

**Salesian Planning and Development Office (SPDO)
Child Protection Policy
(Version 2015.10.27)**

1. Purpose of Child Protection Policy

- To ensure that the SPDO has a Child Protection Policy in keeping with accepted best practice
- To ensure that every SPDO project has in place what is required of them to ensure Child Protection in the projects
- This is a policy for SPDO employees and volunteers.

2. Commitment

The Salesian Planning and Development Office is committed to the seven standards of best practice which represent the expected level of performance to be maintained by employees and volunteers:

- Standard 1: A policy for the protection of children is in place.
Standard 2: Procedures to respond to and report suspicions of and allegations of child abuse are in place.
Standard 3: Policies and procedures to protect children from harm are in place.
Standard 4: Arrangements for staff induction, ongoing training and education are in place.
Standard 5: A variety of methods are in place to communicate the Child Protection Policy.
Standard 6: Access to advise and support will be provided.
Standard 7: Child protection standards are implemented and monitored.

3. Standard 1: A policy for the protection of children is in place.

Each child should 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 SPDO has an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children as enshrined in South African Law are respected and upheld.

The guiding standards stated above inform this policy. The policy has been written to ensure that all members of the SPDO, their co-workers and volunteers take every possible measure to prevent child abuse. It aims to ensure that none of its employees or volunteers engage in behaviour that could allow abuse to occur, or action that could be misinterpreted by children, their families or other adults as constituting or leading to abuse.

3.1 The Obligation to Report

Any person who has knowledge that an offence has been committed against a child must report such knowledge to the relevant authorities. Furthermore, any person who, on reasonable grounds, concludes that a child has been physically abused or deliberately neglected must report that conclusion to the police or a registered social worker.

Any person that has a child protection concern or suspects that a child is being abused has a duty to report such suspicion or concern to the designated person below. This applies in particular to a concern or allegation in relation to any SPDO staff member. This does not absolve the person reporting the issue from informing the legal authorities.

3.2 Useful phone numbers:

LOCAL POLICE STATION Capt Ndaba	landline	011 433 5200
	fax	011 433 5272
	cell	082 955 5658
	email	Booyens_Scm_admin@saps.org.za
CLOSEST SAPS Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit (FCS)	landline	011-433 5200
	fax	011-433 5272
	cell	082 9555 658
	email	childprotect@saps.co.za
TEDDY BEAR CLINIC (CHILDREN UNDER 12) Director: Lizette Schoombee	landline	011 484 4554
	fax	011 484 5144
	cell	082 875 1175
	email	lizetteS@ttbc.org.za
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CHILDREN OVER 12). Supervisor: Mummy Mosia	landline	011 355 7846/7823
	Fax	011 833 4014
	cell	082 414 6910
	email	SalaminahM@gauteng.gov.za
CIE Designated Person: Anne French	Landline	011 433 1888
	fax	011 680 9628
	cell	084 500 8361
	email	annef@cie.org.za
CHILDLINE	landline	011 645 2000
	fax	011 645 2020
	cell	0800 055 555
	email	infogauteng@childline.org.za

4. Standard 2: Procedures to respond to and report suspicions of allegations of child abuse are in place.

The SPDO views the safety and wellbeing of children as of paramount importance and at no time will children be put at further risk of harm by delay or inaction.

4.1 Designated Person:

We have a Designated Person named to deal with concerns.

The Designated Person is a named person who will:

- hear any concerns relating to the protection of children – including disclosures or allegations of abuse by SPDO staff members, or anyone who may work for, or with, the SPDO in a paid or voluntary capacity;
- pass the information to the appropriate civil authorities and Director of the SPDO.
- ensure that all involved are regularly informed about the progress of the enquiry process;
- liaise with all civil and religious authorities with regard to the progress of the enquiry process;
- carefully record all steps undertaken as part of this procedure;
- ensure that the Advisory Panel is called as necessary (see 4.3.1);
- prepare a dossier for the Advisory Panel to consider;
- present a dossier of the complaint (devoid of identifying elements) for the Advisory Panel meeting.

The Designated Person does not attend the Advisory Panel meeting

THE DESIGNATED PERSON AT CIE IS: Anne French	landline	011 433 1888
	fax	011 680 9628
	cell	084 500 8361
	email	annef@cie.org.za

4.2 Anyone who receives notification of a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse should act immediately as follows:

- **Listen** to the allegation and be welcoming and supportive
- **Sensitively** hear the person's story and then explain the initial procedures and give the name and contact details of our Designated Person
- **Offer** to accompany the complainant to the meeting with the Designated Person
- **Be mindful** of the rights of all involved, the person making the allegation and the alleged perpetrator
- **Do not guarantee confidentiality** to anyone who wishes to speak about a situation of abuse.

It is essential that the complainant be put in contact with the Designated Person immediately.

4.3 **Advisory Panel:**

It is required that an Advisory Panel be established. This panel should include the following people: Civil Lawyer, Childcare Professional, Priest/Religious person with pastoral experience, Lay Person with relevant experience e.g. a parent representative.

This panel could be organised to serve the SPDO in specific regions.

4.3.1 **The role of the Advisory Panel:**

This panel is appointed to advise and assist the Director of the SPDO at all stages of the investigative process into alleged abuse. This panel will be convened when necessary.

The Advisory Panel will provide advice on:

- the complaint itself;
- ensuring that the safety and welfare of children remains paramount;
- whether it is appropriate for the alleged perpetrator to remain in her/his position;
- how the right of the alleged perpetrator to a fair trial on a criminal charge is preserved;
- the needs of the community or establishment in which the alleged perpetrator served and the timing of any public statement.

5. Standard 3: Policies and procedures to protect children from harm are in place.

The SPDO is committed to promoting a culture of safety and preventing and reducing the risk of harm to children.

We see this culture being supported by:

- responsible and selective recruitment of staff
- Code of Conduct Safe Activities.

5.1 **Responsible and selective recruitment** – we will make sure that whoever is employed, either in a paid or voluntary role, is recruited responsibly and selectively and is suitable for the job / role with children that they are being asked to undertake.

In order to prevent unsuitable people working with children in SPDO and projects, SPDO will put in place thorough recruitment and selection procedures. Police clearance and other legally required clearance certificates in accordance with National Registers will be sought for all employees and volunteers.

5.2 **Code of Conduct** – we provide a clear and concise guide of what is and is not acceptable behaviour and practice when working with children and this will be signed by all employees and volunteers who work with children.

5.2.1 The following **Code of Conduct** will be adopted:

It is important that all employees and volunteers:

- treat all children with respect;
- provide an example of good conduct as an example to others;
- operate within Church principles and the ethical standards set forth in the document *Integrity in Ministry*;
- wherever possible, work with children in full view of other adults;
- challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour;
- develop a culture where children can talk about their interaction with staff and others openly;
- respect each child's boundaries and help them to develop and appropriate their rights and help them to know what they can do if they feel their rights are being infringed.

It is unacceptable for adults to:

- interview children alone in a closed office / room;
- interact with children outside of the school context without the consent of parents or guardians;
- spend excessive time alone with children away from others;
- take children home, especially where they will be alone with adults.

SPDO staff or volunteers must never:

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse a child or use any other prohibited measures of punishment;
- verbally abuse a child;
- permit children in their care to abuse one another in any way;
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- engage in sexual relations with children;
- act in any way that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.

SPDO employees and volunteers must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example they should never:

- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- have a child / children with whom they are working stay at home with them overnight or unsupervised;
- sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working;
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves;
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children;

- discriminate against, show different treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

5.2.2 **Safe Activities** – providing clear guidelines on how to keep children safe before, during and after activities. A risk assessment will determine how best to run activities and strategies will be worked out to deal with any risks identified.

In providing guidelines for safe activities, the following areas will be given particular attention:

- Vetting of individual personnel involved in events and activities with children whether these activities are ongoing or 'once off';
- Supervision: appropriate levels of supervision depending on age of children and the activities involved will be put in place;
- Health and Safety: proper checks will be carried out to ensure safety of venue, adequate changing areas, toilets and first aid supplies. Safe transport, sleeping arrangements and adequate insurance to be arranged;
- Parental consent: this will include signed consent forms from parents prior to children participating in an activity and provision of contact number in case of emergency; permission for child to receive medical treatment if needed and identification of specific dietary, medical or special needs of child;
- Use of IT equipment: care will be exercised to reduce risk to children associated with online activity and use of images when they are involved in an activity, group or event.

5.2.3 **Curriculum** – we will actively promote the use in schools of the life skills, sexuality and human rights education components in the Religious Education and Life Orientation learning areas with particular reference to the *Lifebound* and *CORD* resources.

6. Standard 4: Arrangements for staff induction, ongoing training and education are in place.

The SPDO recognises that appropriate child protection training for all those who work with children or have a designated child protection / welfare role is an integral and vital element in ensuring best practice.

Everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play in their protection. SPDO believes that in order to carry out this role effectively and confidently they need to be aware of child protection issues and have the necessary knowledge and skills.

All the SPDO staff and volunteers who work with children will be inducted into the SPDO Child Protection Policy and procedures on child protection, as well as Catholic Church policies, in a manner appropriate to their different responsibilities.

SPDO will identify personnel both paid and unpaid who need to access child protection training.

SPDO will provide a budget for training.

SPDO will identify suitable providers to make this child protection training available and all personnel will be required to attend such training.

7. Standard 5: A variety of methods are in place to communicate the Child Protection Policy.

The SPDO will ensure that our Child Protection Policy is communicated to all personnel – employees and volunteers, to parents, to children and to external agencies. We are aware that policies and procedures are only effective if everyone, including children, know how to use them.

To facilitate communication we will implement the following processes:

- We will arrange meetings in all our offices to workshop the Child Protection Policy;
- We will display our Child Protection Policy in public places;
- We will ensure that there are Child Protection Policies in operation in all regional offices in which SPDO staff and volunteers are present;
- We will make sure that parents, children and community members know about our Child Protection Policy and reporting procedures.

8. Standard 6: Access to advice and support will be provided.

The SPDO will provide access to advice and support to anyone who has been abused or who has perpetrated abuse. We will avail of specialist advice on child protection issues from appropriate providers.

We are conscious of how grave and distressing child abuse is and how difficult it is to deal with. We will therefore ensure that the following is in place so that children know where to go for help and advice if they have a concern:

- Lists of services, authorities and organisations with contact details that can provide assistance to children will be openly displayed in all SPDO offices and areas frequented by children;
- These lists will also be made available to all staff and volunteers so that they know what services are available in order to be able to respond and support children.

We have a particular concern for vulnerable children i.e. disabled children and those with communication difficulties, such as deafness, so that they will be able to report abuse and access information and support. A competent interpreter will be provided where necessary.

The SPDO Director will appoint a Support Person to be available to anyone who makes an allegation of abuse. The Support Person will offer care, and will assist, where appropriate, with communication between the child or adult making an allegation and the Designated Person. The Support Person will receive appropriate training.

The SPDO Director will appoint an Adviser to be available to the alleged perpetrator. The Adviser will assist, where appropriate, with the care of the alleged perpetrator and communication between the alleged perpetrator, the Designated Person and the SPDO Director. The Adviser will inform the alleged perpetrator of the right to obtain advice in civil and Canon Law. The Adviser will receive appropriate training.

9. Standard 7: Child protection standards are implemented and monitored.

The SPDO will devise a strategy to implement and disseminate the Child Protection Policy. We will develop a plan of action to monitor the effectiveness of the steps we are taking to safeguard children.

In order to implement and disseminate this policy, the SPDO will utilise both formal and informal procedures. Such procedures will include briefings / meetings; newsletters; memos; all-staff emails; conferences; policy documents; networks; listening / talking; sharing; discussion and training.

SPDO will monitor the effectiveness of the steps taken to safeguard children through questionnaires and feedback.

Appendix 1

What do we mean by child abuse?

Child abuse consists of any act, or failure to act that endangers a child's physical or emotional health and development. Someone is abusive if he or she fails to nurture the child physically, injures the child or relates sexually to the child.

We recognise four main categories of abuse:

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities i.e. encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Physical abuse: is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.

Emotional abuse: is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child, which adversely affects the child's emotional development.

Neglect abuse: is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional or psychological needs, which is likely to result in significant harm.