



Commitment to Safeguarding Children & Young People

The Society of Jesus, often referred to as ‘the Jesuits’ was founded by Saint Ignatius Loyola more than 450 years ago. It is an international Catholic men’s religious order comprising priests, brothers and those in formation for these roles. The Australian Province of the Society had its beginnings with the arrival of the first Jesuits to Australia in 1848. Jesuits, lay staff and volunteers from the Province now minister throughout Australia and the world.

Since it began, the Province’s educational, social, spirituality and pastoral ministries have served children and young people under 18 as well as adults.

Cura personalis or the care for the entire person is a value central to our Ignatian tradition. To that end, all within the Province are committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is safe, supportive, caring and nurturing for all children and young people. We commit ourselves to safeguarding children and young people from all abuse and neglect.

More specifically, we are committed to safeguarding the children and young people in our care from:

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is any act in which a person with power or authority over a child (female or male) uses a child for sexual gratification. An abuser can be an adult, adolescent or older child.

Sexual abuse spans a range of contact and non-contact behaviour.

Non-contact behaviour includes:

- making sexual comments (in person, in letters, or by telephone, text messages or email)
- voyeurism – including commenting on physical attractiveness
- exposing a child to pornography
- nudity – an abuser exposing parts of their body or the child’s body.

Contact behaviour includes:

- fondling or kissing
- sexual penetration
- exploiting a child through prostitution.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a parent or caregiver subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally, or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning and kicking.

Emotional or psychological abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a caregiver or parent repeatedly rejects or threatens a child. Often there is a pattern of emotional or psychological abuse, rather than a single incident. Such abuse may involve humiliating, terrorising, name-calling, belittlement, inappropriate symbolic

acts or continual coldness from the caregiver or parent, to an extent that results in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.

Neglect

Neglect occurs when a parent or caregiver fails to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

Witnessing family violence

Witnessing family violence is a specific form of emotional or psychological abuse. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

We expect all within the Province, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children and young people from such harm by:

- complying with all Australian laws in relation to Child Protection and Child Safe Standards;
- upholding the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- adopting the practices and behaviour we have set as our standard when carrying out their roles; and
- reporting any abuse or neglect of which they become aware to our leaders and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection and/or to police, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by personnel within our organisation, or by those outside our organisation including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

The Province's commitment to providing a safe environment for the children and young people to whom we minister is endorsed and approved by me as the Provincial.



Fr Brian F. McCoy SJ
Provincial