

LORETO PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA & SOUTH EAST ASIA



CHILD SAFE PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

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1. LEADERSHIP AND OVERSIGHT OF CHILD SAFEGUARDING

- Oversight of the development, implementation, and review of the *Child Safe Policy* is carried out principally by the Loreto Ministries Limited (LML) Board and Mary Ward International Australia (MWIA) Board.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of LML (or delegate) and the Executive Officer (EO) of MWIA (or delegate) with the advice and support of the respective Board as required.
- The LML CEO (or delegate) and MWIA EO (or delegate) are required to undertake a regular audit of the implementation of this policy and complete the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations Compliance Checklist* for the LML Board and the MWIA Board at the end of each financial year.
- Child Safety is a standing agenda item at each meeting of the Province Council, LML Board, the MWIA Board, the LML Leadership Team, the MWIA Projects and Operations Committee, and the Province Team.
- All Loreto Sisters, LML Board directors, MWIA Board directors, committee members, employees, and volunteers are required to understand their roles, responsibilities and behaviour expected in promoting child safety.
- It is expected that, upon completion of training, all personnel covered within the scope of this policy sign the *Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct Agreement* while working for or operating under the auspices of the Province. If amendments are made to this Agreement which alter its intent, those required to sign the agreement will be required to re-sign it at the earliest possible time.

2. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES

- The Province, LML and MWIA apply best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of board directors, committee members and employees where they may be required to work directly or indirectly with children, ensuring that they engage the most suitable and appropriate people.
- All applicants for employment that involves working with children are required to respond to a set of behavioural-based questions during their face-to-face employment interview.

- All applicants for employment and all contractors, consultants, donors visiting projects, agents and volunteers engaged by either the Province, LML or MWIA will undergo a screening process prior to commencement, which will include one or more of the following: National Police Check, Working with Children Check, Verbal Referee Check, Character Reference Check and/or Reference Check. Where National Police Checks are not available or are unreliable, a statutory declaration or local legal equivalent will be required.
- All board directors, staff and volunteers are required to hold a current and valid *Working with Children Check*. No person will be permitted to work with children if there is a possibility that he/she poses an unacceptable risk.

3. CHILD SAFEGUARDING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- LML and MWIA are responsible for providing training in child protection to all board directors, Province personnel, employees and volunteers. For this purpose, training agendas, timeframes and resource materials are managed by the LML CEO (or delegate) or the MWIA EO (or delegate) and this training forms part of the staff annual performance review process.
- In settings where child protection and risks are not well understood, LML and MWIA will work with their partners to increase awareness of this issue and to promote the development of child safety policies, based on local culture and values.
- All board directors, employees and volunteers receive an appropriate induction, during which they are made aware of their child safeguarding responsibilities, including reporting obligations.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORD-KEEPING

- Photographic and/or video images of children will not be taken without the informed consent of the child or his/her parents or guardians. 'Informed consent' means that the photographer has explained how the photograph or film will be used. Refer to the *External Communications Policy* which incorporates the *Media and Communications Consent Form*.
- Images collected and stored must portray children in a respectful and appropriate manner, and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. There should be no identifying information of the child when publishing images or sending them electronically. Compliance with local traditions and restrictions for reproducing personal images will be undertaken. Refer to the *External Communications Policy* and the incorporated *Ethical Decision-Making Framework (EDMF) for Communications*.
- Files must not contain details about children that are irrelevant to its operations or any personal details about the young people who are helped by or otherwise benefit from its work.

5. IN-COUNTRY FIELD VISITS

- Contact with children will always be under the supervision of Province, LML or MWIA staff and children will be protected from any adverse consequences of encounters with Province, LML, MWIA or representatives such as threat or intimidation.
- In-country field visits will always be undertaken at the direction and control of the Province, LML and MWIA representative(s). Undertaking such visits will, at all times, be under the management and supervision of local project staff. Refer to the *Volunteer Policy* which specifies additional measures that are taken for in-country volunteer field trips.

6. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN

- Any concerns about a child's safety that involves a Loreto Sister, board director, employee, or volunteer, must be reported according to the *Child Safeguarding - Reporting Process*.
- The concerns raised will be dealt with under the process outlined in *Child Safeguarding - Complaint-Handling Process*.
- Both the reporting process and the complaint-handling process have been designed to be child-focused, culturally safe and accessible by children and those from diverse backgrounds.

7. NATIONAL REDRESS SCHEME

- The Loreto Province of Australia and South East Asia has joined the National Redress Scheme to formalise its shared commitment to acknowledge and offer redress to anyone who has experienced child sexual abuse in any of its institutions.
- LML and MWIA are both covered as participating group members of the Loreto Group.

8. RELATED LORETO DOCUMENTS

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Child Safe Policy

Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct Agreement

Child Safeguarding - Reporting Process

Child Safeguarding – Complaint-Handling Process

Privacy Policy

External Communications Policy

Volunteer Policy (MWIA only)

Funding Guidelines (MWIA only)

Loreto Code of Conduct

Loreto Guidelines for Managing Conduct & Performance (internal)