australia and state and territory public records authorities should ensure that records disposal schedules require that records relating to child sexual abuse that has occurred or is alleged to have occurred be retained for at least 45 years.

8.3 The National Archives of Australia and state and territory public records authorities should provide guidance to government and non-government institutions on identifying records which, it is reasonable to expect, may become relevant to an actual or alleged incident of child sexual abuse; and on the retention and disposal of such records. Records and record keeping principles.

8.4 All institutions that engage in child-related work should implement the following principles for records and record keeping, to a level that responds to the risk of child sexual abuse occurring within the institution.

- **Principle 1:** Creating and keeping full and accurate records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, is in the best interests of children and should be an integral part of institutional leadership, governance and culture. Institutions that care for or provide services to children must keep the best interests of the child uppermost in all aspects of their conduct, including record keeping. It is in the best interest of children that institutions foster a culture in which the creation and management of accurate records are integral parts of the institution's operations and governance.
- **Principle 2:** Full and accurate records should be created about all incidents, responses and decisions affecting child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse. Institutions should ensure that records are created to document any identified incidents of grooming, inappropriate behaviour (including breaches of institutional codes of conduct) or child sexual abuse and all responses to such incidents. Records created by institutions should be clear, objective and thorough. They should be created at, or as close as possible to, the time the incidents occurred, and clearly show the author (whether individual or institutional) and the date created.
- **Principle 3:** Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, should be maintained appropriately. Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, should be maintained in an indexed, logical and secure manner. Associated records should be collocated or cross-referenced to ensure that people using those records are aware of all relevant information.
- **Principle 4:** Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, should only be disposed of in accordance with law or policy. Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, must only be destroyed in accordance with records disposal schedules or published institutional policies. Records relevant to child sexual abuse should be subject to minimum retention periods that allow for delayed disclosure of abuse by victims, and take account of limitation periods for civil actions for child sexual abuse.
- **Principle 5:** Individuals' existing rights to access, amend or annotate records about themselves should be recognised to the fullest extent. Individuals whose childhoods are documented in institutional records should have a right to access records made about them. Full access should be given unless contrary to law. Specific, not generic, explanations should be provided in any case where a record, or part of a record, is withheld or redacted. Individuals should be made aware of, and assisted to assert, their existing rights to request that records containing their personal information be amended or annotated, and to seek review or appeal of decisions refusing access, amendment or annotation.

**Attachment 2: Historical Records Preservation Policy &
Administrative Retention & Disposal Schedule**

Record Title	Action Required	Significant Examples
All Birth, Baptism, Death and Marriage Registers	Records to be sent to Synod Archives	
Minutes	Records to be sent to Synod Archives - Signed, Dated, Original Records to be sent two years after the last action including any attachments, significant correspondence and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church Council Minutes • Congregational Meeting Minutes • Church Committee Minutes
Photographs - All photographs should be labelled with location, date, names of persons and a description	Records to be sent to Synod Archives when use is finalised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos of new buildings or about to be altered or destroyed • Photos of ministers and special events
Newsletters and other published material - considered to have been published if the material have been supplied to the general public	Records to be sent to Synod Archives annually in date sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly/Monthly newsletters • Annual Newsletters • Annual reports
Reports about special events including audio and videotapes CDs and DVDs	Records to be sent to Synod Archive when use is finalised	Reports on special celebrations held by the congregation
Church Histories and Church Rolls	Records to be sent to Synod Archives	
Architectural Plans and Blueprints, Building Specifications - Fully identified as to location, name and date	Records to be sent to Synod Archives when no longer required by congregation. Any plans or specifications OLDER THAN 15 YEARS can be sent to Synod Archives.	All plans of church buildings, manses, halls, toilet blocks, pathways etc
Financial Records	Retain 7 years in congregational records Destroy as per accounting standards after 7 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General financial records • Tax Documents • Invoices • Supporting correspondence • Audited annual accounts • Budgets