Standards for safeguarding in the Company of Mary

2025





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Because minors cannot legally consent, any sexual activity involving them is considered abuse.

2. A **minor** is defined as any person under the age of eighteen, or who is by law considered equivalent to a minor.

3. A **vulnerable person** is defined as anyone who, due to illness, physical or mental disability, or deprivation of personal liberty, is in a condition that limits - even occasionally - their ability to understand, to will, or otherwise to resist an offense.

4. Child pornography refers to any representation, regardless of the means used, of a minor engaged in explicit sexual activities, whether real or simulated, as well as any representation of the sexual organs of minors for primarily sexual purposes.

5. By **Member** or **Confrere** we mean any professed member of the Company of Mary - whether priest or brother - a novice or a postulant.

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Appendix 1

Definitions

1. Types of abuse

a. **Neglect:** The failure of a care giver to provide the basic requirements for a person's physical and emotional care, development and sustenance.

b. **Physical abuse:** Non-accidental or intentional physical aggression towards another person.

c. **Psychological abuse:** Persistent emotional mistreatment or manipulation of another person.

d. **Spiritual abuse:** Using faith, beliefs, or religious authority to control, manipulate, shame, or harm another person. It may also manifest as abuse of conscience.

e. **Abuse of power:** The misuse of authority or a dominant position to unfairly control, manipulate, or harm others for personal gain or advantage.

f. **Sexual abuse of a minor:** Any sexual activity or behavior imposed on someone below the age of eighteen (*Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela*, Art. 6). It includes:

I. Physical contact, such as fondling or penetration:

II. Non-contact acts, such as exposing a child to sexual content;

III. Coercion or manipulation, including grooming;

IV. Producing, displaying, possessing, or distributing child pornography by any means, as well as recruiting or inducing a minor to participate in pornographic performances.

Introduction

Inspired by the values of the Gospel, the vision of our Founder St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, and the principles of human dignity, we recognize that safeguarding is a significant responsibility. It calls us to be vigilant, compassionate, and proactive in creating safe environments where everyone, especially children and vulnerable adults, feels safe, valued, and empowered.

While history, culture, and traditions shape the unique character of each society, influencing local safeguarding approaches, our shared identity as members of the Catholic Church and the Company of Mary demands a unified response.

The purpose of the document is to provide our Congregation with a common and more systematic approach to safeguarding, and to foster a consistent culture of care.

Our standards focus on prevention, pastoral care, response to allegations and supervision, and they are organized around six thematic areas.

This revision of our Congregation's safeguarding standards was requested by the General Council following the presentation of the Operational Plan for implementing the Acts of our 2023 General Chapter.

This document was approved *ad experimentum* by the Superior General, Father Yoseph Putra Dwi Darma Watun, during the Ordinary Session of the General Council Meeting in March 2025, and is thereby binding on all entities within the Company of Mary.

Safeguarding Commission

Standards for safeguarding in the Company of Mary

A committed Entity Administration

Our commitment to the safety of children and vulnerable adults is reflected in how the Administration of the Entity takes this issue seriously. This commitment is shown in the way the Entity is structured and governed, in the activities it carries out, and in the measures it implements to assess and mitigate risks.

1. The Entity Administration publicly commits to safeguarding adopting a zero-tolerance stand towards any form of abuse.

1.1. A safeguarding policy for the Entity is developed and formally endorsed by the Entity Administration.

1.2. A public statement of commitment by the Entity Administration is made available (e.g. web site).

1.3. The Entity Administration fosters and monitors a safeguarding culture within the Entity, emphasizing transparency and accountability among all members.

2. The safeguarding structure of the Entity is clear and transparent.

2.1. The Entity Administration appoints a safeguarding committee, to oversee the implementation of safeguarding practices, policies and procedures.

2.2. The Entity Administration appoints a safeguarding coordinator and clearly defines their roles and responsibilities in writing.

19. Report allegations of abuse and sexual misconduct of confreres to the General Administration.

The Superior of the Entity is required to report all old and current cases of abuse of minor and of vulnerable adults to the General Administration and the Safeguarding Office in Rome.

20. Annual Report.

The Superior of the Entity shall submit to the General Administration and to the Safeguarding Office an annual safeguarding report, including activities, safeguarding-related issues, and any relevant information.

charge of implementing and monitoring, risk reduction strategies and consequences for non-compliance.

16.2. The safety plan is signed by the Superior, the offending member and one other person who is directly involved in the supervision, and it is revised once a year.

16.3. The Superior of the Entity appoints a trained supervisor and clarifies their roles and responsibilities in writing.

17. Members with confirmed abuse allegations do not work in a position that allows access to minors or in any other church ministry.

17.1. In consultation with the Advisory Board, the Superior of the Entity ensures that appropriate activities are assigned to offending members.

17.2. Offending members will live in a community that may ensure support and accountability.

17.3. The Superior of the Entity will ensure that at least one in the said community is informed about the situation of the offending member under supervision.

Reporting to the General Administration and filing

18. Paperwork and filing.

The Entity Administration ensures that every safeguarding activity (e.g. allegations, interviews, verbal interviews and interactions, reports, decisions) is documented in writing, duly dated and signed, and properly filed.

2.3. The Entity Administration appoints a trained and experienced victims and survivors' outreach coordinator and clearly defines their roles and responsibilities in writing.

2.4. The Entity Administration ensures that a reporting structure is available, known and accessible so that victims and witnesses who report abuse feel safe and protected.

3. A code of conduct is defined and made available to members.

3.1. The code of conduct applies to all members and individuals participating in the mission of the Entity.

3.2. It outlines appropriate and expected standards of behavior by members and by those involved in mission.

3.3. It considers the needs of vulnerable groups, the cultural context and the mission activity of the Entity.

4. The Entity develops a risk management plan.

4.1. The Entity Administration regularly monitors structures, communities and practices of ministry within the Entity, to identify, prevent and mitigate safeguarding risks.

4.2. The risk management plan addresses physical as well as online environments.

4.3. Special attention is given to one-to-one interactions in ministry and off-site activities.

Committed members and communities

Our commitment to the safety of children and of vulnerable adults is reflected in how we select and train new members, as well as in our dedication to ongoing formation in safeguarding.

5. The Entity has a clearly defined policy for screening and selecting candidates.

5.1. Selection criteria include a psychological and psychosexual assessment conducted by an accredited psychologist.

5.2. A background check is conducted to ensure that candidates have not been expelled from another seminary or were involved in any crimes or safeguarding-relate concerns.

5.3. Information about the candidate suitability for a life of chastity and of celibacy is provided in the yearly report for the admission to vows.

6. The Entity has a clearly defined safeguarding education plan for each stage of initial formation.

6.1. Candidate training focuses on building a culture of care, support and safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults. It includes the psychosocial and psychosexual aspects of a healthy chaste celibate life. It deals with affectivity, emotional competence and the ability to form healthy and respectful relationships.

6.2. Candidates participate regularly in safeguarding education programs, with a focus on prevention of sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation of children and of vulnerable adults.

14.2. If the allegation proves credible, the accused member will be put in administrative leave, with no unsupervised contact with minors, and a thorough independent investigation is conducted.

14.3. If an independent investigation is deemed unnecessary, documentation explaining the decision is provided and properly filed.

15. When abuse is established, appropriate disciplinary measures are taken.

15.1. For members who abused minors and vulnerable adults, canonical sanctions are considered, which may include - in the case of an ordained member - suspension and laicization.

15.2. Offending members must follow a wellness plan that includes psychological assessment, spiritual direction, and a path of penance and conversion.

15.3. Offending members are permanently removed from public ministry and positions with unsupervised access to minors and vulnerable adults.

Supervision

Our commitment to safeguarding is shown in how we accompany members who abused minors, and hold them accountable for their actions.

16. In consultation with the Advisory Board a safety plan is implemented for members with confirmed abuse allegations.

16.1. The safety plan includes a history of the problem, limitations and restrictions, level of risk, persons in

Response to allegations

Our commitment to safeguarding is shown in how we promptly, actively and transparently respond to abuse allegations.

12. The Entity has clear and accessible procedures for handling abuse allegations.

12.1. The policy to provides step by step guidance on how to respond to allegations and on the actions to be taken.

12.2. Roles and responsibilities of those involved in responding to allegations are clearly defined.

12.3. The policy addresses possible conflicts of interest in matter of authority.

13. Reporting to civil authorities and collaboration are mandatory.

13.1. The Entity Superior reports all known or suspected abuse of minor to civil authorities.

13.2. The Entity Superior cooperates fully with civil authorities investigating abuse cases.

13.3. Members are educated on their duty to report allegations to appropriate authorities, except in cases protected by the seal of confession.

14. Every allegation of abuse is addressed promptly and transparently.

14.1. The Superior of the Entity or his delegate investigates every allegation of sexual abuse.

6.3. Formators ensure that candidates who have experienced abuse receive adequate professional support.

6.4. A candidate who is unable to adequately manage distance and proximity in relationships with minors and vulnerable adults will be dismissed.

7. Members are accompanied and supported through an ongoing formation program that includes the safeguarding.

7.1. Newly professed and ordained members receive accompaniment, mentoring and support for at least five years. The entity ensures a structured system for this process.

7. 2. All members involved in formation and public ministry must complete at least one education program on the nature, dynamics, incidence, identification and prevention of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults.

7.3. The Entity provides ongoing training programs, which may cover topics such as appropriate boundaries with minors and adults, prevention of abuse in off-site activities, conflict resolution, emotional maturity, chaste celibate living, internet pornography, and responsible social media usage.

7.4. All members formally express their safeguarding commitment in writing.

8. Special attention is given to transfers in ministry and seminaries.

8.1. When a member transfers from one diocese to another within the same Entity, a thorough assessment is

conducted, and a transparent report is provided to the receiving Bishop. The same applies when seminarians leave our Institute and transfer to another seminary or diocese.

8.2. When a member transfers between Entities, an assessment is conducted, and a transparent report on his standing is provided to the receiving Entity Superior.

8.3. Before appointing a member to a special mission within the Entity or the Congregation (e.g., chapter representative, superior, councillor, bursar, formator), a verification of good standing is conducted.

Support for victims and survivors

Our commitment to safeguarding is shown in how we accompany and care for victims and survivors, their families and their communities and in how we partner with them to create a safer environment.

9. Individuals reporting abuse by a member are welcomed and listened to.

9.1. The Superior of the Entity or his delegate is always available to meet the victims and their families.

9.2. The purpose of these encounters is to listen with empathy and compassion, offering comfort and support.

9.3. In the case of minors, the consent of parents or guardians is required, and they are involved thought the process.

10. Regular communication is maintained with survivors and their families.

10.1. The superior or his delegate informs survivors and their families of their right to report the abuse also to civil authorities.

10.2. The superior or his delegate informs survivors and their families about the proceedings against the accused member, the outcome and the measures taken in the event he is found guilty.

10.3. The Entity ensures that proper structures are in place to hear survivors' perspectives on safeguarding policies and practices.

11. The Entity is committed to the holistic healing of abuse victims.

11.1. A clear and well-defined process for reparation is established.

11.2. Victims and survivors are offered Spiritual accompaniment and professional psychological counseling.

11.3. Pastoral care and assistance are made available to victims, survivors, and their families for as long as they desire.