

St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children, The Society of St Vincent de Paul

1888 – 1890

Other Names:

- St Joseph's Boys' Home
- St Joseph's Home
- St Vincent de Paul Home for Destitute Children

Details

St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children was established by the South Melbourne St Vincent de Paul Conference (or branch) in 1888. It accommodated girls and boys aged from around 2 to 13. In 1890, the Home was relocated to Kent Road, Surrey Hills and came under the control of the Sisters of St Joseph.

St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children, originally called the St Vincent de Paul Home for Destitute Children, was established by the South Melbourne St Vincent de Paul Conference (or branch) in mid 1888. The name was changed to St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children in February 1889.

Barnard and Twigg write that the opening of the home in South Melbourne was sparked by concerns that non-Catholic child rescuers were taking Catholic children away from their faith.

St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children was originally located in rented premises at 61 Nelson Street, South Melbourne. By December 1888 the Home had relocated to a larger rented house at 64 Montague Street, South Melbourne. By August 1889 the Home moved to yet another rented South Melbourne building, this time at 9 Beaconsfield Parade.

On 15 April 1890, the government approved St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children as a place for receiving 'neglected' children under the Neglected Children's Act 1887. The president of the committee, Charles Grondona, was thus authorised to apprehend and act as guardian for 'neglected' children.

A passage from the Catholic newspaper the *Advocate* in 1890 clearly demonstrates the 'child rescue' philosophy underpinning the operation of the Home:

One of the many good works ... is the rescue of young children brought up in poverty and neglect amid evil surroundings, and providing them with a home until some situation can be found for them in the country or in some other place where they will be far away from their old haunts and separated from their old companions.

The Home's committee sought to find adoptive homes for rescued children, however a number of children (with at least one living parent) went from St Joseph's into Catholic orphanages.

Throughout the whole period that it was under the management of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, the Home had suffered from financial problems. As a solution, Archbishop Carr invited the Sisters of St Joseph to take over the Home.

In April 1890, the committee purchased a house in Kent Road, Surrey Hills, in a site which they described as 'in a beautiful and healthy situation'. The Sisters of St Joseph assumed management of the Home on 21 May 1890, initially working under the St Vincent committee.

In 1997, records of the Sisters of St Joseph were transferred to MacKillop Family Services. These included records of the various orphanages, homes and other residences run by the Sisters of St Joseph and its predecessors. While custodianship of the records about people in 'care' became the responsibility of MacKillop Family Services at this point, it was formally agreed that the intellectual property in these records would not change hands.

More info

Chronology

- **St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children, The Society of St Vincent de Paul (1888 – 1890)**
 - St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children, Sisters of St Joseph (1890 - 1925)

Related Entries

Run by

- [St Vincent de Paul Society \(1854 - current\)](#)

Related Legislation

- [The Neglected Children's Act 1887, Victoria \(1888 - 1890\)](#)

In 1887, St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children was licensed to receive children under the Neglected Children's Act 1887.

Date: 1887 -

Resources

- James Jenkinson Consulting, [Guide to out-of-home care services 1940-2000 - Volume One: Agency Descriptions](#), November 2001
- [Victoria Government Gazette Online Archive 1836-1997](#), 1836 - 1997. *Relevance:* Gazette 36, 18 April 1890, p.1435
- [Heritage Display](#), MacKillop Family Services website, 2013
- [St Vincent De Paul Home for Destitute Children](#), Advocate, 2 February 1889
- Jaggs, Catherine, *The Melbourne Child-Saving Movement, 1888-1910*, 1985
- [A Home for Little Children: A new and deserving charity](#), Advocate, 20 April 1889
- [Catholic Intelligence: Victoria - Archdiocese of Melbourne](#), Advocate, 8 September 1888
- [Christmas Appeals: The society of St. Vincent de Paul, South Melbourne](#), The Age, 25 December 1888
- [Home for Destitute Children](#), Weekly Times, 18 May 1889

Records

For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

Records

- [MacKillop Family Services Records, Victorian institutions \(1857 - current\)](#)
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