



Safeguarding News

October 2021

Greetings all,

Welcome to the Heartbeat Safeguarding Segment! I write this article whilst working from home due to the continuing COVID19 lockdown restrictions. I hope that you are all safe and well in these challenging times.

Since the last edition of Heartbeat, we have created a Safeguarding training video presentation, which has been circulated to all SOSJ Sisters and employees. If you have not yet had the opportunity to view this YouTube video presentation, please contact me and I can share the link with you.

This video focuses on the Congregational Child Safeguarding Policy and the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct. You are encouraged to become familiar with these documents, which can be found on SOSJ's public website, the Josephite Members only site and the staff SPIRIT intranet.

We are all required to acknowledge and sign our commitment to the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct. Sisters shall return their signed commitment to their Regional Leader, and employees are to return their signed commitment to hr@sosj.org.au. We greatly appreciate the positive response to both the Safeguarding YouTube video presentation, and the willing enthusiasm with which everyone has been returning their signed Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct. It is so encouraging and exciting to be part of a culture which is committed to the safety of children. Thank-you to all!

Review of SOSJ Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement

You may recall that we are scheduled to review our Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement by the end of this year, and I would welcome your reflections and contributions. Our next scheduled review shall be in 2024, so I encourage you to participate in this review.

When considering our Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement, please consider the ten National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS), as the Commitment Statement should not only reflect SOSJ's values and ethics, but it should also align with the NCSS.



The NCSS are as follows:

- NCSS 1: Committed Leadership, governance, and culture;
- NCSS 2: Children are safe, informed and participate;
- NCSS 3: Partnering with families, carers, and communities;
- NCSS 4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected;
- NCSS 5: Robust Human Resource Management;
- NCSS 6: Effective complaints management;
- NCSS 7: Ongoing education and training;
- NCSS 8: Safe physical and online environments;
- NCSS 9: Continuous Improvement;
- NCSS 10: Policies and procedures support child safety.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (previously Catholic Professional Standards Ltd), provides some suggested inclusions to a Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement, such as:

- Children should be valued, their rights upheld, and their safety prioritised;
- A zero-tolerance approach to child abuse should be stated;
- Explain how the entity is committed to child safeguarding;
- Raises awareness about obligations to safeguard children;
- Welcomes feedback.

I look forward to hearing from you with any suggested amendments, inclusions, or comments, in relation to our Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement.

Anniversary of National Apology

Friday 22 October 2021 marks the third anniversary of the National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. The Prime Minister of Australia, The Hon Scott Morrison MP, delivered the apology at Parliament House Canberra, on 22 October 2018. You can click [here](#) to read the national apology and how it was developed.

You may have noticed, that SOSJ has made a similar apology on our public website. This is an important step and is necessary to aid in the healing process.

Contained below, is the excerpt from SOSJ's public website, under the 'Safeguarding and Professional Standards' pod:

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Framework

The Sisters of Saint Joseph offer our heartfelt apology for the pain, suffering and trauma experienced by victims and survivors of childhood abuse. We apologise for the profound and ongoing impact of this abuse. We recognise the families and friends, who have faithfully supported their loved ones through these experiences.

We are committed to ensuring that everyone who represents the Sisters of Saint Joseph, is responsible for creating a safe environment for all with whom we minister, and especially for children and adults at risk. We have zero tolerance for abuse and believe that everyone has the right to be safe and treated with respect.

As always, I invite you to contact me via phone, email, or in person should you have any safeguarding questions or matters you would like to discuss.

I hope that you are all able to remain well and protected from this virus.

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