

# SISTERS OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN in the PHILIPPINES

## Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct



*“Safeguarding children and adults at risk is everyone’s responsibility.”*

### Contents

A.	INTRODUCTION.....	2
B.	PURPOSE .....	2
C.	SCOPE .....	2
D.	OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING .....	3
E.	POLICIES .....	3
	Community Engagement .....	3
	Risk Management .....	4
	Complaints Management .....	4
	Reporting .....	4
	Confidentiality and Record Keeping .....	4
	Recruitment and Screening .....	4
	Partners in Ministry .....	5
	Training and Support .....	5
F.	CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT FOLLOWING THE POLICY .....	5
G.	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	5
H.	POLICY REVIEW .....	6
I.	Code of Conduct .....	7
	ANNEX 1: Definition of Terms.....	8
	Annex 2: Reporting Safeguarding Concerns.....	10

### A. INTRODUCTION

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan (SGS) considers the commitment to the safeguarding of children, young people, and adults at risk to be at the forefront of their work and decision making.

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan in the Philippines (GSMP) has developed this Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct to help meet that commitment. It has been developed to align with Sisters of the Good Samaritan [Safeguarding-Policy](#) and the, Sisters of the Good Samaritan Code of Practice. It should be read alongside these documents.

This policy has also been developed to align with the Australian National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and child protection legislation in the Philippines.

Other relevant documents include:

- Sisters of the Good Samaritan Philippines Safeguarding Risk Management Plan.
- Sisters of the Good Samaritan Governance Committee
- Safeguarding Procedures Good Samaritan Kinder School
- Safeguarding Procedures Good Samaritan Outreach Centre

**Refer to Annex 1 for definitions** of the key terms used in this Policy.

### B. PURPOSE

All children and adults at risk are unique, special individuals with their own dignity and rights. Every person is made in the image and likeness of God and possess their own innate vulnerability. Every person deserves special protection from any form of harassment that would endanger their dignity and life. We will strive to overcome any form of abuse of children or adults at risk such as exploitation, discrimination, and violence, and ensure at all times the best interests of the person, especially those with whom we minister.

The purpose (aim) of the GSMP Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct is to:

- Foster a culture of safety, protection, and care for both children and adults at risk, ensuring our facilities and programs are appropriate and safe for children and adults at risk.
- Express an ongoing commitment and proactive approach to safeguarding and empowering all children and adults at risk in our places of ministry.
- Outline our safeguarding model and ensure all involved in our Good Samaritan Ministries are aware of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities.
- Emphasize a zero-tolerance approach to abuse in all its forms and embed practices that protect children and adults from harm.

### C. SCOPE

The Safeguarding Policy applies to

- All Good Samaritan Sisters, oblates, employees, volunteers, and contractors in the Philippines.
- Our Partners in Ministry
- Immersion Groups
- Any other visitors to our Ministries.

The Policy applies across all Sisters of the Good Samaritan Ministries in the Philippines. It also applies to any activities or engagement online.

The policy applies at all times.

## **D. OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING**

We have zero tolerance to any attitude or action that makes children and adults less than safe. All staff/team/volunteers connected to the GSMP are committed to:

- Prioritising the safety and wellbeing of all children and adults at risk.
- Upholding safeguarding principles and values.
- Being respectful, compassionate, and upholding the dignity of others.
- Preventing any person from working with us if they pose an unacceptable risk.
- Ensuring that all concerns, suspicions, or incidents of actual or a risk of harm will be treated seriously.
- Continually strengthening our approach to safeguarding.

### **Principles And Values**

The following principles apply to the implementation of this Policy:

- Our leaders will prioritise and promote safeguarding culture across all Ministries in the Philippines, including by collaborating and advocating with our Partners in Ministry.
- We will defend the rights of children from all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation and discrimination and other conditions prejudicial to their development and well-being.
- We take a child rights approach. Every child has the right to survival, development, participation, and protection in accordance with the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Children. These rights are interdependent, indivisible and should be respected, promoted, and protected so that every child can enjoy a full life.
- We believe that all people have the right to live their lives free from abuse and harm. Our approach to safeguarding is applied without discrimination. We strive for equity and inclusivity that addresses gender inequality and other power imbalances to ensure safety for children and adults at risk regardless of a child (or their parents) or adults at risk identify, sex, race, color, sex, language, political or other opinion, ethnicity, paternity, affiliation, birth status, age, disability, nationality, sexual or gender identity.
- GSMP will defend the rights of children through preventative and risk management systems. While we cannot entirely eliminate risk; we ensure that risk management processes are in place to carefully identify, mitigate, manage, or reduce safeguarding risks across our Ministries.

## **E. POLICIES**

GSMP will create and maintain safe environments for children and adults at risk by implementing the following Policy Settings.

### **Community Engagement**

We will ensure children, families and communities are informed of our approach to safeguarding by:

- Making the Safeguarding Policy visible in the workplace.
- Displaying a sign/information about how to report concerns in each workplace.
- Displaying the contact details of the focal person for reporting cases of abuse and exploitation in every workplace.

## **SISTERS OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN in the PHILIPPINES**

Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct

---

### **Risk Management**

Sisters of the Good Samaritan Philippines have a Risk Management Plan that identifies, assesses, and manages risk across each of its Ministries. The Risk Management Plan is a living document that is reviewed and updated regularly and includes an updated assessment of safeguarding risks. It considers safeguarding risks associated with its Ministries, activities, people, and sites. It also considers risks for Immersion Groups when they are visiting the Philippines. It is presented to each AGM of the Incorporation.

### **Complaints Management**

We welcome feedback and complaints from anyone, including any child, adult at risk, Sister, Oblate, employee, volunteer, contractor, partner, or member of the public.

To encourage feedback, including safeguarding complaints every workplace will have:

- A sign displaying how to report concerns will be visible at all workplaces.
- A suggestion box or safeguarding complaint box that is accessible. The Box will be regularly checked by the safeguarding officer, and the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- Every workplace will display contact details of the safeguarding focal person for reporting cases of abuse and exploitation.

Complaints can be made by

- Face to Face meeting at the Outreach Centre or the Kinder to any person you are comfortable to talk with.
- By phone or text message to 094 20857884 (Anne, Director of Outreach Centre), 099 99154570 (Marites, Principal of Kinder)
- By email: [adixon@goodsams.org.au](mailto:adixon@goodsams.org.au)
- Into the suggestion boxes.

If the complaint relates to a safeguarding concern, we will follow the process for reporting safeguarding concerns (Refer Annex 2).

### **Reporting**

If any Sister, staff, volunteers, contractors, or partners has any concerns or suspicions or is aware of any allegations of child abuse or exploitation or the abuse or exploitation of a vulnerable adult, or that any of our people are not following our Safeguarding Policy or Conduct, they must report.

The Good Samaritan Kinder School has a separate Safeguarding Procedure that outlines the process for immediate and required reporting for any internal and external concerns of suspected cases of child abuse, exploitation, or policy noncompliance.

All other Ministries follow this reporting process outlined in Annex 2: Reporting Process.

### **Confidentiality and Record Keeping**

Hard copy records are kept in locked cupboards in the Director or Principal's offices. Electronic records are saved to a password protected external drive. Only authorized people can access the records.

### **Recruitment and Screening**

When staff are recruitment, we

- Advertising roles. This is done both online and with a sign on the board outside the school/centre.
- Approval for the role through the governance committee and Superior Council.
- Interviewing, using questions guidelines.
- Reference checks, using a structured checklist.
- Any role that will have contact with, or work with, children, young people or adults at risk must have a police check (or equivalent) before commencing their role. These will be renewed every 2 years (or earlier if required).

## **SISTERS OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN in the PHILIPPINES**

Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct

---

### **Partners in Ministry**

We acknowledge that our Partners in Ministry<sup>1</sup> may have their own Safeguarding Policies and Process to follow. However, it is our responsibility to ensure that our Partner's policies meet or exceed our Policy Settings. Partners in Ministry provide their safeguarding policies for review annually through the Governance Committee.

Where Policies and processes are not in place or do not meet our standards, our expectation is that our Partners will follow this Policy. We include these expectations into our partnership arrangements.

We orient Partners to this Policy and Code of Conduct when we begin working together. We also refresh information when contracts are reviewed or renewed.

### **Training and Support**

Everyone in scope of this Policy is expected to behave in accordance with its principles, commitments, and policy settings, including the code of conduct.

We must ensure that all staff, volunteers, contractor, and Partners receive training and support so that we can take positive steps to ensure the protection of all, including abiding by this Policy, associated processes, and the Code of Conduct.

We achieve this by providing all Sisters, staff, and volunteers with:

- A copy of this Policy and requiring them to declare that they have received and understood it. This commitment is refreshed as part of annual contract renewals.
- An orientation into this Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, including any additional processes outlined in the Annexes.
- An annual workshop/training/professional development session about safeguarding. Staff and volunteers at the Good Samaritan Kinder School will attend at least two (2) sessions per year.
- Additional training will be provided for designated staff and volunteers such as those with direct contact with children, those who have responsibility to handle child abuse complaints and investigations.
- Safeguarding will form part of an annual professional standard performance evaluation.

## **F. CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT FOLLOWING THE POLICY**

It is compulsory to follow this Policy and the Code of Conduct. Noncompliance or breach of the Policy will be reported and investigated.

## **G. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The congregation and GSMP recognise that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Everyone is expected to adhere to this Policy and participate in the required safeguarding training. In addition to roles and associated responsibilities outlined in the Sisters of the Good Samaritan Safeguarding Policy, there are roles and responsibilities specific to the Philippines. These include:

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<sup>1</sup> Our current Partners include: The Holy Infants' Orphanage, Prison Ministry, Seminaries, Henrietta Village, Concepcion Parish.

Good Samaritan Kinder School Partners include children, staff, parents, and visitors.

Good Samaritan Outreach Center Partners include Center teams, volunteers, Tertiary Scholars, Bacolod Support Fund Scholars, Prison inmates, staff and volunteers, Post release women, Holy Infants' Orphanage children, staff, volunteers, and visitors.

## **SISTERS OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN in the PHILIPPINES**

### Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct

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#### Superior and Council

- Approve and have oversight of the Philippines Safeguarding Policy and Risk management plans.
- Provide oversight of Safeguarding External Reports and Safeguarding Investigations.
- Provide oversight of internal investigations, including implementing any required processes for standing a Sister or Staff member down during an investigation, and ensuring she is supported during this time.

#### Good Samaritan Ministries Philippines Religious Corporation (Board of Trustees)

- Review and recommend Policy for approval to the Superior Council
- Receive safeguarding reports and Risk Management Plan at the Annual General Meeting.
- Receive information about safeguarding cases at extraordinary meetings.

#### Good Samaritan Ministries Philippines Governance Committee

Monitor and provide advice about ways to continually improve the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Risk Management. The Governance Committee will also provide support and advice about drafting and reviewing Policy.

#### Principal of the Kinder School and the Director of the Outreach Centre.

- Ensure all Sisters and staff are aware of this Policy and understand what is expected from them.
- Prepare and review risk registers and implement risk management.
- Ensure Safeguarding Desk is operational.
- Provide safeguarding support and supervision to Sisters and staff in their respective Ministries.

#### Safeguarding Coordinator

- Champion, promote and review the Safeguarding Policy and Risk Management Processes.
- Ensure all Sisters are aware of this Policy and understand what is expected from them.
- Support Directors to assess protection risks.
- Deliver annual Children and Adults at risk Protection Workshop for Sisters and Staff in the Philippines.
- Receive and respond to safeguarding concerns and complaints.
- Complete internal and external reporting for all safeguarding concerns and complaints
- Conduct Safeguarding Workplace Investigation, with support from the President of the Corporation.

#### Safeguarding Desks

In addition to the local safeguarding team functions, the Safeguarding Desk Officer accepts, and records safeguarding complaints and supports the Safeguarding Coordinator with reporting and record keeping.

#### Good Samaritan Local Safeguarding Team

The team is composed of the Philippines Safeguarding Coordinator and Safeguarding Desk Staff from the Kinder School and the Good Samaritan Outreach Center.

- Promote the Philippines Safeguarding Policy in all their ministries and advocate for the prevention of any form of abuse of children and adults at risk.
- Facilitate proper systematic handling of cases and coordination with various institutions involved in handling cases of abuse.
- Ensure information about keeping children safe is disseminated through designated persons.
- Address barriers to receiving safeguarding complaints and concerns.

## **H. POLICY REVIEW**

We are committed to continually strengthening our approach to safeguarding. This Policy and the Code of Conduct (Section I) will be reviewed at least every 2 years. It will also be reviewed following any safeguarding incidents to make sure it is working well.

## I. Code of Conduct

### All Sisters of the Good Samaritan in Philippines, Oblates, Employees and Volunteers:

#### Must Always

- Adhere to this Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct
- Use positive, non-violent methods to manage children's behaviour both within and outside of the workplace.
- Live our commitment to safeguarding in our daily practice and build a culture of safeguarding for all.
- Treat each other with equal respect, warmth, and opportunity.
- Be a role model for all, including for children, by demonstrating positive behaviour in accord with the Gospel and the Vision and Mission of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan.
- Use child appropriate language.
- Challenge bullying, harassing or abuse behaviour.
- Be welcoming, safe and supportive, especially of children and adults at risk.
- Ensure that another adult is present when working with or near children.
- Ensure that all information about children and adults at risk is stored safely and securely.
- Obtain informed consent from a child's parent/guardian before photographing or filming them. Ensuring that any photos/film taken represents the child respectfully.
- Use common sense and avoid actions that are abusive or exploitative of adults or children or could be construed as such.
- Act when any person, especially a child or vulnerable adult is harmed or at risk of harm.
- Report any concerns about harm to children or adults at risk.
- Report any concerns about others not following the Safeguarding Policy or Code of Conduct.
- Keep any reports confidential (private) and not share information with anyone who does not need to know.
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or during association with SGS.

#### Must Never

- Harm a child or vulnerable adult, including any of the defined forms of abuse.
- Use physical or corporal punishment. – this means no smacking, no hitting, no slapping, no pushing.
- Engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services.
- View, produce, access, procure, or distribute child exploitation material through any medium.
- View, produce, access, procure, or distribute adult pornographic material using our organisation's equipment.
- Engage adults at risk or children in any activity that is not safe for them or behave in a way that might cause them harm.
- Engage in personal actions or behaviours that could be perceived as child exploitation and abuse.
- Shame, belittle or degrade a child or vulnerable adult.
- Use language or behaviour towards children or adults that is inappropriate, bullying, harassing, or demeaning.
- Make sarcastic comments under the guise of humour or jokes.
- Making putdowns (demeaning comments)
- Misuse power over any person (children, adults at risk, family members, community members).
- Practice favouritism in delivery of our programs.
- Be intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst on duty.
- Invite unaccompanied children into private residences unless there is a genuine requirement to protect them from immediate risk of injury or physical danger.
- Sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case the supervisor's permission must be obtained, and ensure that another adult is present if possible (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children).

## ANNEX 1: Definition of Terms

Adult at Risk	<p>Means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who are elderly</li><li>• With a disability</li><li>• Who suffer from mental illness</li><li>• Who have diminished capacity</li><li>• Who have cognitive impairment</li><li>• Who have suffered previous abuse</li><li>• Who are experiencing transient risks</li><li>• Who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance</li><li>• Who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</li><li>• Who are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background</li><li>• Who are of diverse sexuality</li><li>• Who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult from them to protect themselves from abuse.</li></ul>
Child	<p>Any person under the age of 18. We generally refer to children aged 16-17 as young people or teenagers.</p>
Child Abuse	<p>The act or failure to act by a person that results in actual or potential harm to a child. It includes all forms of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect. Child Abuse can occur in private or public spaces.</p>
Child Safeguarding:	<p>The actions, processes and systems organisations put in place to keep children, young people, and adults at risk safe. Safeguarding has an internal focus.</p>
Child Protection:	<p>The action taken by countries, governments, and individuals (families, communities) to protect children from abuse and exploitation. Child Protection has an external focus.</p>
Grooming	<p>Refers to behaviour that makes it easier for an offender to procure a child for sexual activity. For example, an offender might build a relationship of trust with the child, and then seek to sexualise that relationship<sup>2</sup>. Grooming behaviours and tactics are often complex and gradual. They can involve a range of subtle, drawn out, calculated, controlling and premeditated behaviours.<sup>3</sup> Grooming can involve behaviour in person and activities on social media, email, or phone.</p> <p>Grooming behaviour can involve the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques used to build trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour. Grooming is often described as the ‘preparation’ phase of child sexual abuse, undertaken by the perpetrator to gain the trust of a child, and to establish secrecy and silence.<sup>4</sup> Perpetrators may groom to gain access to a child, initiate and</p>

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<sup>2</sup> DFAT Child Protection Policy 2017 [child-protection-policy.docx \(live.com\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Royal Commission, [Final report: Volume 4, Identifying and disclosing child sexual abuse](#), p 12.

<sup>4</sup> Bravehearts, [What is grooming?](#), Bravehearts website.



## SISTERS OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN in the PHILIPPINES

### Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct

---

maintain sexual abuse of that child, and to conceal the sexual abuse from others who may identify it.<sup>5</sup>

#### Harassment

Harassment refers to any act, conduct, statement, or request, whether intentional or unintentional, verbal or written, which is unwelcome by another person or other persons and creates a hostile or intimidating work environment and which could, in all circumstances, reasonably be regarded as behaviour of an inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive, humiliating, or intimidating nature, or as an intrusion of privacy.

#### Sexual Abuse

The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

#### Sexual Exploitation

Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

#### Sexual Harassment

Any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation. Sexual harassment may involve any conduct of a verbal, nonverbal or physical nature, including written and electronic communications, and may occur between persons of the same or different genders.

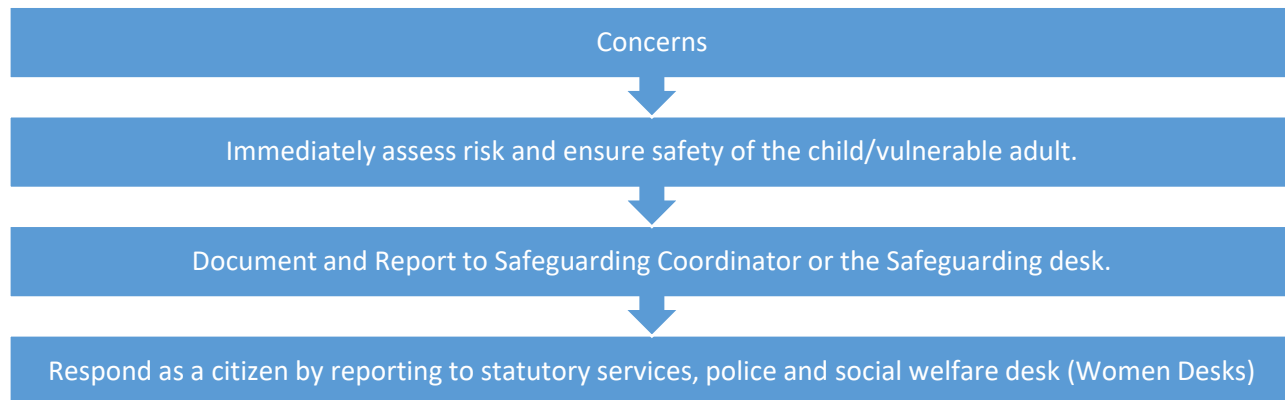
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<sup>5</sup> Royal Commission, [Final report: Volume 4, Identifying and disclosing child sexual abuse](#), p 12.

## Annex 2: Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

The process for reporting safeguarding concerns is outlined below. We require all Sisters, Oblates, Staff, and contractors (except for the Kindy, who have a separate Procedure) to follow this process.

### Process Flow Chart: If alleged perpetrator is in the community and unrelated to Sisters of the Good Samaritan Ministries.



### Process Flow Chart: If Alleged perpetrator is a Sister, staff, volunteer, contractor, or Partner.

