The Community in Western Australia of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA)

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

AUGUST 2026

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1. Introduction

'If one member suffers, all suffer together with it' – 1 Corinthians 12:26.
'A population that does not take care of the elderly, and of children and the young has no future, because it abuses both its memory and its promise' – Pope Francis.[1]

The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) understands that we hold a privileged position of trust in the community. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment which respects and upholds the human rights and dignity of all people, and we have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of children or adults at risk.[2]

This policy has been approved by the Delegation Leader.

2. Safeguarding Commitment Statement

- **The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) upholds the dignity of every person and is committed to maintaining safe, inclusive and supportive environments, particularly for children and adults at risk. We have zero tolerance for abuse in any form.**

- **Every person has the right to be protected from abuse.**

- **Inclusivity is at the heart of the Gospel and our values. It shapes our relationships with children, adults at risk, their families and the wider community.**

- **We create and support environments in which children and adults at risk are empowered to speak up and are listened to.**

- **We recognise the important role of families and the wider community in safeguarding children and adults at risk, and we welcome their input on how we can improve the way we engage with and support them.**

- **We are committed to a culture of care, accountability and transparency. Safeguarding and prevention are embedded in our governance, recruitment, induction, policies, procedures and everyday activities.**

- **We are committed to equity, diversity and justice, particularly for people who may be at increased risk of abuse or harm. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and adults, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disability, and people of diverse sexualities and gender identities.**

[1] Speech by Pope Francis of his visit to the Community of Sant' Egido, Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome, 16th June 2014.
[2] National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) 1.1 There is a public commitment to safeguarding that takes a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

- **We maintain appropriate professional and pastoral boundaries and uphold expected standards of behaviour in all our interactions with children and adults at risk.**
- **All Sisters, staff, volunteers, Associate Members and contractors are expected to understand and fulfil their responsibilities under applicable legislation and our safeguarding, conduct and complaints-handling policies.**
- **All concerns, complaints, disclosures and allegations will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately, sensitively and promptly.**

For further information or to raise a safeguarding concern, please contact our Safeguarding Coordinator:

- ***Email: safeguarding@sja.org.au***
- ***Phone: 08 9450 1588***

3. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance about how The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) will prevent, identify and respond to abuse[3] and harm towards children and adults at risk.[4] This Policy applies to all SJA personnel, including Sisters, clergy where applicable, employees, volunteers, Associate Members and contractors. It applies to all activities, ministries and services conducted or authorised by The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA), in any location.

This Policy has been approved and endorsed by the Delegation Leader.

The policy complies with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (the Standards), which outline requirements for Catholic entities across Australia to promote the safety of children and adults at risk through implementing policies and activities to prevent, respond to and report concerns regarding abuse and harm.[5] The policy also reflects relevant safeguarding legislation.

The Safeguarding Policy is supported by and should be read together with the following related documents:

- **Safeguarding Commitment Statement**
- **Code of Conduct**
- **Complaints Handling Policy**

Nothing in this policy affects the expectations outlined in other relevant Church documents or in civil law.

[3] This policy adopts the definitions for 'child abuse' and 'adult abuse' used in the Glossary of this document.
[4] This policy adopts the definitions for 'children' and 'adults at risk' used in the Glossary of this document.
[5] The Standards are based on the child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse but include additional 'core components'

4. Leading and Implementing a Safeguarding Culture

The Delegation Leader has overall responsibility for safeguarding within The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA).

The *Safeguarding Coordinator* works in collaboration with the *Safeguarding Committee.*

The *Safeguarding Coordinator* coordinates, oversees and monitors implementation of this Policy and the organisation's safeguarding obligations.

The *Safeguarding Committee* is a formally constituted Committee within The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA), reporting to the Delegation Leader and Safeguarding Coordinator.[6]

The *Safeguarding Committee* advises and supports the Delegation Leader and Safeguarding Coordinator and monitors implementation of safeguarding practices, policies and procedures.

The Superior General has established a *Congregational Safeguarding Committee* comprising members with relevant safeguarding expertise. The Committee advises on the ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices, policies and procedures across the Congregation. The *Safeguarding Committee* also liaises with the *Congregational Safeguarding Committee* established by the Superior General.

The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) will lead and promote a safeguarding culture, and will monitor compliance with the Safeguarding Policy and continual improvement of its safeguarding practices, through:[7]

Governance and leadership

- **Upholding and modelling a standard of behaviour consistent with relevant Church documents and civil law, and championing safeguarding and the dignity and rights of children and adults at risk within The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA)**
- **Promoting the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.**
- **Prominently publishing and displaying the Safeguarding Commitment Statement[8] and making sure the Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct and Complaints Handling Policy are readily available to personnel and the broader community [9]**

[6] NCSS 1.2.1 A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority and leaders by: promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone; emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and, actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management.
[7] NCSS 1.2.1 A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority and leaders by: promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone; emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and, actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management.
[8] NCSS 1.1.2 The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, is widely displayed and made publicly available.
[9] NCSS 10.2.1 The policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding are readily available and accessible to all personnel.

Recruitment and screening

- **Taking all possible steps to ensure that only people who are safe and suitable to have contact with children and adults at risk are engaged by The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA)**
- **Monitoring and recording the currency of Working with Children Checks and other relevant background checks held by personnel[10]**

Training and Supervision

- **Empowering all personnel to take responsibility for safeguarding and providing opportunities for them to have input into improving safeguarding practices.**
- **Providing safeguarding training and support for personnel, including induction[11] and refresher safeguarding training (at least every three years) for all personnel,[12] and participation in the 'National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders' for the leadership team.[13] Training will include The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) safeguarding policies and procedures, Code of Conduct, reporting obligations, e-safety, factors that may place children and adults at risk of abuse, cultural safety and diversity[14]**
- **Providing at least 6 hours of annual professional/pastoral supervision and/or reflective practices/mentoring for relevant personnel which include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.[15]**
- **Maintaining up-to-date participation records to ensure personnel complete safeguarding training and supervision as required[16]**
- **Requiring all personnel to sign an acknowledgement of their agreement to comply with The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) Code of Conduct.**

[10] NCSS 5.2.1 All personnel are required to have a background check and clearance (as relevant to their role).
[11] NCSS 5.3.1 All personnel participate in a safeguarding induction program, which occurs as soon as possible after commencement
[12] NCSS 7.1.1 Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.
[13] NCSS 5.3.2 Church Authorities and their leadership team undertake the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders.
[14] NCSS 7.1.2 The entity's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must cover: Code of Conduct; Safeguarding risk management; Safeguarding Policy and procedures; Complaints Handling Policy and procedures; Reporting obligations; and e-safety training; NCSS 7.2.1 Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place children at risk of abuse; NCSS 7.3.1 Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse; NCSS 7.5.1 Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; NCSS 7.5.2 Training is provided to relevant personnel to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds and how to create safe environments for people from these groups.
[15] NCSS 5.4.1 Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities; 5.5.4 All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year; 5.5.5 All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals.
[16] NCSS 7.1.3 Records are maintained to ensure all personnel attend induction training and participate in refresher safeguarding training at least every three years.

Reporting and Complaints

- Encouraging people to bring forward concerns or complaints about the safety of children or adults at risk (including disclosures of current or historical abuse) and providing appropriate processes by which to do so, including processes that are suitable for children and people with diminished capacity and/or cognitive impairment.
- Responding to disclosures and complaints in a manner that is transparent, respectful, fair and accountable.
- The Safeguarding Coordinator will ensure that The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) reports any safety concerns about children or adults at risk to the appropriate civil authorities as required by legislation.
- Ensuring safeguarding is a standing agenda item at meetings of the Australian Leadership Team and the Safeguarding Committee.
- Ensuring the Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct and Complaints Handling Policy are regularly reviewed by The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) according to the specified timeframes in each document.

Risk Assessment and Management

- Regular assessment, monitoring and management of safety risks for physical and online environments[17]
- Managing and resolving complaints, including direct or indirect concerns, disclosures or allegations of current or historical abuse towards children or adults, as per the Complaints Handling Policy.

Record keeping and information sharing

- Creating, maintaining and securely storing records for all incidents, complaints (including disclosures/allegations), responses and decisions that relate to safeguarding matters, with regard to legislative obligations to both maintain confidentiality and pro-actively share risk-related information with other entities.

5. Requiring and Upholding Appropriate Standards of Behaviour

The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) expects all personnel to uphold the human rights, dignity and well-being of all people and safeguard children and adults at risk from abuse and harm.

Personnel will be provided with ongoing supervision and support to meet their safeguarding responsibilities. Annual performance reviews for personnel will include responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults at risk relevant to their role.

[17] NCSS 8.1.1 Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services; NCSS 8.2.2 The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary procedures, or other relevant policies and reported to the leadership.

All personnel must comply with The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) Code of Conduct. The Code provides clear information about the kinds of conduct towards children and adults at risk that are not acceptable.

6. Identifying and Responding to Safety Concerns

The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) has a robust system for receiving, recording, responding to, managing, resolving and monitoring complaints, including direct or indirect concerns, disclosures or allegations of current or historical abuse towards children or adults. These processes are documented in the Complaints Handling Policy.

7. Record Keeping, Information Sharing, Confidentiality and Privacy

Complete, timely and accurate records will be created and maintained for all safeguarding matters. All records will be securely stored, maintained and disposed of in accordance with legislative and statutory requirements.

The Community in WA of St Joseph of the Apparition Inc. (SJA) will maintain current knowledge of, and comply with our legislative obligations to maintain confidentiality and protect personal information and privacy. Information and records relating to incidents, complaints, responses and decisions will be treated as confidential, except where the sharing or distribution of information and/or records is mandated by statutory requirements or principles of natural justice.

8. Review of Safeguarding Policy and Related Documents

The Safeguarding Policy and related documents will be reviewed:

- at least every three years;
- whenever a breach is identified;
- following legislative change;
- following an audit finding;
- following a serious incident;
- where a policy weakness is identified; and
- earlier where otherwise considered necessary.

Stakeholders will be consulted where appropriate.

The Delegation Leader is responsible for ensuring that reviews are completed.

Approval and review outcomes will be documented.[18]

Safeguarding Policy approved	Lilian Bong, Delegation Leader	20th March 2024

[18] NCSS 10.3.2 There is a process in place to develop and review safeguarding policies and procedures.

Safeguarding Policy updated	Lilian Bong, Delegation Leader	August 2026

9. Glossary

Adult Abuse	An adult's vulnerability may not always be readily apparent, and indicators of abuse or harm towards adults at risk may be more difficult to recognise. The right of adults to make their own choices and decisions, and the circumstances in which they may have diminished capacity to do so, are also relevant considerations. Most commonly, the categories of adult abuse include financial, psychological, neglect, physical, sexual or spiritual. See the NCSS for further definitions of these categories.
Adults at risk	Adults at risk are people aged 18 and over who are at increased risk of abuse, including those who: ▪ are elderly ▪ have a disability ▪ have a mental illness ▪ have diminished capacity ▪ have cognitive impairment ▪ exhibit signs of self-neglect ▪ are experiencing transient risks, eg. bereavement, relationship breakdown, domestic or family violence, homelessness ▪ have any other impairment that makes it difficult for that person to protect themselves from abuse or exploitation. Whilst taking care to not make assumptions or generalisations about individuals, we recognise that other aspects of a person's identity or life experiences may also increase their risk of vulnerability to abuse or harm, e.g.: ▪ being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ▪ being a refugee or migrant ▪ diverse gender or sexuality ▪ speaking a first language other than English ▪ surviving sexual abuse or child abuse
Allegation	A complaint, still to be verified, claiming or asserting that someone has committed an act of abuse against a child or adult at risk. The term is used interchangeably and in combination with "complaint".

Child/ren	**Individuals under 18 years of age.**
Child abuse	**There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Most commonly, the categories of child abuse include sexual, physical, psychological, neglect, ill-treatment, exploitation and exposure to family violence. See the NCSS for further definitions of these categories.**
Clergy	**The body of those ordained in sacred ministry in the Church. They are either deacons, priests or bishops.**
Disability	**For the purposes of this Policy, people with disability are those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.**
Diverse gender or sexuality	**Diverse gender or sexuality refers to 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.**
Leaders	**Personnel who are responsible for important governance decisions within a Church entity and/or who lead and coordinate Church improvement initiatives.**
Ministry	**Any activity within, or delivered by, an entity that is designed to carry out the good works of the Catholic Church.**
Personnel	**This includes religious brothers, sisters and clergy, employees, volunteers, contractors (and others) engaged by the Church Authority to provide services to children and adults at risk.**
Religious Institute	**An institute of consecrated life, a secular institute or society of apostolic life, and their provinces or equivalent.**
Safeguarding	**Measures to protect the safety, human rights and well-being of individuals, which allow people – in this context children and adults at risk – to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.**
Safeguarding Committee	**A committee established to advise and support the Church Authority on all matters relating to safeguarding, including in relation to prevention, policies and procedures and complaint handling. Committee members need relevant and varied professional expertise in relation to, but not limited to safeguarding, child protection, organisational culture and**

	structure, policy development, and need to include lay women and men.
Safeguarding Commitment Statement	A commitment statement describing an entity's commitment to keep all, especially children and adults at risk, safe from harm. It informs the entity's culture with respect to safeguarding.
Safeguarding Coordinator	An individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
Supervision	A forum for reflection and learning, an interactive dialogue between at least two people, one of whom is professionally trained as a supervisor. The dialogue shapes a process of review, reflection, critique and replenishment for personnel. Supervision is a professional activity in which personnel are engaged regardless of experience or qualification. Supervision assists personnel in their accountabilities for professional standards (including in relation to maintenance of professional boundaries), defined competencies for their role and understanding and implementation of organisational policy and procedures. For clerics and religious, professional/pastoral supervision assists in the maintenance of boundaries of the pastoral relationship and enhances the quality of their ministry. A cleric/religious' commitment to conscious and critical reflection on their ministry and ministry experiences is recognised as being important for the wellbeing of the cleric/religious, the people with whom they exercise ministry, the wider Church and the community.
Working with children check	Generic term used in the Standards to denote the statutory screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. There is no single national framework setting out requirements for 'working with children' checks. Each state or territory in Australia has its own name, procedures and differences in scope regarding what this type of check entails. They are one part of a Church entity's recruitment, selection and screening processes.