

Spirituality Ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph

Child Safeguarding Policy



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Spirituality Ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph

ACN 144 962 774

Mission Statement

In the spirit of St Mary MacKillop of the Cross, the Spirituality Ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph serves groups and individuals seeking a place that nourishes “spirit”, offering spiritual refreshment, renewal, quiet, beauty, peace, and relaxation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Spirituality Ministry of the Sisters of Saint Joseph (**SM**) is committed to fostering communities and a culture of safeguarding that recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children.
- 1.2 **SM** has a zero tolerance of child abuse. It will be guided by its Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement and broader values and strategic vision.
- 1.3 This policy sets out **SM’s** safeguarding approach and relevant responsibilities in accordance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

2. Scope

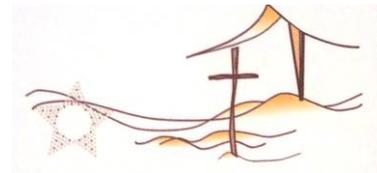
- 2.1 Everyone is responsible for creating and maintaining a child safe culture.
- 2.2 This policy applies to every person in relationship with **SM** including Board Directors of the company, employees of Saint Joseph’s Centre for Reflective Living Baulkham Hills, St Joseph’s Spirituality and Education Centre Kincumber South, Sisters in nominated roles, Clergy in nominated roles, and formal volunteers (Workplace Participants).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 As a registered company and an entity as defined in the NCSS, the Board of the **SM** is responsible for:
 - (a) approving safeguarding policies and procedures;
 - (b) developing strategies to embed a culture of child safety at **SM**;

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- (c) periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies;
- (d) ensuring child safety is a regular agenda item at **SM** meetings;
- (e) creating and maintaining an organisational culture where children's best interests are at the heart of the organisation;
- (f) providing support, as required, to the Centre Managers of the Spirituality Ministry;
- (g) providing verbal and written reports to the Members about **SM's** child safeguarding performance;
- (h) implementing and overseeing the child safeguarding strategy;
- (i) raising any significant matters of concern with the Members and / or Workplace Participants as appropriate;
- (j) ensuring child safeguarding occurs at an operational level;
- (k) complying with requirements of the Congregational Leader as head of the entity under the New South Wales Reportable Conduct Scheme;
- (l) overseeing investigations of child safety complaints and any disciplinary action against Sisters and Workplace Participants as needed and in consultation with the SOSJ Professional Standards Officer and the SOSJ Manager, People and Culture, and
- (m) clearly communicating to all Workplace Participants, the role and responsibility of the **SM** Board.
- (n) **SM** Board to undertake a self-audit on an annual basis and develop an implementation plan as per NCSS 9.1.1.

3.2 All persons listed at 2.2 of this policy, share responsibility for preventing child abuse and creating and child safe culture and are required to:

- (a) comply with this policy and the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct;
- (b) uphold **SM's** values and commitment to child safety, including its zero-tolerance approach;
- (c) respect the human rights of all children;
- (d) comply with **SM's** duty of care to children and workplace health and safety obligations;

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- (e) promote the safety, wellbeing, participation, and empowerment of all children in our care, taking into account children with a disability, First Nations children, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- (f) take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse, including listening and responding to the concerns of children;
- (g) ensure any allegation of abuse is appropriately reported to regulatory authorities and **SM** in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy and Reporting Procedure; this policy is currently being developed. Approval, implementation, and training of the Complaints Handling Policy and Reporting Procedure has been made a priority.
- (h) provide an environment where all individuals associated with **SM** feel encouraged to play an active role in developing a culture of risk minimisation and child safety.

4. Definitions

Child	An individual under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.
Child abuse	Child abuse includes: (a) any act committed against a child or in the presence of a child involving: i. a sexual offence; or ii. the offence of grooming; (b) the infliction of physical violence on a child or in the presence of child; (c) the infliction of serious emotional or psychological harm on a child; or (d) serious neglect of a child.
Child - connected work	Work that is authorised by the SM and is performed by an adult in connection with SM while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
Child Compliance Checks	Compliance check detailing a person's suitability to work with children. Working with Children Check (WWCC) is the required compliance check for working with children in NSW.
Congregational Leader	The Congregational Leader of the Congregation for the time being

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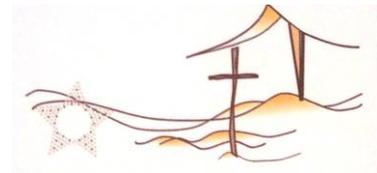


Members	The Members are the Trustees of the Spirituality Ministry (SM)
Leaders and Centre Managers	Sisters in leadership and lay employees in management roles.
Sister	For the purposes of this policy, 'Sister' refers to a woman who has taken public vows dedicating herself to apostolic works, as a member of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.
Spirituality Ministry (SM)	A company, Spirituality Ministry (SM) of the Sisters of St Joseph, ACN 144 962 774, a company limited by guarantee.
Spirituality Ministry Board	Administrators of the Saint Joseph's Centre for Reflective Living Baulkham Hills and Saint Joseph's Spirituality & Education Centre Kincumber South.
SOSJ Professional Standards Officer	Put in place a process for investigations of any incidences and complaints of Child abuse for the SM .
Volunteer	Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain. Formal volunteer positions require recruitment, induction, and training. Persons are recognised by SM as a formal volunteer, following their regular and consistent volunteering service or for a specific volunteering event.
Workplace Participant	Directors of the SM Board, Centre Managers, Sisters in nominated roles, lay employees, Clergy in nominated roles and formal volunteers.

5. Responding and Reporting

- 5.1 All Workplace Participants should be aware of red flags and indicators of abuse. In particular, Workplace Participants should recognise the diverse circumstances and experiences of the children that **SM** interacts with.
- 5.2 **SM** recognises that children with a disability, children from a cultural or linguistically diverse background and First Nations children are particularly vulnerable to abuse.
- 5.3 All complaints and concerns involving both current and historical allegations of child safety should be directed to the Centre Managers. Centre Managers will notify the Chairperson of the **SM** Board and the SOSJ Professional Standards Officer.
- 5.4 **SM** takes all complaints and allegations of child abuse seriously and will address these in accordance with the Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy and

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Reporting Procedure, which is currently being developed. Approval, implementation, and training in relation to the Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy and Reporting Procedure, has been made a priority. All persons listed at 2.2 of this policy are expected to comply with this policy.

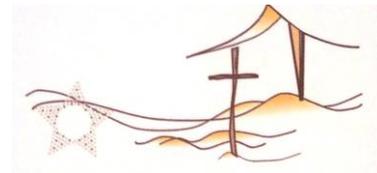
6. Recruitment and Training

- 6.1 Child safeguarding is a critical consideration in any recruitment process. SM is committed to child safeguarding and implementing its zero-tolerance approach.
- 6.2 All recruitment must comply with **SM's** Recruitment and Induction Policy and Procedure. This policy is currently under review to include Child Safeguarding. Approval, implementation, and training in relation to this policy has been made a priority.
- 6.3 **SM** will also ensure that all Workplace Participants undertake regular training on child safety and their obligations, including during induction and refresher training at least every three years.
- 6.4 **SM** ensure child safeguarding is part of the professional supervision processes and annual performance reviews.

7. Risk Management

- 7.1 **SM** recognises the importance of identifying, monitoring, and mitigating risk to children.
- 7.2 **SM** will:
 - (a) consider actual and potential risks relating to children as part of its overall risk management strategy;
 - (b) seek to achieve ongoing risk assessment to identify and mitigate risk in all **SM** environments, taking into account the age and needs of the children, the nature of the activities undertaken and the particular risks they might present;
 - (c) promote understanding by all persons listed at 2.2 of this policy, of **SM's** expectations in relation to behaviour and conduct when interacting with children and the consequences of failing to abide by those expectations;
 - (d) provide ongoing training (at least annually) and support for all Sisters, Managers and Workplace Participants;
 - (e) require appropriate human resources policies to assess potential Workplace Participants to be put in place with a safeguarding focus, as documented in **SM's** Recruitment and Induction Policy and Procedure; this

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policy is currently being reviewed to include Child Safeguarding. Approval, implementation, and training in relation to this policy has been made a priority.

- (f) seek to ensure compliance with **SM's** Risk Management Policy and Framework. The Risk Management Policy and Framework is currently being developed to include Child Safeguarding. Approval and implementation in relation to this policy has been made a priority.

8. Community Engagement

Empowering children

8.1 **SM** recognises the importance of engaging with and empowering children. When appropriate, it will endeavour to put in place age-appropriate strategies to proactively:

- (a) engage with children;
- (b) seek children's views;
- (c) consult with children about decisions that affect them; and
- (d) consult with children about what makes them feel safe and how this can be recognised and implemented by **SM**.

8.2 **SM**, when appropriate, will inform children of their rights, particularly the right to be safe from abuse, safe and respectful relationships and where they can go if they have any concerns. This will be done in an age-appropriate manner.

Community Partnership

8.3 **SM** appreciates the importance of partnering with families, parents, carers and the broader community to create a child safe environment. **SM** will encourage the community to take an active role in child safety by:

- (a) ensuring this policy, its Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement and other relevant child safeguarding information, are publicised on its website and easily accessible;
- (b) promoting open dialogue with families and its community;
- (c) providing families and its community with the contact details of the SOSJ Professional Standards Officer when required;
- (d) reporting on the findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to stakeholders, including safeguarding audit

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reports relating to **SM's** compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards; and

- (e) actively promoting child safety campaigns and child abuse prevention in its community.

9. Information Sharing and Record Keeping

9.1 It is important that all Workplace Participants maintain the confidentiality and privacy of children, adult survivors and respondents at **SM**. **SM** will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and requires all Workplace Participants to comply with its Privacy Policy. This policy is currently being developed. Approval, implementation, and training in relation to the Privacy policy has been made a priority.

9.2 All reports of alleged abuse or harm, or risk thereof, must be recorded in accordance with the Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy and Reporting Procedure, and Safeguarding Information Sharing and Record Keeping Policy. Both policies are currently being developed to include Child Safeguarding. Approval, implementation, and training in relation to these policies have been made a priority.

10. Breach of this Policy

10.1 Any breach of this policy will constitute misconduct and **SM** may take appropriate disciplinary action, including up to (however is not limited to), guidance or specialised help, education or training, counselling and / or suspension, termination of engagement or dismissal from employment, service, or involvement with **SM**.

11. Review

11.1 A review of this policy shall be conducted every three years or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation.

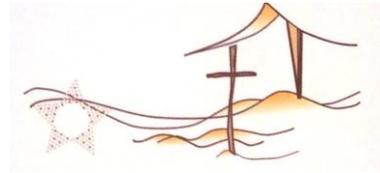
11.2 The Chair of the **SM** Board or her/his delegate is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed and updated as needed.

12. Related Policies, Procedures, Documents, and Legislation

12.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related documents:

- (a) Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement
- (b) Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct
- (c) Children's Guardian Act 2019 NSW
- (d) Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy and Reporting Procedure.

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(e) Safeguarding Information Sharing and Record Keeping Policy.

(This policy is currently being developed. Approval, implementation, and training in relation to this policy has been made a priority).

(f) Recruitment and Induction Policy and Procedure.

(This policy is currently being developed to include Child Safeguarding. Approval, implementation, and training in relation to this policy has been made a priority).

(g) Privacy Policy.

(This policy is currently being developed to include Child Safeguarding. Approval, implementation, and training in relation to this policy has been made a priority).

(h) Risk Management Policy and Framework.

(The Risk Management Policy and Framework is currently being developed to include Child Safeguarding. Approval and implementation in relation to this policy has been made a priority.)

(i) Communications Policy.

(This policy is currently being developed to include Child Safeguarding. Approval, implementation, and training in relation to this policy has been made a priority).

(j) Integrity in the Service of the Church.

(k) Integrity in Ministry.

Policy Name:	Child Safeguarding Policy
Responsible person	Chair of Board
Approval Authority:	Board, Spirituality Ministry
Approval Date:	19 April 2022
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Board approval date: 19 April 2022

Printed name: David Bergman, Chairperson, SM Board

Signature:

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