

## ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA

### CHILD SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT STATEMENT

**St. Columbans Mission Society in Australia (the Society)** is actively committed to fostering communities of safeguarding that recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children.

We encourage open communication whereby families and communities are informed of relevant issues and participate in decisions about the safety of children. It is particularly important to us to look for avenues to empower children to have a say and be listened to.

We actively seek to become and remain informed of the causes and signs of child abuse and neglect.

When we receive information about concerns or witness any matter relating to abuse of a child, we respond appropriately and report any such concerns to the appropriate authority. This includes contacting the police immediately where there may be immediate risk of harm to any person, especially a child.

Every person within the Society who comes into contact, or works, with children seeks to uphold the dignity of all children and commits to establishing safe and supportive relationships.

The Society has documented policies and procedures to prevent risks to children and build a strong culture of safeguarding. All members and associates are expected to follow these policies and procedures and contribute to the culture of care and protection of all children.

We plan, organise and review all activities with children, proactively considering potential risks and strive to ensure risks are reduced and eliminated where possible. Everyone is encouraged to communicate any area of concern or where you think our approach may need improvement.

Anyone who brings forward a suspicion, concerns, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the Society will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with our lawful obligations and our own Complaints Handling Policy.

We regularly undertake internal and external auditing of our safeguarding policies and practices to make sure that they always support a culture and practice that puts the safety of children at the centre of our thinking and action.

We listen to the voices of children as we constantly strive to remain vigilant and make improvements.

For more information or to raise a concern, please contact:

**Fr Peter O'Neill, Columban Safeguarding COORDINATOR in Australia, (03) 9375 9475**

***This Safeguarding Statement has been adapted from the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: EDITION 1 2019 (CPSL). It was endorsed for use by the St Columbans Mission Society (Australia) at its Gathering on 23 November 2019.***