

Safeguarding Annual Update

Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict

NEWSLETTER | 2024



Good News from the Philippines

by Anne Dixon sgs

Here in the Philippines our learning curve continues to climb steeply!

This time last year we reported that we were "endeavouring to finalise our respective Safeguarding Rules and documents".

We can proudly report that for this 2024 Newsletter all documents have been approved by the Superior and Council.

The documents include:

- Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Code of Practice
- Good Samaritan Kinder School Safeguarding Procedures
- Good Samaritan Outreach Center Safeguarding Procedures

We have also updated our Child Safe Improvement Plan and Risk Register.

**"Safeguarding is
everyone's
responsibility."**



Above (L to R): Joan Lobaton (Safeguarding Officer), Arcely Burdeos (Orphanage Coordinator), Anne Dixon (Director), Tata Burdeos (Marketing Coordinator) showing their Safeguarding Policy.



At both the Kinder and Outreach Center specific desks have been allocated for the Safeguarding coordinators, with the Safeguarding Suggestion Box in full view. (see photo below). Other practices include:

1. Kinder School – at the beginning of every parent meeting there is a short segment on Safeguarding. In the classroom there is set curriculum lessons about safeguarding.



Above (L to R): Arlea and Joan at the GS Kinder School Safeguarding Desk in Bacolod, Philippines.

**"SAFEGUARDING
MUST REMAIN
PARAMOUNT IN
OUR MINDS EVERY
DAY."**

2. Outreach Center – Formation sessions with both parents and scholars include safeguarding awareness and a safe environment is evident where participants are encouraged to speak out if they have concerns.

"It is so important to continue to provide education and raise awareness about the steps to take if feeling vulnerable or unsafe."



A significant addition to our safeguarding culture this year has been the incorporation of monthly committee meetings of the Good Samaritan Local Safeguarding Team. These meetings help us to keep focussed on our goals and practices. Safeguarding is an ongoing journey that we are committed to making and we are endeavouring to support and encourage each other along the way! Our next task is to put into writing the terms of reference and role descriptions of this committee.

Bacolod is a city where more than 60% of the population are living in squatter areas, which means that there are thousands of vulnerable people. We are committed to educating those around us about being safe and we will continue to advocate for, and support the families we have the privilege to share our life journey with.



Below: GS Local Safeguarding Team (L to R clockwise) Arlea Bautista (Kinder Safeguarding Officer), Joan Lobaton (Outreach Center Safeguarding Officer), Marites Lagrito (Kinder Principal) and Anne Dixon (Outreach Center Director and Safeguarding Coordinator, Philippines)



"As Good Samaritans on mission let us always hold deep respect for the diverse gifts of Sisters, Oblates, colleagues and friends."



Good News from Kiribati

by Taabeia Ibouri sgs



In August the Sisters in Kiribati participated in safeguarding training sessions. Along with the training, the sisters launched their first Safeguarding Policy. The Safeguarding Policy is written in both English and Kiribati and has been approved by the Superior and Council.

During the training, it was good to see the Sisters ask questions and contribute to discussions. Even though safeguarding is being talked about in the Church, community and workspace, Safeguarding is now just emerging in Kiribati even for us-Sisters. It is a new learning for us. The

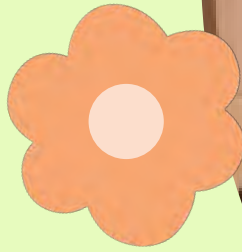


Above: A discussion about the Code of Practice involved discerning behaviours that 'must always' (green) and 'must never' (red). Upon completion of the activity the Code of Practice was updated to address the particular ministry contexts in Kiribati.

training helped us to come to understand why safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.



Above (L to R): Srs Tibwau Matia, Ameria Eutare, Kawi Arebonto, Kakare Biita, Tenta Maritino and Taabeia Ibouri sgs (absent Juniko Toaua sgs) proudly displaying their Safeguarding Policy and Code of Practice. The Sisters took part in safeguarding education and formation sessions prior to the official launch of their Policy.



Good News from Australia

by Anita Biddle

Safeguarding Education & Formation

The following is a summary of the programs featured in this year's education & formation schedule.

Sisters– Five sessions addressed different topics applicable to Sisters' ministry. The sessions were: 1. Risk Management Theories 2. Understanding Coercive Control for Spiritual Directors 3. Adult Safeguarding Functions—Adults with Disability 4. Person-centred Care for the Older Person, and 5. Core concepts in working with people from refugee backgrounds.

Staff (Admin & HWB)– Participated in several sessions throughout the year. A session discussed the concept of Adults at Risk and identified the expected ways of working with adults at risk. Another session involved sharing information about understanding coercive control.

Lastly, staff also engaged in a session about self-care.

Sisters and staff were provided the opportunity to engage with ACSL's online live learning sessions. The sessions attended by the Congregation included Dignity in Safeguarding, Safeguarding Adults at Risk, Responding Restoratively to Complaints of Sexual Abuse, Safeguarding in International Contexts, Trauma-informed Care, and Capturing the Voices of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Oblates –The safeguarding session for Oblates focussed on how the Good Samaritan Parable and the Rule of St Benedict support our safeguarding practice. The Oblate Local Coordinator invited their group to discern and respond to the enquiry question: **What does Good Samaritan Safeguarding mean for us?**



SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK



The Congregation offers services (by employed staff) to support Sisters. It was noted that Sisters with whom staff engage may be considered adults at risk due to their circumstance at the time of interaction.

The following resources and projects for

2024 have strengthened the Congregation's practice of safeguarding adults at risk. Each resource and project, developed in collaboration with work colleagues and Sisters, involved extensive consultation, recognising the importance of everyone's role in the process.



1. Ways of Working

A new Safeguarding document, 'Adults at Risk, Ways of Working Guidelines', was endorsed and launched. The resource, designed to be practical and user-friendly, highlights the principles of Safety, Agency, and Person-centred Care. It outlines the expected ways of working for staff when supporting a Sister of the Good Samaritan while performing their role, including in a community residence.



Above: Anita Biddle catching up with Sr Therese Duffy sgs to listen and note her experience of receiving a service from SGS staff.

2. Conversation and feedback

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards 2, 3, and 4 state that a service has the responsibility to provide access to information about being safe from abuse and where an adult at risk can seek help if they feel unsafe. The service must demonstrate safeguarding practices provided in culturally safe and inclusive ways, facilitating self-determination.

The conversation has been devised to ascertain service quality through the lens of safeguarding. During November and December, I met with individual sisters who access the services to seek their feedback. The outcomes of the conversations will enhance service quality and safety. The results will be reported and inform practices, policies and procedures.



SGS Safeguarding Community of Practice

Anne Dixon, sgs (Philippines), Taabeia Ibouri, sgs (Kiribati) and Anita Biddle (Australia), SGS Safeguarding Coordinators, are members of the SGS Community of Practice (CoP), which Donna Webb of Safeguarding Central competently leads. The CoP gathers three times (via Zoom) annually for three hours each session. Donna facilitates the conversation and provides expert knowledge regarding specific topics requested by the coordinators. The topics this year included Code of Conduct development, Engagement with Local Stakeholders, Safeguarding Induction, what is included, Building a Strong Safeguarding Culture, Safeguarding Policy Development, Safeguarding Roles and Accountabilities and Risk Management. The coordinators highly value this time collaborating and learning from each other and immensely appreciate Donna's expertise and support.

Safeguarding Audit of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) audited the Congregation against version 2 of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. David Treanor, the ACSL auditor, visited the three congregational offices and interviewed up to 30 personnel (Sisters and staff) across the three sites in person and via Zoom. The final Audit Report showed that the Sisters of the Good Samaritan has fully implemented 100% of the relevant indicators to their operations.

Sorrow and Promise 2024

On 20 October 2024 Catholic Religious Australia recognised a day of Sorrow and Promise to those who have been harmed by abuse in the Church and to make a commitment to a safer church. To demonstrate the Congregations commitment to safety and care and lament the past, a dedicated prayer space commemorating victims and survivors was made available during the following week. The prayer space was situated in the Prayer Room at the Congregational Centre in Glebe. Those who visited the prayer space were invited to take a token to represent their prayer and commitment to a safer church.





Good News from Japan

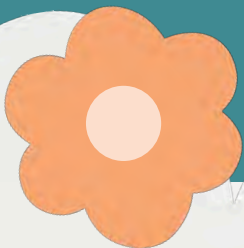
by Anita Biddle

L to R (back): Etsuko Hattori sgs, Johanna Yamawaki sgs, Anita Biddle, Masako Adachi sgs, Fidelis Yamauchi sgs and Eiko Muake sgs.

L to R (front): Hiro Kageyama sgs, Maria Theresia Hiranbe sgs and Haruko Morikawa sgs.

Absent: Yoshi Suzukawa sgs.

I had an opportunity this year to travel to Japan with my husband to visit our daughter. Whilst in the country I visited the Sisters in their home at Osaka. Our conversation did not particularly focus on Safeguarding, although I was informed by the Sisters that they continue to feel safe in both their community and ministry.



**May we, as Good Samaritan women
and men, use all gentleness as
ministers of Christ's mercy and
messengers of Christ's compassion.**

