



Marist Youth Ministry

Child Safeguarding Policy

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

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OUTLINE

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This policy document is validated for use by Marist Youth Ministry

Authorised by National Coordinator of Marist Youth Ministry

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1 POLICY

1.1 Policy Statement

The Marist Brothers were founded for the education and Christian formation of *young people*, especially the least favoured. Marist Youth Ministry (“MYM”), a *ministry* within the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat, nurtures the wellbeing of all *young people* who participate in its programmes, respects their dignity, ensures their safety, and protects them from harm, exploitation and *abuse*.

Any *allegation* or concern of *abuse* is taken seriously, handled in accordance with legal or regulatory requirements, reported, managed with compassion, promptness and integrity, in the interests of justice and reconciliation.

1.2 Child Safeguarding Commitment

Marist Youth Ministry is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all *children, young people and vulnerable adults* in all its programs and events.

The Gospel imperatives of truth, justice, compassion and reconciliation underpin this policy. Our safeguarding commitment is founded on the conviction that the rights and dignity of *children, young people and vulnerable adults* need to be promoted and protected, that they are all to be treated equally with love and respect, and that their personal dignity is never to be compromised.

Marist Youth Ministry is committed to child safeguarding in the context of the [United Nations’ Convention of the Right of the Child](#).

Marist Youth Ministry has zero tolerance for child *abuse* and is committed to providing a child safe environment where *children, young people and vulnerable adults* are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Every person involved in programs and events conducted by Marist Youth Ministry has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all *children, young people and vulnerable adults* and this is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

MYM will make full disclosure of any *allegations* of *abuse* to the Police and/or other government agencies with responsibility for management of such matters, as required by law. It will make a similar disclosure to the relevant Marist Brothers *Professional Standards Office*.

Marist Youth Ministry welcomes all forms of feedback on our child safeguarding and our procedures through the following link (), at our events via our feedback forms and directly to MYM staff.

1.3 Principles

In carrying out our commitment to child safeguarding, Marist Youth Ministry will:

- support and protect *children, young people and vulnerable adults*;
- take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safeguarding;
- value and empower *children* to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to *children*;
- respect diversity in circumstances and cultures while keeping child safety paramount;
- provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards and between *children, young people and vulnerable adults* ;
- engage only the most suitable people to work with *children, young people and vulnerable adults* by and have high quality staff, *Volunteer* supervision, and professional development;
- ensure thorough and relevant education and training of all *Personnel* engaged in working with *children, young people and vulnerable adults* either directly or indirectly;
- ensure *children, young people and vulnerable adults* know who to talk with if they are concerned or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- keep proper records and share information appropriately to ensure child safety;
- ensure that it makes full disclosure of any *allegations of abuse* to the Police and/or other government agencies with responsibility for management of such matters, as required by law. It will make similar disclosure to any relevant *Catholic Professional Standards Office*;
- acknowledge that all *children, young people and vulnerable adults* have equal rights to protection from *abuse* and exploitation. Culture or other reasons notwithstanding, we must intervene on behalf of any child or *young person* suspected of being *abused*;
- ensure that anyone raising an *allegation* or concern about *abuse* is listened to attentively and offered a compassionate, prompt and just response when making an *allegation* of or raising concern about *abuse*;
- accept that a responsibility of care extends not only to the *children* or *young person* who may have suffered harm but also to their family. Any person accused of *abuse* also deserves to be treated with justice and compassion;
- ensure that truth and transparency should characterise all actions
- ensure additional considerations related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and other experiences and needs.

1.4 Description of Marist Youth Ministry (MYM)

MYM is an integrated and coordinated area of youth ministry across school-based and post-school *children, young people and young adults* across Australia. The primary focus is *children, young people and young adults* aged between 12-25.

The main school-based ministry, ‘Game Changers’, involves students in Years 7 to 12. School ministry also involves other programmes, retreats and events organised by MYM, including Marist Connect Evenings, Year 11 and Year 12 Forums, Student Leaders Gathering and the National Marist Youth Gathering.

MYM also engages in young adult ministry. This is done through a range of activities and events across Australia.

All MYM school-based programs are under the direction of *Marist Schools Australia* and are implemented by MYM through its National Coordinator, together with the Regional Coordinators, Assistants and *Volunteers*, in partnership with other Marist ministries.

1.5 Purpose

The MYM Child Safeguarding Policy is written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the organisation to child safety, and to provide an outline of the policies and procedures that have been developed to keep *children, young people and vulnerable adults* safe, including from abuse or other harm.

It is an overarching policy that provides the key elements of MYM's approach to being a child safe organisation and sets the tone for MYM's entire Child Safeguarding Program.

The MYM Child Safeguarding Policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child safeguarding and wellbeing within each *ministry* program and event;
- the creation of a safe and supportive environment and a positive and robust child safe culture;
- the promotion and open discussion of child safeguarding issues within MYM and;
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child safeguarding in the relevant states in which MYM operates.

1.6 Scope

This Policy applies to all adults in MYM, including Staff, Religious, Clergy, *Volunteers*, Direct Contact Contractors, External Education Providers, parents/carers and other family members. This policy applies in all environments, both physical and online, and on-site and off-site School grounds, including camps and immersions.

1.7 Governance

MYM is a key ministry and falls under the authority of the Trustees of the Marist Brothers ("the Trustees"), a body corporate under the NSW Roman Catholic Church Communities Land Act (1942). The Trustees have delegated all oversight and governance of MYM to the Council of the Australian Conference of the Association of St Marcellin Champagnat (the "Association").

The Association has delegated management of any activities involving *children* or *young people* by MYM to Marist Schools Australia ("MSA"). Policies and procedures for MYM are approved by the MSA Leadership Team ("MSALT"). In this, MSALT receives advice from an expert advisory committee of the Association, namely the *Marist Association Professional Standards Advisory Committee*.

MSA delegates to MYM the responsibility for implementing all child safeguarding policies and protocols.

MYM's commitment to child safeguarding is based on the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) as published by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd.

1.8 Authority

This Policy was approved by MYM Leadership Team in November 2021
The policy will be reviewed at least once every three years, or as required by law.

1.9 Sources for this policy

This policy has been developed with reference to and in accordance with key internal and external child safeguarding documents. These include:

- MSA Child Protection Standards
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Commonwealth and State Legislation relating to mandatory reporting of child *abuse* and working with *children* requirements.

1.10 Related documents

Child Safeguarding procedures and guidelines are set out in supporting documents and templates.

- Code of Conduct for Ministry with Children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Student Code of Conduct
- Protocols and Processes for Responding to Reports of Child Abuse or Risk of Child Abuse
- MYM Child Protection Short Guide
- Practical Advice on Listening to a Complainant
- Recognising Child Abuse and Risk of Child Abuse
- Confidential Reference Check
- Report of Allegations of Abuse or Disclosure of Self Harm Form for Staff Member and Local CPO
- Report of Allegations of Abuse or Disclosure of Self Harm Form for MYM National Coordinator or MSA
- Employment Screening

1.11 Glossary

A glossary applying to terminology used within this policy is provided at the end of the policy. Terms explained in the glossary are in italics.

2 IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

2.1 Distribution of responsibility

The Marist Association has responsibility for:

- Ensuring MYM has a child safeguarding framework in place.

Marist Schools Australia Ltd has responsibility to:

- approve the policy developed by the MYM National Coordinator;
- ensure the effective implementation of this policy and adherence to the NCSS
- ensuring that appropriate training in child safeguarding is undertaken, including by the MYM National Coordinator;
- ensure that reports are received about policy development and implementation from MYM National Coordinator;
- ensure that child safeguarding is a standing agenda item for discussion with the National Coordinator of MYM;
- arrange for audits or reviews of child safeguarding policies and procedures in MYM;
- keep records as required;
- submit reports to the Marist Association Professional Standards Advisory Committee on the reporting, management and closure of all safeguarding *allegations* and concerns in MYM.

The MYM National Coordinator has responsibility for:

- being the Senior Child Protection Officer for MYM;
- knowledge and understanding of legislative obligations, child safeguarding standards, and Association and *Church* requirements relevant to the promotion of child safeguarding;
- obtaining the approval of MSALT for child safeguarding policies and procedures;
- implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of child safeguarding policies and procedures, including through a MYM Leadership Team;
- having appropriately trained and publicly named contact people to receive and process any *allegations* or concerns, namely the MYM Regional Coordinators as “Child Protection Officers”;
- ensuring appropriate child safeguarding training for all MYM staff members and *Volunteers*;
- ensuring effective screening of Direct Contact Contractors;
- to ensure effective employment screening procedures are operating;
- compliance with other Association or MSA policies and procedures pertaining to staff recruitment, and induction and to ensure, as far as possible, that those who are appointed to positions are fit and proper persons to occupy those positions and that they understand their child protection responsibilities;
- reporting and management of child safeguarding *allegations* or concerns in accordance with this policy, MSA or Association policies and the law;
- readiness to seek advice from appropriate professionals in the area of child *abuse*;
- relating this policy to other local policies, for example a code of conduct, pastoral care policy, bullying and harassment policy;
- ensuring that *children, young people and vulnerable adults* have adequate knowledge of *abuse* and unsafe behaviours or situations, and ways to report these;
- ensuring parents have access to knowledge of child protection policies and procedures.

The Child Safeguarding and Compliance Officer

MYM is assisted by the Child Safeguarding and Compliance Officer in relation to:

- policy development and review;
- reporting;
- assurance matters;
- organisation of MYM staff training;
- advice and support to the MYM National Coordinator on specific child safeguarding issues.

2.2 Child Protection Officers

MYM will have at least one person appointed and trained as a Senior Child Protection Officer across all regions. This person will be the MYM National Coordinator. The Senior Child Protection Officer has additional child safeguarding responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for child safeguarding matters and coordinating MYM's response to child safety incidents.

MYM will have at least one person appointed and trained as a Child Protection Officer in each region. This person will be the MYM Regional Coordinator and/or the Game Changers Coordinator.

Child Protection Officers will have additional training in child safeguarding issues and will help to plan and deliver staff training in child safeguarding issues. They will be the point of contact for raising child safeguarding *allegations* or concerns within MYM. They will ensure *children, young people and vulnerable adults* are aware of the means to raise *allegations* or concerns and they will provide *children, young people and vulnerable adults* with advice and support if issues are raised. They will be responsible for championing child safeguarding within MYM and assisting in responding to child safeguarding incidents.

Details of the Child Protection Officers for each region will be made known to staff, *children, young people and vulnerable adults*, parents and *Volunteers* involved in MYM activities.

Contact details for our Child Protection Officers are set out below:

Name	Position	Contact No.	Email address
Edwin Bakker	National MYM Coordinator (Melb)	0407879117	edwin.bakker@marists.org.au
Jenifer Miller	Regional Coordinator (Syd)	0439646800	jenifer.miller@marists.org.au
Adam Burns	Marist Youth Minister (Bris)	0472869835	adam.burns@marists.org.au

2.3 Responding and Reporting

All States and Territories make it mandatory for *abuse* or reasonable suspicion of *abuse* involving *children, young people and vulnerable adults* to be reported to the Police or relevant authorities.

If a *child, young person or vulnerable adult* discloses an *allegation* or concern of *abuse*, it will be taken seriously, reported and dealt with sensitively and professionally and without delay.

Regardless of mandatory reporting requirements, all *allegations* or concerns relating to *abuse of children, young people* or vulnerable adults made against MYM *Personnel*, must follow the reporting procedure as set out in the Procedural document: “Protocols and Processes for Responding the Reports of Child Abuse or Risk of Child Abuse”.

2.4 Provision of Advice and Support

Complainants, accused persons, and other affected persons will be offered advice and support, including from specialists as appropriate, as per the MYM Complaint Handling Policy.

2.5 Record-keeping

Records will be kept of all child safeguarding *allegations* or concerns including reports of and investigations into *allegations*, suspicions, incidents or any kind of issues relating to child safeguarding and *abuse*.

Records are securely stored and retained indefinitely at the office of the National MYM Coordinator and MSA.

In maintaining records of child safety incidents or concerns, MYM maintains confidentiality and privacy for *children, young people and vulnerable adults* and families in accordance with Commonwealth and State privacy legislation.

2.6 Confidentiality

An individual’s right to privacy is to be protected in accordance with the law. Both those who are making reports and those about whom accusations are being made are entitled to procedural fairness and privacy.

Where an *allegation* or concern of child *abuse* is raised, staff members should not disclose or make use of the information which they hold other than to report it in accordance with this Policy and to disclose it to persons authorised by law or this Policy to deal with child safeguarding issues.

2.7 Collaboration and case management

MYM will actively cooperate with police, government, *Church* and other agencies, and relevant professional bodies (such as teacher registration bodies) in the best interests of *children, young person and vulnerable adults*.

2.8 Dissemination

All MYM *Personnel* will be made aware of, and appropriately trained in this Policy and their pursuant responsibilities. Annual training sessions, with mandatory and

recorded attendance, will be organised by the MYM National Coordinator to ensure this.

It is the responsibility of the MYM National Coordinator to ensure that *Volunteers* and Direct Contact Contractors are aware of the structures, policies and procedures for child protection, and that all information on this is readily accessible.

Children, young people and vulnerable adults engaged in activities of MYM need to be made aware of their safeguarding rights and the means they have for reporting safety *allegations* or concerns. This responsibility falls to the nominated Child Protection Officer during the event.

Information that needs to be easily accessible to *children, young people and vulnerable adults* includes:

- who the Child Protection Officer is;
- how to make a report or disclosure.

2.9 Policy management and review

An annual audit will take place of the implementation of this Policy and the results will be reported to MSA and the Association.

All policies and procedures will be reviewed at least once every three years. and revised, based on changes in needs, legislation, guidance and experience.

The views of principal stakeholders, including *children, young people and vulnerable adults*, will be sought in the ongoing revision of this policy and its procedures.

2.10 Breaches of the policy

Failure to comply with any provision set out in the policy agreement will result in industrial action under the normal procedures of the Marist Association in accordance with the relevant provisions of law.

Actions made include immediate suspension of duties or dismissal from the organisation.

3 GLOSSARY

Abuse

There are different legal definitions of child *abuse* in Australia. Most commonly, the categories of child *abuse* include sexual, physical, psychological, neglect, ill-treatment, exploitation and exposure to family violence. For specific legal definitions in each state or territory go to <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect>.

Allegation

means a complaint, made verbally or in writing, claiming or asserting that someone has committed an act of *abuse* against a child or *young person*.

Child

A person who is under the age of 16 years.

Church

The Roman Catholic Church.

Direct Contact Contractors

Are third party contractors who have direct contact with students during the normal course of their work, or contractors who may be in a position to establish a relationship of trust with a student, notwithstanding that access to students would be rare. In MYM, direct contact contractors may include guest speakers from outside agencies, priests from various parishes called in to celebrate Mass or assist with the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and sport and recreation staff at camp sites.

National Director of MSA

The person appointed by the Marist Association with the responsibility of oversight and management of Marist Schools Australia.

Personnel

An employee or volunteer in Marist Youth Ministry.

Marist Schools Australia (MSA)

The collective of Catholic schools which shape their identity and mission through the spirituality and educational approach that was introduced into the Church by St Marcellin Champagnat. MSA provides its member schools with leadership, support and, where applicable, governance.

Ministry

The work involved or the situation which exists when one person has responsibility for the well-being of another. All work involved with the supervision or education of *children* and *young person* is a Ministry and, where the context allows in this Policy, so is an institution, agency, project or programme conducted by the Province corporately, or by Brothers or Marist *Personnel* individually.

Marist Association Professional Standards Advisory Committee (MAPSAC)

The group appointed Association Council to provide advice and guidance on child safeguarding matters.

Professional Standards Office

The group responsible to ensure that certain standards are met by met by Clerics and Religious, including ethical and legal standards.

Volunteer

Any person who gives freely of his or her time and experience to participate in activities and perform work for the Province. The relationship between the volunteer and the Province is not bound by a contract of employment and no payment is made by the Province to the volunteer or anybody on their behalf, for the work performed. A ‘Working with *Children* Check’ is required for all volunteers who are engaged in child-related activities.

Young person/people

A person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years.

Young Adult

A person who is 18 years or above and who has graduated from secondary school.

Vulnerable Adult

A person who is aged over 18 or other individuals who may be unable to take care of themselves or are unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation.

While all people must be protected from harm, there are additional legislative and ethical considerations for protecting vulnerable people. Vulnerable people can include:

- children and seniors
- people with impaired intellectual or physical functioning
- people from a low socio-economic background
- people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
- people who are not native speakers of the local language
- people with low levels of literacy or education
- people subject to modern slavery, which involves human exploitation and control, such as forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking, and child labour.

APPENDIX: MYM CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

[MYM Online communication policy](#)

[MYM Complaints Handling Policy](#)

[MYM Privacy Policy](#)

Contractor Credential Procedure:

Contractor is a person engaged as a guest presenter or Priest at MYM events, where children are present.

The contractor (and their employees) must:

1. Be provided with a copy the MYM Child Safeguarding Policy
2. Comply with the MYM Child Safeguarding Policy
3. Have a current WWCC which is linked to a parish, agency or entity
4. Be briefed about child safety on site.