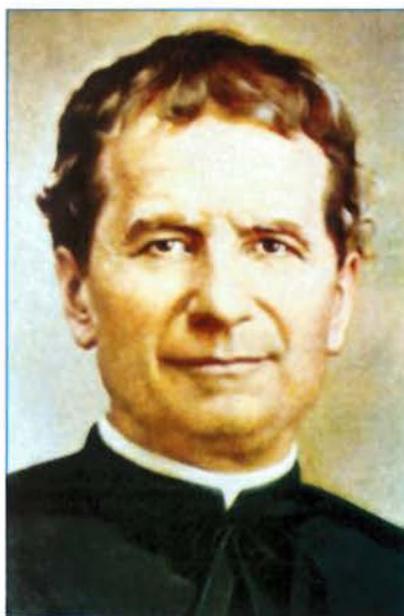




**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
OF
THE SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO**



AUSTRALIA-PACIFIC PROVINCE

AUGUST 2015

DEFINITIONS

- Child /
Young Person: A person under the age of 18 years.
- Salesian/s: Members of the Society of St Francis de Sales, a Religious Congregation in the Catholic Church more generally known as the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB).
- Lay Partners: Formally employed Lay Co-Workers and approved Volunteers working in a Salesian Mission.
- Salesian Mission: A Congregation owned and operated centre in which Salesians and/or their Lay Partners provide a caring and educational service.
- Child Abuse: Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child abuses that power and causes harm to the child. For the purpose of this Document, Child Abuse is divided into four categories:
- Emotional: Is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
 - Physical: Is any deliberate infliction of physical force upon a child; e.g. shaking a child, striking a child in any form.
 - Sexual: Occurs where a child is used by another person for his or her gratification for sexual arousal or for that of others. Sexually abusive behaviours can include fondling genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism or exposing the child to, or involving the child in, pornography. Sexual abuse also includes the grooming of a child (see below).
 - Neglect: Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs. This is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- Grooming: Is behaviour by an adult towards a child/young person with the intention of facilitating the involvement of the child/young person in sexual activity with an adult.

FOREWORD

As Salesians and their Lay Partners in the Australia-Pacific Province, we believe that a child has the fundamental right to grow up safely, free from exploitation and abuse, and able to enjoy life and all the gifts of a compassionate God.

We acknowledge that children and young people have equal rights to protection regardless of their gender, race, religion, disability, social or cultural background, or any other distinguishing characteristic.

The Constitutions of the Society of St Francis de Sales (Salesians) assert that the mission of the Salesians is *"to be in the Church signs and bearers of the love of God for young people especially those who are poor."* (Constitution 2)

Directly based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and on the vision of our founder, St John Bosco, these Constitutions state:

"Under the inspiration of God, Don Bosco lived and handed onto us an original style of life and action: the Salesian spirit." (Constitution 10)

"The Salesian spirit finds its model and source in the very heart of Christ, apostle of the Father."

Reading the Gospel we become more aware of certain aspects of the figure of the Lord: gratitude to the Father for the gift of a divine vocation offered to all men; predilection for the little ones and the poor; zeal in preaching, healing and saving because of the urgency of the coming of the Kingdom; the preoccupation of the Good Shepherd who wins hearts by gentleness and self-giving; the desire to gather his disciples into the unity of brotherly communion." (Constitution 11)

Finally, Constitution 14 states that *"Our vocation is graced by a special gift of God: predilection for the young: 'That you are young is enough to make me love you very much.' This love is an expression of pastoral charity and gives meaning to our whole life."*

For their welfare we give generously of our time, talents and health: 'For you I study, for you I work, for you I live, for you I am ready even to give my life'."

From the very beginning of our Salesian story, therefore, the beacon pointing out our identity and our mission has always been and will be the welfare, the education and the integral formation of young people, particularly the poor and abandoned ones. For us nothing is more precious and more sacred than the life of a young person. That will always be the absolute and unconditional *raison d'être* for us. Consequently, any form of abuse is a denial of our vision and all we stand for, as well as a desecration of the very life of those we work for, depriving the most vulnerable of their dignity and of their future.

In our concern to avoid every form of abuse, we fully subscribe to what, firstly, Pope Benedict XVI and, later, Pope Francis have stated. Pope Francis, in particular, has constantly upheld and espoused the rights and dignity of young people throughout the world. As such, he has committed himself to a pursuit of all those who have generated an indescribable depth of suffering among the

young within the Catholic Church. Among many utterances, the following indicates his passionate concern:

"This is what causes me distress and pain at the fact that some priests and bishops, by sexually abusing minors, violated their innocence and their own priestly vocation. It is something more than despicable actions. It is like a sacrilegious cult, because these boys and girls had been entrusted to the priestly charism in order to be brought to God. And those people sacrificed them to the idol of their own concupiscence. They profane the very image of God in whose likeness we were created. Childhood, as we all know, young hearts, so open and trusting, have their own way of understanding the mysteries of God's love and are eager to grow in the faith. Today the heart of the Church looks into the eyes of Jesus in these boys and girls and wants to weep; she asks the grace to weep before the execrable acts of abuse which have left life-long scars."

(Homily of Pope Francis, L'Osservatore Romano, 7 July 2014)

As Salesians and Lay Partners, our mission and calling direct us to the care of children and young people. In fact, the 27th Salesian General Chapter of 2014 strongly calls us to protect our young people and uphold their rights, *"encouraging in our centres an atmosphere of respect for the dignity of minors, committing ourselves to creating conditions which prevent any form of abuse and violence, where every Province follows the guidelines and directives of the Rector Major and General Council"* (27th General Chapter, N.73.4). It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to adopt this policy and its procedures and guidelines willingly and positively.

Fr Greg Chambers

Salesian Provincial
Australia-Pacific Province

21 August 2015

INTRODUCTION

We Salesians and their Lay Partners recognise that adults who have a formal role in working with or supporting children are in positions of trust and authority. Children are dependent on adults to care for and protect them, hence we realise that the relationship between an adult and a child is not a relationship between equals. Furthermore, we acknowledge that the prevention of exploitation and abuse of children is a shared and collective responsibility of all adults, especially those who are significant in the life of a child.

This document sets down the pastoral and procedural guidelines for the appropriate care of children and young people and the prevention of exploitation and abuse. This document is binding on all Salesians and Lay Partners in the Salesian Province in Australia-Pacific.

These procedures and guidelines are in accordance with, and comply with, those contained in the following Documents of the Salesian Congregation and the Catholic Church in the Salesian presences in Australia, New Zealand, Samoa and Fiji:

SALESIAN CONGREGATION:

1. Some guidelines concerning the abuse of juveniles (The Rector Major and General Council of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Rome, July 2002)
2. Letter regarding Cases of sexual abuse of minors (Fr Adriano Bregolin, Vicar of the Rector Major, Rome, July 2004)
3. Pro-memoria regarding cases of the sexual abuse of minors (Fr Francesco Maraccani, Procurator General, Rome, July 2004)
4. 'The Vocation to remain always united to Jesus to have life' - Letter regarding 'The Horror of Pedophilia' (Fr Pascual Chavez Villanueva, Rector Major, Rome, August 2010)

CATHOLIC CHURCH:

AUSTRALIA:

1. Towards Healing - Principles and procedures in responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia (January 2010)
2. Integrity in Ministry - A Document of Principles and standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia (June 2004)
3. Integrity in the Service of the Church – A Resource Document of Principles and Standards for Lay-Workers in the Catholic Church of Australia (September 2011)
4. May our children flourish - Code of Conduct for Caring for Children (Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, 2011)

NEW ZEALAND:

1. Te Houhanga Rongo A Path To Healing - Procedures for dealing with complaints of abuse in the Church (2010)
2. Integrity in Ministry - Guidelines of professional standards for clergy and religious (2000)
3. National Code of Ethics for Church Volunteers - Statement for all volunteers in ministry (2003)
4. Journeying Together Hikoi Tahī - Standards for Catholic Youth and Young Adult Ministry (2006)
5. Standards for Volunteers and Employees in Ministry - Document setting out a safe recruitment process for volunteers and employees (2011)

SAMOA:

CEPAC (Episcopal Conference of the Pacific) Guidelines for Dealing with Cases of Sexual Abuse (March 2012)

FIJI:

CEPAC (Episcopal Conference of the Pacific) Guidelines for Dealing with Cases of Sexual Abuse (March 2012)

UNITED NATIONS AND NATIONAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS:

These procedures and guidelines are also in compliance with the Legislative and Regulatory framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ([UNCRC] – 1989), and in compliance with legislation for the protection of children in the countries of the Australia-Pacific Province.

Specific Salesian Missions have their own Policies and Procedures developed in alignment with this Salesian Province Child Protection Policy and the requirements of local Church and Civil Authorities. They are publicly available, and are *binding* on all adults associated with the Salesian work in those places. All Salesians are accountable to the Salesian Provincial who, with his Council, is the legitimate authority responsible for all Salesian Missions and the personnel (Salesians and Lay Partners) who work in them.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The principles upon which this policy is based are derived from:

1. The Biblical Roots of Christianity

From Old Testament Scriptures:

- *"..let justice flow like water and uprightness like a never falling stream" (Amos 5:24)*
- *"You have been told what is good and what the Lord requires of you: To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8)*

From the Teaching of Jesus Christ:

- *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord."* (Luke 4:18)
- *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."* (Matthew 5:6 + Matthew 5:3-11)
- *"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind; you must love your neighbour as yourself."* (Luke 10:27)
- *And they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." And he took a child, and put him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."* (Mark 9:33-37)
- *And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.* (Mark 10:13-16)
- *"I give you a new commandment; love one another, you must love one another just as I have loved you. It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciples."* (John 13:24)
- *"You know that among the gentiles the rulers lord it over them, and the great men make their authority felt. Among you this is not to happen."* (Matthew 20: 25)

2. Church Councils/Teachings

Basic Principles of the Church:

- **Justice and equity:** Accordingly, victims are to be healed, offenders are to be called to be accountable, and scandal is to be repaired
- **Dignity and Respect:** Uphold the dignity of all people and their right to respect. Alleged offenders' rights of natural justice will be respected
- **Respect for and compliance with Civil Authorities**
- **Commitment to safe and supportive relationships**
- **Commitment to reach out to those who are poor, alienated and marginalised**
- **Diligence:** Strive for excellence in all work and in dealing with all cases in a prompt and thorough way

Service, given according to these principles, is life enriching for both providers and recipients.

3. The Legal Tradition of the Catholic Church

- This is enshrined in the Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church.

4. Salesian Sources

To priests and religious St John Bosco recommended ongoing care and caution and extolled chastity as a fundamental virtue.

From the Writings of the Founder, St John Bosco:

- *“Charity, humility and chastity are three royal virtues which always go together: none of them can exist without the others. As long as one is chaste, he will always have a living faith, firm hope, and burning charity.”* (Memorie Biografiche, Volume IX, Page 706)
- *“Upon words and looks, even when indifferent, a bad interpretation is oftentimes put by youth . . . the greatest possible precaution should therefore be taken when speaking of anything whatsoever with youths, be their age or condition what it may, or in any dealings with them.”* (Original Constitutions, 1875)

From the Constitutions of the Society of St Francis de Sales (2015):

- *“Our tradition has always considered chastity a resplendent virtue, bearing a special message for the education of youth. Through it we bear witness to the predilection of Christ for the young; it allows us to love them in an open and uncomplicated way, so that they know they are loved and it enables us to educate them to love and to purity.”* (Constitution 81).

From the Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales (2015):

- *“In his relationships with others and in his friendships, the Salesian should be consistent with the obligations assumed at his profession. Let him therefore avoid any ambiguous or dangerous conduct or behaviour, which could obscure his witness to chastity.”* (Regulation 68)

These Guiding Principles have fundamental consequences:

- Each child shall be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.
- Everyone in the Church has an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected.
- A child's right to safety and care is inalienable.
- Children have a fundamental right to justice and freedom; they have a right to be listened to and to be heard.
- Children have a right to good role models whom they can fully trust, who will respect them and nurture their spiritual, physical and emotional development.

- Those who have suffered child abuse by Church personnel should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care as they seek to rebuild their lives.
- Those who have offended are to be brought to account by the appropriate authorities in each country of the province.

POLICY STATEMENT

In the light of our own tradition and the documentation provided in the aforementioned *INTRODUCTION and GUIDING PRINCIPLES*, we Salesians and their Lay Partners:

- Respect the inalienable rights of the child and are committed to promoting the safety and welfare of children and to protecting them from exploitation and physical, emotional and sexual abuse in their mission to care for children.
- Will create and maintain a secure and protective environment for children in their Salesian Missions.
- Are committed to justice and equity and pledge themselves to treat with compassion all those afflicted by abuse, especially the primary victims and their families.
- Undertake to provide appropriate supervision for those who have abused, both to prevent further abuse of children and to enable them to lead offence-free lives.
- Commit themselves to unconditional cooperation with each and every investigation of historical and ongoing cases of abuse where Salesians or Lay Partners have been involved.

SALESIAN CHILD PROTECTION COMMISSION

The Salesian Provincial has established a Child Protection Commission within the Salesian Province. The Provincial is normally chairman of this Commission and the members are the Vice Provincial, one other senior Salesian appointed by the Provincial, and appropriate lay advisers with legal and counselling/psychological experience. This Commission assists the Provincial and his Council in preventing any form of child abuse or exploitation and assisting in dealing with any allegations of child abuse reported in a Salesian Mission.

The Salesian Child Protection Commission will undertake to:

1. Monitor child protection systems and compliance with them in Salesian Missions.
2. See to proper training in child protection for Salesians and Lay Partners in Salesian Missions
3. Network with Church and civil authorities to maintain up-to-date practices and procedures.
4. Ensure that ministry in a Salesian Mission is carefully planned, that there are clear role descriptions for all Salesians and Lay Partners, that procedures are clearly defined and that the mission is safe and welcoming.

5. See that the Salesian Province Child Protection Policy is known by all Salesians and Lay Partners and that the people amongst whom they work know this policy.
6. Ensure that all Salesians and Lay Partners are given a copy of this Policy and, after reading it, are asked to sign a form confirming that they have received the policy, read it, and committed themselves to comply with it.
7. See that contact details of Child Protection services are displayed and easily accessible.

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

The Salesian Provincial will appoint an appropriate person to carry out the all-important role of Safeguarding Officer within the Salesian Province of Australia-Pacific. The Safeguarding Officer will co-ordinate and oversee safeguarding and preventative procedures and practices for the protection and safety of children in all missions of the province.

In particular, this officer will ensure that all Salesians and Lay Partners working in Salesian Missions have completely understood and adopted the Province's Child Protection Policy, and have ensured that their own local child protection policies are fully compliant with it.

In addition, the Salesian Provincial will assess the implementation of this Policy during his annual canonical visitation to each Salesian Mission (see Regulation 146).

INDUCTION AND TRAINING OF SALESIANS

The Salesians of Don Bosco are guided in their process of induction and training of new members by foundational documents that have been in place since 1992, and are now in their third edition. They provide a comprehensive Salesian Child Protection Policy.

These foundational documents are:

Formation of Salesians of Don Bosco. Principles and Norms, 3rd edition (Rome: Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, 2000). See especially paragraphs 96-97, 112-113 and 352 for general norms.

Criteria and Norms for Salesian Vocational Discernment. Admissions, 3rd edition (Rome: Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, 2000). The specific applications of the *Principles and Norms* are extensively described in paragraphs 38-94.

Committed to the prevention of Child abuse and exploitation, and in their quest for excellence in ministry, the Salesian Provincial and Council will monitor:

- The psycho-sexual screening of candidates for admission to the Novitiate (see *Criteria and Norms for Salesian Vocation Discernment. Admissions*, paragraphs 64, 65, 68 and 75)

- The periodic testing of Salesians early in their years of training before they begin to work directly with the young (see *Principles and Norms*, paragraphs 141, 299, 351-352, 526)
- The state of health of Salesians
- Their material and emotional needs
- Their psychological balance
- The development of a solid spiritual life
- The practice of attending Spiritual Direction
- The provision of periodical vacations and sabbaticals
- The availability of professional counselling
- The encouragement of participation in peer supervising groups
- And the promotion of effective teamwork in ministry.

RECRUITMENT OF LAY PARTNERS

Candidates seeking employment as Lay Co-Workers in a Salesian Mission will be carefully screened. As part of this process they will be required to:

- Provide at least two references: one from a person to whom the applicant has been responsible (e.g. Employer, Parish Priest); and the other from a significant person who has known the applicant for a period of no less than two years
- Provide evidence of a current Police Check
- Obtain, in each relevant State, the required Working with Children Check
- Indicate their willingness to undergo a medical and/or psychological examination

After submitting the above documentation, lay candidates will, in an interview/discussion, be asked to give evidence of:

- level of knowledge/qualification gained and vision for life
- Catholic identity and involvement in the mission of the Church
- knowing and living according to Gospel Values
- a spirituality that accords with that of the Salesians
- responsible ethical behaviour
- being an exemplar of high values and moral courage
- a spirit of cooperation
- empathy for the poor and marginalised
- being service-oriented
- a passion for ongoing learning

Lay people seeking placement as approved volunteers in a Salesian Mission will be required to indicate their knowledge of the Salesian ethos, to demonstrate their suitability for the position (eg. by providing appropriate references), and to provide evidence of a current Police Check and Working with Children Check if relevant.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Salesian Child Protection Commission will see to the provision of opportunities for Salesians and Lay Partners to attend seminars, workshops and similar initiatives that address the issues surrounding child abuse as well as child protection, as part of ongoing formation and in-service training. A record of these sessions and participation in them will be kept.

REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This Policy is to be reviewed and updated by the Salesian Provincial and his Council, and a report presented at each Provincial Chapter, every three years.

This review of the Policy by the Salesian Provincial and his Council will not only assess the policy as such, but also assess with equal vigour the effectiveness of the Policy in each Salesian Mission.

CONCLUSION

Finally, this Child Protection Policy for the Salesian Province of Australia-Pacific is fittingly concluded with the compelling words of Pope Francis:

"In the Gospel, Jesus welcomes children, he embraces them and blesses them (Mk 10:16). We too need to protect, guide and encourage our young people, helping them to build a society worthy of their great spiritual and cultural heritage. Specifically, we need to see each child as a gift to be welcomed, cherished and protected."

(Homily of Pope Francis, L'Osservatore Romano, 23 January 2015)