Prepared by

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A Child-Centred Educational Commitment

When Jesus was asked by his disciples who were the most important people in the Kingdom of God, he called a child, stood him in their midst and solemnly declared that it belonged to those who became like children (Mt 18: 1-3). Don Bosco embodied this policy of his Master in his own life and action. “For you I study, for you I work, for you I live, for you I am ready even to give my life,” he told his boys. Following him, we his sons and daughters place the young person at the very centre of our educational philosophy, spirituality and practice. The integral welfare of the young makes up the reason of our existence as a religious society in the world.

The numerous Don Bosco Institutions, spread over all the States of India, have educated hundreds of thousands of children for more than a century. Following Don Bosco’s System of Education, based on Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness, we have been pioneers in creating safe, conducive and family-like atmosphere in all our settings, in order to promote the integral growth of the young. The Salesian “assistance” practised in all our houses is nothing but a child promotion framework.
Hence a lofty and integrated child policy and child protection policy have been part of our philosophy right from our origins.

The making of this present Don Bosco Child Policy, along the lines of our own tradition, began more than a decade ago in order to bring it up to date in keeping with modern needs. The 25th General Chapter has directed us to lay down norms of behaviour to which all Salesians and their collaborators must conform in dealing with children. In this process the present Policy is an important step forward. It is in consonance with the International Treaties and Conventions on Child Rights, the polices and laws of the Indian Government and the guidelines of the Church.

I place on record my gratitude to all those who contributed to the evolution of this policy in the past and to its final outcome. The Salesian Provincial Conference and the Salesian Forum for the Young at Risk have prepared child policies earlier that have contributed to the present document. Several experts in the field have been consulted. The Salesian Provinces have given their feedback on the draft. Fr. Maria Charles and the Don Bosco Youth Animation Team, integrating material from earlier documents and the latest policies and laws, have prepared the present policy.

This Policy has been approved by the Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia. Hence I present and promulgate this policy for all our Salesian institutions with effect from 31st January 2014, the feast of Don Bosco. It is to be taken seriously as an official policy by the Salesians, staff, workers and everyone else involved with the children in our Centres of Work, for study, reflection and implementation. Our joy will be in seeing the young people grow as healthy and integrated human beings, honest citizens and good children of God.