

Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary
Safeguarding Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction (Pg. 3)
2. Safeguarding Commitment Statement (Pg. 3)
3. Scope (Pg. 4)
4. Roles & Responsibilities (Pg. 4)
5. Recruitment & Training for Safeguarding and HR (Pg. 4)
6. Risk Management (Pg. 5)
7. Privacy & Record Keeping (Pg. 5)
8. Related Policies, Procedures, Documents and Legislation (Pg. 5)
9. Appendices (Pg. 6...)
 - A Definitions & Abbreviations (Pg. 6)
 - B Organisational Chart (Pg. 9)

1. Introduction:

History of the Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary (ISSM), Australia (Hereafter will be referred to as ISSM)

ISSM arrived in Western Australia in 1951 where they have continued to serve until the present. In 1957 some sisters moved to NSW and have been in active apostolic work in the Sydney area from 1966. Their present main centres are at Mt Schoenstatt Mulgoa NSW 2745 and Schoenstatt Centre Mt Richon WA 6112. Our primary apostolic activities are directed towards families, women and girls.

The Schoenstatt Movement

The Schoenstatt Movement is an international apostolic movement, which has expanded to every continent and has members from all vocations and walks in life. As a renewal movement, it has a marked apostolic and lay character; its pedagogy and spirituality are particularly suitable for those who live in the world and must face an increasingly de-Christianized and materialistic environment. It is a spiritual family whose many branches and communities join to form a single Schoenstatt Movement. In Australia, the Movement consists of branches concerned with the spiritual formation of priests, families, single women, mothers, men and youth.

Purpose of the Safeguarding Policy

The aim of this Safeguarding Policy is to highlight the way forward for ISSM, the Schoenstatt Movement in Australia and their ministries' commitment in making sure it champions a safe and supportive environment for all. Safeguarding is about ensuring that there are measures to protect the safety, human rights, and wellbeing of individuals, which allows people – in this context, children and adults who may be at risk – to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

We do this by using a trauma informed approach that has six principles at the forefront:

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and transparency
3. Collaboration and mutuality
4. Empowerment, voice, and choice
5. Peer support
6. Cultural, historical and gender issues

2. Safeguarding Commitment Statement:

The Members of the Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary and the Schoenstatt Movement in Australia, hereafter referred to as "Schoenstatt Australia", are committed to protecting the rights of children, young people and adults at risk to be safe and to grow and develop in environments that are free from violence, exploitation and harm.

Schoenstatt Australia recognises and acknowledges that the Church has failed to protect and care for persons who were harmed by the Church in the past and understands that it needs to ensure that all children and adults at risk coming into contact with Schoenstatt Australia are safe and protected.

All levels of our community commit to the safety and protection of children, young people and adults at risk. At the same time, the community has clear expectations that children, young people and adults at risk, while involved in activities at Schoenstatt will be protected from all forms of harm including sexual, physical and psychological harm as well as ill-treatment and neglect. Schoenstatt Australia is supportive of these expectations and take seriously our responsibility to promote the safety and protection of children, young people and adults at risk who participate in our activities.

Schoenstatt Australia commits to complying with the policies indicated in this document (Cf. No. 7 b), and it is expected that members, employees or volunteers engaged with other catholic entities also commit to the relevant policies of those entities where applicable.

3. **Scope**

This Policy applies to anyone who serves as a Member, Employee or Volunteer of Schoenstatt Australia.

It is expected that the safeguarding principles within this policy and the safeguarding requirements of the local dioceses in which Schoenstatt Australia serve will be followed and upheld.

4. **Roles & Responsibilities** [Please refer to Appendix B for Organisational Chart]

The oversight of this policy and its implementation rests with the ISSM Board of Trustees in Mulgoa, NSW.

Two delegated Members of the Board are responsible for Safeguarding matters. One is responsible for both New South Wales and Victoria and one for Western Australia.

A *Working With Children Check Administrator* is appointed for each state and is responsible for verifying roles that work directly with children, young people and adults at risk in accordance with their state laws.

Delegation of further responsibilities for various ministry areas at each Movement Centre lie with the Safeguarding Officers for:

- Events and Programs of the Schoenstatt Movement – to the local Movement Coordinator,
- Retreat and Movement Houses – to the local House Superior or Spirituality Centre Management Team

The ISSM Board of Trustees meets at a minimum four times annually and has Safeguarding as a standing agenda item to monitor any related issues.

5. **Recruitment & Training**

Our recruitment and induction training for **all Members in active ministry, employees, and those volunteers holding roles of responsibility** includes:

- Induction Process for employees and volunteers relating to safeguarding and managing risks to children, young people and adults at risk.
- Training on the Code of Conduct. [Refer to the ‘Schoenstatt Code of Conduct - Safeguarding’]
- Other areas such as: Work, Health and Safety, Acceptable Use of Electronic and Social Media and Risk Management Strategies.

Employees will be provided with HR Training, including training on Workplace legislation, WHS, Social Media and Electronic Communications Protocols and Risk Management, at the time of their appointment and when necessary.

Members, employees and volunteers will be required to complete and renew Safeguarding Training every three years.

Members, Employees or Volunteers who work directly with children are required to submit a current Working With Children Check Number for verification. The WWWC Administrator for each state will verify this number according to the procedures of the state (Cf. Safeguarding Training)

6. Risk Management

A process has been put in place to conduct a risk management assessment regarding the safety and well-being of children, young people and adults at risk for each venue coming under the control of Schoenstatt Australia. This assessment should be reviewed prior to each event organised by Schoenstatt Australia. (Refer to our Risk Management policies for Events)

7. Privacy & Record Keeping

In relation to Privacy, it is our policy to operate Schoenstatt Australia in a manner that reflects the principles in our Code of Conduct:

1. A profound respect for the individuality of all in our care
2. An education and formation tradition based on love rather than power and control and which meets our legal rights and obligations in regard to privacy and confidentiality, by ensuring compliance with the provisions of relevant privacy legislation. Refer to our Privacy policy

8. Related Legislation, Policies, Procedures, Documents

a. Legislation:

State Legislation
New South Wales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Children and Young Person’s (Care and Protection) Act 1998</i> ○ <i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012</i> ○ <i>Children’s Guardian Act 2019</i> ○ <i>Crimes Act 1900</i>
Victoria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i> ○ <i>Working with Children Act 2005</i> ○ <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i> ○ <i>Crimes Act 1958</i>
Western Australia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Children and Community Services Act 2004</i>

- *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*
- *Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913- crimes as defined by the state*
- *Parliamentary Commissioner Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2022.*

Federal Legislation

- *Privacy Act*
- *Disability and Discrimination Act*
- *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 and related Rules*
- *Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018 and the Aged Care Act 1997*
- *Fair Work System*

b. Policies:

GENERAL POLICIES

[Code of Conduct](#)

Human Recourses Policy

[Dress Code Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Managing Workplace Complaints Policy](#)

[Preventing Discrimination, Harassment & Bullying Policy](#)

[Risk Assessment Policy](#)

[WWCC Process](#)

c. Procedures:

- i. Working With Children Check – Verifying Procedure*
- ii. Schoenstatt Safeguarding Training Procedure*

Members, Employees and Volunteers of Schoenstatt Australia will complete the Safeguarding Training offered by their respective Diocese.

Information regarding Safeguarding Training, including requirements and registration details, can be found using one of the following links or can be found on the local diocesan website:

Archdiocese of Sydney <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/safeguarding-and-child-protection/safeguarding-resources/>

Diocese of Parramatta <https://parracatholic.org/safeguarding/training/>

Archdiocese of Perth <https://safeguarding.perthcatholic.org.au/training/>

Archdiocese of Melbourne <https://safeguarding.melbournecatholic.org/>

Please forward your safeguarding certificates to the relevant Safeguarding Officer (see organisational chart – page 9).

d. Additional Resources:

Further guidance may be found in the following resources:

- NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian Child Safe Standards

- National Response Protocol: Church Authorities in Australia responding to concerns and allegations of child abuse (Implementation February 2021)
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Second Edition)
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Implementation Guide
- Integrity in our Common Mission 2023

9. Appendices

Appendix A: Definitions & Abbreviations

Schoenstatt Australia		
Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Mount Schoenstatt Spirituality Centre	MSSC	Retreat and Conference Facility in Mulgoa NSW
Schoenstatt Movement in Australia		Members of the Schoenstatt Apostolic Movement who have officially entered into the Covenant of Love in a League Branch of the Movement. These League Branches include: priests, families, women, men, young adults and youth.
Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary	ISSM	A community of lay consecrated women, founded in 1926 in Germany; began work in Australia in 1951 with the mission to help in the renewal of the Church through a Covenant of Love with Mary, the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt.
Schoenstatt Centre WA		Shrine and Conference Centre in Mount Richon WA

Term	Explanation
Adults at Risk	<p>... are people over the age of 18 who are at increased risk of abuse, including those who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are elderly - have a disability - have a mental illness - have diminished capacity - have cognitive impairment - are exercising transient risks e.g. 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 <p>While taking care to not make assumptions or generalisations about individuals, we recognize that other aspects of a person's identity or life experiences may also increase their risk of vulnerability to abuse or harm, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Child/Children	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.

Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement	A Commitment Statement describing an entity's commitment to keep children safe from harm. It informs the entity's culture with respect to child safeguarding.
Code of Conduct	An entity's document that outlines a special set of rules for all people who work or help out in an organization. In the Church, this outlines acceptable behaviour for Priests, Religious, employees and those involved in voluntary ministry to ensure the Church and its ministries are safe for all and especially safe for children and young people.
Grooming	This refers to communication with a child where there is an intention to meet and commit a sex offence with the child. More generally, it is the process by which an individual manipulates the child and those around, to provide opportunities to abuse by reducing the likelihood of being reported or discovered.
Risk Management	Managing coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regards to risk. The process of identifying risks, assessing risks and developing strategies to manage risks.
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.
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's 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.

Organisational Chart

