



Safeguarding News

August 2023

Greetings all,

Welcome to your Safeguarding *HeartBeat* segment.

The audit is coming!

I recognise that this declaration perhaps does not stir as much excitement and joy in your hearts and minds as I hoped it would! However, there are many benefits of an independent audit occurring. One such positive outcome of the audit is the public display of the Congregation's commitment to the safety of children.

In May earlier this year, Pope Francis asked the world to join him in prayer stating:

“Asking for forgiveness is necessary (for abuse committed by members and representatives of the Church) but it is not enough... victim's pain and psychological trauma can only heal if they find answers – if there are concrete actions to repair the horrors they have suffered and to prevent them from happening again.”

It is important and necessary to do all we can to work towards repairing the community's confidence that there are organisations where child safety is at the core of the mission. Publicly displaying the results of an independent audit has greater value than simply displaying the results of the annual self-assessment we do.

You may be invited to be interviewed by the auditors and although this may not be as exciting as being invited out to watch the Matildas play, there are ways in which you can prepare yourself for this invitation.

Here are a few suggestions of how you can best prepare yourself:

- Be aware of the Congregation's commitment to the safety of all people.
 - A great place to start is to re-visit the Sisters of Saint Joseph Adult and Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement. The Commitment Statement is on public display throughout our buildings, reception or public visiting areas, Chapels, and has also been uploaded to the SPIRIT intranet and the SOSJ public website, under the Safeguarding pod.

Another way to prepare for the audit is to be familiar with how to find safeguarding information. Here are a few tips:



- The Safeguarding pod has a wealth of information contained within it. Here you'll find:
 - aAll of our safeguarding policies (including the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct which we have all signed)
 - Information about how to make a report if you were concerned about the safety of a child
 - Support services resources and contact numbers
 - Reference documents (such as the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse)
 - Our safeguarding newsletters which often contains links to other resources, videos, webinars etc.
- Our OneCAS meetings regularly have safeguarding as an agenda item. The minutes of these meetings can also be located on SPIRIT.
- Contact your friendly Safeguarding Co-ordinator! I am available for you to ask questions, come and see me, pick up the phone or drop me a line via email.

It is important to know that you are NOT expected to remember everything about safeguarding, or the details of how to make a report of alleged child abuse as contained within the SOSJ Complaints Handling and Reporting Procedures. Rather, you just need to know that these details exist and are available to you and where you would go to source such.

For those who are contacted and invited to participate in an audit interview, we shall be here to support, prepare, and assist you as much as possible prior to the interview occurring. I will reach out individually to those of you who are involved in this process.

I invite you to contact me should you have any safeguarding questions or matters you would like to discuss. I can be contacted by phone, email, or the old-fashioned way – in person!

Blessings,

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