



## Salesian Institute Youth Projects

### Cape Town

#### Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures:

##### **Introduction:**

This policy has been drawn up in compliance **MISEAN CARA CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFE GUARDING POLICY.**

##### Short description of the Salesian Institute Youth Projects:

Salesian Institute Youth Projects work with vulnerable children and youth. Education and skills training are the priority areas, with a focus on reintegration back into society, and or back into mainstream education, and or into jobs when they have completed their training. Accommodation is provided to those that are from the streets, and attend the various skills training available to them, depending on their abilities. Training varies from more advanced training to training for those youth with little or no education. Life skills are an integral part of the programmes.

##### Focus areas -

Street Children, Street Youth, Vulnerable community youth and youth at risk.

##### Main Objectives:

Rehabilitation, reintegration, education and skills training of street children, street youth, vulnerable community youth, and youth at risk and job placements for older youth who have completed their programmes at the Salesian Institute.

##### Main Target groups:

Children: 8 – 15 years in the School for Street children  
Youth ages 16 – 24 skills training for street youth  
Youth ages 16 – 24 hostel programme and reintegration programme  
Vulnerable and impoverished community youth – 18 – 26 years in skills training and job placements

## **Overall objective**

The overall objective of The Salesian Institute - Youth Projects is to provide disadvantaged youth living in and around Cape Town with a range of educational and skills training opportunities. Through these opportunities, youth who have been marginalised and disempowered will develop a range of work skills and lifeskills that will capacitate them to become empowered and independent. By providing these youth with the skills and opportunities needed to generate income and participate in the economy, the organisation believes that the project will contribute greatly to the reduction of poverty in South Africa.

The specific objectives of The Salesian Institute - Youth Projects are as follows:

*To improve the education and skills levels of street youth to enable them to work towards greater independence*

Most of the youth who are living on the streets dropped out of school at an early age, for various, traumatic reasons, and therefore have very limited numeracy and literacy skills. Those who would like to return to mainstream schooling require specialised interventions before they can do so. Older street youth have not received any form of skills training and therefore find it difficult to seek employment or generate their own income. Programmes run by The Salesian Institute - Youth Projects address these needs, thus raising the skills levels of younger and older youth.

*To develop the lifeskills of youth living on the streets, so as to restore a sense of dignity and self-esteem within these youth*

All youth need to develop a range of lifeskills before they can attain any level of independence. The experiences of youth living on the streets or being marginalised have resulted in them having little or no self-respect or self-esteem, which prevents them from seeing the benefits of improving their lives. Activities conducted by The Salesian Institute - Youth Projects work to restore the dignity of these young people, so that they will willingly participate in, and benefit from, the educational and skills development programmes. Through the development of various lifeskills, youth will also be more equipped to seek employment in the open labour market or generate their own income.

*To ensure that all interventions are implemented in a sustainable manner*

The Salesian Institute - Youth Projects understands the importance of sustainable interventions. The project aims to achieve this through negotiations with government bodies, project evaluation and monitoring, effective publicity, the building up of a broad funding base, and by ensuring that the organisation as a whole has effective systems and structures in place.

## **Context**

Basic conditions in the Western Cape, South Africa

The Salesian Institute - Youth Projects targets two extremely vulnerable groups of youth living in and around Cape Town. These groups are street youth and unemployed youth from poverty-stricken communities. Both of these groups are extremely disadvantaged, as they have grown up amidst poverty and have been denied access to basic opportunities. Street youth are further marginalised, as they are

discriminated against and thus denied even more opportunities. Their educational development is often seen as unimportant, and they are therefore denied access to various opportunities.

Poverty reduction is addressed through the activities run by the YES and the Learn to Live programme. This programme tackles unemployment by equipping youth to become active in the local economy and open labour market. The workshops train youth to produce goods that are marketable, to develop marketing strategies and to commercialise their products. Youth in this programme also receive training that equips them with the skills to apply for jobs and generate their own income.

Through lifeskills programmes, The Salesian Institute - Youth Projects improves the quality of life of the target group. Lifeskills training improves the self-esteem of this group and equips youth to access resources. All of the project's activities work to develop the capacity of street youth, providing them with ways in which they themselves can improve their situations.

## **Standard 1: A written policy on keeping children safe.**

### **Policy statement:**

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. It is the policy of Salesian Institute Youth Projects to be fully committed to the safe guarding and protection of every child's safe passage through childhood. In this regard, it will seek to ensure that every child Salesian Institute Youth Projects comes into contact with either directly or indirectly, will be treated with respect and dignity, and will be protected from harm, neglect or every form of abuse.

### **Guiding principles:**

#### **This child protection policy is guided by the following principles;**

- Salesian Institute Youth Projects recognizes that the welfare of the child is of paramount consideration, above all other considerations.
- Salesian Institute Youth Projects fully accepts and endorses the **MISEAN CARA CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFE GUARDING POLICY.**
- Salesian Institute Youth Projects will not tolerate any form of child abuse or exploitation.
- Everybody has a responsibility to protect children.
- Salesian Institute Youth Projects staff will strive to always be present in all places where the children are and will put into practice the preventative system which was introduced by our founder Don Bosco; in this way we shall try to prevent possible harm, abuse and neglect of the children under our care.
- Salesian Institute Youth Projects will not knowingly engage, directly or indirectly with anyone who poses a risk to children, nor work with any individual or organization that does not meet Salesian Institute Youth Projects Child Protection and Safe guarding standards in their operation and activities. Salesian Institute Youth Projects reserves the right to audit any organization or individual it works with to ensure compliance with its child protection and safe guarding standards.
- All children have an equal right to protection from abuse and exploitation. Salesian Institute Youth Projects recognizes that some children, such as children with disabilities, children born of parents with disabilities, children with HIV/AIDS and children living in areas impacted by disasters (natural or conflict based) are particularly vulnerable.

- Salesian Institute Youth Projects will ensure that all its staff, teachers and members of the Salesian Community in AFM Province especially those assigned to work in this institution, are properly trained in the implementation of this Child Protection Policy and that all staff, teachers and board members are fully aware of their duties to report abuse to the designated person.
- Salesian Institute Youth Projects will employ safe recruitment and vetting practices preventing those who pose a known risk to children from gaining employment or becoming members of the organization.

### **Policy context**

The development and implementation of this Child Protection and Safe guarding policy is completely congruent with the core principles enshrined in the following:

- The UN Convention on the rights of the child
- Misesan Cara Child Protection Policy
- The South African Constitution
- The Children's Bill of Rights Act

### **Standard 2: Responding to child protection allegations and suspicions:**

Children have a right to be listened to, heard and believed. Salesian Institute Youth Projects is committed to responding effectively and sensitively to all allegations and suspicions of child abuse.

As an integral part of Salesian Institute Youth projects commitment to protection of children. Ms Margaret Simmonds, will act as the designated child protection officer for the organization.

The designated officer(s) will:

- Ensure adherence to this policy.
- Act as liaison with statutory services in matters relating to child protection
- Act as a resource person to the organization providing support and guidance in matters relating to child protection
- Take the lead role in the reporting and follow up of child protection referrals to the statutory services and ensure that the procedures are followed systematically and thoroughly

### **Salesian Institute Youth Project's child protection reporting procedure:**

Salesian Institute Youth Projects is committed to promoting the safety, welfare and protection of all children and takes all concerns, allegations, suspicions and disclosures of abuse very seriously. Salesian Institute Youth Projects believes that the protection of children is the responsibility of all members of the Salesian Congregation, staff members, teachers and all other stake holders.

The following procedures will be followed by all those assigned to work at Salesian Institute Youth Projects, the staff members, teachers and all other administrators of Salesian Institute Youth Projects.

**Reporting procedure in relation to child abuse allegations/concerns identified or suspected:**

- If any of the above mentions receive a concern, suspicion, allegation or disclosure of abuse, he/she must act immediately and refer the matter to the above designated officer(s) as soon as possible. Never guarantee absolute confidentiality as all suspicions, allegations and concerns must be reported to the designated officer and in return to the statutory services. It is the role of the designated officer to report the matter to the statutory services.
- The designated officer will make report to the Director of Salesian Institute Youth Projects by phone and in writing as a matter of priority.
- It is not the responsibility of the one reporting or the responsibility of the designated officer to investigate the allegation. This is the role of the statutory services who are trained to carry out Child Protection investigations.
- Whenever possible and appropriate, notes taken during the disclosure, but with permission of the child to do so. If the child does not feel comfortable with note taking, write your notes as soon as possible following the disclosure.
- Record all the information on the Salesian Institute Youth Projects Child Protection recording form. You must pass on all original child protection recording forms as well as any rough notes taken throughout the course of a disclosure to the designated officer as soon as possible. The designated officer will identify a safe place to file all information in a secure and confidential manner. (any copies retained by a staff member, teacher who initially received the complaint, must also be stored in a secure and confidential manner)
- Under no circumstances should a child be left at risk/ in danger pending contact with the health service executive. In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, an immediate report should be made by the designated officer to the statutory services.
- Explain to the child what the next steps will be and include them in the process as much as possible, without over involving them in a way that might cause further stress or harm.
- It is important to maintain professional confidentiality.

The protection of children that Salesian Institute Youth Projects staff and teachers come into contact with directly or indirectly is the responsibility of all staff, teachers, volunteers and Salesians assigned to work in the organization. It is the responsibility of all the staff, teachers and Salesians to protect children by:

- Being familiar with and adhering to the above procedure
- Maintaining the best interest of the child as paramount at all times

- Ensuring that all allegations and suspicions of child abuse are treated seriously and with the utmost professional integrity. Protecting children is everyone's responsibility.
- Treating children with respect, dignity, sensitivity and respecting their right to privacy.
- Taking time to listen to children and spending time getting to know each child.
- Consulting and involving children in an age appropriate way
- Never showing favoritism
- Enabling children to freely express their feelings, fear and experiences openly and without fear of retribution or sanction
- Informing the children about the principles and practices of Child Protection including their legal duties
- Never engaging in sexually provocative games or acts or make suggestive comments, even in fun
- Being sensitive to the fact that some children are more vulnerable and have special needs
- Building a professional relationship in which the child can learn to trust and respect adults and which recognizes the difference between confidentiality and secrecy

### **Standard 3: preventing harm to children**

**It is the policy of** Salesian Institute Youth Projects to develop a culture of safety within the organization that seeks to minimize risks to children. Salesian Institute Youth Projects will do this by:

- Having a safe recruitment and vetting process in place
- Having an organization code of behavior
- Operating safe activities for children, where applicable.

### **Safe Recruitment policy**

Salesian Institute Youth Projects acknowledges that safe care starts with the appointment of suitably qualified, skilled and vetted staff or teachers who have the desired competences and skills to carry out their function in an effective, efficient and safe manner.

The processes used in Salesian Institute Youth Projects are clear, unambiguous, equitable and in the best interest of children. This recruitment procedure will also enable Salesian Institute Youth Projects to identify whether the applicant is suitable and competent for the position for which they have applied.

### **Guiding principles:**

Salesian Institute Youth Projects - *Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures*

In order to uphold safe practices in relation to recruitment of teachers and other staff (full and part-time), (dealing with the children directly or indirectly but working at the center) Salesian Institute Youth Projects will ensure:

- That Salesian Institute Youth Projects recruitment procedures are applied to ALL applicants, irrespective of who the applicant happens to be.
- That the interview process judges the applicant on a wide range of skills and competencies.
- That all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that Salesian Institute Youth Projects eliminates applicants who might pose a risk to children.
- That those engaged in the recruitment processes are suitably trained to undertake this task.
- That Salesian Institute Youth Projects recruitment processes are transparent, adhere to “best practice”, and comply with the rules of natural justice, record keeping and human Resource Management.
- That Salesian Institute Youth Projects is committed to the policy of inclusion and equality.

#### **Recruitment practices that promote child protection**

Alongside the standard operating procedures relating to personnel recruitment, the following protocols will apply to the process of all appointments. It should be noted that these procedures do not affect the applicant’s rights under the relevant employment legislation.

- All posts will have a clear job description outlining all the roles, responsibilities and expectations, minimum qualifications, and a person specification of desirable attributes and skills associated with the job.
- Positions will be advertised both internally and externally, including the national and provincial papers, as appropriate.
- All applicants will be advised of their responsibilities towards children and their assessment of suitability will include an awareness of child protection and safe care practices.
- The application form will enable potential applicants to identify any relevant experiences with children, and relevant training associated with childcare.
- All applicants will be required to sign a declaration stating that there is no known reason or event that would render them unsuitable for the post, and declaring any past or pending criminal prosecutions against them. In this regard, Salesian Institute Youth Projects has a policy regarding the type of factors that would exclude a candidate, to which the applicant can have access as required.



- The interview boards will be composed of experienced and qualified personnel, with a proven ability to access and explore the information, which the candidate has included when filling in the application form.
- All applicants will be required to submit names of two referees who will provide both verbal and written references, a requirement of which will include a statement as to the referee's considered view on the candidate's suitability to work with children. Listed references must include the applicant's most recent employer, and the application form will state how and when the references will be obtained.
- All paper work associated with the application process will be kept in an appropriate personnel's file. All references, reports and communications in respect of the applicant should be in writing, and access to it will only be available to appropriate personnel within the organization. Candidates will be advised that their application and follow-up process of recruitment will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.
- The successful applicant will only be offered a position subject to (a) suitable references, (b) proof of qualifications, (c) relevant vetting/clearance procedures, and (d) positive proof of identification.

Salesian Institute Youth Projects fully endorses the requirement to obtain police vetting on its employees, especially those that will have access to children.

After an applicant is accepted to work at Salesian Institute Youth Projects , whether directly or indirectly with the children, they will be expected to go through the following:

- An induction process which will immediately follow the interview process, which will enable them to get to know; the organisation, their colleagues, their job and other organisations doing the same type of work, other Salesian communities and their activities. It will also cover the expectations from all the sides, conditions and procedures for dealing with discipline, grievances, and allegations, and the Salesian Institute Youth Projects child protection policy.
- A trial period will be given to the new worker. The length will be determined by the Director or the interview team. This will enable Salesian Institute Youth Projects to assess the suitability of the new worker to work with the children and his/her commitment to Salesian Institute Youth Projects policies on safe practice.

#### **Code of behavior and the operation of safe activities for children:**

The recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced personnel is a vital aspect of Salesian Institute Youth Projects safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. However, in order to maintain a high level of child protection awareness and safe care, codes of behavior are equally important.

The following list (which should be read in conjunction with Salesian Institute Youth Projects “code of practice” will assist Salesian Institute Youth Projects in promoting safe practices:

1. It is the responsibility of the Director to (a) ensure that staff, teachers and volunteers are fully aware of Salesian Institute Youth Projects safe guarding and child protection procedures, (b) that staff, teachers and volunteers engage in relevant training opportunities and induction, and (c) that the adequacy of staff and teachers is such as to promote safe practices. The designated officer has a responsibility in respect of the follow up of all suspicions or allegations of child neglect or abuse.
2. Particular attention must be paid to any health and safety matters to ensure that children are provided with the safest environment possible whilst engaging with Salesian Institute Youth Projects staff, teachers, Salesians and volunteers.
3. Employees, while carrying out their daily duties or other duties assigned to them, should always be respectful of the privacy of young people particularly in dormitories, changing rooms, showers or toilets. In order to avoid a child being placed in a risk situation and/or staff and teachers being compromised, it is recommended that staff and teachers need to be vigilant in these areas and follow safe care practices, for example by ensuring that a child/young person does not spend time alone with an adult person.
4. When activities/operations involve taking children out on day or overnight trips, it is the responsibility of all staff and teachers to ensure that safe practices are upheld in relation to the transportation of children, adequate insurance, and that appropriate supervision and consent is available.

**Standard 4: Training and Education for keeping children safe.**

It is the policy of Salesian Institute Youth Projects to offer training to all its staff, teachers, Salesians and volunteers and in particular the designated officer, in order to achieve best practices in the area of child protection. Effective child protection requires that all relevant professionals working in the organization engage in, and undertake regular reviews, of training. The role of training is to:

- Provide evidence of the organization’s competency in the area of child protection. All certificates of training will be kept on file.
- Raise awareness and skill levels in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- Promote understanding in the recognition and identification of child abuse
- Identify area of staff members’ or teacher’s work which may impact on children (such as the selection of project proposals) and provide the skills to recognise and deal with potential child safety issues.

- Ensure staff, teachers and volunteers are versed in relevant legislation, national guidelines, Church guidelines and internal processes for protection of children.
- Translate learning into a better service for those children, young people and their families with whom Salesian Institute Youth Projects comes into contact.

The level and type of training that Salesian Institute Youth Projects provides, either internally or in association with the health services executives and other social care providers, will depend on the degree of contact that particular staff and teachers have with children.

#### **Standard 5: Communicating Salesian Institute Youth Projects AFM's safeguarding message**

It is the policy of Salesian Institute Youth Projects to make all; staff, teachers, Salesians, volunteers, children and all stake holders of the organization, aware of its safeguarding and child protection policy. Salesian Institute Youth Projects will do this by:

- Requesting that all Salesians sign up to its safeguarding and child protection policy and agree to uphold all the principles and procedures inherent in it
- Display in a prominent position in Salesian Institute Youth Projects offices a summary of its child protection policy for the public to view
- Disseminating it's safeguarding and child protection policy on all appropriate occasions
- Developing good professional links with the statutory and voluntary organizations that are involved in the area of child protection. This will facilitate good working relationships as well as identifying services to which Salesian Institute Youth Projects can refer children if they seek further support.

#### **Standard 6: Access to advice and support:**

**Salesian Institute Youth Projects recognizes that child abuse is distressing and can be difficult to deal with. Children in particular, need someone to turn to when they are being abused or wish to disclose a previous incident of abuse. Often children are not aware of where they can go to for help.**

Arrangements for child protection can only be successful if organizations work in partnership with the statutory sector through the sharing of relevant information and our knowledge base. Salesian Institute Youth Projects recognizes that not every organization has all the skills, knowledge or resources to protect children on their own, which requires all those who come into contact with children to work collaboratively. Salesian Institute Youth Projects is committed to such arrangements.

Salesian Institute Youth Projects will do this by:

1. Ensuring a comprehensive response to all concerns and disclosures of abuse and neglect, and the prompt sharing of relevant information with the statutory services.
2. Developing a network of resources and information to direct children to appropriate support services in the community including help lines.
3. Working in partnership with social workers and other authorities in the protection of children.
4. Where applicable, making available to health service executive and other relevant authorities all relevant records relating to specific children who are believed to be at risk.
5. Attending joint training initiatives about child protection and welfare matters.
6. Encouraging its sister organizations to develop and implement safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.

#### **Standard 7: Implementing and Monitoring the standards**

It is the responsibility of the Director to ensure that this policy is evaluated each year, and where indicated, amended to incorporate new practices or processes as required to protect children with whom we come into contact.

This evaluation will also indicate any specific training needs of staff, teachers and other key stakeholders in relation to the implementation of this safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Practices. A budget will be set aside at the start of each year to cater for any financial expenditure and/or resources that may be incurred during the year in implementing the policy.

A database of all incidents, allegations and suspicions of abuse will be recorded by the designated officer at the end of each year and stored in a secure and confidential manner.