



## **Safeguarding Commitment Statement Spirituality Ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph**

**April 2022**

The Spirituality Ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph is actively committed to fostering communities and a culture of safeguarding that recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children. We have zero tolerance of child abuse. We believe that all people have the right to be safe and respected. We commit to establishing a safe environment and supportive relationships for all with whom we have contact. This is particularly so for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability or other vulnerabilities.

The Board of the Spirituality Ministry is committed to governing with integrity and continuing to develop a safe culture for all who have contact with our Ministry. This is evidenced by the endorsement and review of our policies and practices, ensuring an awareness of safeguarding principles and an organisational commitment to such through our recruitment, training, complaints management processes and collaboration with the children and families with whom we are in community.

The Spirituality Ministry has policies in place to ensure a strong safeguarding culture for children. The Spirituality Ministry Board and all the staff and volunteers who work in our Spirituality Centres are expected to follow these policies and contribute to the culture of care and protection of all children. We strive for our safeguarding policies to be dynamic documents which influence and dictate our practice. We plan, organise, collaborate, and review all activities involving children, proactively considering potential risks and strive to ensure any identified risks are reduced and eliminated where possible. We regularly undertake internal and external auditing of our safeguarding policies and practices to make sure that they always support a culture and practice that puts the safety of children at the centre of our thinking and action.

We commit to doing all within our power to ensure our staff and volunteers are suitable and safe people to be in contact with children. The Board, Sisters appointed to the Ministry, employees and volunteers adhere to a code of conduct, upholding the rights and safety of children. All persons have a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively, to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of children is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

We actively seek to become and remain informed of the indicators of child abuse and neglect. All allegations of current or historical child abuse, information containing concerns relating to children, or witness of any abuse towards a child is treated seriously, respectfully and with sensitivity. This information is reported to the appropriate authority, in line with our legal obligations, our moral obligations and our policies. This includes contacting the Police immediately where there may be immediate risk of harm to any person, especially a child. We commit to providing a timely and transparent response to these matters, in line with our Complaints Handling Policy, (which is currently being developed). This policy has been prioritised for approval, circulation and for staff and volunteer training.

We listen to the voices of children, their families, and carers as we constantly strive to remain vigilant and make improvements. We encourage open communication whereby families and communities are informed of relevant issues and participate in decisions about the safety of children. It is particularly important to us to look for avenues to empower children to have a say and be listened to. Everyone is encouraged to communicate any area of concern or where our approach may need improvement.

For more information or to raise a concern, please contact the Centre Manager at Saint Joseph's Centre for Reflective Living, Baulkham Hills on email [safeguarding@stjosephscentre.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@stjosephscentre.org.au) or Centre Manager at St Joseph's Spirituality and Education Centre, Kincumber South on email [safeguarding@stjosephsretreat.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@stjosephsretreat.org.au).