



Sisters of Saint Joseph  
*of the Sacred Heart*

# Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart

## Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



# Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy

## Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart

### 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**) is committed to fostering communities and 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, are required to abide by the local Church and civil law requirements.
- 1.4 SOSJ has a zero tolerance for abuse. It will be guided by its Adult and Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement and broader values and strategic vision.
- 1.5 This policy sets out SOSJ’s safeguarding approach and relevant responsibilities in accordance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) Edition 2, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, the Universal Guidelines Framework (Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors) and Our Common Mission (Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd).
- 1.6 This policy aligns with the ten NCSS.

### 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 policy 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**). This policy also

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



applies to Sisters, Josephite Affiliates, persons in formation, members of the Safeguarding Committee and Stewardship Commission members.

2.3 It applies to all aspects of Congregational activities within SOSJ’s lands, buildings, pilgrimages and SOSJ’s ministries.

**3. Roles and responsibilities**

3.1 As the Church Authority, the Congregational Leader is responsible for and may delegate to the Congregational Leadership Team:

- (a) approving safeguarding policies and procedures;
- (b) developing strategies to embed a culture of safety at SOSJ;
- (c) periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies;
- (d) ensuring adult at risk and child safety is a regular agenda item at Congregation Leadership meetings;
- (e) creating and maintaining an organisational culture where adults at risk and children’s best interests are at the heart of the organisation;
- (f) appointing the Safeguarding Committee and Safeguarding Co-ordinator;
- (g) providing support to the Safeguarding Committee;
- (h) providing verbal and written reports to the Congregation about SOSJ’s safeguarding performance;
- (i) implementing and overseeing the adult at risk and child safeguarding strategy;
- (j) raising any significant matters of concern with the Congregation and / or Workplace Participants as appropriate;
- (k) ensuring adult at risk and child safeguarding occurs at an operational level;
- (l) complying with requirements as head of the entity under relevant state-based Reportable Conduct Schemes;
- (m) overseeing investigations of adult at risk and child safety complaints and any disciplinary action against Sisters and Workplace Participants as needed and in consultation with the Manager, People & Culture; and

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



- (n) clearly communicating to all Sisters and Workplace Participants, the role, responsibility and makeup of the Safeguarding Committee and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- 3.2 The Safeguarding Committee will be made up of members with a range of different professional expertise and will be responsible for:
- (a) advising and supporting the Congregation on all matters relating to safeguarding;
  - (b) advising on a Safeguarding Implementation Plan;
  - (c) advising the Congregational Leader on safeguarding aspects related to adults at risk and children (in consultation with any risk committee); and
  - (d) coordinating annual self-audits at a local level.
- 3.3 The Safeguarding Co-ordinator and / or the Professional Standards Officer will have specialised knowledge and expertise in safeguarding and be responsible for:
- (a) providing advice and counsel to the Congregational Leadership Team on all matters relating to safeguarding;
  - (b) being conversant with relevant legislative requirements and ensuring the entity is compliant;
  - (c) assisting the Safeguarding Committee with identifying adult at risk and child safeguarding risks and putting in place safeguards in accordance with the Risk Management Policy and Framework;
  - (d) managing or having oversight of the entity’s safeguarding complaint handling procedures;
  - (e) responding to child and adult at risk safety complaints and concerns, with support from the Safeguarding Committee;
  - (f) developing SOSJ’s safeguarding policies and procedures in consultation with the Congregation and Safeguarding Committee;
  - (g) co-ordinating and / or facilitating safeguarding training and education to all Sisters and Workplace Participants at SOSJ in accordance with the Recruitment and Induction Policy and Procedure; and
  - (h) being proactive in safeguarding initiatives.

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



- 3.4 All persons listed at 2.2 of this policy, share responsibility for preventing abuse and creating a safe culture and are required to:
- (a) comply with this policy and the Adult and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct, by understanding and maintaining physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological boundaries;
  - (b) commit to positive relationships by acknowledging our own vulnerability and power in any relationship;
  - (c) uphold SOSJ’s value and commitment to the safety of all people, including its zero-tolerance approach;
  - (d) respect the human rights of all people;
  - (e) complying with SOSJ’s duty of care to all people and workplace health and safety obligations;
  - (f) promote the safety, wellbeing, participation, and empowerment of all adults at risk and children, taking into account those with a disability, First Nations peoples and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
  - (g) take all reasonable steps to protect adults at risk and children from abuse, including listening and responding to the concerns of adults at risk and children;
  - (h) ensure any allegation of abuse is appropriately reported to regulatory authorities and SOSJ in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy and Reporting Procedure; and
  - (i) provide an environment where all individuals associated with SOSJ feel encouraged to play an active role in developing a culture of risk minimisation and safety.

**4. Definitions**

<b>Adult Abuse</b>	<p>Means the improper treatment of an adult that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing harm. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. neglect). Adult abuse is commonly divided into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional / psychological abuse</li> <li>• Neglect</li> <li>• Physical abuse</li> <li>• Sexual abuse</li> <li>• Elder abuse</li> </ul>
--------------------	--

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 <small>Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10</small>	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial abuse</li> <li>• Exploitation (i.e. using someone for another's advantage)</li> <li>• Spiritual abuse</li> <li>• Boundary violation</li> </ul>
<b>Adult at Risk</b>	<p>Means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who are elderly</li> <li>• with a disability</li> <li>• who suffer from mental illness</li> <li>• who have diminished capacity</li> <li>• who have cognitive impairment</li> <li>• who have suffered previous abuse</li> <li>• who are experiencing transient risks eg: bereavement, relationship breakdown, domestic or family violence, homelessness, unemployment</li> <li>• who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance</li> </ul> <p>Whilst taking care not to make assumptions or generalisations, recognising that other aspects of a person's identity or life experience may also increase their risk of vulnerability to abuse or harm, such as people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</li> <li>• who are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, or who speak a first language other than English</li> <li>• who are of diverse sexuality</li> <li>• who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse.</li> </ul>
<b>Adult Sexual Abuse</b>	Sexual activity with an adult who is incapacitated by a mental or physical condition (such as dementia) or affected by substances (i.e. Alcohol / drug related), or functioning at a lower cognitive level, which impairs their ability to give informed consent.
<b>Boundary Violation</b>	An action which breaches the physical, emotional, and/or other boundaries of another person.
<b>Child</b>	An individual under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.
<b>Child abuse</b>	Child abuse refers to any behaviour or treatment (usually by an adult, however, may also be from a peer), that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing harm. Such behaviours may

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



	<p>be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. neglect). Child abuse is commonly divided into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional / psychological abuse (including exposure to domestic violence)</li> <li>• Neglect</li> <li>• Physical abuse</li> <li>• Sexual abuse</li> <li>• Exploitation (i.e. using someone for another’s advantage)</li> <li>• Spiritual abuse</li> </ul>
<b>Child - related work</b>	Work that is authorised by the Congregation and is performed by an adult in connection with SOSJ while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
<b>Child Sexual Abuse</b>	Any act that uses the child for sexual gratification, or exposes a child or young person to, or involves them in, sexual activities.
<b>Church Authority</b>	The canonical steward in relation to a particular Catholic entity.
<b>Cognitive Impairment</b>	Difficulty remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions that affect everyday life.
<b>Compliance Checks</b>	Checks required within each state, territory or national, detailing a person’s suitability to work with children and/or adults at risk. Commonly referred to as “Working with Children’s Checks,” “Vulnerable Persons Check” or “NDIS Check.”
<b>Congregation</b>	The Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart is a religious Congregation of pontifical right dedicated to apostolic works (Constitutions of SOSJ, Chapter 1, Article 1, 2009).
<b>Contractor</b>	When referring to ‘contractor’ within a safeguarding policy, SOSJ is referencing a person whose work is engaged long term by the Congregation, on a contract or subcontract basis, to provide services (to children and adults at risk).
<b>Diminished Capacity</b>	<p>Impaired decision-making capacity. There are three elements to making a decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the nature and effect of the decision</li> <li>• Freely and voluntarily deciding and</li> <li>• Communicating the decision in some way.</li> </ul>
<b>Diverse Gender or Sexuality</b>	NCSS Edition 2, defines this term to mean ‘all the diversities of sex characteristics, sexual orientations and gender identities, without the need to specify each of the identities, behaviours, or characteristics that form this plurality’.

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



<b>Domestic Violence</b>	Aggression or violence of any kind (i.e. verbal / physical / sexual / emotional) between persons who reside together. Includes financial control and manipulation.
<b>Elder Abuse</b>	A single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.
<b>Emotional / Psychological Abuse</b>	Behaviours or actions that damage the confidence or self-esteem or emotional development or stability of a person. Includes children witnessing domestic violence.
<b>Financial Abuse</b>	May include: Threatening or coercing regarding finances Taking control of a person's finances against their wishes and without legislated authority to do so. Abusing Powers of Attorney. Stealing
<b>Grooming</b>	Behaviours that manipulate and control an individual (usually a child or vulnerable person), and possibly their family, kin, carers and other support networks, or organisations, in order to make the individual more isolated, dependent, likely to trust and more vulnerable to being abused.
<b>Josephite Affiliate</b>	Women and men Affiliates share in SOSJ charism and participate with SOSJ in spirituality and mission according to their individual Memorandum of Affiliation (SOSJ General Directory 2019).
<b>Leaders and Managers</b>	Sisters in leadership and lay employees in management roles.
<b>Neglect</b>	Failure to provide basic physical / psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment. Includes failing to provide necessities such as food, shelter, clothing or necessary medical treatment and care. Includes lack of age appropriate or required supervision (i.e. adults with dementia).
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	The infliction of physical violence where it is clearly not reasonable corporal punishment. Includes using unreasonable physical force and non-accidental injuries.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	The measures taken to protect the safety, human rights, and well-being of individuals, which allow people to live free from abuse, harm, and neglect. It includes creating and maintaining safe activities and environments.

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027





<b>Sexual Misconduct</b>	Misconduct of a sexual nature that may include a broad range of sexual behaviours considered unwelcome and/or inappropriate on an individual or societal basis of morality.
<b>Sister</b>	For the purposes of this policy, ‘Sister’ refers to a woman who has taken public vows dedicating herself to apostolic works, under the order of Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart.
<b>Spiritual Abuse</b>	Abuse of a person that involves a person’s religious beliefs and faith to perpetrate harm, fear, or control. Spiritual abuse can occur as a secondary experience of abuse when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of spiritual authority and trust within a faith community and can negatively impact a person’s spirituality.
<b>Volunteer</b>	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 SOSJ as a formal volunteer, following their regular and consistent volunteering service or for a specific volunteering event.
<b>Workplace Participant</b>	Congregational Leadership, Sisters in nominated roles, lay employees, clergy in nominated roles, (some) contractors and formal volunteers.
<b>Young Person</b>	A person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years. (NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act No 157.

## 5. Responding and reporting

- 5.1 All Sisters and 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 adults at risk and children that SOSJ interacts with.
- 5.2 SOSJ recognises that adults at risk and children are particularly vulnerable to abuse.
- 5.3 All complaints and concerns involving both current and historical allegations of abuse or safety should be directed to a Safeguarding Co-ordinator at [childsafeguarding@sosj.org.au, or via telephone (+61) 0488 041 015].
- 5.4 SOSJ takes all complaints and allegations of abuse seriously and will address these in accordance with the Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy and Reporting Procedure. All persons listed at 2.2 of this policy are expected to comply with this.

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



**6. Recruitment and training**

- 6.1 Safeguarding is a critical consideration in any recruitment process. SOSJ is committed to safeguarding and implementing its zero-tolerance approach to abuse in all aspects of its advertising, recruitment, and screening for Workplace Participants.
- 6.2 All recruitment must comply with SOSJ’s Recruitment and Induction Policy and Procedure.
- 6.3 SOSJ will also ensure that all Workplace Participants undertake regular training on adult at risk and child safety and their obligations, including during induction and refresher training at least every three years. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will ensure Sisters in active ministry and Josephite Affiliates receive safeguarding training. SOSJ will also provide members of the Safeguarding Committee and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator with ongoing support and professional development relevant to their role. Training will take place in accordance with the Recruitment and Induction Policy and Procedure.
- 6.4 Adult at risk and child safeguarding will also be part of professional supervision processes and annual performance reviews.

**7. Risk management**

- 7.1 SOSJ recognises the importance of identifying, monitoring, and mitigating risk to adults at risk and children.
- 7.2 SOSJ will:
  - (a) consider actual and potential risks relating to adults at risk and children as part of its overall risk management strategy;
  - (b) seek to achieve ongoing risk assessment to identify and mitigate risk in all SOSJ environments, taking into account the age and needs of the person, 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 SOSJ’s expectations in relation to behaviour and conduct when interacting with adults at risk and children and the consequences of failing to abide by those expectations;
  - (d) provide ongoing training (at least annually) and support for Sisters 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 SOSJ’s Recruitment and Induction Policy and Procedure; and

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



- (f) comply with SOSJ’s Risk Management Policy and Framework.

**8. Community engagement**

*Empowering adults at risk and children*

8.1 SOSJ recognises the importance of engaging with and empowering adults at risk and children. When ministering to adults at risk and children, it will endeavour to put in place (age-and/or developmentally appropriate) strategies to proactively and respectfully:

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

8.2 SOSJ will inform adults at risk and 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 and/or developmentally appropriate, respectful manner.

*Community partnership*

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

- (a) ensuring this policy, its Adult and Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement and other relevant 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 Safeguarding Co-ordinator;
- (d) reporting on the findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to stakeholders, including safeguarding audit reports relating to SOSJ’s compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards; and
- (e) actively promoting adult at risk and child safety campaigns and abuse prevention in its community.

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



**9. Information sharing and record keeping**

- 9.1 It is important that all Sisters and Workplace Participants maintain the confidentiality and privacy of adults at risk, children, survivors, and respondents at SOSJ. SOSJ will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and requires all Sisters and Workplace Participants to comply with its Privacy Policy.
- 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.

**10. Breach of this policy**

- 10.1 Any breach of this policy will constitute misconduct and SOSJ 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 SOSJ.

**11. Review**

- 11.1 A review of this policy shall be conducted every three (3) years or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation.
- 11.2 The Congregational Leader 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) Adult and Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement
  - (b) Adult and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct
  - (c) Risk Management Policy and Framework
  - (d) Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy and Reporting Procedure
  - (e) Safeguarding Information Sharing and Record Keeping Policy
  - (f) Recruitment and Induction Policy and Procedure
  - (g) Managing Underperformance and Disciplinary Policy
  - (h) Compliance Check Policy
  - (i) Social Media Policy

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027



- (j) Performance Planning and Review Policy and Procedures
- (k) Our Common Mission (Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd), 2022
- (l) Universal Guidelines Framework (Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors), 2024
- (m) Integrity in the Service of the Church 2013
- (n) Integrity in Ministry 2010
- (o) National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Edition 2, 2022
- (p) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- (q) United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability 2006

Policy Name:	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator
Approval Authority:	Congregational Leadership Team
Approval Date:	2024
Review Date:	2027

CLT approval date: 19.11.2024

Signature:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Policy Name	Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy		
Version	v.2.0 Aligns with NCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Approved by the Congregational Leadership Team	2024
Responsible person	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Scheduled review date	2027