



# MARIST SISTERS GENERALATE CIO

Registered charity number: 1179883

55 Thetford Road, New Malden KT3 5DP England

## CHILD AND ADULTS AT RISK PROTECTION POLICY

**Date of last review:** October 2024  
**Date of next review:** October 2025  
**Review period:** 1 year  
**Person responsible:** General Bursar

### The Charity

The Marist Sisters ("the Charity") recognise the dignity and rights of all children and adults at risk and are committed to their protection from abuse. Abuse is not only harmful but is also a serious breach of trust and therefore is unacceptable.

Everyone working with the Charity is responsible for ensuring that children and adults at risk are safe, this includes where we work with a partner organisation or make a grant to an organisation. The Charity aims to create a fair, open and positive culture and ensure that everyone involved feels able to report concerns, confident that they will be heard and responded to. Safeguarding risks will form part of the Charity's risk management strategy.

The Catholic Church in England and Wales embraces its role in supporting children and adults at risk to achieve their full potential in an environment where they are protected from exploitation, abuse and maltreatment. The Charity follows the national safeguarding procedures of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Where this policy conflicts with the requirements and guidance published by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA), the CSSA procedures will take precedence.

This policy applies to all Charity representatives (as defined below).

### The purpose of this policy:

- to protect children and adults at risk who come into contact with the Charity through its work, including the children of adults who have contact with our Charity; and
- to provide charity representatives with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child and adults at risk protection.

All Charity representatives have a responsibility to act and intervene when it appears that children or adults at risk need to be made safe from harm.

## Definitions

**Abuse** - Abuse is when someone does or says something which harms you and makes you upset and scared. It is always unacceptable; everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect. No-one has the right to abuse you. It can be a single one-off act or something that happens over weeks, months or years. Just because there is no injury does not mean there is no abuse. Abuse and neglect can be defined in many ways and there can be no exhaustive list, however the most recent guidance from the Government identifies the following types of abuse and neglect:

- Physical abuse
- Psychological/emotional abuse
- Financial or Material abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect & Acts of Omission
- Organisational Abuse
- Self-Neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Modern Slavery
- Discriminatory Abuse

Further guidance and information about different types of abuse is available from CSSA, the NSPCC and the NHS.

**Adult at risk** - An adult at risk is 'any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support' (Care Act 2014). This includes, but is not limited to an adult who:

- is elderly and frail;
- has a mental illness including dementia;
- has a physical or sensory disability;
- has a learning disability;
- has a severe physical illness;
- is a substance misuser; or
- is homeless.

**Child** - consider any individual aged under 18 to be a child for the purposes of this policy.

**Charity representatives** includes trustees, all paid employees, seconded staff, mentors, students, agency workers, contract, seasonal and unpaid staff and volunteers working on behalf of the Charity in any capacity and in any setting, and includes non-work-related personal conduct.

**Congregation Safeguarding Lead:** The Congregation Safeguarding Lead ensures that appropriate arrangements for keeping children, young people and adults at risk safe are in place at the Charity and promotes the safety and welfare of children, young people and adults coming into contact with the Charity at all times. The Congregation

Safeguarding Lead should be the first point of contact for all Charity representatives to go to for advice if they are concerned about a child, young person or adult at risk.

Contact details for the Congregation Safeguarding Lead and other useful contact numbers are contained in an Appendix to this policy. Representatives should contact a trustee of the Charity if the Congregation Safeguarding Lead is unavailable or if a concern relates to the Congregation Safeguarding Lead.

**Unit Leader:** The Unit Leader is the leader of the Marist Sisters' Unit in a particular country.

**We recognise that:**

- the welfare of a child/young person is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989;
- all children and adults at risk, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or personal characteristics (which may indicate additional vulnerabilities) have a right to be in a safe and caring environment and to equal protection from any form of exploitation or abuse. Some children are additionally vulnerable because of their level of dependency, their communication needs or they are from minority ethnic groups;
- working in partnership with children, adults at risk, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children and adults at risk' welfare although it is important to recognise that, in some limited circumstances, it will not be appropriate to engage with carers or family members in order to protect the child or adult at risk.

**We will seek to keep children and adults at risk safe by:**

- valuing, listening to and respecting them;
- ensuring effective and robust safeguarding and protection practices by having clear policies,
- putting procedures and guidance in place;
- acting within the guidance set out in the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, as updated from time to time;
- adopting best practice and recommendations from the CSSA and liaising/reporting to the Congregational Safeguarding Lead as appropriate in relation to the care, protection and welfare of children and adults at risk;
- establishing safe recruitment procedures that will be applied consistently to all applications where the role will bring an individual into contact with vulnerable groups;
- obtaining Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) checks where Charity representatives are legally eligible for such checks due to the nature of their work/contact with vulnerable groups;
- ensuring that any concerns or allegations of abuse are responded to sensitively, respectfully and seriously, referred appropriately and co-operating with the work of statutory agencies as necessary;

- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with our Privacy Notice and data protection legislation and guidance;
- making sure that children, young people, adults at risk, their families and carers know where to go for help if they have a concern and ensuring that we have an effective complaints policy in place; and
- building a safeguarding culture where charity representatives and vulnerable people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns
- ensuring that where we work with partner organisations or make grants to other organisations that they follow safeguarding legislation and best practice and have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place following the CSSA policies and procedures for Whistleblowing and Complaints.

## CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK PROTECTION PROCEDURES

### 1. Procedure to be followed when raising a concern

If you are concerned about the safety of a child or adult at risk e.g. you see or suspect abuse, an allegation of abuse is made or a child or adult at risk reports abuse, you should discuss your concerns with the Unit Leader who will inform the Congregation Safeguarding Lead promptly (see Appendix for contact details).

You should focus your discussion on:

- The nature of concerns
- Risk to child or children, or adult(s) at risk
- Action/next steps

**Report concerns as soon as possible** – this should normally be on the same working day. Do not delay in passing the information on and seeking further advice on what action should be taken.

**Make a record** – ensure you make a detailed record of all events (including dates and times) and include what the child or adult at risk has said (if applicable).



The Unit Leader and the Congregation Safeguarding Lead will decide the appropriate course of action and decide which of the following should be informed:

- The local authority designated officer
- The police and/or children's social care
- Parents/carers

The Unit Leader will be responsible for making the necessary report in their country and will confirm that they have done so to the Congregation Safeguarding Lead. If the

concern raised relates to the Unit Leader, you should report directly to the Congregation Safeguarding Lead.

**Implement agreed actions.** If the person reporting their concerns is not satisfied with the course of action taken by the Unit Leader and/or Congregation Safeguarding Lead, they should feel able to raise it again and if no action is taken and concerns remain, the person should refer the concern directly to the local authority or the police.

## EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

NB\* In an emergency and where there is immediate risk to a child or adult at risk **ACT IMMEDIATELY**.

It is essential to avoid delay as inaction may place the child at further risk. Contact the Unit Leader soon as possible or contact the police and/or social services.

## 2. Investigation

It is not for anyone working at the Charity to decide whether or not a child or adult at risk has suffered abuse. However, there is a responsibility and a duty of care to act on any concerns by reporting these to the Unit Leader (who will inform the Congregation Safeguarding Lead) and/or the appropriate authorities. The individual who learns of the suspected abuse should not investigate themselves but should follow the procedure set out at 1. In reporting what he or she knows or is concerned about.

The Charity assures all Charity representatives that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports a concern in relation to possible abuse.

## 3. Record keeping

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. All those involved in dealing with an allegation should keep clear notes of the allegations made, how they were followed up, and any actions and decisions taken, together with the reasons for these.

These notes should be compiled gradually as the situation unfolds, with each entry being made as soon as possible after the event it describes. The notes should be signed and dated by the person making them, and the person's name should be printed alongside. It must be kept confidentially.

The notes should be held on file for a 10-year period, whether or not the person remains with the Charity for this period.

#### **4. Confidentiality and data protection**

The welfare of the child or adult at risk is paramount. Privacy and confidentiality should be respected where possible but if doing this leaves a child or adult at risk of harm then the child or adult at risk's safety **MUST** come first.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

The Charity is committed to complying with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 when dealing with information relating to safeguarding of children and adults at risk. In order to comply with the data protection principles, the Charity will:

- Ensure appropriate security is applied to safeguarding information by ensuring that any paper files are stored in a filing cabinet that remains locked at all times, with restricted access to any keys. Electronic information will be stored in a way that means that it is only accessible to those who need to see it, and encrypted/password protected where appropriate.
- Ensure that only relevant information is kept, and that information is updated quickly when it becomes apparent that anything recorded is inaccurate.
- Ensure that the information is used in accordance with the relevant privacy notice.
- Ensure that the information is only used for the purposes of assessing risk, and complying with safeguarding obligations.

#### **5. Allegations of previous abuse**

Allegations or disclosures of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child). Where such an allegation or disclosure is made, the Unit Leader should follow the procedures as detailed above, inform the Congregation Safeguarding Lead and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children or adults may be at risk from an individual still working with vulnerable groups.

#### **6. Reporting concerns outside the Charity (e.g. suspected abuse by a parent or carer)**

Report your concerns to the Unit Leader who will report to the Congregation Safeguarding Lead. The Unit Leader should contact social services or the police as soon as possible. If the Unit Leader or Congregation Safeguarding Lead is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately. Social Services and the Unit Leader/Congregation Safeguarding Lead will decide how to involve the parents/carers.

#### **7. Working with partner organisations and/or Congregations in other jurisdictions**

There is an obligation on units/members of the Congregation in other jurisdictions that receive funds from the Charity to ensure that local safeguarding standards and

requirements comply with the Bishops' Conference in the local jurisdiction and are at least at the same level as those of the Charity and CSSA policies and procedures.

## **8. Referrals and reporting obligations**

The Charity will follow guidance from the Charity Commission on serious incident reporting and will make all necessary referrals in a timely and open manner. The Charity will report any incident which falls within the Charity Commission's guidance on what is deemed 'serious' and relates to protecting people and safeguarding incidents – incidents that have resulted in or risk significant harm to beneficiaries and other people who come into contact with the charity through its work

The Charity will report any incident to the DBS where an allegation or incident falls within the DBS guidance and the charity has a duty to refer.

This policy is approved and endorsed by the board of trustees. We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.  
[date]

Approved by the Trustees

***16<sup>th</sup> day of August 2021***

## APPENDIX

### Contact Details

#### Unit Leaders

Aotearoa-New Zealand – [anzulsm47@gmail.com](mailto:anzulsm47@gmail.com)  
Australia – [leaderaust@maristsisters.org](mailto:leaderaust@maristsisters.org)  
Brazil - [irmasmaristasunidadebrasil@gmail.com](mailto:irmasmaristasunidadebrasil@gmail.com)  
Canada - [Canada.unit@hotmail.com](mailto:Canada.unit@hotmail.com)  
England – [unitleader@maristsisters.co.uk](mailto:unitleader@maristsisters.co.uk)  
Fiji – [maristsistersfj@gmail.com](mailto:maristsistersfj@gmail.com)  
France - [sup.sm.maristefrance@gmail.com](mailto:sup.sm.maristefrance@gmail.com)  
Ireland – [ldrmaristirl@gmail.com](mailto:ldrmaristirl@gmail.com)  
Italy - [unitaita44@gmail.com](mailto:unitaita44@gmail.com)  
Mexico - [liderunidadmexico@gmail.com](mailto:liderunidadmexico@gmail.com)  
The Philippines – [maristsisters.uphsm@gmail.com](mailto:maristsisters.uphsm@gmail.com)  
United States of America - [maristsrs@gmail.com](mailto:maristsrs@gmail.com)  
West Africa - [maristsistersafricaunit@gmail.com](mailto:maristsistersafricaunit@gmail.com)

#### Congregation Safeguarding Lead

Name: Congregation Leader  
Email: [supgensm@gmail.com](mailto:supgensm@gmail.com)  
Phone: ++39 06 3936 6532  
Work days:  
Out of hours contact information: As above

#### Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency

Email: [www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk)  
Phone: +44 (0) 207 901 1920  
Operational hours: 9am – 5pm every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and from 9am – 7pm on Tuesdays.

### LADO

#### Children's Social Care Services

#### Adult Social Care Services