



Sisters of Saint Joseph
of the Sacred Heart

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Adult and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 5, 6, 8 & 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



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Mission Statement

The Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart continue God’s mission by immersing themselves in the midst of life to empower others and bring hope.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart (**SOSJ**) are actively committed to fostering a culture of safeguarding that recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all people.
- 1.2 SOSJ respects and upholds the rights of all First Nations, Māori, Pasifika, and Native Peruvian people in the lands on which we minister, work, and reside.
- 1.3 Members of the Congregation who are in lands other than Australia, may also be required to abide by the local safeguarding code of conduct.
- 1.4 SOSJ has a zero tolerance for abuse. SOSJ will be guided by its Adult and Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement and broader values and strategic vision.
- 1.5 SOSJ commits to establishing a safe environment and supportive relationships for all with whom we have contact. This Safeguarding Code of Conduct (**Code**) is one strategy used to achieve our following objectives:
 - (a) The safety of all people during all engagement and / or interaction with SOSJ;
 - (b) The recruitment of suitable Workplace Participants for direct contact with adults at risk and children; and
 - (c) Clear expectations for all people associated with or representing SOSJ in their physical and online interactions with adults at risk and children.
- 1.6 In committing to safe relationships, there is responsibility to:
 - (a) Acknowledge our own vulnerability and power in any relationship;
 - (b) Acknowledge that power imbalances can occur in ministries and services;
 - (c) Promote the autonomy and voice of others;
 - (d) Clarify the nature of personal and professional relationships;
 - (e) Understand and maintain physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological boundaries;

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- (f) Report boundary violations to the relevant safeguarding authority; and
- (g) Only act within and not beyond an area of expertise.

1.7 This Code should be read in conjunction with SOSJ’s Adult and Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement and Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy. Terms used in this Code are defined in the Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy.

2. Scope

2.1 Everyone is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe culture and has a responsibility to think and act in the best interests of adults who may be at risk and children.

2.2 This Code of Conduct applies to every person in relationship with SOSJ including Congregational Leadership, Sisters in nominated roles, lay employees, clergy in nominated roles, (some) contractors and formal volunteers (**Workplace Participants**), Sisters, Josephite Affiliates, the Stewardship Commission Members, and Safeguarding Committee Members.

2.3 The Regional Leader may grant an exemption from signing this Code of Conduct, to Sisters who are incapacitated or infirmed.

3. Adult and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

3.1 As part of SOSJ’s commitment to safeguarding, we believe that all persons associated with SOSJ are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all with whom we engage.

3.2 We particularly recognise people who identify as First Nations Peoples, people with particular vulnerabilities, for example, adults at risk and children from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who cannot live with their birth family, people who are homeless, people with a disability, people of diverse sexuality, people suffering from an illness, and people who are elderly.

3.3 As such, this Code sets out the behaviour which SOSJ expects from all persons listed at 2.2 of this policy. All are expected to sign it and adhere to the following within the context of their representation and relationship with SOSJ: -

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All persons listed at 2.2 of this policy, during the course of their role / ministry related to and/or representing SOSJ, must:

- a) Adhere to all SOSJ’s safeguarding policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- b) Behave in a manner consistent with the Gospel and Josephite values.
- c) Behave respectfully, justly, honestly and with integrity towards adults at risk, children, their carers’ and / or families, regardless of ethnicity, language, religion, disability, or diverse sexuality.
- d) Be compassionate, hospitable, inclusive and respect the individuality of each person.
- e) Be a positive role model, acknowledging their own vulnerability and power when interacting with adults at risk and children.
- f) Be responsible with alcohol at any SOSJ organised event and ensure there is a nominated adult who is not consuming alcohol, who shall be responsible for adults at risk and/or children, in the event of an emergency.
- g) Comply with their legal obligations in relation to the safety of adults at risk and/or children.
- h) Comply with any direction provided to them as a result of an allegation and / or investigation and cooperate with any internal or external investigation.
- i) Respond to any disclosures, concerns or complaints of harm or abuse, promptly and in accordance with national and state or territory legislation and SOSJ’s Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy and Reporting Procedure.
- j) Immediately speak up and advise their supervisor, Safeguarding Co-ordinator, and mandatory State or Territory reporting agency, if they observe any concerns of exploitation, abuse, harassment, or breach of this Code or any SOSJ safeguarding policy or procedure or legal obligation.
- k) Inform their supervisor, and/or the Manager, People & Culture, and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinator, if they are (or have previously been) the subject of a Police or Statutory Child Protection agency investigation, including in relation to the alleged abuse or sexual misconduct of a child.
- l) Ensure they have a valid state-based child compliance check, vulnerable person and NDIS check as needed and notify the Manager, People & Culture, and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinator immediately if this has been or is likely to be suspended, banned or revoked.
- m) Create a supportive, safe, and caring environment which promotes and empowers adults at risk, children, their carers’ and / or families’ participation in decisions which affect them, and

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is inclusive of all adults at risk, children, their carers' and / or families, regardless of ethnicity, language, religion, disability, or diverse sexuality.

- n) Seek to increase their cultural awareness especially when working with people who identify as First Nations Peoples, or who are from a different country of origin.
- o) Use respectful age and developmentally appropriate language when their work or ministry involves engaging with adults at risk and/or children.
- p) Listen respectfully to all people.
- q) Identify themselves by name, position, and role when their work or ministry involves engaging with adults at risk and/or children.
- r) Recognise and accept the existence of power imbalances when working or ministering one-to-one, especially when providing counselling, spiritual direction, pastoral care, and home visiting.
- s) Maintain personal and professional physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological boundaries in their interactions with all people, especially adults at risk and/or children.
- t) Make every effort to ensure that they are not alone with a child. If they are alone with a child, ensure that they have the child's parent or guardian's consent to do so, and the interaction is open to observation.
- u) Behave in a respectful manner which is consistent with the Code if conducting one-to-one contact with an adult at risk, with the purpose of the interaction being clear, open to explanation, and a record of such retained.
- v) Obtain informed consent from the child and the parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child or obtaining their story, when using the photograph or film for SOSJ purposes. An explanation of how the photograph, film or story will be used will be provided.
- w) Protect the privacy of adults at risk and children by only sharing confidential information as absolutely required in accordance with their role at SOSJ (or in accordance with legal obligations).
- x) Plan, organise and review all activities with adults at risk and/or children, be committed to identifying and mitigating risk to safety, and comply with SOSJ's Risk Management Policy and Framework.

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All persons listed at 2.2 of this policy during the course of their role / ministry related to and/or representing SOSJ, must not:

- a) Behave or act in a manner which may be physically, sexually, emotionally, or psychologically harmful towards any person, or constitute abuse.
- b) Use language towards any person which is abusive, harassing, sexual, shameful, demeaning, culturally inappropriate, discriminating, racist or sexist, or intended to threaten or be harmful.
- c) Use inappropriate language in the presence of adults at risk or children, or show, or provide any person access to inappropriate and / or pornographic images or material.
- d) Engage in bullying or harassing behaviour towards any person.
- e) Exploit, abuse, corrupt, groom or manipulate any person.
- f) Behave in a manner with an adult at risk or child, which may be considered to be a boundary violation.
- g) Discriminate against any person on any basis including (however not limited to) that of disability, culture, religion, ethnicity, or sexual diversity.
- h) Consciously expose an adult at risk or child to person/s whom they know to be unsafe, or situations which they assess to be unsafe and have not implemented safeguarding measures to reduce the identified risk.
- i) Engage in unnecessary physical contact with an adult at risk or child / young person or utilise any form of physical discipline.
- j) Visit a child's home without their parent or guardian being home.
- k) Invite children into their own home or accommodation without the child's parent and / or guardian unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- l) Initiate physical touch with an adult at risk or child unless it is a legitimate occupational requirement.
- m) Communicate with children via email, text messages, phone calls, social networking, gaming, or instant messaging sites, unless with the consent and knowledge of their parent or guardian, and for the purpose of issues directly associated with their representation of SOSJ and in adherence with the SOSJ's Communications Policy.
- n) Become 'friends' or 'follow' an adult at risk or child on social media platforms unless they have a relationship that is external to SOSJ.

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- o) Transport children alone without parental approval, unless in the event of an emergency. Wherever possible, Workplace Participants shall obtain written parental approval prior to transporting children.
- p) Give personal gifts or favour adults at risk or children or develop a ‘special relationship’ with an adult at risk or child, and/or their parent or carer, which could be seen as favouritism.
- q) Initiate ‘secrets’ with an adult at risk or child.
- r) Share a tent or bed with an adult at risk or child.
- s) Sleep in a room with an adult at risk or child without anyone else present.
- t) Supply alcohol or illicit drug/s to an adult at risk or child.
- u) Be negatively affected by the influence of alcohol or drug/s, or over the legal alcohol limit, when in the presence of an adult at risk or child.
- v) Take photos of children visiting SOSJ ministry and / or pilgrimage and / or historical sites unless asked to take a group photo by an accompanying teacher / carer using the teacher / carers / child’s phone or camera.

4. Consequences for breaching the Adult and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

- 4.1 A breach of this Code will constitute misconduct and SOSJ may take appropriate disciplinary action which may include (however is not limited to), guidance or specialised help, education or training, transfer to other duties, counselling, and / or suspension, termination or dismissal from employment, service, or involvement with SOSJ.
- 4.2 Suspected breaches of this Code which constitute abuse or harm, must be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator via email: to [childsafeguarding@sosj.org.au], via telephone: (+61) 0488 041 015 or in person at: 9 Mount Street North Sydney NSW.
- 4.3 Any person who in good faith, raises a complaint or discloses an allegation of abuse will not be disadvantaged or prejudiced and will be protected from victimisation.
- 4.4 Allegations that a person listed at 2.2 of this policy has breached this Code, will be dealt with in accordance with the Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy and Reporting Procedure. Reports may also be made to external regulatory authorities or the police.
- 4.5 SOSJ has full discretion to put in place safety management plans or take disciplinary action where it forms a reasonable belief that doing so is necessary for it to ensure the health and safety of other people.

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5. Record keeping

- 5.1 The Adult and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct is to be acknowledged, read, and signed by all persons listed at 2.2 of this policy.
- 5.2 The Manager, People & Culture, shall be responsible for ensuring SOSJ lay employees and (some) contractors, have signed the Safeguarding Code of Conduct upon commencement and this is recorded on relevant human resource records.
- 5.3 The Regional Leader or her delegate, shall be responsible for completing the register in relation to Sisters and Affiliates in the Regions and forwarding any changes, updates, additions, or amendments to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator via email: to [childsafeguarding@sosj.org.au]. These records shall be retained for fifty (50) years and then destroyed, as aligned with the Safeguarding Information Sharing and Record Keeping Policy. Information will be recorded on the Congregational Members Database.
- 5.4 The Leader or Manager or Director of each SOSJ ministry shall be responsible for completing the register in relation to all volunteers, Clergy and / or other people who are associated with or representing SOSJ and forwarding any changes, updates, additions, and amendments to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator via email: to [childsafeguarding@sosj.org.au]. These records shall be retained for fifty (50) years and then destroyed, as aligned with the Safeguarding Information Sharing and Record Keeping Policy.
- 5.5 All persons listed at 2.2 of this policy, shall be required to renew their signature to the Code every three years and / or when the policy document is revised and renewed, and / or if their position or role description changes with SOSJ.

6. Review

- 6.1 This Code will be reviewed every three (3) years or as needed.
- 6.2 The Congregational Leader or her delegate is responsible for ensuring the review and approval of this Code.

7. Related policies, procedures, documents, and legislation

- 7.1 This Code should be read in conjunction with the following related documents:
 - (a) Adult and Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement
 - (b) Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy
 - (c) Risk Management Policy and Framework
 - (d) Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy and Reporting Procedure
 - (e) Safeguarding Information Sharing and Record Keeping Policy

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- (f) Recruitment and Induction Policy and Procedure
- (g) Compliance Check Policy
- (h) Managing Underperformance and Disciplinary Policy
- (i) Social Media Policy
- (j) Our Common Mission, Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd, 2022
- (k) Universal Guidelines Framework, Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, 2024
- (l) Integrity in the Service of the Church 2013
- (m) Integrity in Ministry 2010

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Approval Authority:	Congregational Leadership Team
Approval Date:	2024
Review Date:	2027

CLT approval date: 19.11.2024

Signature: *M M Cavanagh*

Please tick I have read, acknowledge, and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct within the context of my representation and relationship with SOSJ

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Relationship with SOSJ: _____

Date: _____

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