MGL Risk Management for Child Safety

MGL Safeguarding System

The strength or weakness of the MGL Safeguarding system in a particular situation, ministry or activity is fundamental for good risk management. A "yes" to all the questions below would suggest a strong system. The more "no" answers, the weaker the system.

1) Are you satisfied that adult personnel have been properly screened and recruited?
2) Does the MGL Code of Conduct address all the situational risk factors?
3) Do personnel know the Code of Conduct via training and briefings?
4) Do children and young people and their families know the Code of Conduct?
5) Is there a reporting and complaint handling protocol for responding to breaches of the Code of Conduct?
6) Do personnel, children and young people and their families know this protocol?

Partner Entity Safeguarding

Most of the MGL work with young people involves being in partnership with other entities, such as a Diocese (parishes), Disciples of Jesus Community (Summer Schools, Light to the Nations pilgrimage, Disciples School of Mission, Youth Mission team, Explosion, youth groups), and the MGL Sisters.

The quality of their safeguarding systems will determine our capacity for risk management, especially when the work or ministry is under the authority of the partner and MGL are working under their protocols. Hence, we must be pro-active in engaging collaboratively with other entities with whom we share ministry. We need to identify the gaps, and where there is overlap a complementary and consistent service needs to be worked out for the sake of best practice. In the interests of risk assessment we could ask these questions:

Does the safeguarding systems of the partner entity appear strong?

Is our MGL Mission collaboration with the partner entity in safeguarding strong? For example, have the gaps and overlaps in safeguarding practice between the two entities been identified, addressed and documented?

Sometimes the collaboration is simply a matter of providing hospitality for another entity in one of our parishes. Yet we still need to be assured that there is best practice in child safeguarding.

Definitions

Risk

A situation involving exposure to danger

Risk Assessment

A systematic process of evaluating the possible risks that may be linked to an activity or task

Risk Management

The risk assessment along with the documentation of procedures to avoid or minimise the impact of the risk

Principles and Guidelines

Identify risks

Identify where, when, why and how events or circumstances could cause a breach of the MGL Code of Conduct or expose a child to danger

Analyse risks

Determine the likelihood of the risks to occur and the potential consequences related to the risks and how these could occur

Evaluate risks

Compare the level of risk against the potential adverse outcomes so that decisions can be made on how to manage priorities

Manage risks

Develop and implement strategies and action plans which mitigate risks and ensure adequate safety for children

Types of Risk

Accidental Harm
- Poor physical environment leading to injury
- Poor supervision
- High-risk activity

Physical Abuse
- Physical punishment
- Pushing, shoving
- Punching, slapping, biting, kicking

Psychological/Emotional abuse
- Bullying
- Threatening language
- Shaming
- Intentional ignoring and isolating

Neglect
- Lack of supervision
- Not providing adequate nourishment
- Not providing adequate clothing or shelter
- Not meeting the specific physical or cognitive needs of children

Sexual Abuse
- Sexual abuse, assault and exploitation
- Grooming
- Inappropriate touching
- Inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature
- Crossing professional boundaries

Cultural/Spiritual abuse
- Lack of cultural respect, racial or cultural vilification or discrimination
- Lack of support to enable a child to be aware of an express their cultural identity
- Use of positional power and control and using prayer/scripture/Mass as means of manipulation

Online Abuse
- Abusive texts and messages in social media
- Hurtful messages, images, video
- Intimidating others on line
- Grooming- sending a child offensive, confronting or obscene content
- Singling a child out for a special relationship

Action

All new events or ministries conducted by the Missionaries of God's Love should be subject to a formal risk assessment prior to commencement

All existing events or ministries conducted by the Missionaries of God's Love should be reviewed for assessment of risk

Each Mission Head and Head of Formation house has the responsibility to

a) List all situations, ministries and activities of their Mission or Formation situation which involve direct contact with children or young persons

b) Document a risk assessment and management plan for each situation, ministry or activity; this should include the living situation of MGL houses as well as buildings, environment and open spaces

c) For those ministries of partner entities which MGL either work within or provide hospitality the Mission Head through collaboration with the partner entity needs to be satisfied that adequate risk management is undertaken

d) Prioritise assessments and actions for those ministries and activities identified as having the highest risk

Accountabilities

The Moderator, with the help of the Safeguarding Committee, will review the risk assessments, oversight the implementation of the risk management plans and provide discernment and advice to Mission Heads when needed.

All risk management assessments and management plans for each MGL mission will be lodged in the Risk Management Register held at the MGL Central Office at 6 Boake Pl., Garran. ACT. 2605. The MGL Safeguarding Committee has the responsibility of reviewing these plans every six months. When it becomes clear that a particular MGL mission is neglectful or insufficiently resourced such that the risk assessment plans are inadequate, a competent member of the Safeguarding committee will be delegated to assist the Mission Head to improve the standard of assessments and management

GUIDE TO RISK ASSESSMENT

(with particular focus on possible breach of boundaries)

Situational risk

The risk management plan should address physical and on-line risks including child-to-child and adult-to-child interactions

a) Contact

Generally speaking, the greater the access and opportunity adult personnel have to children and young people the greater the risk.

b) Isolation

And the greater the likelihood of an adult MGL member, volunteer or staff person being alone with a child/young person the higher the inherent risk. Consequently, one primary aim is to minimise the access and opportunity of adults being alone with children and young people, especially unnecessary contact.

c) Vulnerability

Another situational risk factor is where children and young persons have vulnerabilities such as disabilities, behaviour and communication disorders, or clusters of families with histories of social dysfunction, trauma and abuse. The presence of these vulnerabilities can lead to a higher risk of victimisation.

A young person also has a certain vulnerability towards an adult who minsters to them in a sacred place such as charismatic prayer ministry, spiritual direction, pastoral care or the sacrament of reconciliation.

Contact between adult personnel and children/young people includes:

- One to one mentoring/companioning
- Overnight camps/retreats
- Private electronic communications/social media
- Young persons/children informally visiting the homes of adult personnel or MGL Mission House
- Young persons/children relying on adult personnel for transport e.g. in their car
- Physical contact during sports, swimming pool, or games
- Physical contact during prayer ministry
- Hugging for greetings and showing care

RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

This is a proposed template for assessing risk and managing risk in relation to a particular ministry event or activity. Mission Heads in parishes may prefer to use the template provided by their Diocese. Whatever template is used the aim must be to eliminate unnecessary risk and to minimise whatever risks remain.

Risk is measured in terms of consequence and likelihood.

- **Likelihood:** a qualitative description of probability and frequency.
- **Consequence:** The outcome of an event or situation expressed qualitatively or quantitatively, being a loss, injury, disadvantage or gain. There is usually a range of possible outcomes associated with an event.
- **Management of risk:** this involves mitigation strategies such as avoiding the risk, reducing the likelihood of the occurrence, reducing the impact of the occurrence, transferring the risk, and accepting the risk.

RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

LIKELIHOOD	RISK LEVEL				
Almost certain	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Possible	Low	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
CONSEQUENCE	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic

Risk Management Plan

TABLE 1 RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

IDENTIFY RISK	ASSESS RISK			MANAGE RISK	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Description	LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCE	RISK LEVEL	Management Actions	

TABLE 2 RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE EXAMPLE

IDENTIFY RISK	ASSESS RISK			MANAGE RISK	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Description	**LIKELIHOOD**	**CONSEQUENCE**	**RISK LEVEL**	**Management Actions**	
Children wandering outside unattended.	Possible	Major	High	Alert parents to the danger. Appoint trusted adults to keep an eye out for problem.	Fr Brian
Venue is a farm house with many individual rooms and outside areas where an adult could be alone with young person.	Possible	Catastrophic	Extreme	Screening of adult youth workers. Safeguarding training regarding "two adults rule". Vigilance of appointed team members.	Coordinator of weekend
Families with young people visiting for dinner or other social events. Easy access of children to bedroom area.	Possible	Major	High	Clear signage of private area. Training of brothers about upstairs areas not to be entered by anyone under any circumstance.	Head of Formation