



Missionary Society of St Paul (Australian Province) Code of Conduct

1. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The Missionary Society of St Paul (MSSP) is committed to fostering a culture of safety and care for children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with the MSSP and its works in Australia. The MSSP unequivocally commits to promoting the dignity and integrity of every person. To meet this commitment, this Code of Conduct has been developed in consultation with relevant parties. The provision of a safe and supportive environment is essential to ensure that our members, employees, volunteers and those with whom they work are affirmed in their dignity and worth as people.

2. PURPOSE & SCOPE

This Code of Conduct applies to all MSSP religious, all paid employees, volunteers under the auspice of the MSSP and contractors. The safety of children and young people is core to the Society's mission and is reflected in this Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct should be read alongside the MSSP Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and related documents. The Code also complements other documents of the Catholic Church and relevant legislation, policies and procedures.

3. WHEN DOES THE CODE APPLY?

The Code of Conduct applies to all MSSP religious, paid employees, volunteers and contractors:

- a) in the performance of their duties
- b) during MSSP activities and at MSSP-related events (whether convened by the MSSP or not,)
- c) when their association with the MSSP is identifiable (eg: while using social media from a personal computer in personal time if the MSSP is listed on social media as the employer).

Before commencing any role, personnel must sign an acknowledgement that they have reviewed the Code of Conduct, agree to comply with it, and understand the consequences of breaching the Code. Personnel will then be required to review and sign the Code of Conduct annually.

4. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

In performing their duties, it is expected that all MSSP religious, and all their employees, volunteers and contractors will support the core values of the MSSP and have a responsibility to meet the high standards of professional and ethical behaviour expected. MSSP religious, their employees, volunteers working under the auspice of the MSSP and contractors must comply with legislative requirements, with this Code and

any policies and procedures that are implemented by Australian church authorities including *Integrity in Ministry - A document of principles and standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia* and *Integrity in the Service of the Church - A resource document of principles and standards for lay workers in the Catholic Church in Australia*

- 4.1.1 Respectfully listen to and receive information and suggestions from others in a collaborative way
- 4.1.2 Make well-considered justifiable decisions, especially where they may have an adverse impact on others
- 4.1.3 Report suspected unethical behaviour or wrong-doing by another to an appropriate person or in accordance with the MSSP's procedure for reportable conduct
- 4.1.4 Admit and take responsibility for their mistakes and work to rectify problems as quickly as possible
- 4.1.5 Engage in genuine dialogue with other personnel and stakeholders through transparent, open, honest and consistent communication and consultation
- 4.1.6 Be accountable in all work that they do and act with authenticity, sincerity and integrity
- 4.1.7 Perform duties diligently, ethically and conscientiously
- 4.1.8 Not use their position for advantage or personal gain
- 4.1.9 Avoid any conduct, including alcohol or substance abuse or misuse, which would adversely affect their work performance
- 4.1.10 Act equitably, fairly and reasonably and treat others with honesty, respect, courtesy, sensitivity and compassion
- 4.1.11 Take an inclusive approach that does not discriminate against or harass any person because of their gender, sex, marital status, pregnancy, age, race, ethnic or national origin, physical or intellectual impairment or sexual orientation or gender identity. Such harassment or discrimination may constitute an offence under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*.
- 4.1.12 Behave and communicate in a manner that does not intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate, and which does not harass, sexually harass, unlawfully discriminate or bully
- 4.1.13 Maintain a respectful, co-operative and collaborative approach to all working and work-related and pastoral relationships.

5. SAFEGUARDING MINORS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The safeguarding of children and young people is fundamental to our work. It underpins all decision making and we are committed to giving children and vulnerable adults a voice. 'Child' means any individual under the age of 18 years.

Acceptable Behaviours:

All MSSP religious, their employees, volunteers and contractors have a responsibility to:

- 5.1.1 Use language or behaviour that is appropriate and in no way harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- 5.1.2 Use computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras and social media appropriately and not as a means to exploit, harass or place children and vulnerable adults at risk

- 5.1.3 Obtain informed consent before photographing, filming or audio-recording others. An explanation of how the photograph, film or recording will be used must be understood by all parties involved
- 5.1.4 Report suspected unethical behaviour or wrongdoing by another to an appropriate person or in accordance with the MSSP's procedure for reportable conduct
- 5.1.5 Always adhere to the Society's Child Safe Policies and protocols and uphold the Society's 'Statement of Commitment to Child Safety'
- 5.1.6 Take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse and harm
- 5.1.7 Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- 5.1.8 Report any allegations of child abuse to the police or to the relevant authorities
- 5.1.9 Understand and comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting, reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and reporting under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- 5.1.10 Complete their duties in accordance with the directions provided by the relevant supervisor
- 5.1.11 Consider the risks of proposed activities and tasks and develop strategies to manage these risks, and
- 5.1.12 Adhere to an appropriate standard of dress when engaged in ministry.

Unacceptable Behaviours:

All MSSP religious, and their staff, volunteers and contractors must not:

- 5.2.1 Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- 5.2.2 Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- 5.2.3 Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- 5.2.4 Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors or being alone with a child with no good cause)
- 5.2.5 Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- 5.2.6 Manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating a child; corporal punishment is never acceptable. Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort or in an emergency
- 5.2.7 Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal details or social activities) including using sexually suggestive or explicit language and/or engaging in conversations about sexual experiences or sharing sexual images
- 5.2.8 Use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- 5.2.9 Be alone with a child or young person away from the presence of other adults, including for the purpose of transportation, without express permission

- 5.2.10 Make any kind of drug, alcohol or cigarettes available to children or young people
- 5.2.11 Engage in private (i.e. outside of appropriate ministry) electronic or online contact with a child or young person .

6 Conduct Towards Adults at Risk

'Adult at risk' means any individual over the age of 18 years at increased risk of abuse, including those who:

- are elderly
- have a disability
- have a mental illness
- have diminished capacity
- have cognitive impairment
- are experiencing 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.

6.1 Whilst taking care to not make assumptions or generalisations about individuals, recognises that other aspects of a person's identity or life experiences may also increase their risk of vulnerability to abuse or harm, e.g.

- being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- being a refugee or migrant
- diverse gender or sexuality
- speaking a first language other than English
- surviving sexual abuse or child abuse

6.2.1 Personnel must not engage in the following conduct:

- any form of physical or sexual abuse
- making excessive and/or degrading demands
- exploiting an individual's vulnerability to form an intimate relationship
- any misuse of authority or power that exploits, manipulates or coerces a person to engage in any activity, or which disrespects their human rights and dignity
- not respecting the person's privacy
- any form of financial abuse or exploitation

6.3 Personnel must:

- report to the MSSP Provincial or your supervisor any concerning conduct that is brought to your attention and any circumstances where you suspect that an adult at risk is currently at risk of harm (see Section 8)
- take reasonable steps to protect vulnerable adults from foreseeable risk of injury
- ensure that physical contact with vulnerable adults is reasonable for the purpose of their care, and is appropriate given their age, health, disability or other characteristics. For example:

- physical contact should be consistent with any specific management plan for the person, and
- physical intervention (including physical restraint, removals or escorts) should be avoided and used only as a last resort to ensure safety and protection of the person and others.
- complete their duties in accordance with the directions provided by the MSSP Provincial or your supervisor
- consider the risks of proposed activities and tasks and develop strategies to manage these risks, and adhere to an appropriate standard of dress when engaged in ministry.

Generally, one-to-one interactions with an adult at risk should not take place unless in an open or visible space, or within the clear line of sight of another adult. This includes ministries and/or services such as counselling, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, coaching, spiritual direction and mentoring. However, this will depend on the individual's circumstances, preferences and right to privacy. Prudent judgement is required on a case-by-case basis.

7. Reporting Requirements

The MSSP will comply with all requirements to report concerns about the safety of children or adults at risk to external authorities. These requirements are outlined in the Safeguarding Policy.

- Reporting criminal offences to Police
- Reporting to the Child Protection Authority where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child (or class of children) is at risk of harm
- Notifying the independent oversight body of reportable allegations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Reporting safety concerns for an adult in an aged care facility, respite and day care service or support services delivered in the home to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.
- Reporting safety concerns that relate to the abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult with disability or older person living in their home (conduct by a member of the person's family, other informal supports, or members known to them from the community) to the relevant body. [In NSW, this is the Ageing and Disability Commission, but other jurisdictions may have an Elder Abuse Hotline for example].

To ensure the Archdioceses of Melbourne and Sydney can fulfil these reporting requirements, Personnel must report any concerns about the safety of children or adults at risk to the Professional Standards Offices as soon as practical.



THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

CODE OF CONDUCT DECLARATION

I, _____, have read, understand and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct of the MSSP and understand that compliance with this Code of Conduct is a condition of my employment, engagement or volunteer work. I understand that a breach of this Code of Conduct may be grounds for disciplinary action or in the case of serious misconduct, termination of employment or the cessation of engagement with the MSSP.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20____.
