

# Commitment Statement – Safety for all

Sophia Education Ministries (Sophia) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.

Sophia has zero tolerance for all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. All people, regardless of their age, gender identity, race, religious beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Sophia and our member schools live out the values that reflect our Sacred Heart tradition and are embodied in the five goals of Sacred Heart education:

1. A personal and active faith in God
2. A deep respect for intellectual values
3. The building of community as a Christian value
4. A social awareness that impels to action
5. Personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom

Sophia and our member schools commit to promoting and protecting the welfare and human rights of people that interact with, or are affected by, our work.

Sophia upholds the right of all children to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including protection from physical and psychological harm, sexual abuse, and witnessing family violence. Sophia and our member schools are committed to providing safe environments, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard when considering decisions that affect their lives.

Sophia recognises that some individuals and groups may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. We pay particular attention to the most vulnerable students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, gender diverse students and students with disability as we develop and implement services and when responding to concerns.

Every person involved in Sophia and our member schools has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

In our planning, decision-making and operations, Sophia and our member schools:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safeguarding and safety
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives
- Foster a culture of openness that supports any individual to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development
- Ensure children know who to talk to if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk
- Value the input of, and communicate regularly with, families and carers.

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Related Policy	Sophia Safeguarding Policy					
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