

3.1 | SVD POLICY on Safeguarding

For whom is this policy intended?

The Divine Word Missionaries intends that this policy will provide proper protection and safeguarding for all those entrusted to our care, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults: in parishes, in SVD houses and in places of ministry, and be in accordance with the requirements of the places where we reside and work.

To whom does this policy apply?

This policy applies to all members of the Divine Word Missionaries in the Australia Province whether in active ministry or retired, to our employees, and to those who associate with us in our ministries and activities. It applies to students in formation, to SVD overseas visitors whether staying in one of our communities or living externally, and to those who are permanently or temporarily resident in our houses and communities.

3.1.1 Safeguarding

At all times, and in all places, we commit ourselves to a culture of safeguarding and protection of those entrusted to our care, both in decision making and in practice. All local Superiors and those in charge of formation must be aware of and comply with State, Federal and Church legislation and other statutory requirements pertaining to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults when considering the environment in which ministry and formation is conducted.

It is the responsibility of the SVD Director of Professional Standards and Safeguarding to make sure that local superiors are up-to-date with these requirements and that changes to legislation are advised through updating notices or bulletins.

Aboriginal children. We commit to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD).

Children living with disabilities. We commit to the protection and inclusion of children living with a disability, and promote the social inclusion of such persons as a special consideration.

All SVD Province personnel have the responsibility to adhere to the following safeguarding requirements in principle and practice:

- 3.1.1.1 To treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect: regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion and faith belief, opinions, ethnicity, social origin, ability or disability, sexual orientation or other status;
- 3.1.1.2 To use language that is appropriate and in no way harassing, abusive, demeaning, sexually discriminating, provocative or culturally inappropriate;
- 3.1.1.3 To use computers, laptops, cameras, mobile phones and media devices appropriately and reasonably, and not as a means to exploit or embarrass any child or vulnerable adult, nor place any person at risk;
- 3.1.1.4 To obtain informed consent before photographing, video recording or otherwise capturing any person's voice or image on a media device. Agreement concerning the use of the image/images must be obtained and understood by both parties;
- 3.1.1.5 In respect to media, to ensure that files, meta-data or text descriptions do not identify any child or vulnerable adult when sending, uploading or forwarding files or images to a media platform or to another person.

3.1.2 Commitment to safeguarding from forms of abuse.

The Divine Word Missionaries in the Australia Province specifically commits to safeguarding all children, young people and vulnerable adults in in our care from the following forms of abuse:

- **Sexual abuse**
Sexual abuse is any act in which a person with power or authority over a child, young person or vulnerable adult uses that power to an advantage for sexual gratification. Sexual abuse can include contact and non-contact forms.
- **Physical abuse**
Physical abuse occurs when a caregiver subjects someone in their charge to non-accidental physical aggression. Such behaviour may include (but is not limited to) striking, slapping, punching, kicking, etc.
- **Emotional / psychological abuse**
This type of abuse occurs when a caregiver repeatedly rejects, threatens or insults a child or other vulnerable person, including someone who is elderly or dependent. Identifying behaviour of this sort may be patterned or repetitive, rather than a single event. Such behaviour may involve humiliation, bullying, mocking, coldness in relating, withholding conversation or social engagement, etc.
- **Neglect**
Neglect occurs when a caregiver or someone with responsibility fails to provide the basic necessities of life such as nutrition and liquids to a dependent person such as a child or vulnerable adult. This type of abuse can also include failure to provide shelter, clothing, medical assistance etc. to another, such that their quality of life or health is compromised.

3.1.3 Commitment to laws, Province policies and protocols.

The AUS Province expects that all members within the Province, regardless of assigned role or responsibilities, will act to implement safeguarding from harm to others, by:

- Upholding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ;
- Complying with all Federal, State and Territory laws in relation to Safeguarding and Child Safe standards ;
- Adopting and implementing the policies and protocols established by the Office of Professional Standards and Safeguarding of the Divine Word Missionaries in the AUS province as approved by the Provincial and his Council ;
- Signing a personal Code of Conduct ;
- Reporting any observed instance of abuse or neglect to community leaders and/or external authorities, in accordance with the established guidelines and laws of Mandatory Reporting of the States or Territories wherein the abuse or neglect has occurred.

(This document will be subject to regular review and modification).