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<b>Document</b>	<b>Safeguarding Policy</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Date of next review</b>	<b>July 2022</b>

## Policy

Inspired by its mission and values, McAuley Ministries Limited (MML) recognizes the inherent dignity of all people and the gospel imperative to protect and nurture those who are vulnerable. Consequently, MML is committed to creating and maintaining environments, both real and online, that are safe, supportive, caring and nurturing for all children and vulnerable people.

By adopting a zero-tolerance approach, MML is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable people from all abuse and neglect. In keeping with the Constitutions of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea and relevant church protocols, MML strives to maintain the safety of all children and vulnerable people with whom it has contact.

More specifically, MML is committed to safeguarding the children and vulnerable people in MML's ministries, online and in those places where we work, volunteer or journey with people in our mission.

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

- Code of Conduct which is required to be signed by every sister, staff member, volunteer, and long-term contractor
- Safeguarding Training Overview to outline training responsibilities for all those within the scope of this Policy
- Safe Use of Technology Policy
- Safeguarding Governance: Roles and Responsibilities

These are listed as Supporting Documents in this Policy.

## Scope

This policy applies to all sisters, staff, board members, volunteers and long-term contractors of MML.

## Responsibilities and Obligations

All MML personnel have an obligation to take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of children and vulnerable people with whom they come into contact. MML's safeguarding

responsibility is a shared one at all levels of the organisation.

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

- i. Embedding a culture of safety and respect in MML's leadership, governance, and practice.
- ii. Prioritising the safety and best interests of the children and vulnerable adults with whom we work. We plan, organise, and review all activities with children, proactively considering potential risks and strive to ensure risks are reduced and eliminated where possible.
- iii. Encouraging everyone to communicate any area of concern and to identify where our approach may need improvement.
- iv. Understanding the nature and risks of abuse and taking deliberate and immediate steps to prevent it. In particular, we actively seek to become and remain informed of the causes and signs of child abuse and neglect.
- v. Encouraging the participation of children, vulnerable adults, families, and communities in providing feedback on and input into decision making about safety. We listen to the voices of children as we constantly strive to remain vigilant and make improvements.
- vi. Responding to complaints of abuse sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in accordance with our lawful obligations and our own policies and procedures. This includes contacting police immediately where there may be an immediate risk of harm to any person, especially to any child or vulnerable adult.
- vii. Undertaking regular internal and external auditing of our safeguarding policies and practices to ensure an ongoing culture of safety and respect for all.
- viii. Providing adequate supervision.
- ix. Following procedures relating to children's and vulnerable person's safety, welfare, and well-being (for example, reporting procedures).
- x. Demonstrating personal behaviours that promote the safety, welfare and well-being of children and vulnerable persons as outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- xi. Providing medical assistance (if competent to do so) or seeking assistance from a medically trained person to aid a child or vulnerable person who is injured or becomes sick.
- xii. Paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who are unable to live at home and children of diverse sexuality.
- xiii. Protecting a child or vulnerable person from known hazards that pose a risk of harm and which can be reasonably predicted.
- xiv. Taking appropriate action where a child or a vulnerable person's safety, welfare or well-being is at risk.

Our duty of care to children and to vulnerable people applies during all activities and functions conducted or arranged by MML, including engagement in online environments, where children or vulnerable persons are in our care.

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

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

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

## **Review**

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

## **Definitions**

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

“**ISM PNG**” means Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, a religious institute of pontifical right and a public juridic person within the Catholic Church.

“**Vulnerable person**” refers to any person aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.

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

## **Supporting Documents**

Code of Conduct

Safe Use of Technology Policy

Safeguarding Governance: Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding Training Overview

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## Version Control Page

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