

**The Policy and Guidelines for the Protections
of Minors and Vulnerable Adults**

- **SSHJM SpEd Learning Center**
- **Pre-school Education**

**Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary
Cebu, Philippines**

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SSHJM Convent:

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Managed by the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary on behalf of the Archdioces of Cebu

FOREWORD FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL LEADER OF THE SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY

The safety of the children and vulnerable young people and adults in our care is a priority for us. We are fully committed to protecting all those in our care. Indeed, care, compassion and the preservation of the well-being and dignity of the individual lies at the very heart of our Mission Statement:

“We, Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, urged by the compassion of Christ and responsive to the anguish of peoples and planet, are called to help shape communities of gentleness, justice and peace that witness to the healing, liberating and empowering love of God”.

Our commitment to justice entails a duty to protect the dignity and the rights of all God’s people. The creation of a safe environment which protects and respects the dignity of each person is, therefore, a responsibility which we take seriously. Those entrusted to our care in our schools, care services and overseas missions are among the most vulnerable of all. We embrace the measures taken to protect them from all forms of harm and mistreatment. Furthermore, we commit ourselves to promoting and achieving standards of excellence in this key area of safeguarding, as well as in all other aspects of the education and care we provide.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sister Julie Rose". The script is cursive and fluid, with a small flourish at the end.

Sister Julie Rose

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Introduction

Every child is a gift from God, and each child has inherent rights that must be respected and protected. This responsibility, especially entrusted to us, does not only involve to us Sisters, rather it is a task entrusted to every person, to every program, and to the whole SSHJM Community.

The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SSHJM) came to the Philippines in May 2000, bringing the charism of Fr. Victor Braun, Founder, “Only two things matter, Jesus Christ and the Poor”. SSHJM is serving children and vulnerable adults and treats them like a loving mother, and cares for all and protects with a special affection those who are smallest and defenseless through various programs and services to address the needs of the poor families around identified areas. This is the duty that Christ himself entrusted to the Community as a whole.

Aware of this, SSHJM is specifically vigilant in protecting children and vulnerable adults.

Every person - especially the ones to whom are directly entrusted the care and safety of children and those who are in contact with them-has the moral and civil obligation to provide to a child a safe and nurturing environment.

The many cases of abuse, especially of minors, “have inflicted wounds on the Body of Christ, the family of God’s adopted children in Jesus” As part of God’s community and as the Body of Christ-the Church- we respond, not just, to the call of Pope Francis but to the call of the times in safeguarding and protecting minors and vulnerable adults.

This **SSHJM Policy for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults** provides a guidance on the implementation of Safeguarding procedures for the prevention of abuse of children and vulnerable adults. The document also details the course of action for responding to allegations, necessary support for the victims, and provides a mechanism which helps to enable the bringing to account of perpetrator. It is based on the Tripod of Relational Safety: safe self, safe community, and safe ministry-that is to say,” safeguarding assumes a safe self, lived-out in a safe community towards a safe ministry in the service of God’s people”.

Chapter 1

The Foundations

Section1: Commitment

The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SSHJM) recognizes the dignity and rights of minors and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring their protection from all forms of abuse. Specific measures are being taken to give effect to this commitment, namely:

- To create and maintain a safe environment by practicing fully and positively Christ's ministry towards children;
- To create and maintain a safe environment also for vulnerable adults;
- To provide education and conduct information campaign regarding different forms of abuse;
- To raise awareness on SSHJM response to child abuse;
- To receive and promptly verify reports of abuse concerning minors and vulnerable adults;
- To secure the safety of primary and, as needed, secondary victims;
- To offer appropriate pastoral care, spiritual, medical, psychological and legal support;
- To ascertain fair and impartial trial on the accused;
- To ensure that the perpetrators are held to account;
- To help restore the good name of the falsely accused;
- To network and collaborate with different stakeholders to maximize internal and external resources.

We commit to becoming a community who are trustworthy promoters and practitioners of Safeguarding. We shall achieve this through cultivating program ownership, conducting relevant education, training and information dissemination, strengthening support interventions and active linkages.

Section2: Principles

The Guiding Principles

From the Canon Law and the Vatican

The SSHJM recognizes and commits to the faithful application of the laws of the Catholic Church pertaining to the protection of minors and vulnerable persons as laid down by the canons of the Code of Canon Law.

From the United Nations

The SSHJM recognizes the rights of the child outlined under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the optional protocols.

***Please see Appendix 1 for the summary of the UNCRC**

The SSHJM also recognizes and commits to follow the principles articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), "to which every human being, most especially the vulnerable persons, is equally and inalienable entitled."

From the Philippine Civil Law

The SSHJM recognizes the national laws of the Republic of the Philippines. This policy is intended to compliment and in no way replaces national law, particularly:

- RA 7610 Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act of 1992
- RA 9775 Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009
- RA 8369 Family Courts Act of 1997
- RA 9165 Comprehensive Drugs Act of 2002
- RA 9344 Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006
- RA 9208 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 (expanded in 2012)
- RA 9262 Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004
- RA 10175 Cybercrime Prevention Act 2012
- PD 605 Child and Youth Welfare Code
- RA 11313 Safe Spaces Act (Bawal Bastos Law) of 2019
- RA 8353 Anti-Rape Law of 1997

Section 3: Definitions

Definition of Terms

Minor	Any person under the age of eighteen, or who is considered by law to be the equivalent of a minor
Vulnerable Adult	Any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact even occasionally limit the ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence
Child Abuse	<p>All forms of physical abuse, emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, spiritual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.</p> <p>It may be a deliberate act, or it may be failing to act to prevent harm, It consists of anything which individuals, institutions, or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.</p>
Physical Abuse	Actions directed towards other persons with the purpose of inflicting pain such as hitting, shaking, kicking, suffocating, misuse of medication, applying inappropriate sanctions or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It can also apply to one's failure to act to protect the child.
Verbal Abuse	The act of forcefully criticizing, insulting, or denouncing another person characterized by underlying anger and hostility, it is a destructive form of communication intended to harm the self-concept of the other person and produce negative emotions.
Child Sexual Abuse	<p>Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities- whether the child is aware of what is happening or not. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative sex (rape) or non-penetrative sex (oral sex)</p> <p>Other forms may include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at or participating in the production of pornographic material, watching sexual acts, or behaving in sexually inappropriate ways.</p> <p>Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males or females, by adults, by young people, family members or people from all different walks of life.</p>

Sexual Abuse	Unwanted sexual activity (regardless of age) with perpetrators using Force, making threats or taking advantage of victims not able to give consent. Most victims and perpetrators know each other. Immediate reactions to sexual abuse include anxiety, fear, or post-traumatic stress disorder. While efforts to treat sex offenders remain unpromising, psychological interventions for survivors-especially group-appears effective (Encyclopedia of Psychology).
Sexual Harassment	Any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as basis for employment decisions affecting such individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
Child Pornography	Any representation of a minor, regardless of the means used, involved in explicit sexual activities, whether real or simulated, and any representation of sexual organs of minor for primarily sexual purposes.
Neglect	A form of abuse where the perpetrator, who is responsible for caring for Someone who is unable to care for themselves, fails to do so. It can be a result of carelessness, indifference, or unwillingness.
Child Safeguarding	The set of policies, procedures, and practices that we employ to ensure that every vulnerable person-child and/or vulnerable adult-is safe. It involves our collective and individual responsibility and preventive actions to ensure that all vulnerable persons are protected from deliberate or unintentional acts that lead to risk or actual harm.

Section 4: Scope of Policy

This policy applies to every person without exception, who has an appreciable contact with children and adults in our care.

This includes:

- All members of the Congregation
- All candidates in formation
- All those employed in our programs and services
- All Interns and Volunteers
- All visitors
- All outside stakeholders
- All beneficiaries

Chapter 2

Prevention: Creating a Safe Organization

SSHJM aims to provide a safe environment to everyone especially to children and vulnerable adults.

- To safeguard from harm or abuse all the children and vulnerable adults entrusted to our care.
- To identify and prevent any form of abuse of children before it happens by raising awareness of child safeguarding issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- To support children who have been or suspected to have been abused in accordance with the laid down counselling procedures and principles.
- Taking appropriate action at the right time
- Preventing cases of child abuse and reducing the number of incidents in the facilities and programs
- Making the children aware of their rights and their active role in child protection
- Informing children, staff, interns, volunteers, family and community members about the child protection policy and related procedures.
- Fostering open and honest discussion on child abuse in meetings and workshops in all programs and facilities amongst all stakeholders.
- To ensure that the following guidelines are adhered to:
 - Early recognition of situation where abuse may occur so that preventive measures are applied.
 - Early identification of abuse where there is evidence or mere suspicion or concerns within any of the Congregation services, either internally or externally.
 - Awareness raising among all who work with the children and adults entrusted to our care of the symptoms of abuse and identification of particular children and adults who might be vulnerable.
 - Cooperation with the statutory and local authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of every child
- Raising awareness among community members who work with the vulnerable children and young adults on the identification of signs and symptoms of abuse related to vulnerable children and young adults.
- Work in cooperation with the statutory, local and church authorities to ensure the safety and wellbeing of every child and vulnerable young adults in our organization.

Section 1: The SSHJM Code of Conduct Agreement

A set of behavioral guidelines for working with children are outlined in the Code of Conduct which all our employees are mandated to sign.

All project, staff, Teachers, volunteers, interns working with SSHJM must:

- Treat children with respect, recognizing their right to personal privacy
- Ensure that child protection risks for all events in which they are involved are assessed and planned for in order to mitigate them
- Foster a culture of mutual accountability so that potentially abusive behavior can be challenged and prevented
- Help children to develop their own sense of rights and responsibilities as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem.
- Ensure that field visits and programs affecting children are done in their best interest
- Be honest, accountable and selfless in their actions towards children in their respective work places and communities.
- Do not beat or abuse a child/vulnerable in any way

- Report any kind of suspicion regarding child or vulnerable adult maltreatment of any kind.
- Ensure that all activities with children are supervised, accompanied by another member of staff, or at least in sight of other adults.
- Ensure that interviews with children are done in a respectful and decent manner.
- Ensure that consent is obtained from the child (if they are old enough) or from parent/guardian (for children under 14 years) prior to any images or biographical information being used.
- Maintain professional boundaries with children.
- Ensure that any injury to a child, be it accidental or otherwise, is recorded and witnessed by another adult.

No Project staff, teachers, volunteers and interns working at the Project should

- Physically assault or abuse a child
- Develop intimate physical or sexual relationship with a child.
- Create a relationship with children, which could be deemed exploitative and abusive in any way.
- Act in a way that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice, which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Have a child stay overnight at the worker or volunteer's homes.
- Be alone with a child in an enclosed space to avoid allegations of abuse against them.
- Engage a child or vulnerable young adults in work that is beyond their capabilities.
- Discriminate against, show preferential treatment, or favor a particular children or vulnerable young adults to the exclusion of others.
- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior.
- Use the mission's computers or other equipment to view, download, create or distribute in appropriate material, including but not limited to pornography.
- Sleep in the same room with a child and share the same bed with a child. If circumstances necessitate making an exception to this rule, then staff must inform and explain these to their line manager in advance or as soon as possible.
- Do things of personal nature (e.g., cleaning bottoms, undressing/dressing, bathing or toileting etc.) for a child that they can do for themselves.
- Be intoxicated under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst children are under their care.
- Take a child in a vehicle alone
- Pat a child on the bottom
- Hug and kiss children (Though we want to give love and attention to children, this guideline is important for our protection as well as theirs.

Reporting and responding

Our employees have a responsibility to consider and help minimize the child protection risks of all activities involving children and vulnerable adults. Anyone who suspects child abuse has taken place in our Centers are invited to contact our Child Safeguarding Officer. All concerns raised under our Child Safeguarding Policy will be dealt with promptly and will be treated seriously and sensitively.

Section 2: The SSHJM Safeguarding Team

We are the Safeguarding Team of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Cebu. We aim to safeguard and protect the rights and dignity of children and vulnerable adults, who may be victims of any form of abuse, as a response to the Gospel mandate of Jesus, who, Himself, gives a loving preference to the little ones. "Let the children come to me, do not prevent them for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14).

a. The Head Safeguarding Officer (HSO): The Unit Leader of the Organization

Assigned by the Congregational Leader to be the Link Person between the SSHJM Community in Cebu and the Congregational Leadership Team and the Congregational Safeguarding Coordinator

The HSO shall:

- Appoint a qualified person who will form a SSHJM Cebu Safeguarding Team.
- Form an independent investigating body to deal with allegations when they occur.
- Transmit the allegation report he/she receives from the SSHJM Cebu Safeguarding Team without delay to the Congregational Leadership Team and the Congregational Safeguarding Coordinator.
- Send a report every month on the status of the investigation to the Congregational Leadership Team and the Congregational Safeguarding Coordinator.

b. The SSHJM Cebu Safeguarding Team

The Unit Leader of the SSHJM Cebu Unit shall be the Head Safeguarding Officer directly under whom is the Safeguarding Team, with the Safeguarding Team Coordinator as the head. The responsibility for dealing with child abuse in all of the Projects/Programs implemented by SSHJM Cebu lies with the Unit Leader as the Head Safeguarding Officer and the Safeguarding Team.

- Unit Leader Head Safeguarding Officer
- Safeguarding Team Coordinator
- Safeguarding Team

Appointing a Safeguarding Focal Person (A Social Worker)

- A person who has a good reputation in working with minors and vulnerable adults
- A person who is highly recommended by the SSHJM Community

Responsibilities:

- To serve as the Safeguarding Focal Person in close collaboration with the SSHJM Safeguarding Team.
- To ensure the promotion of best practice and compliance with the SSHJM Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- To promptly forward any concern or report on abuse to the SSHJM Safeguarding Team.

Section 3: Responsibilities of SSHJM

A. Safe Recruitment

SSHJM will ensure the suitability of the candidates to interact with the minors and vulnerable adults when selecting and hiring a staff.

a. The SSHJM application form contains the following questions:

- I. "Have you ever been involved in any administrative, civil or criminal case? (Yes/No) If yes, what are the details?"
- II. Have you ever been accused of inappropriate conduct within an employed or voluntary capacity? (Yes/No) if yes, what are the summary details?
- III. Have you ever been convicted of a sexual or child safeguarding offense or the subject of an ongoing sexual or child safeguarding investigation? (Yes/No) If yes, what are the summary details?
- IV. Have you suffered from any serious illness, hospitalization or accidents in the past five (5) years: (Yes/No) If yes, what are the summary details?
- V. Have you suffered from any serious depression or psychological illness in the past five (5) years? (Yes/No) If yes, what are the summary details?

- b. The applicant is required to submit proofs of identity and qualifications in the form of diplomas and transcript of record with photo.
- c. The interview is carried out by two interviewers, explores the applicant's experiences with feelings and attitudes towards children and vulnerable adults and probes the applicant's suitability in working with children and vulnerable adults.
- d. Reference checks: If the applicant is successful in the interview, the applicant is required to submit at least two recommendation forms from references who are not family members and ideally have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's work or experiences with children and vulnerable adults, including the applicant's most recent supervisor.

The recommendation form contains the following. "Is there any reason to consider this applicant unsuitable for working with children? (Yes/No)

Conduct a phone interview with the references submitted.

- e. If the applicant is vetted safe by the references, the applicant is informed of the outcome of the application and required to submit the following security checks: Clearance from the Barangay and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

B. Human Resource Measures

The employment contract contains clear stipulations regarding abusive behaviors that merit termination. A three (3) months probationary period is provided at the end of which an appraisal is conducted and used as basis for an employment term.

STAFF ORIENTATION, the start of employment orientation covers a broad range of topics but integrates further explorations of safe self and orients new staff on the principles of safeguarding as well as on the group profiles of the children and young people in the care of SSHJM specifically.

- a) Explores the self that the new staff member brings in beginning work with SSHJM; including experiences with, feelings about, and attitudes towards children; and the understanding and experiences of the boundaries between adults and young people.
- b) Facilitates the new staff member's reflection on
 - i. The understanding and experiences of being safeguarded and safeguarding others, and
 - ii. The sense of the ways in which young people are safe and not safe with the new staff member
- c) Orients the new staff member on the developments, traits and needs of children and vulnerable adults.
- d) Conducts a brief training on basic attention or listening skills, and
- e) Provides a discussion of the following principles of safeguarding, boundaries between students and staff members, code of conduct for staff, and safeguarding policies and procedures.

C. SUPPORT, SUPERVISION AND FORMATION

Working with children and vulnerable adults in the roles of teaching and supervision requires emotional health and resilience on a day-to-day basis.

As such, SSHJM staff members need ongoing support from supervisors, who can give feedback as well as offer a safe space for expressing difficulties and struggles encountered at work. This is done through one-on-one sessions with immediate supervisors and group sessions that facilitate self-expression and

self-reflection and foster friendship and a sense of community among staff. Having positive relationships with other adults is critical for preventing unhealthy relationships with children and vulnerable adults. Staff members have the responsibility to open a dialogue with their supervisors in the event of personal difficulties that may impinge on their competence and relationship dynamics with students/beneficiaries. Personal support is offered to the staff and options regarding alternative work arrangements are explored so that responsibilities and well-being of young people are not compromised.

D. EMPOWERING STUDENTS, Empowering children and empowering vulnerable adults in safeguarding themselves is critical in protecting them from all kinds of abuse. Topics related to safeguarding are integrated in the formative class, taught several times in a month. These topics include:

1. Rights of the children:
What is life like for a child who is loved?
2. Boundaries between boys and girls and between children and adults
3. Vulnerable persons and the responsibility for safeguarding them
4. Types of abuse and other threats to children and young people; including bullying
5. Safeguarding one's self from abuse: including how to spot an abuser
6. What to do if one feels unsafe though not yet harmed: who to tell and how
7. What to do if one is already in harm's way: how to protect one's self
8. What to do in the aftermath of abuse: who to tell and how
9. Indicators of abuse

E. OPERATIONAL POLICIES

1. FACILITIES

Boys and girls are housed in separate buildings and have separate bathrooms and toilets that are not near each other. Staff members also have rooms, bathrooms and toilets separate from those used by students. Doors, except for bedrooms have a small window for transparency. Wooden bars are placed on all windows to prevent access from outside.

2. STAFF-STUDENT BOUNDARIES

Students are not allowed to enter staff rooms and vice versa. Staff members may enter student's bedrooms only when reviewing cleaning or attending to a student.

3. PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

Given the ease by which photos and videos can be easily copied, adopted or distorted, staff members are discouraged from taking photos and videos of students/beneficiaries except for documentation of school activities. Staff are instead encouraged to "take photo with the heart," creating lasting memories by being fully present in the moment, taking in the full sights, sounds, and meaning of the experience, instead of recording it in digital form while missing it in reality. Group photos of students are allowed in limited quantities. Posting of student's pictures on social media is greatly discouraged. In official SSHJM Communications, images of children are focused on the activity and not on any particular child. Children should not be identifiable through a photograph and there is no fundraising based on "adopting a child."

F. WORKING WITH PARENTS

Orienting parents regarding children's rights, types of abuse and safeguarding measures is also critical in ensuring children and young people are safe within the home, school and community. Learning and reflective sessions with parents are scheduled within the school year or the summer break. These

sessions may also include formative activities aimed to promoting parents' emotional health, enabling them to better respond to their children's needs.

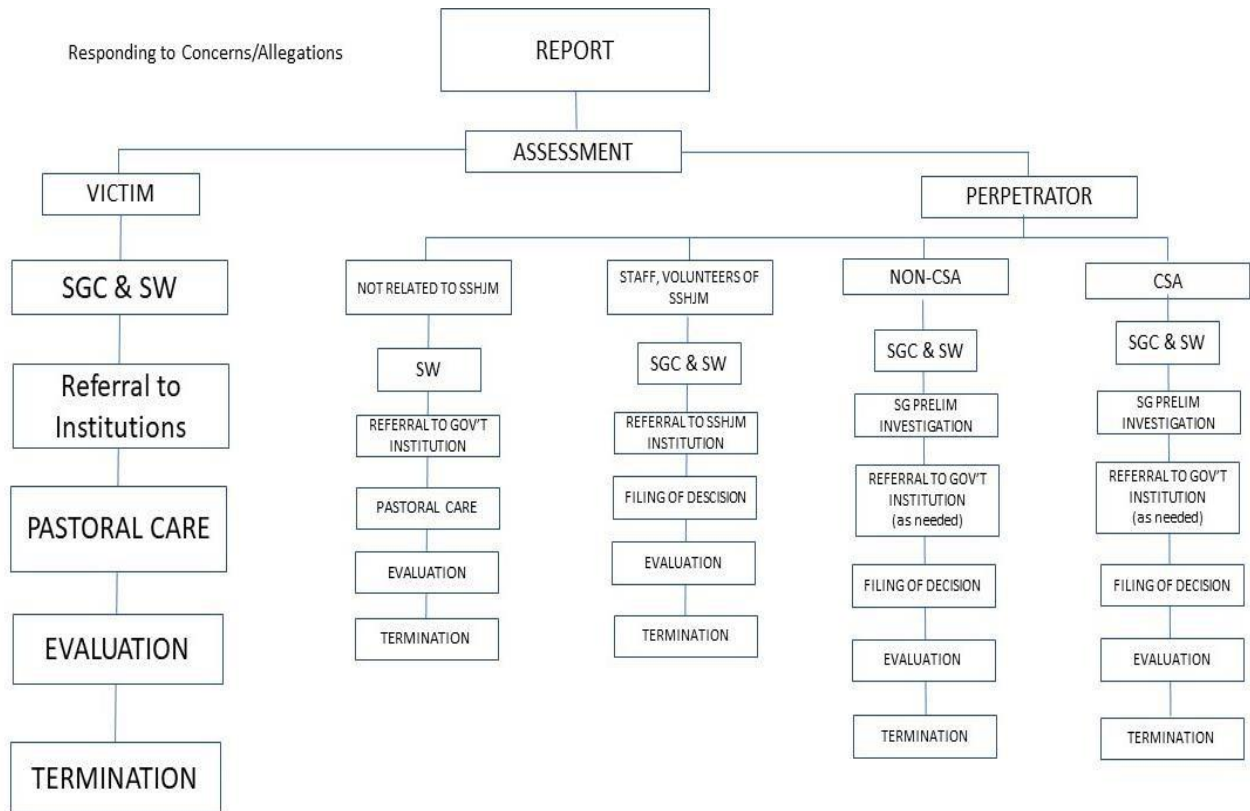
G. WORKING WITH COMMUNITY

SSHJM has been working with the community around identifying areas to conduct awareness on Safeguarding Policies and Procedure so that individuals will be guided and know whom to approach if allegations arise.

Chapter 3:

Intervention

Section1: Responding to Concerns/Allegations



(Termination – after thorough evaluation of the cases or allegations and being cleared or referred to an appropriate institution. Considered as case closed and terminated.)

SGC – Safeguarding Team Coordinator
 SW - Social Worker
 CSA – Child Sexual Abuse

A. REPORTING

- The Person (as well as their family members and those who may have knowledge of it) who affirms that they have suffered exploitation, sexual abuse, or ill-treatment have the right to be welcomed, listened to and supported.
- Anonymous complaints, or complaints by those who wish to remain anonymous, shall also be given due consideration. It should be kept in mind, however, that the identity of the accuser and alleged victim may ultimately have to be revealed.
- The SSHJM Safeguarding Team Coordinator, directly or through the Safeguarding Focal Person for the protection of minors in our level, shall listen to them, making certain that they receive adequate attention regarding the allegation, spiritual assistance and protection of their good name and privacy, as well as the confidentiality of their personal data.

- When the report includes sexual abuse of a minor or a vulnerable person perpetrated by a cleric, the Safeguarding Focal Person shall communicate it without delay to the Safeguarding Team Coordinator and to the Civil Authorities.
- No complaint shall be dismissed without at least a minimum of prompt and serious attentions.

B. RECORDING

- The report shall include as many particulars as possible, such as indications of time and place of the facts, of the person involved or informed, as well as any other circumstance that may be useful in order to ensure accurate assessment of the facts. These shall be diligently recorded during, or as soon as possible after receiving the concern or allegation. Notes should be made quoting the person's own words as far as possible.
- These records of cases are confidential and are kept in a locked cabinet in the Safeguarding Office. Access to this Safeguarding Office and locked cabinet is restricted to authorized safeguarding personnel.

This reporting form shall be filled out for documentation.

RECORD OF INCIDENTS/CONCERNS REGARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Information Received

Time received: _____ Date Received: _____

By: (insert name) _____ Role: _____

Phone Numbers: _____ Email Address: _____

Information received: by telephone/by letter/in person/ by email

From: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Alleged Victim/ Survivor, Child or Vulnerable Adult

Name: _____

Age/Date of Birth: _____ Role: _____

Phone Number: _____ Gender: Male/Female _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Name of Parents or Guardian: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Alleged Person Responsible for Incident/Concern

Name: _____

Role: _____

Age/ Date of Birth: _____

Details of Incident

When (Date of Incident): _____ Time of Incident: _____

Where (Place of Incident): _____

What happened/How:

Other persons involved in the case

Name	Nature of Involvement and other details	Relation to the victims

Actions and Further Information

Record all action taken and information received with times, location, dates, and identities of persons present.

All entries must be signed.

All relevant documents should be retained securely and forwarded to the SSHJM Safeguarding Office with this form as soon as possible.

Date/Time	Actions Information	Signature

C. RESPONDING

- The SSHJM shall attend to every allegation with utmost care and attention.
- The welfare of the victim, especially when a minor, is of paramount importance, and partnership with parents and/or with the minor's legally acceptable representative are among the primary concern.
- The investigations shall proceed with impartially and celerity, making effort to conclude them in a timely manner and avoid unnecessary delay.
- For the above-mentioned reasons, the SSHJM shall ensure that the persons involved in child protection receive proper training and support in their role.

Section 2: Investigation

A. The SSHJM Safeguarding Team Meeting

The SSHJM Safeguarding Team meeting shall be called within twenty-four (24) hours from the moment the allegation has been reported to the proper Safeguarding personnel.

The meeting shall at least include the following.

- The Unit Leader, Head Safeguarding Officer
- The Safeguarding Team Coordinator
- The Social Worker
- An expert on a specific field, as the case warrants

The purpose of the meeting is to validate the report and the information provided in the allegation. Should any resemblance of truth be made manifest during the meeting, then the risk has to be assessed.

Whenever a certain risk maybe established, the team shall decide whether it would be a sensible precaution to limit the ministry of the accused cleric or suspend the member of staff or volunteer immediately to protect project user and community.

B. INQUIRIES AND VERIFICATION

Whenever possible the Head Safeguarding Team Coordinator speaks directly with the young person at risk in the safeguarding concern brought to her attention. She listens to them calmly and with compassion and refrains from making comments or speculations or asking intrusive and leading questions. With the young person's approval, notes are taken using the person's own words. An assessment of imminent danger is made and steps taken to remove the young person from an unsafe environment or situation. The Head Safeguarding Team Coordinator may make further inquiries from other persons, including students and staff members who can share relevant information. An assessment is made and the next steps to be undertaken are decided. Afterwards, the Head Safeguarding Team Coordinator meets with the respondent involved in the concern, verifying allegations. The conversation is carried out with compassion and care for the person, recognizing his/her vulnerability in this situation.

C. DISCERNMENT AND RESOLUTION OF CASES

The Safeguarding Team Coordinator and SW (Focal Person) is responsible for assessing the gravity of the situation and determining the next course of action.

1. WHEN ONLY YOUNG PERSONS ARE INVOLVED

If all parties involved are comprised of only young persons and the matter is not deemed grave enough, the resolution and reconciliation between complainant and respondent is facilitated by Safeguarding Team Coordinator.

Afterwards the Safeguarding Team Coordinator, together with the complainant, makes a visit to the latter's parents and informs them of the situation, exploring options for the next steps as regards to seeking justice and resolution and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the young person.

The Head Safeguarding Team and Social Worker (Focal Person) then together with the respondent, visits the latter's parents to apprise them of the situation, including the result of the meeting with the complainant's parents, and also to explore next steps towards a resolution that promotes the wellbeing of all young persons involved.

2. WHEN RESPONDENTS INVOLVE STAFF

In cases where respondents involve staff members and the matter is deemed not grave and therefore redeemable, involving minor misdemeanors which may still be corrected, the HSO speaks with the staff member involved and facilitates a reflection on the seriousness and impact of the latter's actions, pursuing an understanding of the impropriety of the behaviors involved. Pastoral and therapeutic support are sought for both the complainant and respondent.

3. WHEN THERE IS NO CASE

In cases where concerns and allegations prove to be unfounded and a reconciliation is deemed necessary between complainant and respondent: for staff who underwent internal investigation, all outstanding matters are dealt with, and pastoral and therapeutic support are offered to allow the person to move forward in his life and work. The complainant will also be informed that there was no basis to the allegation(s).

4. WHEN STAFF ARE THREATENED

In cases where the words and actions of a young person constitute a threat to staff or may cause staff to feel threatened, the HSO speaks with the young person to facilitate expression of feelings and reflection on the actions involved.

D. REPORTING TO OFFICIAL AUTHORITIES

Following the Department of Justice (DOJ) process in implementing legislation that protect the child, a complaint for child abuse may be filed with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or with the police or other law enforcement agency.

The following government authorities may be approached as found applicable:

- Local Barangay Council for the Protection of Children
- Women's Desk at the Local Government Unit
- Local Police Station
- DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development)
- DSWS (Department of Social Welfare and Service)
- Anti-Child Abuse, Discrimination, Exploitation Division (ACADED) of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI)
- Child Rights Center of the Commission of Human Rights (CHR)
- Philippine National Police Office
- The Parent, Legal Guardian of the Victim
- The Local Barangay Chairman

E. MANAGEMENT

The Safeguarding Team undertakes program planning, evaluation and assessment to conduct a regular review on program accomplishment and being able to identify operational risks, seeking inputs from different stakeholders.

Appendices

Appendix 1

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

All together there are 54 Articles in the United Convention on the Rights of the Child. The articles the UNCRC are listed below.

1. Everyone under (18) years of age has all the rights in the Convention.
2. The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.
3. All organizations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.
4. Governments should make these rights available to children.
5. Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn use their rights properly.
6. All children have the right of life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthy.
7. All children have the right to a legally registered name, the right to a nationality and the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.
8. Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.
9. Children should not be separated from their parents unless this might hurt the child.
10. Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact or get back together as a family.
11. Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.
12. Children have the rights to say what they think and should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.
13. Children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.
14. Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practice their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.
15. Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organizations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.
16. Children have the right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.
17. Children have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand and should not promote materials that could harm children.
18. Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.
19. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse, and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
20. Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.
21. When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether the children are adopted in the country where they were born or taken to live in another country.
22. Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children born in that country.
23. Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support so that they can lead full and independent lives.
24. Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
25. Children who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly.
26. The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.
27. Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this,
28. Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
29. Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.

30. Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of the people in the country or not.
31. All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.
32. The Government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education.
33. The Government should provide ways of protecting children dangerous drugs.
34. The Government should protect children from sexual abuse.
35. The Government should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.
36. Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.
37. Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their families.
38. Governments should not allow children under fifteen (15) to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection.
39. Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special to restore their self-respect.
40. Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.
41. If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should stay.
42. The Government should make the convention known to all parents and children.

Articles 43-54 (Implementing measures)

These articles discuss how governments and international organizations like UNICEF should work to ensure children are protected in their rights.

In response to the growing exploitation of children around the world the UN General Assembly adopted in 2002 two Optional Protocols as addition to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These Optional Protocols increase the level of protection of children from involvement in armed conflicts and from sexual exploitation.

The Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography 2002 draws special attention to the criminalization of these serious violations of children's rights and emphasizes the importance of fostering increased public awareness and international cooperation in efforts to combat them

The Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict 2002 establishes eighteen (18) as the minimum age for compulsory recruitment into a state's armed forces and requires states to do everything they can to prevent individuals under age of eighteen (18) from taking a direct part in hostilities.

Appendix 2

Forms and Types of Abuse

(The following examples are not exhaustive as forms and types of abuse may vary from one community/culture to the other.)

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Intentionally inflicting pain to child-whether it is considered to be as corporal punishment, as exorcism, initiation, rite of passage, or as torture such as by

Caning	Scalding	Pulling of hair
Pulling/twisting of ears	Forcing to fast/starve	Smacking
Burning	Kicking	Exposing to harsh weather conditions
Tying up	Hitting with the belt or something similar	Smacking repetitive
Pinching	Forcing to lift heavy loads	Not facilitating a child in getting healthcare or taking medicine
Punching	Female genital cutting	Administering substances which make the child sick
Slapping	Pricking	Forcing to endure physical discomfort (sitting, kneeling or standing in such a way that it becomes uncomfortable.

CHILD EXPLOITATION AND ECONOMIC ABUSE

Coercing a child to do something	Getting a child too commit a crime
Recruiting a child to armed conflict	Allowing a child to do work which will physically, emotionally, or mentally harm them
Allowing a child to work to the detriment of their education	Using a child to carry, make, or sell drugs
Encouraging a child to use antisocial language/behavior	Not facilitating a child's inheritance rights

SEXUAL ABUSE

Any sexual activities with a child or minor which can be physical, verbal, written and emotional

Rape/penetration of the child of any form	Touching a child's private parts except in the course of their care	Getting a child to view or touch other's private parts or watch pornography
Kissing in ways that are considered sexual	Force marriage and child marriage	Using obscene or sexually provocative language
Sexually flattering a child	Exposing a child to pornography	Sending indecent messages to a child (e. g., sexting)
Exposing children to a sexual environment or to adult sex acts	Sexually suggestive dressing by adults	Trafficking, supplying, or procuring a child for any of the above

CHILD NEGLECT

Depriving a child of their basic needs

Not listening-denying children love and attention	Not educating certain children or groups of children	Not facilitating children in your care in taking medicines that they need
Not giving feedback on children's work	Not providing facilities for children in your care for basic water, sanitation and hygiene	Not providing children in your care a healthy diet
Not facilitating children in your care in receiving healthcare and medicine	Failing to provide a safe environment for children in your care	Failure to take reasonable measures to protect children from potential hazards and abuses
Ignoring children's concerns and grievances	Absconding lessons by teachers	Failure to provide adequate age-appropriate supervision

Appendix 3

Signs of Child Abuse

Emotional Signs

- *Fear
- *Depression
- *Withdrawal
- *Anger

Behavioral Signs

- *Violence/Abusive language
- *Extreme withdrawals/self-harm
- *Abuse of pets
- *Bed wetting/soiling

Additional Signs

- *Vagueness or denial around injuries (I don't know how I got that mark)
- *Incompatible explanations offered, or several different explanations given for a child's illness or injury
- *An explained delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed
- *A child reacting in a way that is inappropriate to his/her age or development
- *Reluctant to give information or failure to mention previous known injuries
- *Frequent presentation of minor injuries (which, if ignored, could lead to a more serious injury)
- *Unrealistic expectations/constant complaints about the child by parent/teacher
- *Domestic violence between parents
- *Parental/family mental ill health issues

Signs of Physical Abuse

Bruising is the most common injury to a child who has been physically abused.

What do we know about bruising?

- *Bruising in a baby who is not yet crawling and therefore has no independent mobility is very unusual
- *Only one in five infants who is starting to walk by holding on to the furniture has bruises
- *Most children who are able to walk independently have bruises

Where would you expect to see bruising from an accidental injury?

- *The shins and the knees are the most likely places where children who are walking, or starting to walk, get bruised.
- *Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body – e. g., knees and elbows- and often seen on the front of the body.
- *Infants who are just starting to walk unsupported may bump and bruise their heads – usually the forehead, nose, center of their chin, or back of the head.

Where would more suspicious (less likely to be accidental) bruising be?

- *Back
- *Belly
- *Cheeks
- *Upper arm
- *Neck/throat
- *Chest
- *Thighs
- *Ears

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- *Pain in peeing, sore bottom or anus, unusual discharge
- *Sexualized behavior or abuse in play scenarios
- *Signs of an adult favoring a child-gift giving, seeking private time with a child, etc.

Appendix 4

Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Self Declaration Form (CONFIDENTIAL)

State of Commitment

I, _____ have read and understood the provision of this Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its appendices, I have taken note of the disciplinary measures that will be employed in the event of an allegation being made against me. I agree with the principles/guidelines contained therein and accept the importance of implementing the policy and practice in line with the project mandate to do so.

Signed _____

Date _____

Witnessed by _____

Date _____

Declaration of Criminal Conviction.

Do you have a prosecution pending or have you ever been convicted, bound over or cautioned by the police or received a formal reprimand or final warning for any offences, including road traffic offences?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please provide details, including those prosecutions or convictions considered 'spent' and declare any previous investigations or allegations made against you. These will be kept confidential by the designated Safeguarding Team Coordinator of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary who will assess if they pose any risk or not in relation to the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

I declare that the information I have given is complete and true and understand that knowing to make a false statement may result in termination of any agreement held between myself and Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Cebu, Philippines.

Signed: _____ Print Name _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____ Print Name: _____

Date: _____

INCIDENT REPORT

Child's/Vulnerable Adult's Name: _____

Person Reporting: _____

Date of Incident: _____

Time of Incident: _____

Place of Incident: _____

Details of Incident: _____

Action Taken: _____

Name of Person reporting

Signature of Person reporting

Date

Name of Witness

Signature of Witness

Date

Appendix 5

SSHJM Safeguarding Case Management Flow

THE REPORT

- Any person can file a report concerning any form of abuse committed against a minor or a vulnerable person, using the means provided by the SSHJM – via telephone, email or by any other appropriate means.
- The person who makes the report may not be the complainant but must have the knowledge concerning the incident
- This shall include as many particulars as possible, such as indications of time and place of the facts, of the persons involved or informed, as well as any other circumstance that may be useful in order to ensure an accurate assessment of the facts.
- The reporting form shall be diligently filled in, signed and dated by the SSHJM personnel who received the report.

THE ASSESSMENT

- When a report received, the SSHJM SG Team shall call a meeting within 24 hours from the moment the allegation has been reported and filed.
- The meeting for the assessment shall include the Safeguarding Coordinator and a Social Worker.
- The purpose of the meeting is to validate the report and the information provided. Should there be any semblance of truth, recommendations shall be made for the preliminary investigation.
- Whenever necessary, the SSHJM Safeguarding Team shall recommend for preventive suspension for the accused, staff or volunteer involved. They are not allowed to come to the premises while the investigation is ongoing.
- Any warranted suspension shall last until an executory decision has been made by the proper authorities.

THE VICTIM

- The SSHJM upholds the principle on Victim-First Approach. It will uphold the rights of the victim.
- Whenever the information from the report does not suffice, an interview may be conducted. Prudence and confidentiality must be duly observed.
- The necessary care and attention shall be provided for the victim through the linkages available in the Community.

THE PERPETRATOR

➤ Whenever the alleged is in the community not related to SSHJM.

- A duly recognized Social Worker of SSHJM shall be contacted within 24 hours for the assessment and recommendation.
- Contact the victim's parents or legal guardians, when a minor or vulnerable adult.
- Refer the victim to the nearest Women and Child Protection Unit/Local Police to conduct proper police investigation, Any arrest of the alleged perpetrator shall be made by proper government authorities.
- Confidentiality shall be observed at all times and the protection of the good name and the privacy of the persons involved.
- The report shall be filed also at the SSHJM Safeguarding Office for future references.

➤ Whenever the alleged is a Staff or Volunteer of SSHJM

- The SSHJM Safeguarding Coordinator and duly recognized Social Worker (Focal Person) of SSHJM shall be contacted within 24 hours for assessment and recommendation, which shall then be forwarded to the Safeguarding Focal Person of concerned institution.
- The victim shall receive immediate care and assistance through the linkages of SSHJM.
- The investigation shall be conducted according to the protocol SSHJM.
- Any possible criminal offense imputable to the alleged perpetrator shall be reported to the proper government authorities.
- The rights of the victim and the alleged perpetrator shall be upheld at all times.
- The SSHJM Safeguarding Office shall make a regular follow-up on the matter until a Decision is made.
- The decision concerning the case shall end the term of SSHJM SGO procedure.
- The report shall be filed in the SSHJM SGO for future references.

➤ Whenever the allegation is not Child Sexual Abuse

- A duly recognized Social Worker of SSHJM shall be contacted within 24 hours for assessment and recommendation, which shall then be forwarded for SSHJM SGO.
- The victim shall receive immediate care and assistance through the linkages of SSHJM.
- The SSHJM Safeguarding Team Coordinator shall conduct the preliminary inquiry.
- The rights of the victim and of the alleged shall be upheld at all times.
- The decision concerning the case shall end the term of SSHJM SG procedure.
- The SSHJM shall extend necessary assistance to the victim, for a maximum of 1 year (depending on the outcome of the evaluation) and to the alleged perpetrator.
- The report shall be filed at the SSHJM SGO for future references.

➤ **Whenever the alleged concerns Child Sexual Abuse**

- SSHJM SG Coordinator and a duly recognized Social Worker of SSHJM shall be contacted within 24 hours for assessment and recommendation which shall then be forwarded to the Head Safeguarding Officer.
- The possible crime, when imputable to the alleged, shall be reported to the proper government authorities.
- The victim and the family shall receive immediate care and assistance through the linkages of SSHJM SGO.
- The SSHJM Safeguarding Team Coordinator shall conduct the preliminary inquiry. The result and the recommendations shall be forwarded to the SSHJM SGO.
- The report shall be filed at the SSHJM Safeguarding Office for future references.







Safeguarding vulnerable adults is crucial; no one should be abused due to their incapability.

#SSHJM – CEBU CARES

SSHJM SAFEGUARDING



**"Our Community,
Our Responsibility"**

#SSHJM – CEBU CARES

SSHJM SAFEGUARDING



**I FEEL SAFE
HERE!**



#SSHJM – CEBU CARES

SSHJM SAFEGUARDING



**VULNERABLE ADULTS ARE SAFE
IN OUR HANDS.
WE PROTECT. WE LOVE. WE
CARE.**



#SSHJM – CEBU CARES

SSHJM SAFEGUARDING



**"Warning: Zero Tolerance for
Harassment–Safety is Non-
Negotiable!"**

#SSHJM – CEBU CARES

SSHJM SAFEGUARDING



**“Be vigilant, be
compassionate, be a
guardian.”**



#SSHJM – CEBU CARES

SSHJM SAFEGUARDING



Safety is a shared responsibility; let's uphold it together."



#SSHJM - CEBU CARES

SSHJM SAFEGUARDING



"In safeguarding, every action counts and every voice matters."

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**Be a safety champion:
Protect the vulnerable
with heart and action."**

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**"Think Before You Click: Your
Caution is the First Line of
Defense."**



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BEWARE OF SCAMS

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**"Creating safe havens
where everyone is
protected and valued."**

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CAUTION

**VULNERABLE ADULTS!
HANDLE THEM WITH
CARE!**

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**BEWARE OF FAKE
INFORMATION AND
MESSAGES!**

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**"Secure your digital life—
cybersecurity is key to
protecting your information."**




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 Password Protected

**SHOW YOUR LOVE, BUT
NOT YOUR PASSWORD!**

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**Protect Your
Data**



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Protecting Vulnerable Individuals is Critical.

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WARNING

**Beware of Phishing: Guard
Your Data Like a Treasure!"**

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**"Ensure All Safeguarding
Procedures are Followed—
Safety is Paramount!"**

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Inappropriate Behavior is Prohibited!

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"Every individual deserves a sanctuary of safety and respect."



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WARNING

All Safety Violations Will Be Taken Seriously—Report Suspicious Activity!

#SSHJM – CEBU CARES

SSHJM SAFEGUARDING



Contact Persons:

Sr. Anne Healy, SSHJM	416-6241; 0921-7591118; email add: srannehealy@yahoo.co.uk
Sr. Luela Danieles, SSHJM	340-9989; 0956-7585768
Remencia Cajigas, RSW	416-6241; 0935-5495802

Notes: