



DAUGHTERS OF  
OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART  
AUSTRALIAN PROVINCE

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**2023**

## Purpose

The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to:

- provide an informative safeguarding model which all Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart including Sisters, employees, volunteers and contractors can utilise to foster a culture of safety for children, young people and adults at risk.
- express an ongoing commitment and proactive approach to safeguarding and empowering all people wherever we minister.
- ensure all with whom Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart collaborate are aware of the safeguarding roles and responsibilities.
- signal a Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart provincial zero-tolerance approach to abuse in all its forms and embed practices that protect children, young people and adults at risk from harm.

## Principles and Values

- The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart recognise that integrity in ministry is at the heart of the call to seek God. We are committed to creating and maintaining co-operative and harmonious relationships in Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart communities, with partners in ministry and where Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are invited to participate in God's mission. The Province and all Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are committed to providing safe environments for children, young people and adults at risk and to restorative justice.
- The Province and all Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart consider the commitment to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk to be at the forefront of their work and decision making. The highest value is placed on taking a person-centred approach to safeguarding: putting the wellbeing and safety of children and adults at risk above any perceived reputational risk to the Province. The Province and all Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are always mindful of the moral responsibility to maintain the high standards expected by those we serve.
- This policy is underpinned by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Code of Conduct and is informed by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart commitment to the safeguarding of all, particularly children, young people and adults at risk.

## Scope

- This Safeguarding Policy applies to all Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, employees, volunteers and contractors engaged across the Province.

## Policy Review

- This Policy is reviewed every three years and will be checked against any associated relevant legislation

## Public Safeguarding Statement

Jesus, in his manner of being and acting, lived this ideal: He upheld and enhanced the inherent dignity of every person, regardless of age, race, status or religion. He bore witness to the love, kindness and compassion of the Heart of God for each person and was a healing presence for those who came to him.

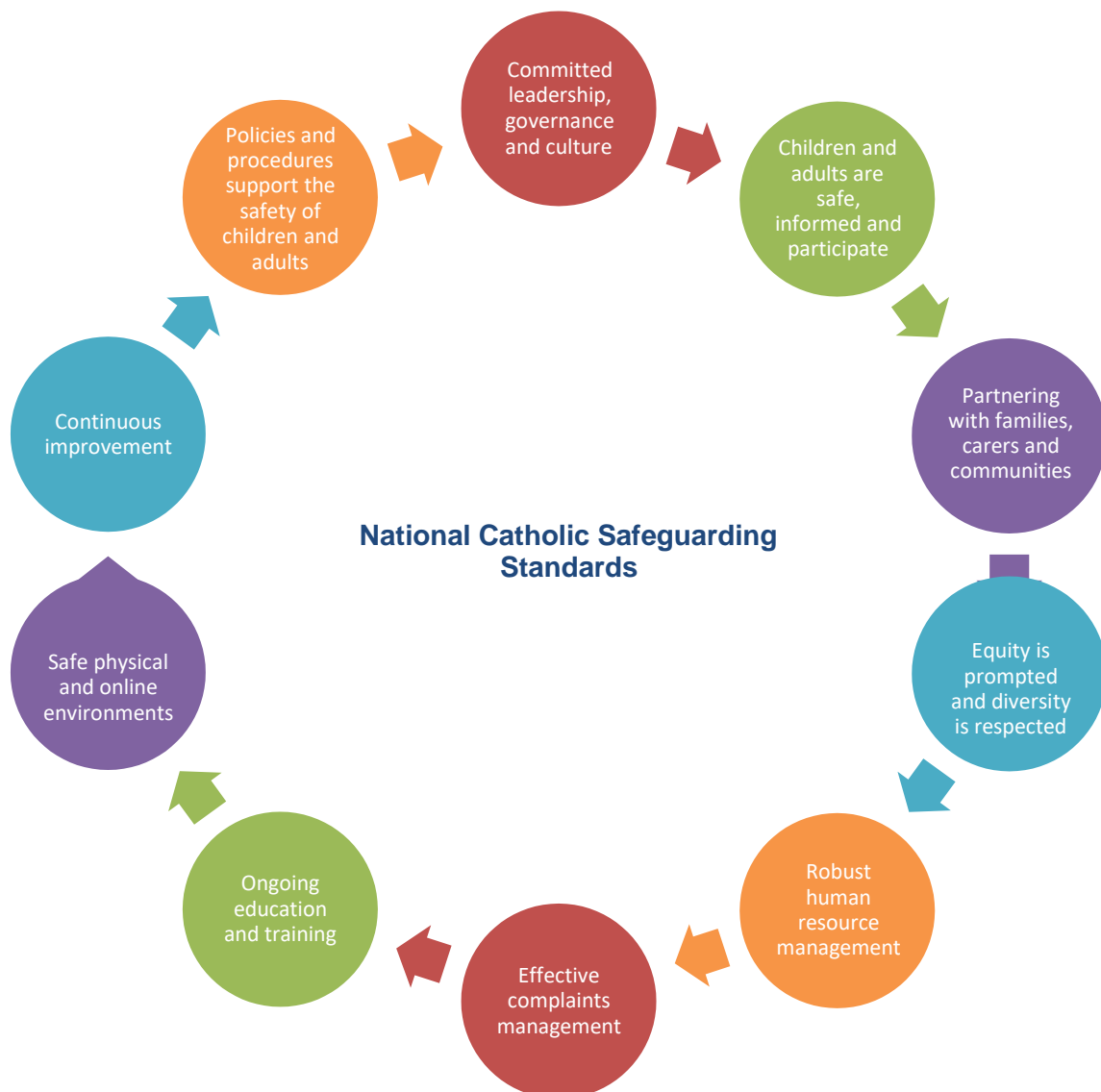
*We in our turn have committed ourselves, by our religious profession to make known the strong and merciful love of God revealed in the Heart of Jesus.*  
(Constitution 58)

Our Constitutions challenge us:  
*Contemplating with Mary His opened side, we enter into the mystery of the Heart of Jesus and receive the gift of his Spirit. We experience in faith, the forgiving, healing and transforming power of His love. We are impelled to live and proclaim this love, leading others to know that in Jesus, God loves them with a human heart and is the answer to their hopes, their questionings and their every need.*  
(Constitution 5)

The Australian Province of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and the cover up of abuse. We acknowledge with conviction that children, young people and adults at risk have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured and safeguarded by all people. It does not tolerate any form of abuse and seeks to redress, as far as humanly possible, any wrong that is attributed to a Sister, employee, volunteer or contractor of the Province. The Province understands that the safeguarding of children and adults at risk is a shared responsibility among all those in the Province. The Province is committed to an ongoing and proactive approach to safeguarding and professional standards and encourages anybody harmed by the Church to come forward and have their concerns heard.

## 1. Legislative and Social Context

- 1.1. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Code of Conduct reflects the key values from the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching.
- 1.2. This Policy and other relevant policies and procedures have been developed in line with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). The NCSS provide a framework through which all Catholic organisations can work to ensure they are able to detect and prevent abuse and neglect, and to better identify and manage risk factors.



- 1.3. This Policy and other related policies and procedures are consistent with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and which formed the basis for the NCSS. The National Principal for Child Safe Organisations can be seen in Safeguarding Fact Sheet 1.
- 1.4. This Policy and other related policies and procedures are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The Convention is the foundation for child protection and safeguarding globally and recognises children’s rights as human rights. Article 19 states, “Parties shall protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse.”
- 1.5. The policy is also informed by and consistent with a range of other legislation and guidance which is set out in our Safeguarding Fact Sheet 2.

## 2. Statement of Commitment

*N.B. Bolded type in the text below indicates reference to the NCSS.*

- 2.1. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart have maintained a **deep commitment to safeguarding children and adults at risk** throughout their history. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart acknowledge that they must be **transparent** and **accountable** for safeguarding practices across all ministries.
- 2.2. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are **committed to fostering a culture of safeguarding** that recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults at risk and takes a **zero-tolerance** approach to all forms of abuse. Wherever Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, including Sisters, Associates, employees, volunteers and contractors, live and minister, they will do all they possibly can to keep children and adults at risk safe.
- 2.3. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart encourage **open communication whereby families and communities are informed** of safeguarding issues and participate in decisions about the safety of children. It is particularly important to look for **ways for children, young people and adults at risk to have a say and be listened to**, not just through the particular ministries of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, but across the wider community.
- 2.4. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart actively work to **become and remain informed of the causes and signs of abuse** through continuous education.
- 2.5. Where Sisters, employees or volunteers receive information about concerns or witness any matter relating to the abuse of a child, young person or adult at risk, they **respond as soon as practicable, and report any such concerns to the appropriate local authority**. This may include contacting the police immediately where there may be immediate risk of harm to any person, especially a child or young person.
- 2.6. Every person engaged in the mission of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who comes into contact or works with children, young people and adults at risk seeks to **uphold the dignity of all people and commits to establishing safe and supportive relationships**.

- 2.7. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has **documented policies and procedures to prevent risks to children, young people and adults at risk and to build a strong culture of safeguarding**. The Provincial and Council will arrange for every Sister, employee and volunteer to become familiar with this policy and any related procedures, together with the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Code of Conduct. Sisters are expected to reflect on and commit to the application of this policy personally, in communal living, in the workplace and in ministry within and beyond the Province.
- 2.8. Where the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart foresees contact with children, young people and adults at risk, activities are planned and organised to proactively consider potential risks and to ensure risks are reduced and eliminated where possible. **Everyone is encouraged to communicate any area of concern or where an approach may need improvement.**
- 2.9. Anyone who brings forward a **suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse** of a child, young person or adult at risk to the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with the Province’s lawful obligations and the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Complaints Handling Policy.
- 2.10. Safeguarding policies and practices are reviewed regularly to make sure that they always support a culture and practice that **puts the safety of children, young people and adults at risk at the centre of both thinking and action.**

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibility for:
<b>Provincial and Council</b>	Provincial Leader and Council are responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating a culture of safeguarding across the Province and its ministries;</li> <li>• endeavouring to ensure that all with whom Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart work and engage will feel safe and supported in the Province life and mission, especially in relation to their safeguarding obligations;</li> <li>• the formation of inquirers, pre-novices, novices, temporary professed, perpetually professed, employees, and volunteers</li> <li>• implementing and monitoring compliance procedures for Sisters, employees, volunteers and contractors to all legislation and standards especially in relation to protection of children and adults at risk.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Safeguarding Coordinator</b></p>	<p>The Safeguarding Coordinator is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing advice to the Provincial Leader and Council on matters relating to the protection of children, young people and adults at risk;</li> <li>• maintaining knowledge of relevant legislation relating to child protection and the protection of adults at risk to ensure compliance across jurisdictions in which the Sisters live and minister;</li> <li>• reviewing safeguarding policies, at least annually, to reflect any changes in legislation and communicate those changes to Sisters, employees, and volunteers as is relevant;</li> <li>• providing and/or coordinating training and education for Sisters, employees and volunteers as part of induction, formation and ongoing professional development;</li> <li>• ensuring all Sisters, employees, volunteers and contractors are aware of the importance of safety for children, young people and adults at risk and embedding a culture of safety;</li> <li>• ensuring all Sisters are aware of their responsibilities under the Church documents <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i> and other relevant church documents such as <i>Integrity in Ministry</i> and <i>The National Response Framework and Protocol</i>;</li> <li>• ensuring all, employees, and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities under Church documents such as <i>Integrity in the Service of the Church</i> and <i>The National Response Framework and Protocol</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>All Sisters</b></p>	<p>All Sisters are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formalising their commitment to safeguarding by reading and signing the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy;</li> <li>• undertaking a proactive approach to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk;</li> <li>• endeavouring to ensure they are aware of their obligations for responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns or incidents in accordance with relevant legislation. Where Sisters are unsure of their obligations, they are responsible for seeking clarification from the Provincial Leader or the Safeguarding Coordinator;</li> <li>• undertaking training and ongoing formation on the Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy and relevant Child Protection legislation;</li> <li>• where it is required by legislation, maintaining a current Working with Children Check and updating the Province of any changes to their status;</li> <li>• demonstrating an ongoing commitment to their responsibilities under the Church document <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i> and other relevant documents such as <i>Integrity in Ministry</i> and <i>The National Response Framework and Protocol</i>.</li> </ul>

<p><b>All Employees</b></p>	<p>All employees of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formalising their commitment to safeguarding by reading and signing the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy;</li> <li>• undertaking a proactive approach to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk;</li> <li>• periodically reflecting on the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy;</li> <li>• endeavouring to ensure they are aware of their obligations of responding and reporting to safeguarding concerns or incidents in accordance with relevant legislation. Where they are unsure of their obligations, they are responsible for seeking clarification from the Safeguarding Coordinator;</li> <li>• undertaking the relevant statutory police checks as required in the jurisdictions in which they work;</li> <li>• maintaining a current Working with Children Check when an employee is in child-related employment and it is required by legislation in the jurisdiction in which they work. Updating the Province of any changes to their status.</li> <li>• undertaking training and professional development on the NCSS and the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart safeguarding principles and practices;</li> <li>• an ongoing commitment to their responsibilities under the Church document <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i> and other relevant documents such as <i>Integrity in The Service of the Church and The National Response Framework and Protocol</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>All Volunteers</b></p>	<p>All volunteers of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compliance with the Congregation’s Code of Conduct;</li> <li>• undertaking a proactive approach to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk;</li> <li>• undertaking the relevant statutory police and Working With Children Check where applicable to their role and as required by legislation in the jurisdictions in which they are working;</li> <li>• participating in appropriate induction for the service they provide;</li> <li>• where relevant, are aware of their mandatory reporting responsibilities and all relevant child protection legislation;</li> <li>• conducting themselves in accordance with the Congregation’s relevant processes and procedures;</li> <li>• demonstrating an ongoing commitment to their responsibilities under Church documents such as <i>Integrity in the Service of the Church</i>.</li> </ul>



<p><b>All Contractors</b></p>	<p>All contractors of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complying with the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Code of Conduct;</li> <li>• undertaking a proactive approach to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk;</li> <li>• in the jurisdictions where it is required undertaking the relevant statutory Police and Working with Children Checks where applicable to their role;</li> <li>• participating in appropriate induction for the service they provide;</li> <li>• ensuring that those who are contracted in a child-related role are aware of their mandatory reporting responsibilities and all relevant child protection legislation;</li> <li>• conducting themselves in accordance with the Congregation’s relevant processes and procedures;</li> <li>• demonstrating an ongoing commitment to their responsibilities under Church documents such as <i>Integrity in the Service of the Church</i>.</li> </ul>
-------------------------------	--

**3.1. Safeguarding Committee**

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Will establish and operate a Safeguarding Committee to provide oversight and guidance on safeguarding issues, initiatives, and the response of the organisation to concerns, civil and criminal matters and associated processes. The Safeguarding Committee will also be responsible for providing oversight with respect to the obligations under this policy, and external audits.

The Safeguarding Committee will operate in accordance with its Terms of Reference as updated from time to time. The Safeguarding Committee will consist of at least two members, being the Provincial Leader and the Safeguarding Coordinator, alongside other members as appointed from time to time, and in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

## Related Policy, Procedures and Concerns

**1. Responding to Complaints and Concerns**

1.1. All Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Sisters, employees, volunteers and contractors are bound by moral, ethical, legal and social requirements to report any safeguarding concerns they may have. That is, any instance where a person has reasonable grounds to believe that a child, young person or adult at risk may have suffered or be at risk of suffering from abuse. The Province is committed to fostering a culture within the organisation where all personnel and children, young people and adults at risk feel safe and able to raise safeguarding concerns.

1.2. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart believe that all people have the right to make a complaint when they are dissatisfied with the actions or inactions of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart personnel including Sisters, employees, volunteers and contractors or the services that the Province provides. The Daughters of Our Lady of the

Sacred Heart are committed to providing accessible and supportive pathways for Sisters, employees, volunteers, contractors, families, children and community members who wish to make a complaint and are committed to ensuring that complaints are handled with respect, fairness, efficiency and transparency.

- 1.3. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are committed to providing Sisters, employees, volunteers and contractors with training and support, proportionate to their role, that will enable them to discharge their duties in accordance with this policy. This includes training in relation to identifying and responding to abuse. Contractors will be asked to sign a declaration according to their role.

## **2. Ongoing Education and Training**

- 2.1. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are committed to ensuring all Sisters, employees, volunteers and contractors are equipped with the skills and knowledge required to proactively engage in the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk and to work effectively in accordance with this Policy. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are committed to providing education through induction and ongoing safeguarding training. In the interim, all personnel will have access to and receive ongoing updates through the Provincial Leader and Council and the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- 2.2. Education and training programs will be updated where new legislation, policy and best practice guidelines arise.

## **3. Human Resources**

- 3.1. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart recognise that skilled, knowledgeable and experienced personnel are vital for the safeguarding of children. Safeguarding is prioritised in all recruitment and appointment processes. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are committed to ensuring they recruit personnel who are committed to upholding the NCSS and the principles of the Safeguarding Policy and will consistently utilise rigorous recruitment and appointment approaches to mitigate risk and ensure the appropriate candidates are appointed.
- 3.2. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are further committed to providing personnel with the opportunity to improve their safeguarding understanding on an ongoing basis in a variety of ways which include regular performance appraisal and, where required, professional supervision.

## **4. Managing Safeguarding Risks**

- 4.1. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are committed to maintaining risk management processes which better facilitate the detection and prevention of potential risks before they arise. All Sisters, employees, volunteers and contractors are required to prioritise the assessment and treatment of risks, and the Province will ensure that they have access to training and support which enables them to do this effectively. Any serious incidents or breaches of policy and procedure are reviewed to ensure that the training and support is adequate to strengthen safeguarding practices.

## **5. Safeguarding Declaration**

- 5.1. All Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, employees, volunteers and contractors, must complete the declaration at **Annexure A**. Should any circumstance arise where they would not be able to complete the declaration at any given point in time, the employee, volunteer, or contractor must advise their manager of this as soon as possible.

## **6. Record Keeping and Information Sharing**

- 6.1. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart collect information from a range of stakeholders, the type of information collected and the length of time information is stored is dependent on the type of engagement with stakeholders.
- 6.2. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk at all levels of the organisation. Where information is relevant to wellbeing or safeguarding, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are committed to upholding the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

## **7. Equity and Diversity**

- 7.1. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart recognise and actively anticipate the diverse circumstances of children, young people, adults at risk and their families. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart celebrate the strengths and individual characteristics of all people and embrace them regardless of their abilities, gender, socioeconomic status and cultural background. A welcoming, safe and supportive environment for all is paramount to fulfilling mission. Equity and diversity, as a principle and practice, are built into all aspects of safeguarding, including our values, education and training and understanding of abuse in its many forms.
- 7.2. The particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and LGBTQI+ people are recognised. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are committed to removing any barriers that people may experience so that they can freely disclose any experience of abuse. People in the care of the Province have access to information, support and complaints processes in an easily understood format.

## **8. Engaging Children, Young People and Adults at Risk and the Wider Community**

- 8.1. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart understand that a safe organisation has a culture that makes an ongoing commitment to supporting children, young people and adults at risk to understand what safety means in ways that are age appropriate and meaningful for them. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart recognises that empowered people who feel safe and supported in their environment are more likely to raise concerns about abuse or neglect and are more likely to interact safely and positively with peers. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will endeavour to make children, young people and adults at risk with whom our Sisters, employees and

volunteers engage aware of their rights, and to provide them with safety information in appropriate language and formats.

- 8.2. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are committed to making their positions, safeguarding focal points, policies and direction statements public and available for the community, including parents and carers, to view online and in physical spaces where children, young people and adults at risk spend time. Where safeguarding documents are under review, Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will seek the input of the community.

## **9. Ongoing Commitment to Safe Online Environments for Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.**

- 9.1. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are committed to ensuring all people in our Ministries are aware of safe online practices. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart commit to staying informed about any updates to online safety and recognise that many children, young people and adults at risk are abused online every day. The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will communicate updates to Sisters, employees, volunteers and contractors through the Safeguarding Coordinator.

## **10. Non-Adherence to Safeguarding Policy**

- 10.1. All Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Sisters, employees, volunteers and contractors are required to adhere to the policies and procedures within the Safeguarding Policy. Where a breach in policy is identified, the Congregation will respond without delay. Personnel who breach the policy and its related procedures will face disciplinary action. For employees, volunteers and contractors this disciplinary action may include termination of their engagement with the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Serious breaches of this policy and related procedures may be reported to police.

---

---

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY DECLARATION**

---

---

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
have received and read a copy of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Safeguarding Policy. I understand the key principles, values and behaviours that are at the heart of the life and mission of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

I commit to honour and practice these values and behaviours as outlined in this document.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Annexure A: Safeguarding Disclosure**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (full name) of \_\_\_\_\_

(residential/professional address) declare the following:

**You must tick all of the following. If you are unable to tick any of the following, please notify your proposed manager as soon as practicable.**

Please note that this declaration must be completed irrespective of whether you are applying to be engaged as a volunteer or contractor in 'child-related' work as per *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW):

- I have not been refused a Working with Children Check (WWCC) under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW) or comparable legislation in another Australian State or Territory;
- I have not had a Working with Children Check (WWCC) cancelled under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW) or comparable legislation in another Australian State or Territory;
- I am not currently subject to a bar or an interim bar on engaging in child-related work under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW) or under the comparable legislation in another Australian State or Territory;
- I have not been charged with or convicted of any criminal offence punishable by imprisonment in Australia or overseas;
- I have not been accused of any sexual offence or abuse of a child or adult; physical or emotional abuse of a child, or neglect of a child;
- I have not been the subject of a reportable conduct investigation under the *Children's Guardian Act 2019* (NSW), the *Ombudsman's Act 1974* (NSW) or any other comparable legislation in another Australian State or Territory;
- I have not been the subject of an apprehended violence order;
- I have not been the subject of a complaint relating to a breach of professional boundaries;
- There is no reason I might be considered unsafe to work with vulnerable adults;
- The information I have provided in this form is true and correct;
- I agree that if any of the above circumstances or declarations change, I will immediately inform my manager at Catholic Healthcare.

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_