

 <b>SISTERS OF MERCY PARRAMATTA</b>	
<b>Safeguarding Policy</b>	<b>Version: 1.0</b>
<b>Date of Approval</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> September, 2020</b>
<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Sr Marie-Louise Petro</b>
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## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Inspired by its founder, Venerable Catherine McAuley, Sisters of Mercy Parramatta commits to live and work in accordance with the gospel ideals and the values and principles articulated in the *Constitutions of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta* and relevant church protocols. In particular, Sisters of Mercy Parramatta recognizes the inherent dignity and rights of all people and the gospel imperative to protect and nurture those who are most at risk. The purpose of this policy is to create and maintain environments, both real and on-line, that are safe, supportive, caring and nurturing for all children and adults.

### **2.0 SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Congregation members, employees, volunteers and long-term contractors of Sisters of Mercy Parramatta.

### **3.0 POLICY**

By upholding the dignity and rights of all children and adults and by adopting a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, Sisters of Mercy Parramatta commits to safeguarding children and adults from all abuse and neglect and strives to maintain the safety of all with whom it has contact.

More specifically, Sisters of Mercy Parramatta is committed to safeguarding the children in its ministries, online and in those places where personnel work, volunteer or journey with others in its mission.

This policy is supported by a number of related policies and procedures including:

- \* Code of Conduct which is required to be signed by every member of the Congregation, employee, volunteer, and long-term contractor.
- \* Safeguarding Training Overview to outline training responsibilities for all those within the scope of this policy.
- \* Acceptable Use of Electronic Communication Systems and Devices Policy.
- \* Protected Disclosure Policy.

These are listed as Supporting Documents in this Policy.

#### **4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS**

All Sisters of Mercy Parramatta personnel have an obligation to take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of those with whom they come into contact. This safeguarding responsibility is a shared one at all levels of the organisation.

These obligations will arise from the specific role and responsibilities of the person and may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- i. Embedding a culture of safety and respect in Sisters of Mercy Parramatta's leadership, governance, and practice.
- ii. Prioritising the safety and best interests of the children with whom it works. Planning, authorising and reviewing all activities with children, proactively considering potential risks and striving to ensure risks are reduced and eliminated where possible.
- iii. Encouraging everyone to communicate any area of concern and to identify improvement.
- iv. Understanding the nature and risks of abuse and taking deliberate and immediate steps to prevent it. In particular, actively seeking to become and remain informed of the causes and signs of abuse and neglect.
- v. Encouraging the participation of children, families, and communities in providing feedback on and input into decision-making about their safety, including listening to the voices of children and constantly striving to remain vigilant and make improvements.
- vi. Responding to complaints of abuse sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in accordance with lawful obligations and the policies and procedures of Sisters of Mercy Parramatta. This includes contacting police immediately where there may be an immediate risk of harm to any person, especially to any child.
- vii. Undertaking regular internal and external auditing of safeguarding policies and practices to ensure an ongoing culture of safety and respect for all.
- viii. Providing adequate supervision.

- ix. Following procedures relating to children's safety, welfare, and well-being (for example, reporting procedures).
- x. Demonstrating personal behaviours that promote the safety, welfare and well-being of children as outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- xi. Providing medical assistance (if competent to do so) or seeking assistance from a medically trained person to aid a child who is injured or becomes sick.
- xii. Paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who are unable to live at home and children of diverse sexuality.
- xiii. Protecting a child from known hazards that pose a risk of harm and which can be reasonably predicted.
- xiv. Taking appropriate action where a child's safety, welfare or well-being is at risk.

Duty of care to children applies during all activities and functions conducted or arranged by Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, including engagement in online environments, where children are in its care.

Actual harm to a child, or potential to cause significant harm to a child, caused by:

- (a) a single serious failure to exercise appropriate duty of care; or
- (b) repeated less serious failures to exercise appropriate duty of care,

may constitute misconduct, neglect or negligence and/or a breach of this policy. Consequences for breaching this policy may include remedial education, counselling, warnings, suspension, restrictions, termination and/or official reports to police and other statutory agencies as required. Congregation members may also be subject to restriction of ministry as determined by the Congregation Leader.

## **5.0 REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years and whenever there are significant changes in the legislation.

## 6.0 DEFINITIONS

“**Child**” means any person under the age of 18 years

“**Child abuse**” means any intentional harm or mistreatment of a child under 18 years of age. The most common categories include physical abuse, psychological/emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, grooming and exposure to family violence.

“**Congregation member**” means a professed member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta.

## 7.0 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Acceptable Use of Electronic Communication Systems and Devices Policy.

Code of Conduct

Protected Disclosure Policy

Safeguarding Training Overview

<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/training-and-resources/child-safe-resources/legislation>