Augustinian Sisters

Child Safety Policy

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Augustinian Sisters

Child Safety Policy

Every one of you is precious in God's eyes.
– M. Teresa Spinelli

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1. Introduction

The Augustinian Sisters (Augustinian Sisters) we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our parish. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel[1]
The Church's social doctrine constantly points out the need to respect the dignity of children. 'In the family, which is a community of persons, special attention must be devoted to the children by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity, and a great respect and generous concern for their rights' (Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio, 26). Indeed it was Jesus who, when his disciples were arguing among themselves about who was the greatest, directed his attention to a little child and said to his disciples, '*Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me'* (Mark 9.37).

2. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of **The Augustinian Sisters** to the care, safety and wellbeing of all children whom we have contact with. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep children safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our work environment, online. This policy applies to all our Congregational members residing in either domicile of Avondale Heights or Sunshine North.

3. Principles

The Catholic Church has a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe[2].
The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety at The Augustinian Sisters*:*

- Our Congregation has zero tolerance of child abuse.
- All children are entitled to, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of

[1] (CAM Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

[2] CAM Commitment Statement to Child Safety

abuse and neglect.

- Our Congregation works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.
- All adults who make contact with us, including Congregational members, clergy, volunteers, contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.
- The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of children are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- Congregational members, clergy, volunteers, parishioners including children and contractors should be free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by the the Congregational leadership and its members.

Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

4. Definitions

Child: A person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child abuse includes:

(a) any act committed against a child involving:

(i) a sexual offence

(ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)

(b) the infliction on a child of:

(i) physical violence

(ii) serious emotional or psychological harm

(c) serious neglect of a child.

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse,

managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Child neglect: The failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing.

Child physical abuse: Generally, child physical abuse refers to the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviours including shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. The fabrication or induction of an illness by a parent or carer (previously known as Munchausen syndrome by proxy) is also included in this definition of "Child physical abuse".

Child protection: Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm.

Child sexual abuse: Any sexual activity between a child under the age of consent (16) and an adult or older person (i.e. a person two or more years older than the victim) is child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse can also be:

- any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult in a position of power or authority over them; the age of consent laws do not apply in such instances due to the strong imbalance of power that exists between young people and authority figures, as well as the breaching of both personal and public trust that occurs when professional boundaries are violated
- any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult family member, regardless of issues of consent, equality or coercion
- sexual activity between peers that is non-consensual or involves the use of power or coercion
- non-consensual sexual activity between minors (e.g. a 14-year old and an 11-year old), or any sexual behaviour between a child and another child or adolescent who, due to their age or stage of development, is in a position of power, trust or responsibility over the victim. Sexual activity between adolescents at a similar developmental level is not intended to be included in this definition of "Child sexual abuse".

Mandatory Reporting: The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. Mandated persons include teachers, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical practitioners.

Reasonable Belief: When an adult is concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or

young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a ‘reasonable belief’. A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

5. Policy Commitments

All children who come into contact with the **Augustinian Sisters** have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

Our commitment to children

(a) We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.
(b) We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
(c) We commit to listening to children and young people and empowering them by taking their views seriously and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
(d) We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
(e) We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
(f) We commit to seeking input and feedback from children regarding the creation of a safe environment.

Our commitment to parents and carers who may make contact with us through Congregational functions etc

(a) We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.

(b) We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child- safety practices, policies and procedures.

(c) We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.

(d) We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of those who make contact with us and being sensitive to how this may impact on child safety issues.

(e) We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

Our commitment to volunteers, contractors and clergy

(a) We commit to providing all who make contact with the **Augustinian Sisters** with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.

(b) We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include communicating, via printed material, the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and responsibilities to report concerns.

(c) We commit to listening to all concerns voiced to us, regardless of who these may be, about keeping children and young people safe from harm.

6. Responsibilities and Organisation Arrangements

Every volunteer associated with the Augustinian Sisers has a responsibility to understand the important and significant role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make[3]).

The Congregational Delegate/Representative has the role and responsibility for child safety

[3] CAM Commitment Statement to Child Safety

as follows:

6.1 Guide to Responsibilities as Congregational Representative

The Congregational representative together with the community members recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of, and shared responsibility for child safety. Responsibilities include:

- creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe
- upholding high principles and standards for all members
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in ongoing professional learning for members
- ensuring that community members have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child and young people's protection and wellbeing
- ensuring the Congregational community members meet the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

6.2 Organisational Arrangements

The Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary have appointed Sr Lorraine Testa, Delegate for Australia Child Safety Co-ordinator and has attended Child Safety Training sessions. Sr Lorraine Testa is contactable at the Community Convent on 93374595. Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) offered and continue to offer training and information sessions of which Sr Lorraine attended and will continue to attend when appropriate.

7. Expectations of community members Avondale Heights and Sunshine North – Child Safety Code of Conduct

Community members, are expected to proactively ensure the safety of children at all times

and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any child in the convent environment. All members are to remain familiar with the relevant laws, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and comply with all requirements. We have developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary Child Safety Code of Conduct, which recognises the critical role that all members play in protecting the children in our care.

8. Child Safety and Participation

Congregational members actively encourage all children to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them.

We discuss with our children what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concern's children or their parents or carers, raise with us.

9. Reporting and Responding

Congregational records hold any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and are stored in accordance with security and privacy requirements. We comply with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.), the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.).

Our Congregation's **Child Protection – Reporting Policy Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary Reporting Policy** , updated on **18/07/2019** sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child in our immediate environment is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.
We work to ensure all children, families and members know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or a victim, or if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary Child Projection Reporting Obligations policy

Any person can take child safety concerns to either Sr Lorraine Testa or Sr Connie Mamo. Matters are treated confidentially and professionally. Our complaints and disclosure processes, in keeping with Diocesan and Government requirements are outlined and

detailed their policies:

92. Where a child's behaviour is disruptive to the group activity, unsafe, or otherwise breaches the Children's Code of Conduct, you will need to take steps to manage the behaviour. The steps you take should be appropriate having regard to the circumstances, behaviour and age of the child. Appropriate steps may include:

    a. Directing other children away from a dangerous or disruptive situation;
    b. Discussing the behaviour with the child, and asking him or her to stop;
    c. Giving the child an opportunity to explain his or her behaviour;
    d. Discussing the consequences of the behaviour with the child;
    e. Asking for assistance from other adults;
    f. Removing the child from the activity to another supervised environment;
    g. If the behaviour continues, calling the child's parent/guardian and asking them to remove the child from the activity.

93. Children should be made aware of the standard of behaviour they are entitled to expect from supervising adults and from other children participating in the activity.

DEALING WITH BREACHES AND MATTERS OF CONCERN

94. The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne aims to deal with all reports under this Code of Conduct fairly and appropriately, and to act on the following principles:

    a. Promoting a positive experience of the Church and creating a strong community of faith;
    b. Preventing misconduct where this is possible;
    c. Ensuring fair process for persons against whom allegations are made; and
    d. Dealing effectively with any allegations which are substantiated, including responding compassionately to anyone who has been affected.

95. A **flow chart** setting out how and to whom to make reports may be found at page 18.

What should you report?

96. You may come across possible breaches of this Code of Conduct, or matters that cause you concern, in any number of ways. These might include:

    a. A disclosure made to you by a child;
    b. Observing events that cause you to form an objectively reasonable belief that a child is being harmed or abused, or is at risk of being harmed or abused (whether by a family member or by another person); or
    c. Being present and witnessing an event or incident.

97. Alternatively, an incident may occur during an activity you are responsible for, such as:

    a. A child being lost;
    b. A child being injured; or
    c. A medical emergency.

98. Regardless of the way in which an issue arises, you should always report circumstances that cause you concern and you should certainly always report:

a. Any material breach of this Code of Conduct;

b. Any incident in which a child is seriously harmed or goes missing;

c. Any emergency situation including a medical emergency;

d. Any hazard or risk of harm to a child that is not being adequately addressed;

e. Any allegation of sexual misconduct;*

f. Any disclosure by a child, or an objectively reasonable belief you have formed, that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse of any kind;*

g. Any allegation of violence inflicted by an adult upon a child;*

h. Any allegation in which an adult has been under the influence of drugs (illicit or misused medication) or alcohol while responsible for children;

i. Any incident in which a child has been seriously harmed or injured (either physically or psychologically) or is at risk of harm or injury;*

j. Any allegation of conduct which is or might be unlawful;* and

k. Any conduct which would or might give rise to a mandatory requirement to report under the CYF Act or the Crimes Act 1958.

99. If you are not sure whether to report a matter, please contact the Professional Standards Unit on 03 9926 5677 or 0439 435 182.

Who may make a report?

100. Any person may make a report. If an allegation involves sexual or other abuse of a child you should not investigate the matter yourself, or raise it with parents/guardians or the alleged abuser directly. You should report the matter using the procedures set out in paragraphs 101-110.

How can a report be made?

101. If you would like any guidance about how to report a breach of this Code of Conduct or a matter of concern, please contact the Professional Standards Unit on 03 9926 5677 or 0439 435 182. The process for reporting and dealing with any concerns or breaches of this Code of Conduct will vary depending on the type of conduct and who is responsible for the conduct.

102. A Confidential Incident Recording Form may be used to record details of any incident or matter of concern. A sample form for this purpose may be found at www.cam.org.au/Professional-Standards/Sample-Forms.aspx

103. Nothing in this Code of Conduct restricts the right of any person to report any matter to the police or other authorities.

* These matters should be be immdeiately reported to Victoria Police. For further information regarding the mandatory reporting requirements under CYF Act, please see www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cyfa2005252/. For further information regarding the mandatory reporting requirements under the Victorian

To report sexual and other abuse

104. Conduct that is or may be illegal should be reported to Victoria Police.

105. Sexual misconduct by Church personnel should be reported to the Independent Commissioner, whose office has been established by the Archbishop of Melbourne to enquire into and advise him with respect to allegations of sexual misconduct by any priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, and religious and lay persons working and volunteering within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

106. The Role of the Independent Commissioner and the procedures that will be followed upon the receipt by him of a complaint can be located at www.cam.org.au/Professional-Standards/Melbourne-Response.aspx .

107. Nothing in this Code of Conduct is intended in any way to affect the role of the Independent Commissioner or the ability of any person to make or refer a complaint to the Independent Commissioner.

108. The Independent Commissioner may be contacted at 03 9225 6422.

To report all other matters

109. All matters other than those within the purview of Victoria Police, DHHS or the Independent Commissioner should be reported as follows:

    a. **Any matter that arises within a parish** should be reported in the first instance to your parish priest (unless the matter involves the parish priest, in which case it should be reported in accordance with paragraph 110). The parish priest will listen to the allegations and decide what action to take in accordance with the procedures below at paragraph 112. If, after a reasonable time has elapsed, you are not satisfied with the parish priest's response to your report you may then refer the matter to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Melbourne 03 9926 5677 or vicar.general@cam.org.au.

    b. **Any matter that arises within an agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne** should be reported in the first instance to the head of the agency (unless the matter involves the agency head, in which case it should be reported in accordance with paragraph 110). The agency head will listen to the allegations and decide what action to take in accordance with the procedures below at paragraph 112. If, after a reasonable time has elapsed, you are not satisfied with the response to your report, you may refer the matter to the HR Office on 03 9926 5677 or human.resources@cam.org.au.

110. Matters relating to parish priests, agency heads, or any other matters should be reported as follows:

    a. **Any report that relates to a parish priest** should be reported in the first instance to the Vicar General on 03 9926 5677 or vicar.general@cam.org.au

    b. **Any report that relates to an agency head** should be reported to the HR Office on 03 9926 5677 or human.resources@cam.org.au.

    c. **Any other matter** may be reported to the HR Office on 03 9926 5677 or human.resources@cam.org.au.

    Reports will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures at paragraph 112.

111. **Any medical emergency, a missing child, or any other emergency situation** should be reported in the first instance to the appropriate authorities (such as police, fire or ambulance by dialling 000). As soon as possible thereafter, the child's parent/guardian should be notified and a report should be made (at the latest within 24 hours) to the HR Office on 03 9926 5677 or human.resources@cam.org.au.

What happens when a report is made?

112. When a report is made in accordance with paragraph 105, the person receiving the report shall:

    a. Listen carefully to the report and ensure it is fully understood;
    b. Consider whether it is appropriate or necessary to advise others within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne or to inform relevant authorities;
    c. Determine what action will be taken (if any);
    d. Document all action taken; and
    e. Maintain the confidentiality of all parties (including the person making the report, and any person to whom the report relates) at all times to the extent this is possible. In some cases, it may be necessary to inform relevant authorities or others within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne or the person to whom the report relates. Depending on the nature of the allegation it may be necessary to:
        (i) Inform the police, if the behaviour is or might be criminal;
        (ii) Consider whether a mandatory report must be made to the DHHS under the CYF Act;
        (iii) Make or refer a report to the Independent Commissioner.

Dealing with disclosures by children or a reasonable belief that abuse is or may be occurring in a setting to which this protocol applies

113. If:

    a. A child makes a disclosure to you that sexual, physical or psychological abuse is occurring, or
    b. You form an objectively reasonable belief that a child is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed,

    you should immediately report the matter to Victoria Police who will advise you on the next steps to take.

114. Be aware that the child may be feeling ashamed, guilty and scared, and may be worried about the consequences of telling someone about the abuse. Stay calm and listen carefully to the child. Tell them you believe them and that they did the right thing by telling you. Do not make promises you cannot keep such as promising that you will not tell anyone else.

115. To assist the child, it may be necessary to provide some psychological support and/or counselling or to ensure that such counselling is available to the child.

Taken from
https://www.cam.org.au/ProfessionalStandards/Reporting-Abuse

1.1 When does the Commission need to be told about a reportable allegation?

It is a criminal offence for a head of an organisation to fail to comply with the three business day and 30 calendar day notification obligations without a reasonable excuse.

1.1.1 Three business day notification

When the head of an organisation becomes aware of a reportable allegation against a worker or volunteer, they must notify the Commission for Children and Young People within three business days.

1.1.2 30 calendar day update

Within 30 calendar days after becoming aware of a reportable allegation, a head of an organisation must provide the Commission with detailed information about the allegation, disciplinary or other actions undertaken, and the response of the worker or volunteer to the allegation.

1.1.3 Advice on investigation

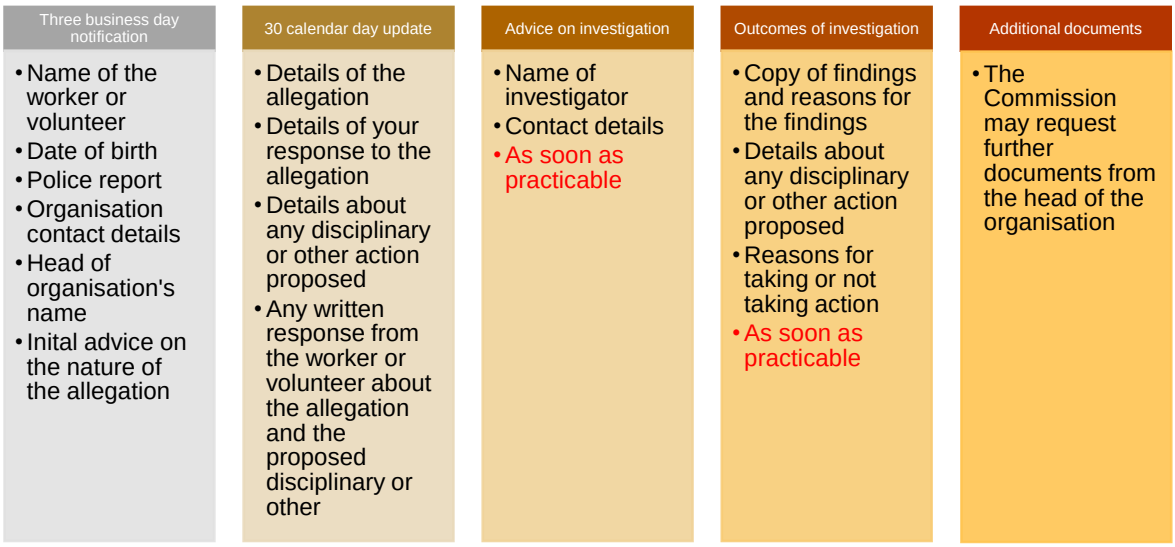
The allegation must be investigated as soon as practicable after the head of organisation becomes aware of it. The investigation may be conducted by the organisation, their regulator or an independent investigator. The head must inform the Commission of who will conduct the investigation.

1.1.4 Outcomes of investigation

At the conclusion of an investigation into a reportable allegation, a final investigation report must be prepared. The final investigation report should set out the findings, reasons for the findings and recommendations made at the conclusion of the investigation. A copy of the final investigation report should be provided to the Commission as soon as practicable.

1.2 What information does the Commission need?

The types of information that the Commission will seek are set out in the diagram below.



The Commission will operate an online form for heads of organisations to notify of a reportable allegation, which will guide them through the notification process. Supporting documentation can be submitted through the online form. The Commission requires that heads of organisations use the online form.

If you are not the head of an organisation you can still tell the Commission about a reportable allegation by using the online form, calling or writing to the Commission.

If you are in doubt about how to complete the online form, we encourage you to contact the Commission for advice and support.

1.3 What matters should be reported to Victoria Police?

All suspected criminal behaviour should be reported to Victoria Police.

If the reportable allegation involves suspected criminal behaviour, both Victoria Police and the Commission must be notified.

If you are unsure of how to proceed, contact the Commission or Victoria Police for guidance.

If an organisation becomes aware that Victoria Police will investigate a reportable allegation, they must not begin or continue their own investigation. Organisations should wait until police advice that its investigation has concluded or that the organisation's investigation may be conducted simultaneously.

1.4 Where to go for help

Organisations covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme should contact the Commission for clarification and guidance, and to talk through any issues of concern.

- Telephone: 8601 5281
- Email: childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au

Further information is also available on the Commission for Children and Young People's website at www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

For further information cf Appendix 1

10. Screening and Recruitment of Staff

Though the **Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary *do not*** employ staff, in the event that this happens the **Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary** will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child-connected work. The Congregation's commitment to child safety and our screening requirements will be included in all advertisements for such employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all applicants will be provided with copies of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy.

11. Child Safety – Education and Training for Staff

The **Augustinian Sisters** have no employed staff and, as such the need for education and training is limited to the immediate Congregational members. However, our Child Safety Policy will be readily accessible both in print and in electronic form for those who wish to access them.

12. Risk Management

The **Augustinian Sisters** are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to child safety who may come into contact with us (physical and online) and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

A risk register has been developed to identify and manage risks. Our Leadership Team includes Child Safety as a regular agenda item in our Meetings and sign off items once discussed.

13. **Relevant Legislation**

- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act.

(a) **Failure to disclose offence**: Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

(b) **Failure to protect offence**: The offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk, but negligently fail to reduce or remove it.

(c) **Grooming offence**: This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

14. Related Policies

14.1 Catholic Archdiocese Melbourne Policies

- Working with Children Check Protocols
- National Police Record Check Policy
- Code of Conduct for Caring for Children “May our children flourish”
- Social medial policy

14.2 Congregational Policies

Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary Privacy policy APPENDIX 2

15. Breach of Policy

Where a **member of the Augustinian Sisters community** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the Sr Lorraine Testa (Congregational Delegate) is to take appropriate action *and / or* contact Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct and Ethics).

Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary Child Protection – Reporting Obligations Policy

16. Review of this Child Safety Policy

The **Augustinian Sisters** are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices. We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly

reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.
We will maintain a history of updates to the policy.

History of Updates to Policy Date Comment

27/03/2018	Draft
18/07/2019	Approval Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary Leadership

(e.g. major review, minor review)

17. Inclusion of All

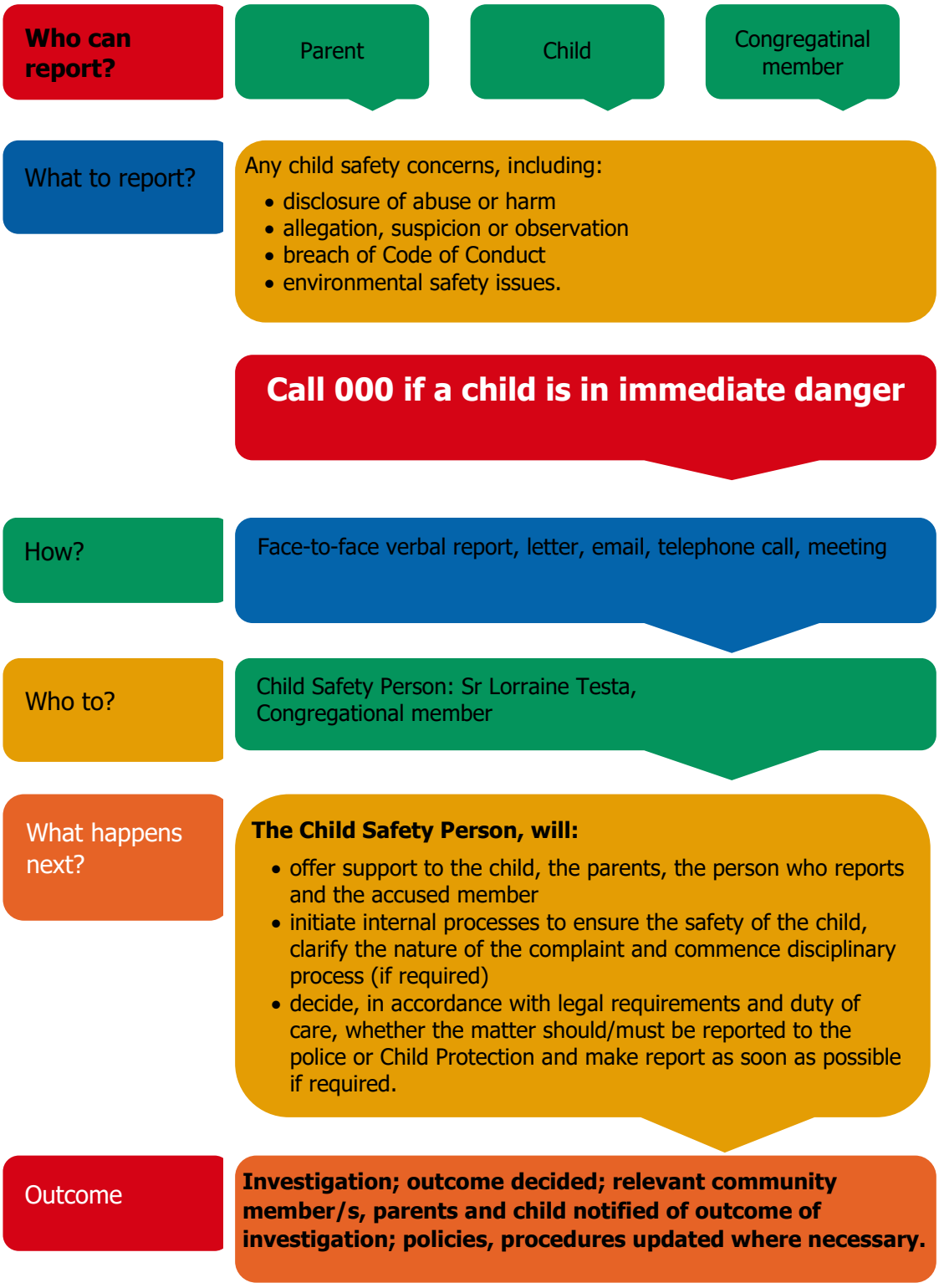
We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

18. References

Catholic Education Melbourne Child Safety Policy Editable Template – June 2016
Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, *Commitment Statement to Child Safety* – September 2016
State of Victoria 2016, ***Child Safe Standards*** – *Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools: Ministerial Order. 870*, Education & Training Reform Act 2006, Victorian Government Gazette No. S2
Victorian Government Department of Justice 2016, ***Betrayal of Trust Implementation.***

APPENDIX

APPENDIX : Reporting flow chart



APPENDIX 2

Privacy Statement

18 July 2019

At Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary we collect information when providing the following parish services and activities:

- Pastoral Care:
- Bereavement, counselling;
- Family and community support;
- Fundraising;

and

- Communication, Invitation and Visitation.

Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary adheres to the following Federal and State legislation:

Information Privacy Act 2000 (Victoria) ; and
Privacy Amendment (Private Sector act 2000 -National).

In the course of providing services, personal information is collected, held and maintained by the Congregation. Privacy is important to us and we are committed to protecting the information we collect.

All information collected will be used only for the primary purpose intended. Where the intention includes confidentially, the information will be retained as such, unless otherwise required by law.

By law, those who wish to access your personal information that is kept on record may request more information about our Privacy Policy by contacting Sr Lorraine Testa.

Sr Lorraine Testa (asjm)
Congregational Delegate, Australia

The 7 Victorian Child Safe Standards

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an applicable entity or individual carrying on a business to which the standards apply must have:

1. strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
2. a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
3. a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

In complying with the child safe standards an organisation must include the following principles as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability.

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 1: **Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
leaders and managers create an organisational culture that protects children from abuse	√		
other staff and volunteers know and understand the organisation's commitment to child safety	√		
leadership is aware of allegations and substantiated cases of abuse and responds in ways that protect children from abuse	√		
there is a commitment to continuous improvement through regular reviews and updating policies and practices	√		

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 1: **Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
leaders and managers are open to scrutiny	√		
strategic direction, vision and mission statement include child safety	√		
responsibility for embedding an organisational culture of safety is built into performance arrangements and position descriptions for senior staff	√		
there is a section on child safety in the annual report		√	
induction/training is provided in recognising and responding to child abuse for all personnel including leadership	√		
induction and training in recognising and responding to child abuse are provided for staff and volunteers		√	
a confidential reporting culture is promoted and adequate record keeping of child safety issues which respect privacy are maintained	√		
child safety and improvements to child safety policies and procedures are a regular item at leadership and staff meetings	√		
child safety policies and procedures are clearly communicated to all staff, volunteers, children and families by publishing policies for child safety on the organisation's website		√	
the organisation's leaders take responsibility for incidents at all levels			
child safety is included as a regular newsletter item	**N/A**		

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.	Already Congregational practice	Not yet in place but able to implement	Details of Archdiocese assistance requested
there are systems to regularly review and improve child safety policies and practices, particularly following any incidents		√	
leaders are asked to dialogue with parents of children with disabilities/special needs regarding how their child can be supported	√		
job descriptions on child safety awareness include a line on aboriginal inclusion, special needs issues and cultural diversity	√		
you have an appropriately trained child safety officer/champion		√	
there is a poster in the church foyer to say who you can contact if help is needed	√		

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 2: Organisations must have a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety.	Already Congregational practice	Not yet in place but able to implement	Details of Archdiocese assistance requested
you have a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that includes a statement or description of: o what child abuse is o statement of zero tolerance of child abuse o statement of commitment to children's safety and best interests o statement on prevention and risk management o description of roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in protecting children, including duty of care of the board, management, staff and volunteers	√		

○ your organisation's commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, cultural safety for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) children and the safety of children with a disability			
the statement or policy could also include: o children's rights and adults' obligations in ensuring child safety, for example by reference to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child o detailed description of the systems for promoting a safe environment, including through the early identification and response to risks o expectations and requirements of staff to ensure the protection of children ○ contact details for organisation's child safety champion/officer.	√		
you have a publicly communicated statement or policy, for example, on your website, annual report, posters around the church, recruitment advertisements, mission or vision statements, welcome packs	√		
statement or policy in child friendly language and design	√		

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 2 (cont.):	Already Congregational practice	Not yet in place but able to implement	Details of Archdiocese assistance requested

Organisations must have a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety.			
board members, staff and volunteers are aware of the organisation's child safe policy and its key provisions. For example, child safety material could be included in staff induction information and welcome packs		√	
the statement is available in community languages, including Aboriginal and CALD languages and in accessible methods for people with a disability		√	

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 3: Code of Conduct **Organisations must have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
you have a code of conduct that provides all staff, volunteers and children with a set of clear principles about how they should behave in a child-safe environment	√		
appropriate behaviour with children is clearly defined, accessible and understood by staff, volunteers, families and children	√		
you have clearly outlined steps staff should take if they identify child safety risks	**N/A**		
staff, volunteers, families and children understand culturally safe behaviour and relationships with Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds		√	
staff, volunteers, families and children understand safe behaviour and		√	

relationships with children with a disability			
children and families from CALD backgrounds can access and understand the code of conduct		√	
efforts have been made to make the code of conduct accessible to children with a disability		√	
Code of conduct includes: o clear and specific standards of conduct for working with children in different situations, for example the code of conduct could cover boundaries for physical contact in responding to a child in distress	√		
Indicators of Child Safe Standard 3 (cont.): Code of Conduct **Organisations must have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
○ clear explanation of appropriate relationships with children for staff, volunteers, parents and children o instruction on how adults should respond to any risks adults may pose to children, or that children may pose to each other ○ recognition of the needs of Aboriginal children and CALD children and culturally appropriate behaviour ○ recognition of any differences in what is considered acceptable behaviour (for example personal care for children with a disability).	√		
requiring staff and volunteers to sign the code of conduct	√		

you have a Code of Conduct for Children in accessible language for children outlining behaviour of children which children can sign	√		
you recognise the needs of children from CALD backgrounds and you require culturally appropriate behaviour and relationships for personnel and children, for example, appreciating the tendency of people from CALD communities to mistrust authority figures	√		

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 4: Human Resources **Organisations must have screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
newly recruited and existing staff and volunteers understand the importance of child safety, are aware of the relevant policies and procedures, and are trained to minimise the risk of child abuse	**N/A**		
your Congregation has designed and adheres to recruitment and selection processes that focus on: ○ factors that may indicate a risk to child safety, i.e. “red flags” (e.g. reluctance to undergo a Working with Children Check or police check) ○ an understanding of child safety ○ understanding and respecting Aboriginal culture, cultural and linguistic diversity and the needs of children with a disability	**N/A**		

you undertake recruitment and selection practices including: ○ Working with Children Checks when required ○ police checks ○ face-to-face interviews where possible ○ interview questions to assess people's motives when working with children ○ referee checks that assess the quality of the applicant's previous experience ○ probation periods ○ references to the child safe policy or statement in recruitment advertisements	**N/A**		
Indicators of Child Safe Standard 4: Human Resources (Cont'd) **Organisations must have screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
board members, staff and volunteers are trained specifically on child safety in ensuring the safety of: ○ Aboriginal children ○ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) children ○ Children with a disability		√	
culturally inclusive recruitment practices are used	**N/A**		
you regularly assess and then provide organisational child safety training needs as part of regular performance review processes		√	
interview questions are asked to understand applicants' past experiences and their understanding of child safety		√	
during interviews, the organisation's culture of valuing child safety is emphasized to underscore its importance to the organisation		√	

information, training and education for employees and volunteers about child abuse and child safety are regularly provided including: ○ what child abuse is ○ how to identify and reduce child abuse risks ○ understanding and appreciating diversity, cultures and languages, including Aboriginal ○ what constitutes inappropriate behaviour between children, and between children and adults, such as grooming, inappropriate sexualised play, bullying and fighting		√	
Indicators of Child Safe Standard 4: Human Resources (Cont'd) **Organisations must have screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
○ building resilience and coping with child abuse incidences the importance of ensuring safe environments for children with a disability, and how to promote this			
you have induction processes to inform new staff and volunteers about child safety policies and processes, including the code of conduct applications from Aboriginal people, people from CALD backgrounds and people with a disability are specifically welcomed		√ √	

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 5: Reporting and Responding **Organisations must have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
you train staff and volunteers on how to report and identify signs of risk		√	

you have clear policies and procedures to ensure families and children know how and to whom to report abuse allegations	√		
you ensure a supportive environment for personnel, families or children who report allegations of abuse or child safety concerns	√		
you have instituted feedback processes for staff, volunteers, children and families on organisational policies and procedures		√	
you have publicised and made accessible for families and children avenues for reporting incidents or concerns. For example, information could have been included in welcome packs and/or on the organisation's website	√		
ensure children are safe, and that procedures for responding to alleged abuse are fair and focus on child safety, for example by suspending the alleged perpetrator or providing them with alternate duties pending investigation	√		
you contact parents/carers as appropriate	√		
you would provide ongoing support (e.g. helping them understand their rights and processes that will follow), and/or make referrals for support (e.g. counselling)	√		
you would ensure allegations of abuse and safety concerns are appropriately recorded and stored securely to protect privacy	√		

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 5 (cont.): Reporting and Responding **Organisations must have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**

you have disciplinary processes that are clearly defined, understood and adhered to by all staff and volunteers	√		
if an allegation of abuse involves a child from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, you ensure the required steps are taken to ensure the child and child's family are supported to understand the situation, including the use of an interpreter if required	√		
where an allegation of abuse involves a child with a disability, steps are taken to ensure the child and their family understand the situation and are supported	√		
you provide contact details for internal and/or external expertise so that staff have access to advice when managing child safety incidents, including expertise relating to culturally and/or linguistically diverse children, and children with a disability	√		
you review organisational child safe policies and procedures and organisational responses following an incident to help drive continuous improvement	√		

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 6: Detect and prevent (risk management) **Organisations must have strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of child abuse.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
you have a clear and accessible process for evaluating risks posed by situations and activities relevant to the organisation, its size and resources, and the children they work with	√		
you develop, record and communicate clear processes for removing risks to children (e.g. rules on online communications that could be included		√	

in the code of conduct or child safe policy, removing staff who may pose a risk)			
you provide staff and volunteers with training in identifying children at risk of abuse and organisational child abuse risks, for example blocked/out-of-sight spaces (especially rooms with doors that can be locked)		√	
you are committed to continued improvement in how risks are managed by learning from past lessons, including policy review and staff training	√		
you adopt a risk management approach by including responsibility for risk identification and management in position descriptions	√		
you institute risk management policies and processes including supervision requirements for children by suitable staff	√		
you include discussion about apparent risks or 'near misses' in team meetings		√	
you encourage early identification and raising awareness of possible risks		√	
you roster staff with experience and qualifications to manage high risk environments		√	

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 6 (cont.): Detect and prevent (risk management) **Organisations must have strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of child abuse.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
you recognise and adapt to the needs of particular children and communities, including Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and children with a disability. For example, you acknowledge that greater staff or volunteer to child ratios may be needed		√	

for some children with a disability			
you recognise and address risks to children with a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background which might exist because of their experiences, for example increased communications with families where that is necessary to build trust and understanding of organisational activities		√	
you recognise and address risks for children with a disability, for example, communication barriers they may face when telling an adult they feel unsafe		√	
you have a central reporting and advisory contact for staff to raise concerns and get advice about what to do if they need to report suspected abuse, for example, a Child Safety Officer		√	

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 7: Empowering children **Organisations must have strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
you have an environment where children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse	√		
you have simple and accessible processes that help children understand their rights and what to do if they want to report inappropriate behaviour	√		
you provide children, including children with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and children with a disability with accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights and how they can raise concerns about		√	

abuse. For example, posters, welcome packs, information sessions as part of Children's Liturgy on Child Safety Sunday, information sheets, websites, social media			
you consider access and culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal children, children from CALD backgrounds and children with a disability when drafting communications materials		√	
you translate organisational information (including information and children's rights, child safe policies, statements of commitment and reporting and response procedures) into relevant community languages, including relevant Aboriginal languages		√	
you ensure services are accessible for people with a disability, for example you provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops		√	
you assist children to understand their right to make decisions about their body and their privacy		√	

Indicators of Child Safe Standard 7 (cont.): Empowering children **Organisations must have strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.**	**Already Congregational practice**	**Not yet in place but able to implement**	**Details of Archdiocese assistance requested**
you ensure children understand how to report an allegation of abuse or concern for their safety to the organisation, a trusted adult and external bodies such as the police	√		
you ensure children's reports of concern are responded to appropriately	√		
you gather feedback from children about whether they feel safe to raise concerns and you implement improvements on your child safe	N/A		

policies and processes based on this feedback			
you ensure your staff understands how to empower children and encourage their participation	**N/A**		
you train your staff and volunteers on methods of empowering children and encouraging children's participation	**N/A**		
you encourage participation and empowerment of children in organisational activities such as organisational planning and decision making		**√**	
you raise awareness in the organisation and community about children's rights, for example by having conversations with families, by including the issues in relevant Congregational news bulletins.	**√**		