



**RELIGIOUS SISTERS OF CHARITY**

**ZAMBIA/MALAWI REGION**

**POLICY ON**

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

**AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

**POLICY STATEMENT ON PROTECTION OF**  
**CHILDREN/VULNERABLE ADULTS**

*We cherish and affirm each child and vulnerable adult as a gift from God and we acknowledge each person's inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity. We will strive to ensure that this right is respected, nurtured and protected by all. Everyone in our organisation has an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children and vulnerable adults are respected.*

*We are committed to ensuring that each member of our organization is aware of and complies with this obligation.*

## **FOREWORD**

As Religious Sisters of Charity we are committed to serve the poor and vulnerable people in our society. This includes work with children and co-workers in various fields/situation.

In all of our work with children we recognize and promote the fundamental right of every child to a safe environment in which she or he will be free from any form of abuse, neglect or harm. It is therefore our policy to protect any persons with whom we work from physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect or harm and to strive to provide a safe and caring environment for them. In order to ensure that this happens these guidelines are provided to each working with the Religious Sisters of Charity in any area involving children, young people and vulnerable adults in Zambia and Malawi.

The work with children in Zambia and Malawi falls broadly into two categories:

- 1.1 Work in educational, health, social service facilities and parishes. All of these have their own policies/guidelines e.g. schools, health centres, counselling associations and Church bodies.

Persons involved in such work, whether voluntary or paid are obliged by and accountable to the organization concerned. The organization concerned is in turn accountable to the appropriate governmental body and is obliged to provide its own internal child protection policies and procedures in accordance with the Laws of Zambia and Malawi. Any person involved in such work is obliged to receive the internal written child protection policies, procedures and guidelines in existence within the relevant organization/body, such as Social Welfare and Child Protection Unit. In the event that no such guidelines exist, any person involved in such work, should immediately discuss the matter with a member of the Child Protection Team and seek further guidance in relation to their position.

Each person working in a situation covered by No. 1.1 above must be aware of and be familiar with the processes of child protection and reporting allegations of abuse which they are obliged to follow when working with such organizations.

- 1.2 Work which takes place outside the above settings e.g. activities in which the Religious Sisters of Charity are involved for children in clubs, or schools or churches must be carried out by persons who understand the appropriate policy.

## **GENERAL POLICY**

As Religious Sisters of Charity we recognize and respect the rights and dignity of every child. Our standards of behaviour and our relationships with children must always reflect this and must therefore include a firm commitment to provide a safe, caring and life-giving environment in which children can feel secure and happy.

### **The Child Protection Team:**

1. **Designated Officer**            **Sr. Kayula Lesa**
2. **Safeguarding Person**        **Sr. Kayula Lesa**

To ensure commitment from each person working with children, young people and vulnerable adults the Child Protection Team mandates the following:

### **Recruitment of Staff**

- 2.1 Any person who becomes involved in any group/organization or in setting up of any group/organization should contact the Regional Team within Zambia/Malawi or the Heads of the Institutions run by the Religious Sisters of Charity

### **Code of Conduct for Safeguarding Children**

- 2.2 Ensure that privacy is respected at all times.

By way of example: Particular care regarding privacy is observed when young people are in all places.

Tasks of a private nature, such as undressing or toilet use should not be done for children or young people if they can undertake these tasks for themselves. However, for those who cannot perform these tasks help can be given with permission from the person in charge at that particular time.

- 2.3 Favouritism towards any individual child or group of children or spending a disproportionate amount of time with any individual child or group of children is not acceptable. All children must be treated with equal respect.
- 2.4 Appropriate boundaries must be maintained between adults and children.
- 2.5 Physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstances.
- 2.6 Physical contact should reflect the child's needs and be appropriate and respectful, never engage in inappropriate physical contact, such as leaning over a pupil and putting arms around a pupil when marking work.
- 2.7 Verbal abuse of children is not allowed. Conversations and behaviour should be friendly and appropriate. Great care should be taken if it is necessary to have a conversation regarding sexual matters with a child or young person.
- 2.8 When a person sets up a group to provide a service for children e.g. a club, art group etc. it is very important to ensure that written consent has been received from each parent/guardian before the child is admitted to any such grouping.
- 2.9 When a person is involved in organizing/taking children to participate in any activity away from the normal meeting place they must ensure that parents/guardians have signed a consent form for their child to go to such an outing/activity.
- 2.10 Adequate and appropriate supervision must be in place for all activities at all times.
- 2.11 Being alone with a child or young person may not always be wise or appropriate practice. If a situation arises where it is necessary to be alone with a child the appropriate authority should be informed.

- 2.12 No one should engage in or tolerate any behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical that could be construed as bullying or abusive.
- 2.13 Only age-appropriate language, material or media products (such as camera, phones, internet, videos, discos) and activities should be used when working with children and young people. Sexually explicit and pornographic material is never acceptable. You should be aware of the dangers of individuals accessing inappropriate and possibly pornographic websites. You should also be aware of the dangers to children by the undesirable open-air shows that are a feature of many places in Zambia and Malawi. In addition, you should be aware that websites may be accessed deliberately or accidentally.  
Appropriate child security measures should be installed in computers with internet access for children. Usage should be monitored. Computers should be in a public area where the screen is visible to others. You should be aware of the dangers of children having unrestricted, unsupervised access to computers/internet.
- 2.14 Under no circumstances should any person working with children or young people give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to them.
- 2.15 Alcohol, tobacco and drugs must not be used by personnel who are supervising or working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 2.16 All volunteers and parents who may be engaged/working with the Religious Sisters of Charity in Zambia/Malawi in any activities involving children must be fully aware of the guidelines and must adhere to them.
- 2.17 If a Sister is a member of a team working with children she is equally obliged by the guidelines and must adhere to them.

### **Policy on Keeping Children Safe**

- 2.18 A copy of the Policy of Child Protection is available and displayed in a prominent place for all people working with children or vulnerable adults in any of the Institutions run by the Sisters of Charity. As time goes on this policy will be reviewed every three years or when necessary. Definitions of child abuse are clearly outlined in the policy.

Clear and specific procedures on how to deal with allegations or suspicions of abuse are clearly outlined in the policy.

Procedures consistent with the civil legislation on child protection and welfare in the locality are written in a clear and easily understandable way.

The Sisters in the Region are aware who the Designated Officer is and clear about her role and responsibilities.

There is a process for dealing with complaints from children and vulnerable adults and all information is private and confidential.

The policy of the Sisters of Charity is given and explained to all recruits when applying for positions in the institutions run by the Religious Sisters of Charity.

The policy includes guidelines on behaviour with children and vulnerable adults, intimate care of children, use of internet, mobiles and all IT appliances.

The Designated Officer and Safeguarding Person are trained for their roles in the Child Protection Programme.

The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity has a programme in place to make children and vulnerable adults aware of their rights consistent with the UN Charter of Human Rights. There are procedures in Zambia and Malawi to enable personnel to deal with child abuse in an integrated way e.g. Social Services, Child Victim Support and the Police.

Sr. Kayula is the evaluator for the monitoring programme of abuse in collaboration with the Child Protection Team.

The Regional Team will sponsor any expenses incurred by the Child Protection Team.

### 3. **WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child or young person causes harm to the child or young person. The common denominator of all child abuse is that it makes children and young people feel diminished or threatened and that it causes them harm. All forms of child abuse constitute a betrayal of trust and an abuse of power by an adult over a child or young person.

Child abuse is generally categorized into many broad groups:

**NEGLECT:** Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant or impairment of development, by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults and medical care.

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** Physical abuse includes any form of handling that is harmful to the child both physically and emotionally.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** Emotional abuse is the actual or likely persistent and/or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection of a child, which is likely to have an adverse effect on the child's emotional and behavioural development.

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** Any form of sexual behaviour initiated by an adult with a child or young person or vulnerable adult is sexual abuse and is both immoral and criminal.

**BULLYING:** Bullying could involve physical intimidation, verbal intimidation or emotional intimidation. It may include racist and sexist remarks or isolating or excluding someone.

**PEER ABUSE:** In some instances of child abuse, the alleged abuser may be another child or young person.

Consistent with civil guidelines all forms of child abuse are covered in this document.

Each form of child abuse must be treated seriously, there can be no suggestion that some forms are of less significance than others.

It is accepted, however, that there is a distinction between sexual abuse and the other ways in which children can be harmed in that the motivation and circumstances for the sexual abuse of children can be very different from those which are involved when people physically or emotionally abuse children or cause them to be neglected. A child may be subject to more than one form of abuse at any one time.

3.1 Child abuse may come to light in different ways. In essence, it may be alleged or suspected. An allegation of child abuse is direct, specific and supported by some sort of evidence. An allegation may include the following situations:

3.2 Where a person, either an adult or a child, alleges that they have been abused and they name the alleged perpetrator.

Where a person alleges that they have been abused but are unable or are unwilling to name the alleged perpetrator.

Where a person alleges that they have been abused but the alleged perpetrator has died.

Where a person reveals that another person has told them of being abused, or where they themselves have witnessed abuse.

3.3 A suspicion is less direct or specific. However, in either case, it is necessary to take further action.

A suspicion that a child or young person is at risk of abuse or is being abused is less direct or specific than an allegation. A person might, for example, become suspicious as a result of rumours, anonymous claims, signs of behavioural, psychological or emotional change, fear on the part of the child or young person, contact with a known abuser, unexplained injury.

Where suspicions of child abuse arise and the suspected person is working for the Religious Sisters of Charity in Zambia/Malawi, the person who encounters the suspicions must record the details in writing immediately and refer the matter to the Designated Officer who will notify the Regional Leader of the Religious Sisters of Charity and the Statutory Authorities.

## THE RELIGIOUS SISTERS OF CHARITY DUAL RESPONSIBILITY

4. The Religious Sisters of Charity in Zambia/Malawi has a dual responsibility:

**Safeguarding children:** This at all times takes priority. If a child is at risk the Religious Sisters of Charity must ensure that all appropriate procedures are followed in relation to reporting the matter to the civil authorities and it must do all within its power to ensure that no child continues to be exposed to the risk of being abused.

All mandatory reporting is provided for in the Laws of Zambia and Malawi.

**Dealing with a person against whom an allegation has been made:** The Religious Sisters of Charity must ensure that proper procedures are followed in relation to the person against whom an allegation has been made, in line with both fair procedures and natural justice. The person against whom allegations have been made must be presumed innocent unless the contrary has been established.

## 5. PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

Where a child or young person discloses child abuse to a person working in any capacity with the Religious Sisters of Charity, it is important that the situation is handled sensitively and compassionately. It should be borne in mind that the child or young person may feel that they have taken a huge risk in disclosing the abuse.

The general guidance should be observed:

- The person receiving the allegation should remain calm and not indicate any reaction. They should listen to the child or young person with sensitivity and understanding. They should facilitate them as they tell about the problem but avoid interviewing them.
- The person receiving the allegation should be conscious that the child may feel very frightened and need reassurance and support that they have done the right thing in disclosing the abuse.
- The person receiving the allegation should avoid appearing judgmental about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- The child or young person should not be questioned unless the nature of what is being said is unclear. It may be necessary to clarify that what was said has been correctly understood. Leading questions should be avoided.
- The steps that are likely to follow should be explained to the child or young person.
- It should be made clear that the person receiving the allegation is not in a position to keep the information secret. However reassurance can be given



that it will be treated as confidential and will be shared only with those who have a right to hear it.

- Parents or guardians should be informed unless to do so would place the child at further risk.
- In the case of an adult disclosing child abuse, it is equally important that the initial response is characterized by compassion and sensitivity. The general guidance outlined should be followed.
- The person who receives an allegation of child abuse should actively encourage the person who is making it to report the matter to the civil authorities. Appropriate arrangements should be made to support them in doing so, if this is what they wish. Should the person making the allegations be under 18 years of age their parent or guardian can make a statement on their behalf.
- Whether or not the person making the allegation wishes to report it to the civil authorities, the protection policies in Zambia and Malawi require that the allegation be referred to the relevant authority of the Institution who will inform the Designated Officer.

The person receiving the allegation should:

- 5.1 Record in writing, all relevant information received, including, for example, dates, times, names, locations and context.
- 5.2 They should then inform the relevant authority in the Institution who will then inform the Regional Leader of the Religious Sisters of Charity.

## 6. **ROLE OF THE PERSON DELEGATED TO DEAL WITH SUSPICIONS**

The person handling the allegation shall immediately inform the Regional Leader.

In the case of organizations or projects they need to inform their own child protection delegate of the suspicions and follow their own procedures in the Child Protection Policy.

When an allegation of child abuse is received the relevant person handling the issue shall determine whether there are reasonable grounds for concern that the child abuse may have occurred and shall proceed in one of the following ways. Before proceeding the same person shall inform the Designated Officer of what is proposed.

### 6.1 **Reasonable Grounds for Concern**

Evidence, such as injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in any other way.

An injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse.

An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation and other indications of abuse and/or dysfunctional behaviour.

Consistent indication over a period of time that the child is suffering emotional or physical neglect.

A suspicion which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern.

## 6.2 POSSIBLE STEPS TO BE TAKEN BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITY

Report directly to the Civil Authorities, Victim Support and Social Service.

Where it is established that there are semblances of truth for concern that child abuse has occurred the Designated Officer shall on behalf of the Regional Leader or appropriate person of the organization report the allegation to the Civil Authorities immediately, Victim Support and the Social Service and copied to the Police. All written communications should be marked **“strictly private and confidential”** for the attention of the individual who is entitled to receive it. This is normally the Director of Community Care in the Social Service Unit area where the report is being made. The report to the Police is normally directed to the Superintendent of the area where the complaint is being made. The Designated Officer shall inform the Regional Leader or appropriate person in the organization, in writing, that this report to the civil authorities has been made and retain a copy of the letter. Again, any correspondence to the Regional Leader or appropriate person in the organization should be marked **“strictly private and confidential, strictly for addressee only”** for the attention of the person receiving the communication.

### SEEK FURTHER CLARIFICATION

The person in charge of protection may need to seek further clarification and additional information in establishing whether reasonable grounds for concern exist.

## 6.3 Take no further action against the person whom the allegation has been made.

Where no further action is to be taken, it will be the responsibility of the relevant authority to:

Advise the complainant in writing of the action taken on foot of the complaint and its outcome, including information on the means of pursuing their complaint if they remain dissatisfied.

Keep a record of the complaint, indicating its nature, when, by whom and to whom it was made and a brief explanation of what it was considered that no further action should be taken, together with any correspondence on the case.

Advise the person against whom the allegation has been made that a complaint has been made and inform them of its nature, advise them that it was considered to be without substance and that no further action is being taken. Appropriate support should be offered.

Consider whether the child or young person may have been abused by someone else and if necessary, report the matter to the civil authorities for follow up.

## 7. PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

A suspicion that a child or young person is at risk of abuse or is being abused is less direct than an allegation. A person might, become suspicious as a result of rumours, anonymous claims, signs of behavioural, psychological or emotional change, fear on the part of a child or young person, contact with a known abuser, unexplained injuries.

Where suspicions of child abuse arise and the suspected person is working for the Religious Sisters of Charity in Zambia/Malawi, the person who encounters the suspicions must record the details in writing immediately and refer the matter to the relevant authority.

Even when a person has suspicions but is not sure if child abuse is involved, they should nevertheless record the details in writing and refer the matter to the relevant authority without delay. All communication should be marked **“strictly private and confidential”**.

Where appropriate and relevant contact the Regional Leader in Zambia/Malawi, the Social Welfare and the Victim Support Unit.

## 8. ROLE OF RELEVANT AUTHORITY IN REGARD TO SUSPICIONS

Reasonable grounds for concern

- 8.1 When the suspicion has been referred to the Designated Officer, they will examine whether reasonable grounds for “concern” exist. Again the following may constitute grounds for concern.

An injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in any other way.

An injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, or implausible explanation, and other indications of abuse and/or dysfunctional behaviour.

Consistent indication over a period of time that the child is suffering emotional or physical neglect.

A suspicion which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect may constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern.

Where there is any doubt or uncertainty or where concerns remain, the relevant authority will, without delay, consult with the civil authorities on the appropriate steps to be taken.

The Child Protection Team will keep a written record of the outcome of the consultation with the civil authorities.

The outcome of any consultation may be that it is established that reasonable grounds for concern do exist. In this case the Designated Officer shall inform the Regional Leader and make a formal report to the civil authorities

It may be decided following a consultation, that there are no grounds for the relevant authority to formally report the matter to the civil authorities. In this case, the person who referred the matter should be given a written statement by the person in charge outlining the reasons why no further action is being taken and indicating that if they do remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with or report to the civil authorities themselves. (There may be need for internal investigation as thresholds are different)

## **9. HISTORICAL ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING MEMBERS OF THE RELIGIOUS SISTERS OF CHARITY AND/OR LAY PERSONS**

People who have been abused in their childhood may not actually disclose the abuse until many years, or decades, later. It is the Religious Sisters of Charity policy to create a caring and responsive atmosphere in which people can disclose child abuse, regardless of how long ago it took place.

A person who approaches the Religious Sisters of Charity in Zambia/Malawi concerning abuse in the past should receive a prompt, compassionate and sensitive response. In addition, the child protection implications of the complaint must be treated with as much urgency as those arising from allegations of current or recent child abuse. This is because there may be a continuing risk to children and young people from the person against whom the allegation has been made.

The following procedure shall apply in respect of all historical allegations of child abuse:

The policies and procedures for responding to allegations of current or recent abuse may be fully operated for historical cases which come to the attention of any person working with the Religious Sisters of Charity in Zambia/Malawi, in particular in regard to reporting procedures, dealing with the person against whom the allegation has been made.

When the adult discloses abuse they experienced as a child or young person, they should be encouraged to report the matter directly to the civil authorities. Whether or not the person making the allegation wishes to report it to the civil authorities, it should be

explained to them that the Designated Officer must nevertheless be informed of the allegation as there may be implications for the current safety of children or young people or for the investigation of historical allegations made by others.

The Designated Officer, after informing the Regional Leader in Zambia/Malawi or appropriate person in the organization and having established that there are reasonable grounds for concern that child abuse has occurred, must report the allegation to the civil authorities.

Where historical allegations arise in the course of civil or other enquiries and these have not already been referred to the civil authorities, they should be reported.

Similarly, previous allegations of child abuse that were known by the individual (receiving the allegation) in the past but were not reported at the time they were received should be dealt with in the same way.

Where the person against whom the allegation is being made is deceased the police should still be informed as there may be implications for the investigation of other cases.

It is possible that, due to lapse of time, third party disclosure of some historical cases may not provide sufficient information to assess if there are reasonable grounds for concern that child abuse occurred. In these instances, the process detailed regarding cases involving suspicions should be applied.

If an allegation is received in relation to historic abuse which does not concern or relate to any member of the Religious Sisters of Charity or person involved with the Religious Sisters of Charity in any way, the person making the allegation should be encouraged to report the matter to the civil authorities, the victim support unit, the Social Service and the Police. In addition, the individual receiving the allegation should record the matter in writing and furnish the information to the person in charge appointed by the Regional Leader of the Religious Sisters of Charity.

#### **10. INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR AND MISCONDUCT**

There may be instances where in the judgment of the Designated Officer the complaint does not constitute “reasonable grounds for concern” that child abuse has occurred but rather indicates inappropriate behaviour, misconduct, or a breach of standards on the part of the person in question against whom the allegation has been made. In such instances, it may be necessary for the Regional Leader of the Religious Sisters of Charity to take action.

#### **11. ACTIONS FOLLOWING REPORTING BY THE PERSON IN CHARGE**

Once an allegation or suspicion of child abuse has been reported to the civil authorities and the Regional Leader or Chairperson of the lay organization has been informed the Designated Officer will arrange an initial meeting with the civil authorities as a matter of urgency.

The meeting will look at child protection issues from the allegation or suspicion of child abuse with a view to ensuring that no child is exposed to unnecessary risks. The meeting will consider protective measures: such measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalize the person against whom the allegation has been made, financially or otherwise.

The meeting will also consider the manner and timing by which the person concerned is informed that an accusation of child abuse has been made against him and has been reported to the civil authorities. While timing must take into account the need to ensure that it in no way endangers a child or enables the person against whom the allegation has been made to interfere with the civil investigation, a person against whom the allegation is made should in natural justice be informed as soon as possible. Where the civil authorities ask that there be a delay in informing the person against whom the allegation is made, the Designated Officer should seek a written confirmation of that request.

Immediately after the meeting with the civil authorities, the Designated Officer will inform the Regional Leader or chairperson of the organization of its deliberations regarding the level of risk poses to children; actions to the person against whom the allegation is made pending the outcome of the civil investigation and the question of infirming the person against whom the allegation is made.

## 12 **INFORMING THE PERSON AGAINST WHOM ALLEGATIONS ARE MADE**

Following the meeting between the Designated Officer and the appropriate person in the organization, the appropriate person in the organization should advise the person against whom the allegation has been made and take the following steps:

Communicate a summary of the allegations to the person against whom the allegation has been made.

Remind them of their right not to respond or admit any offence.

Ensure that they understand that anything they say may be introduced as evidence in court.

Ask the person against whom the allegation has been made to meet with the person in charge to hear the allegations.

The appropriate person will also encourage the person against whom the allegation has been made to obtain legal advice and counselling support as soon as possible.

The right to justice and the presumption of innocence must be preserved. It may be necessary in certain cases for the appropriate person in the organization, in consultation with the person in charge, to request the person against whom the allegation has been made to take administrative leave or to

‘step aside’ pending the investigation of matters. An investigation is not an indication of guilt.

Aspects of dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse concerning employees or volunteers can vary considerably from case to case and it may be therefore necessary for the Child Protection Team to seek legal advice.

### **OUTCOME OF CIVIL INVESTIGATIONS**

Investigations by the civil authorities, Social Service or Victim Support can lead to three possible outcomes:

<b>Confirmed</b>	<b>child abuse occurred.</b>
<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>unable to determine whether or not abuse occurred.</b>
<b>Confirmed non abuse</b>	<b>child abuse did not occur.</b>

### **13. INVESTIGATIONS BY THE POLICE CAN LEAD TO THE FOLLOWING OUTCOMES**

**Conviction**

**Acquittal**

**Mistrial**                      **no determination of whether an offence occurred.**

**Nolle-prosqui**              **where the Prosecution withdraws the charge or offence.**

The Director of Public Prosecutions may, however, decide that the case should not proceed to court. This decision may indicate that the Director of Public Prosecutions considers that the evidence would not meet the standard of proof required by a criminal court but it does not necessarily imply innocence and there may still be concerns which the Religious Sisters of Charity in Zambia/Malawi has to deal with.

### **14. FALSE OR MISTAKEN ALLEGATIONS**

Some allegations of child abuse are deemed to be false. However, those that are unfounded cause profound distress to the people who are wrongly accused. Given the gravity of the accusation of child abuse, it is important that when an allegation is deemed to be false or mistaken, all appropriate steps are taken by appropriate authorities to restore the good name of the person accused. The Regional Leader and the Child Protection Team in consultation with the person against whom the allegation was made, shall decide on how they are to be supported and facilitated in resuming their duties.

### **15. IF IN DOUBT**

If you are unsure about any matter concerning the safety and well being of children, young people and vulnerable adults, always act in their best interests. Contact the Child Protection Team who will be available to provide you with guidance and assistance.

**Contact numbers:**

**Designated Officer: Sr. Kayula Lesa  
(0978 308715)**

**Safeguarding Person: Sr. Kayula Lesa  
(0978 308715)**

**SIGNED:**



**Sr. Mary Clare Moomba  
Regional Leader**



**RELIGIOUS SISTERS OF CHARITY**

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT**

In keeping with our Child Protection Policy we have appointed

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to be our **Child Protection Officer**. Contact can be made at

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All complaints of abuse of any kind, sexual, emotional or physical relating to any of our personnel should be made to the above or to the local civil authorities.

**Contact details for local Civil Authorities:**

**Under no circumstances must a child be left in danger pending the intervention of the Civil Authorities.**

**In case of emergency contact**

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***Where the Religious Sisters of Charity are,  
children will be safe***

**Declaration Form for all persons working as employees or  
volunteers with children and young people**

**Confidential**

For the Religious Sisters of Charity and all organizations under their managements, the welfare of children and young people is paramount.

We therefore ask that everyone working or volunteering with the Religious Sisters of Charity or for any organization under their management, who will come into contact with children or personal details of children, abide by good practice by completing and signing this declaration:

I have no prosecutions pending and have never been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or Bound Over Order for any matter relating to a child (i.e. anyone aged 0 - 18 years)

I have never been the subject of disciplinary procedures nor have I ever been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour towards a child.

**Full name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

Any surname previously known by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place of birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration**

I understand that, if it is found that I have withheld information or included any false or misleading information above, I may be removed from my post whether paid or voluntary, without notice. I understand that the information will be kept securely by this organization.

I hereby declare the information I have provided is accurate.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Declaration form for all persons working as employees or  
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We therefore ask that everyone working or volunteering with the Religious Sisters of Charity or for any organization under their management, who will come into contact with children or personal details of children, abide by good practice by completing and signing this declaration:

Do you have any prosecutions pending or have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound Over Order (please tick)

Yes  No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s)

Date of offence: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of offence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour towards a child? (Please tick)

Yes  No

If yes, please give details including date(s) below:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Full name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Any surname previously known by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Declaration**

I understand that, if it is found that I have withheld information or included any false or misleading information above, I may be removed from my post whether paid or voluntary, without notice. I understand that the information will be kept securely by this organization.

**I hereby declare the information I have provided is accurate.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Safe recruitment and selection checklist for employees and volunteers

<p><b>Contact with children</b></p> <p>What contact with children will the job involve?</p> <p>Will the employee/volunteer have unsupervised contact with children or hold a position of trust?</p> <p>What other forms of contact will the person have with children, e.g. email, telephone, letter, internet?</p>	
<p><b>Defining the role</b></p> <p>Have the tasks and skills necessary for the job been considered?</p> <p>Does the job description make reference to working with and having responsibility for children?</p>	
<p><b>Key selection criteria</b></p> <p>Has a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience been developed?</p>	
<p><b>Written application</b></p> <p>Have all applicants been asked to supply information in writing including personal details, past and current work/volunteering experience?</p> <p>Have you developed application forms?</p>	

## Code of behaviour for Children

Children should be involved in drawing a code of behaviour for themselves. However, it is important that working with children, an appropriate adult with relevant skills and competencies participates to help them develop a code of behaviour.

The method used in creating a code of behaviour should be age and ability appropriate with children being encouraged to avoid a list of prohibitions. Instead the code should be composed of positive statements about respect and should consider what consequences ensue if the code is broken.

In developing the code, consideration should be given to the following

- Treating everyone with respect
- Treating property with respect
- Not consuming alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs
- Agreeing not to bring any physical items into the Church activity that may cause offense or harm to others
- Acting as a good role model
- Attending activities on time
- Signing in and out
- Turning off your mobile phone
- Telling someone you trust if you feel uncomfortable with a person or a situation
- Not using bad language when communicating by phone or email;
- Never bullying anyone or sending threatening messages