



## **Salesians Child and Vulnerable Adult Safe Guidelines**

The Salesians have developed the following Child and Vulnerable Adult Safe Guidelines. These Guidelines are an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to protecting children from abuse, consisting of the Child Safe Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

While we refer to child safety throughout this Policy and Code of Conduct this also applies to vulnerable adults.

The Policy forms the foundation of the Province's procedures, practices, decision-making processes and ultimately the Province's culture with respect to child safety. It has been developed to meet the requirements in each jurisdiction in which the Salesians operate.

It is designed to be published on our public website as well as communicated through other mediums such as newsletters, our annual report and in induction and welcome packs for Provincial Council members, staff and Volunteers.

The Salesians' Child Safe Policy has been approved and endorsed by the Provincial Council and is regularly reviewed by them.

### **Our Child Safe Policy**

#### **Objectives**

This policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the organisation
- the creation of a positive and robust child protection culture
- the promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the organisation
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in all Salesian works.

### **Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

**The Salesians are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe, feel safe and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.**

The Salesians have a zero tolerance for child abuse, are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The Salesian Province regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

## Child Safe Values and Principles

The commitment of the Salesians to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff/Confrere and Child/Young Person Professional Boundaries policy.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within the Salesian community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, **Direct Contact Volunteers\*\***, and Third Party Contractors who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all Provincial Council members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the Salesian community.
11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

*\*\*Direct Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to children and could potentially have direct contact with children during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.*

*Definitions of "direct contact" differ from state to state. Refer to **Direct Contact Volunteers** for more information.*

*Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in Province camps and other activities with children.*

## **Child Protection Program**

The Salesians are committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of the Province's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the children in the Salesians community.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, parents/carers and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening Provincial Council members, staff, Direct Contact Volunteers, and Third Party Contractors
- procedures for reporting reportable conduct and/or misconduct
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower children and keep them safe
- policies with respect to cultural diversity and children with disabilities
- a child protection training program
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards)
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of Salesians induction process, all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Protection Program.

Additional, ongoing child protection training is provided at least annually.

Staff, Volunteers, and Third Party Contractors are supported and supervised by the Province's Safeguarding Officer to ensure that they are compliant with the Province's approach to child protection.

### **Responsibilities**

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. The Salesians, the Provincial Council and staff, as well as Volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

#### ***The Provincial***

The Provincial is responsible, and will be accountable for ensuring that this Child Safe Policy and the Salesians' Child protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the Salesian Province.

### ***Provincial Council***

Each member of the Provincial Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the Salesian's Child Safe Policy and the Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the organisation and are responsible for holding the Provincial and the Professional Standards Office accountable for effective implementation.

### ***The Province's Safeguarding Officer***

The Salesians have appointed the Rector at each Salesian Community as Safeguarding Officers. The Safeguarding Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the Salesians. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the Salesians and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

### ***Staff Members and Confreres***

All staff/confreres are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safe Policy and our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the Province's Safeguarding Officers.

### ***Direct Contact Volunteers***

All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in our Child Protection Program, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection Program, particularly this Child Safe Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct, and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse in the relevant jurisdiction.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the Province's Safeguarding Officers.

### ***Indirect Contact Volunteers***

Indirect Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of children.

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children within the Salesian environment.

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are required by the Province to be familiar with our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with Province administrative functions.

### ***Third Party Contractors***

All Third Party Contractors engaged by the Province are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the Province environment.

Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants.

## **Reporting Child Abuse Concerns**

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for the Provincial Council, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to the Province's Safeguarding Officer. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Staff and confreres, Third Party Contractors, Volunteers, children/young persons, parents/carers and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact the Province's Safeguarding Officer by phoning

**03 9377 6000** or by emailing **pso@salesians.org.au**.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

**Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.**

## **Policy and Program Review**

Salesians are committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

## Child Safe Code of Conduct

A Child Safe Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships. For more detailed guidance refer to the Province's **Staff/Confrere and Child/Young Person Professional Boundaries** policy.

When individuals are clear about behavioural expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately with each other and with children. When everyone is educated about the Code of Conduct and the reasons it is so important to uphold, the organisation becomes much more transparent and people are accountable for their behaviour. Above all, a Child Safe Code of Conduct helps to protect children from harm.

### The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to:

- Salesian Confreres
- Provincial Council members
- all staff members, including temporary and casual staff
- Volunteers
- children and young people
- parents and carers
- Third Party Contractors and service providers
- visitors.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct set out below is designed to stand alone. It can also be incorporated in whole or part into broader codes of conduct that are developed within the organisation, including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular staff at the Salesians.

The Code is made available to all staff/confreres, Volunteers, families and children/young people via our public website.

## Our Child Safe Code of Conduct

This Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards children and young people. The Code serves to protect children and young people, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety at the Salesians. It provides guidance on how to best support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. Where a staff member/confrere breaches the Code, Salesians may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal. The Province revises the Code annually.

The Salesians have the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting with children and young people within the Salesians community. This includes all staff/confreres, the Provincial Council, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and parents/carers.

The Provincial Council has endorsed this Child Safe Code of Conduct.

## Child Safe Code of Conduct **DO:**

- Behave as a positive role model to children and young people.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to safety and child protection issues.
- Provide age appropriate supervision for children and young people.
- Comply with guidelines published by the Salesians with respect to child protection.
- Treat all children and young people with respect.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with a disability.
- Families and carers take part in decisions affecting their children.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse children and young people.
- Use positive and affirming language towards children and young people.
- Encourage children and young people to 'have a say' and participate, and then listen to them with respect.
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences.
- Identify and mitigate physical and online risks to children.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all children and young people to interact and socialise.
- Intervene when children and young people are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way.
- Report any breaches of this Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Report concerns about child safety to one of the Province's Safeguarding Officers and ensure that the legal obligations to report allegations externally are met.
- Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the children/young person involved is safe.
- Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child/young person's safety.
- Respect the privacy of children and young people and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

## Child Safe Code of Conduct **DO NOT**:

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards children or young people or expose children or young people to such behaviour.
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with children or young people.
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children or young people or discriminate against any child or young person based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of children or young people.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a child or young person including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a child or young person including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a child or young person.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a child or young person serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Develop 'special' relationships with children or young people that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children or young people).
- Groom or make predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity at a later time.
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a child or young person that is not your own child.
- Engage in meetings with a child that is not your own, outside the context of Salesian activities or locations and without permission from the child's parent.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a child or young person through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a child or young person.

- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a child or young person without parental/carers consent.
- Post online any information about a child or young person that may identify them such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse

Our Child Protection Program includes a **Staff/Confrere and Child/Young Person Professional Boundaries** policy that provides detailed guidance for all staff/confreres and Volunteers on how to maintain professional boundaries between children/young people and adults at Salesian centres and locations.

## **Report any concerns**

The Program also includes information for members of the Provincial Council, staff and **Direct Contact Volunteers** as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of the Province's nominated Safeguarding Officers.

It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third Party Contractors, Indirect Contact Volunteers, children/young people, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the Province's **Safeguarding Officers**.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

**Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.**

Reviewed and approved by the Provincial Council on 28/10/2022.