



DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART
AUSTRALIAN PROVINCE

RISK ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of all individuals associated with its ministries and works.
- 1.2 This *Risk Assessment and Management Policy* is designed to provide a comprehensive framework for identifying, assessing, and managing risks related to safeguarding children and adults at risk within the Province and its works and ministries.

2. Purpose

2.1. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Identify potential risks to the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk within OLSH's works and ministries.
- Assess the likelihood and severity of these risks.
- Implement measures to mitigate and manage identified risks effectively.
- Ensure alignment with the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy* and *Code of Conduct*.
- Develop an inclusive and risk-aware culture.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all Sisters, Employees, Associates, Contractors, and Volunteers involved in OLSH's ministries and works.

4. Risk Assessment Process

4.1 Identification of Risks:

Risks related to safeguarding children and adults at risk may include:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional/psychological abuse;
- Neglect;
- Elder abuse;
- Financial abuse;
- Exploitation;
- Exposure to family violence;
- Discrimination;
- Spiritual abuse.

Risks can arise from interactions with personnel, volunteers, contractors, visitors, or external stakeholders. The *OLSH Safeguarding Policy* and *Code of Conduct* provide guidance on identifying potential risks and prohibited behaviours.

4.2 Risk Assessment:

Risk assessments will be conducted regularly for all ministries and works, including events and activities involving children and adults at risk.

The *OLSH Safeguarding Policy* and *Code of Conduct* serve as reference documents during the risk assessment process, ensuring alignment with established standards and principles.

4.3 Risk Categories:

In the context of safeguarding, risks will be categorised based on their nature, severity, and likelihood of occurrence. The table (below) outlines the categories of risk and how they are to be assessed.

4.4 Risk Evaluation:

Risks will be evaluated based on their likelihood and potential impact, considering factors such as vulnerability of individuals, frequency of interactions, and effectiveness of existing safeguards.

The *OLSH Safeguarding Policy* and *Code of Conduct* provide information to assist in evaluating the severity and urgency of identified risks.

This below matrix provides an approach to measuring the likelihood and consequences of potential risks. For assistance in completing a risk assessment, please refer to **Annexure A**, '*Risk Assessment Tool*.'

LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCES				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Almost certain	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Rare	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium

4.5 Responsibility for Risk Assessments:

Risk assessments related to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults should be conducted by the Safeguarding Coordinator and reviewed by the Provincial Leader. Risk assessments should be reviewed as necessary, especially where there is an ongoing risk, to ensure compliance with safeguarding principles and the effectiveness of risk mitigation measures, in accordance with **Annexure A**, the '*Risk Assessment Tool*'.

For low-level internal complaints made by a Sister, a Community Leader may undertake the risk assessment in accordance with the *OLSH Complaints Handling Policy*. The Community Leader should conduct the initial review, but if concerns persist, the Provincial Leader should provide further oversight.

Completed risk assessments must be stored in accordance with the *OLSH Record Keeping Policy* to ensure proper documentation and accessibility for future reference.

5. Risk Management Strategies

5.1 Prevention:

Risk prevention strategies include:

- Implementing robust recruitment and screening procedures for personnel and volunteers, in accordance with the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.
- Providing comprehensive training on safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices, as outlined in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy* and *Code of Conduct*.
- Establishing clear codes of conduct and boundaries for interactions with children and adults at risk, consistent with the principles outlined in the *OLSH Code of Conduct*.
- Regularly reviewing and updating policies and procedures to reflect best practices and requirements, as specified in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.

5.2 Mitigation:

Risk mitigation strategies include:

- Monitoring and supervision of activities involving children and adults at risk, with adherence to guidelines provided in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.
- Establishing reporting mechanisms for concerns or incidents related to safeguarding, as detailed in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.
- Conducting thorough investigations of reported concerns and taking appropriate action, guided by procedures outlined in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy* and *OLSH Conducting Investigations Policy*.
- Providing support and resources for individuals affected by safeguarding incidents, in accordance with the approach outlined in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.

5.3 Mitigating Physical Risks

OLSH recognises that risks may be present in the online and physical environment. This may include, as applicable to OLSH:

- In ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, spiritual directions, and mentoring;
- One-to-one interactions with adults at risk;
- Adult-to-child interactions;
- Adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration of power imbalances); and
- The nature of physical spaces.

OLSH is dedicated to ensuring that these interactions are to be conducted, where possible, in an open and visible space and within clear line of sight of another adult.

Where facilities and services are contracted to and from third parties, OLSH is dedicated to ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place to facilitate appropriate safeguarding practices. This includes, where applicable, a Service Agreement outlining the responsibilities of third parties to uphold relevant safeguarding policies and practices.

5.4 Mitigating Online Risks

OLSH is dedicated to ensuring the safe use of online applications for children and adults to learn, communicate and seek help. This includes ensuring that personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults. This includes:

- Personnel are required to access and use online environments in line with the *OLSH Code of Conduct*, *OLSH Privacy Policy* and *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.
- The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary procedures in accordance with the *OLSH Code of Conduct*.

OLSH uses online media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. OLSH takes all reasonable steps to ensure the safe use of these platforms by disabling comments on social media and actively monitoring the use of social media. Both the Provincial Leader and Safeguarding Coordinator actively monitor OLSH's online presence to ensure its safe use.

5.5 Response:

Responses to identified risks include:

- Responding promptly and sensitively to safeguarding concerns or incidents, following the approach outlined in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.
- Implementing disciplinary measures for personnel or volunteers found to have breached safeguarding policies, as specified in the *OLSH Code of Conduct*.
- Collaborating with relevant authorities and agencies, such as law enforcement or child protection services, as necessary, in alignment with the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.

5.6 Risks involving adults and children with diminished capacity

OLSH will consider the needs of children and adults with diminished capacity in their risk management and strategy. This includes consideration of:

- Understanding the barriers that prevent children from disclosing abuse;
- Understanding the barriers for adults to be able to recognise and then respond to disclosures; and
- Outlining strategies to address these barriers.

Strategies to address barriers for those with diminished capacity include:

- Assisting and supporting individuals to make their own decisions;
- Involving carers and guardians in decision-making where an individual has a diminished capacity;
- Engage openly and collaboratively with carers and guardians to assist in decision-making, so the best interests of the individual is supported.

6. Reporting and Monitoring

6.1 Reporting:

- All safeguarding concerns or incidents must be reported to the designated Safeguarding Coordinator or appropriate authority within OLSH, as stipulated in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.
- Reports should include details of the concern or incident, individuals involved, and any actions taken, as required by the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.

6.2 Monitoring:

- Regular monitoring and review of safeguarding practices and procedures to ensure effectiveness, as mandated by the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.
- Reviewing and analysing reported concerns or incidents to identify trends or areas for improvement, as outlined in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.
- Providing regular updates and reports to relevant stakeholders, including OLSH leadership and governing bodies, in accordance with reporting requirements specified in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.

7. Reviews and Compliance

7.1 Review:

- This *Risk Assessment and Management Policy*, along with associated procedures, will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy* and *Code of Conduct*.
- Any necessary updates or amendments will be made in consultation with OLSH leadership and relevant stakeholders, consistent with the principles of transparency and accountability outlined in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy*.

7.2 Compliance:

- All Sisters, Employees, Associates, Contractors, and Volunteers are required to comply with this policy and associated procedures, as specified in the *OLSH Safeguarding Policy* and *Code of Conduct*.
- Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action, including termination of engagement or legal consequences, as outlined in the *OLSH Code of Conduct*.

8. Conclusion

OLSH is committed to upholding the highest standards of safeguarding for all individuals associated with its ministries and works. This Risk Assessment and Management Policy, in conjunction with the OLSH Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, provides a robust framework for identifying, assessing, and managing risks related to safeguarding children and adults at risk, in accordance with the OLSH values.