YaR

CHILD POLICY

**And**

**Essential Protocols**

****

**YaR FORUM INDIA**

THE DON BOSCO NATIONAL FORUM FOR THE YOUNG AT RISK

Palam Gaon, New Delhi -110045, INDIA.

Ph. 011 25081014, Email:yarindiaforum@gmail.com

C O N T E N T S

01. Introduction

02. Vision

03. Principles of the Policy

04. Objectives of the Policy

05. Priority Areas for Policy Implementation

5.1. Survival

5.2. Development

5.3. Protection

5.4. Participation

06. Organizational Protocols

07. Recruitment

08. Training, Capacity Building

09. Documentation and Research,

10. Advocacy

11. Responses to Allegations of Staff Offences against Children

12. Communication about Children

13. Declaration of Commitment to the Child Policy

14. Evaluation and Review of Policy

15. Who are governed by this policy?

Annexure

**1.INTRODUCTION**

 **“I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness.”** *(John 10: 10.)* The Don Bosco National Forum for the Young at Risk (YaR Forum), committed to serving and working with the Young at Risk, draws its inspiration from these words of Jesus which state that the purpose of his life was to give ‘life’ especially to the weak and lowly in society. Don Bosco, the founder of the Salesian movement for youth, reached out to serve the marginalized youth of his times saying: **“That you are young is sufficient to make me love you very much.”***(Il Giovane Provveduto, Turin 1847, p.7)* It is this passion of Don Bosco for the vulnerable young persons that motivates the YaR Forum services for the Young at Risk.

The Don Bosco National Forum for the Young at Risk has been established by the Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia (SPCSA) for reflection, sharing and co-ordination among those involved in the Salesian ministry for the Young at Risk, to network with like-minded persons and organizations on behalf of Young at Risk, and to influence policies related to the Young at Risk . The YaR Child Policy is deemed to be a faithful expression of the spirit, guidelines and objectives mentioned above. It attempts to resonate with the voices of the children of the world: **“We are not the sources of problems; we are the resources that are needed to solve them. We are not expenses; we are investments. We are not just young people; we are people and citizens of this world. You call us the future but we are also the present.” (***The**Children’s Statement to the World Leaders at the UN General Assembly’s Special Session on Children, 8 May 2002.)*

Children are an invaluable asset of humanity; hence it is particularly important that they are nurtured and protected effectively, so that they grow up as persons who are physically fit, mentally alert, and morally healthy, endowed with necessary skills and helpful attitudes. The YaR Forum is committed to the promotion and safeguarding of the rights of children as mandated in the Constitution of India, according to the principles contained in the Convention on the Rights of Children, the Juvenile Justice Act, and the Preventive System of Don Bosco (Pedagogy of Presence), and to ensuring the realization of the highest standards and equal opportunities for survival, development, protection and participation to all children. The following policy statement and guidelines aim at providing children and youth, ‘that part of human society which is so exposed to danger and yet so rich in promise” (BM II, 35), a safe environment in which they can grow and become fully alive.

The YaR Child Policy has been framed to ensure the care and protection of children at risk (a child being any individual below the age of 18 years). The poverty, hardships, oppression, exploitation and marginalization of children are increasing alarmingly. The systems, plans and development processes of the State, for the care and protection of vulnerable children are not delivering sufficiently.  One cannot remain a silent spectator to this situation. Challenged by this, the YaR Forum seeks to address the dire needs of children and their neglect by the State by reaching out to and advocating on behalf of the following most vulnerable groups of children: children on the streets, child labourers, abandoned orphans, children in conflict with the law, children with disabilities, run away children, children from dysfunctional families, institutionalized children, young substance abusers, children in war-torn and conflict areas, refugee children or children of the displaced including ethnic groups and minorities, children in sex trade and children affected by HIV/AIDS, children who have dropped out of education, trafficked children and children in very serious danger of being trafficked, and all children who are found in any other situation of serious vulnerability.

The YaR Child Policy reflects a paradigm shift from welfare and need- based approach to an approach of equal rights and justice for all. It outlines the way in which the YaR Forum aims to listen to the voices of children as participants in an agenda for their dignity, well being and future. It posits itself as a platform to protect, support and empower children, both in their individual situations and in the Society as a whole. The underpinning thrust of such an effort could be, articulated as: ‘Every child matters”, irrespective of religion, caste, sex, place of birth and any other factor of identity or ability.

This policy encapsulates an over-arching expression of intent and commitment for everyone in the YaR Forum. All the members of YaR Forum are duty-bound to function according to the principles, objectives and priorities outlined in this policy. The YaR Forum and its members stand committed to invest the required resources to implement this policy effectively.

**2.** **VISION**

The Don Bosco National Forum for the Young at Risk, in collaboration with the State, non-Statal actors, and families of children, strives to offer every child a nurturing, respectful and safe environment based, on an agenda of equity and the best interests of the child, to enable all children to access rights, opportunities and resources for survival, protection and development to ensure for them a safe and happy childhood and to secure their future prospects.

**3. PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY**

3.1. The Constitution of India guarantees certain rights to every person in this country including children. All children have equal rights; no class, origin, custom, tradition, cultural or religious practices shall be allowed to violate, restrict or prevent children from enjoying these rights.

3.2. Child Rights are universal; inter-related, interdependent, indivisible and inalienable.

3.3. The best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration in all actions concerning or affecting the child.

3.4. The children have the right to safety and security. To ensure this right, the children need to be protected from harm, discrimination, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

3.5. The safety and security of children shall be of prime importance. The children will be protected from harm, abuses, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and violence as they have the right to protection.

3.6. The physical, social, psychological, emotional, intellectual, moral, cultural and spiritual development of the child shall be addressed in totality.

3.7. A family setting is most conducive to the all-round-development of children. Institutionalization shall be resorted to only when family setting and alternative forms of family care are not possible, and every effort will be made to restore the institutionalized children to their families or to alternative forms of family care.

3.8. The principles of equity, justice and non-discrimination shall guide all actions concerning children.

3.9. Individuality, age, gender, and recognition of the special needs and vulnerability will set the direction for any/all programmes and interventions related to children.

3.10. Consultation and participation of children in a manner appropriate to their age, in all matters affecting them, is an indisputable right of every child and shall be respected in all our dealings with children.

3.11. Taking positive measures for the care and protection of children is the primary responsibility of the State; and these measures are to be carried out by the State, adhering to the “Rights” perspective. Collaborating with the State to implement its laws, policies and schemes for the care and protection of children will be an important contribution of YaR Forum, while being faithful to the guiding principles and standards of this policy.

3.12. The Publishing of information and depiction of children in whatever form will be done, respecting the privacy, dignity and the best interests of the children and with utmost circumspection.

3.13. Children have the right to access information that is important to their development and well-being. The children, especially from minority and indigenous groups, should be provided with information in a language which is suitable and simple. Children should also have access to children’s books and other forms of media appropriate to their growth and development.

3.14. The Preventive System with its principles of REASON, RELIGION AND LOVING KINDNESS is to be practiced in all the YaR involvements for the overall development and protection of the children.

3.15. Consistent with the mandates enshrined in the Constitution of India, the international standards in the Child Rights Convention of UN, legal directions as in Juvenile Justice Act and other relevant legal systems of the country, and in keeping with the spirit of the Preventive System of Don Bosco, the YaR Forum in collaboration with the State and other non-Statal sectors shall create a safe environment for the child.

**4. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

The YaR forum shall, in all its services and support to all the children for whom it assumes responsibility, commit itself to:

4.1. Ensure survival, health, well-being, nutrition, clean water and sanitation to prevent malnutrition, disease, disability and death due to avoidable causes.

4.2. Ensure the necessary standards of human and infrastructural resources, so as to enable children to develop to their full potential.

4.3. Shall collaborate for the establishment of a safety net of strong preventive, promotive and punitive laws, institutions, procedures and enforcement machinery to ensure accountability in governance which leads to the care and protection of children.

4.4. Create an environment where in the aspirations of children are a part of all decisions on matters concerning them.

4.5. Consult, network and collaborate locally, nationally and internationally with State and non-Statal actors for the care and protection and promotion of the rights of children.

4.6. Make every effort to improve knowledge, attitude and practice among children and personnel regarding Child Rights and their violations, to find out and make known how and where to access protection and to support them in situations that threaten or violate child rights.

4.7. To adopt the Preventive System or the “Pedagogy of Presence” that uses REASON, RELIGION and LOVING KINDNESS to enable the best in every child to blossom; to create an environment of preventive care by taking active steps to prevent any harm to the child; to provide a healthy environment that supports the integrated development and protection of the young; to create a culture of rights so that violations of child rights become rare and difficult; to protect the young from falling into the situations of risk, harmful influences, situations of abuse and exploitation.

**5.0. PRIORITY AREAS FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

**5.1. SURVIVAL**

The right to life and survival is an inalienable right of every child. It is important to accord the highest priority to promote the health and well being of children. Hence the YaR Forum shall:

**5.1.1.** Make efforts to eliminate crimes against life such as abortion, female foeticide and infanticide. Every child has a right to be born and to live.

**5.1.2.** Provide timely, quality and essential medical care and treatment for children.

**5.1.3.** Make efforts to prevent child marriage and ensure the right age at marriage.

**5.1.4.** Provide for child-friendly and safe physical spaces by ensuring easily accessible facilities, clean environment, adequate infrastructure facilities, living spaces, playgrounds, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities etc.

 **5.1.5.** Make available sufficient nutritious diet and adequate clothing.

 **5.1.6.** Provide immunization to the child for protection from vaccine- preventable diseases.

**5.2. DEVELOPMENT**

There is no substitute of any sort for quality and age-appropriate education for the physical, emotional and cognitive development of children, so as to empower them to live confident and happy lives with life skills for their own safety and protection. Hence the YaR Forum shall:

**5.2.1.** Provide and promote quality, child-friendly, gender-sensitive and a locally relevant school education.

**5.2.2**. Provide opportunities for sports, leisure, recreation and creativity.

**5.2.3.** Provide early childhood education, prevent children dropping out of education, promote better enrolment, ensure quality primary and upper-primary education for all as non-negotiables, and promote secondary education.

**5.2.4.** Enable children to develop holistically, draw out their aspirations and focus on their aptitudes by reviewing the curriculum with a special focus on mental health from a perspective of self esteem, confidence and life skills.

**5.2.5.** Make available skill training to older children to prepare them for life, so that they may be able to find employment and imbibe independent living skills, so that they continue to live their lives on their own leading to and establishing families of their own.

5.2.6. Address issues of children affected by life threatening and/or stigma attached diseases such as HIV/AIDS and make efforts to ensure proper care such as treatment, health care, nutrition and education and to preventdiscrimination.

**5.2.7.** Educate children about their rights and teach them to access help when their rights are violated.

**5.2.8.** Make necessary efforts to secure or to restore children who are unaccompanied and who are in institutions, a meaningful access to their own culture, religion and language, so that they may know, understand and value their own identity. Also make efforts to give such children the best opportunity to be restored to their own cultural setting and environment, to obtain for them a better atmosphere for their integrated development, as well as to their own communities and families keeping in mind their best interests, and with due solicitude for the child’s own sense of security and belonging.

**5.2.9.** Provide care, support and services to the children in a spirit ofaccompaniment, supportive supervision and in a friendly family-like atmosphere offering a caring presence to the child.

**5.2.10.** In caring for children, give them sufficient freedom, bereasonable towards them, provide emotional support, discipline them with loving kindness, and avoid corporal punishments and public humiliation.

**5.2.11.** Educate and take care of children in a culture-friendly, religion-respectful and tolerant way. This is the existential expression of a core belief of the YaR Forum which stands by the conviction of being “loyal to one’s own faith and culture; while duly respecting the faith and culture of another”. This principle should be concretely translated into action, by fostering in the children an attitude of openness towards God, towards human beings and towards the world; while at the same time, duly respecting the culture and religion of each child. Furthermore, it is also important to inculcate in children an attitude of respect towards different cultures and religions.

**5.2.12.** Treat the children with a counseling attitude and facilitate individual counseling for personal growth, and group counseling with a view to group living and community life.

**5.3. PROTECTION**

A positive and protective environment for children can foster their development, progress, health and education leading the children to become knowledgeable, committed and compassionate men and women for others. It is ensured by caring and enabling policies, regulations and services.

Child protection requires networked effort with the allied systems of the State, NGOs, donors, society at large, family, civil society groups, responsible citizens etc. It is transforming the society to become a caring community that protects and takes care of its children. Child protection involves creating a child safety net in the society to protect children from vulnerabilities underlying many forms of harm and abuses like sexual abuse, exploitation, trafficking, hazardous labour, violence, living and working on the street, impact of armed conflict, deployment in armed forces, child marriage, unnecessary institutionalization etc. Child protection is saying ‘Yes’ to prevent, to respond to and to resolve the abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children.

**5.3.1. ABUSE**

**What is Abuse?**

Abuse is a deliberate act of ill treatment that can harm a child’s safety, well being, dignity and development. It can include all forms of physical, sexual, psychological and emotional ill treatment**.** All abuse involves abuse of power because there is always a power difference between the abuser and the abused.

**Physical Abuse:** Physical Abuse involves the use of violent physical force so as to cause actual or likely physical injury or suffering (e.g.: hitting, shaking, burning, mutilating, torturing etc).

**Emotional or Psychological Abuse** includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as: calling nicknames that hurt, constant criticism, belittling, persistent probing, solitary confinement and isolation.

**Child Sexual Abuse** includes all forms of sexual violence including incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in pornography and sexual slavery. It also includes indecent touching or exposure, using sexually explicit language towards a child and showing children pornographic materials.

**5.3.2. NEGLECT**

Neglect involves, deliberately or through carelessness or negligence, failing to provide for or secure for a child their rights (to physical safety and development). Neglect is sometimes the passive form of the above in that it relates to a failure to carry out some key aspects of care and protection of children at the appropriate time, which results in a significant impairment of the child’s health or development, including the failure to grow emotionally and socially. Persistent or severe neglect is usually manifested through evidence. Repeated failures or a failure that is in itself so serious that it severely endangers the child is neglect. E.g.: Deliberate failure to provide medical care is carelessly exposing a child to harm/death.

**5.3.3. EXPLOITATION**

Exploitation refers to the use of children for someone else’s advantage, gratification or profit, often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child. These are activities detrimental to the child’s physical or mental health, educational, social, emotional and moral development. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimization and oppression or ill-treatment. Any assignment given to children should take into account the age, capacity and the best interests of the child.

There are two main forms of child exploitation that are recognized: sexual exploitation and economic exploitation.

**Sexual Exploitation** is the abuse of a position of vulnerability of the child, differential power or trust for sexual purposes. This includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of the child, as well as for personal sexual gratification. Eg: Child prostitution, trafficking of the child for sexual abuse and exploitation, child pornography, sexual slavery, sexual assault, sexual harassment etc.

**Economic Exploitation** of a child is the use of the child in work or in other activities for profit. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour. Economic Exploitation implies the idea of a certain gain or profit through the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. E.g.: Child domestic work, child soldiers, child bondage, the use of children in criminal activities including the sale and distribution of narcotics, the involvement of children in hazardous work etc.

 **5.3.4. VIOLENCE**

There are a number of definitions of violence that are in use depending on the focus and approach taken in its regard. Article 19 of UNCRC states that all forms of physical or mental violence, including sexual abuse are acts of violence.

 The WHO Report on Violence and Health (2002) states: “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child by an individual or group that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harms to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity”.

**THE WHO HAS IDENTIFIED THREE TYPES OF VIOLENCE**:

**Self-directed Violence**: suicide, self- mutilation.

**Interpersonal Violence:**  all forms of physical/sexual and psychological abuse, neglect and exploitation including domestic violence and other forms of gender- based violence.

**Collective Violence**: Violence committed by the State or by the society at large. It includes violence by the armed forces/law enforcement and security forces, the use of the death penalty, cruel inhuman and degrading treatment, torture, forced displacement, unlawful imprisonment etc. Other forms of collective violence include violence resulting from armed conflicts, terrorism, organized crime, child infanticide, honour killings, corporal or physical punishment (or the threat of it). This includes hitting the child with hand, pinching, pulling his/her hair, forcing the child into uncomfortable or undignified positions, use of physical exercises as punishment, burning and scarring the child and humiliating and degrading punishment such as psychological punishment such as verbal abuse, ridicule, isolation and ignoring the child.

**5.3.5. The YaR FORUM AND ITS COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION.**

The YaR Forum is committed to the protection of children from any perceived or real danger/risk to their life, their personhood and childhood with a focus on reducing vulnerability. Hence the YaR Forum shall:

**5.3.5.1.** Plan and implement programmes to reduce the risks faced by vulnerable children and collaborate with stakeholders at alllevels to ensure that children are protected from all forms of inhuman degrading treatment including abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence.

**5.3.5.2.** Create awareness against harmful customary practices such as child marriage, corporal punishment, ragging, human sacrifices, honor killings and witch hunting.

**5.3.5.3.** Advocate before the State for special protection measures, schemes and rehabilitation measures to address the special needs of children at risk.

**5.3.5.4**. Make efforts to enroll school dropouts back in school and prevent children from dropping out of school so that they may not fall into the dangerous situations of child labour and other forms of exploitation.

**5.3.5.5.** Build the capacity of personnel who have the responsibility for the care of children with adequate information, education, training in the right attitudes and practical skills.

**5.3.5.6**. Create awareness among children about their rights, about how to respond to situations of risk and thus train them to protect themselves.

**5.3.5**.7. Provide support to children to safeguard their property and to receive their rightful inheritances which may be under threat because of the situations of disadvantage that they are in.

The YaR Forum believes that abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children are not acceptable in any form**.** Ifit is known that a child is being abused, exploited, neglected or is a victim of violence, keeping silence or being indifferent would be wrong.

**5.4. PARTICIPATION**

Child Participation refers to the involvement of the child in the process of making decisions which affect the child’s own life and the life of the community in which the child lives. The YaR Forum wants to ensure that children are made aware of their rights and are provided with opportunities to develop skills, form aspirations and express their views in accordance with their age and maturity and to enable them to be actively involved in their own development and in all matters concerning and affecting them. Accordingly the YaR Forum shall:

**5.4.1.** Respect the views of children and discuss with them and understand matters concerning them.

**5.4.2.** Provide training to build the capacity of personnel in the organization on the concept and processes of child participation.

**5.4.3.** Empower children by providing them information about their rights.

**5.4.4**. Design all programmes so as to move consciously from welfare approach to rights-based approach and engage children (whose age so permits) in programme planning, implementation and evaluation. Establish mechanisms for participation and involvement of children on matters related to them.

**5.4.5.** Provide opportunities for children to be members of children’s clubs, groups and movements.

**5.4.6.** To provide opportunities to children to grow up as persons with a sense of purpose, convinced and responsible, and to relate to the Divine and to practice their religion meaningfully.

**5.4.7**. Create a neighbourhood/society that is participatory and child- friendly.

**5.4.8.** Provide life skills training for children to acquire appropriateknowledge and skills with a view to their adequate participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives, have awareness about their rights, know where to go, who to talk to, and how to avoid or respond to risks.

**6. CHILD PROTECTION AND YaR ORGANIZATIONAL PROTOCOLS.**

 Child Protection is related to organizational protocols, policies and procedures aimed at to ensuring that every child under the care of the organization is safe while they are under its care:

**6.1.** All the personnel will give respect and dignity to all children under their care. Furthermore they shall consider each child as a unique individual with specific characteristics and needs and adopt an individualized plan/approach for each child.

**6.2.** All the personnel must sign a statement stating that they are aware of the contents of the Child Policy and would respect and abide by it and understand that action would be taken against them in cases where their behavior is not in accordance with the policy.

**6.3.** Priorpermission is required from authorized persons for volunteers and externs to photograph, video graph, and record children/children’s events and with a view to use of these materials for purposes outside the objectives of the organization.

**6.4.** All personnel need to be aware of the risks involved in being alone with children where one cannot be observed by other adults. Such situations must be avoided.

**6.5.** Children must not be disciplined using any form of violence. Children must not be expelled from the care of the organization arbitrarily by an individual, but such decisions must be the result of a consultative process among authorized persons that keeps in mind the spirit of the Child Policy.

**6.6.** All personnel need to be aware that they may be working with children who, because of the circumstances and abuses they have experienced in life, may exploit a relationship to win special attention. The adults are always expected to behave appropriately and responsibly in their interaction with children even when a child may be acting in a provocative or seductive manner. The adult should avoid being in a compromising or vulnerable situation.

**6.7.** Inappropriate behavior towards children, the failure to behave in accordance with the YaR Child Care and Protection Policy can lead to disciplinary action including termination of employment/ volunteer status/ internship and/or board/ committee membership.

**6.8.** All personnel must be concerned about demeanor and appearance in their dress, language, action, and relationship with children. It is important to maintain an appropriate standard of behavior in the presence of children. (E.g:. They should not use unbecoming language, tobacco products and liquor in the presence of children who are under the care of the organization.)

**6.9.** Children who are victims or who are suffering from grave problems need to be cared for by professionals and by responsible persons who have the skills to give them the proper care.

**7. RECRUITMENT**

**7.1.** All personnel will be carefully and properly screened, selected and appointed following the HR policy. Preference will be given to persons who have records of positive contribution for the promotion of child welfare.

**7.**2. Persons selected will have to be child-friendly, with qualifications pertaining to child care and promotion, such as degrees/training in pedagogy, sociology, psychology, law and/or long-term experience of working with children.

**7.3.** In view of the best interests of children, the organization will not appoint anyone with a prior conviction for child abuse, pedophilia or related offences.

**8. TRAINING, CAPACITY BUILDING**

**8.1.** Training, capacity-building programmes and relevant activities will be conducted by the organization to help all personnel to understand the content of the Child Policy, Child Rights, legal systems in the country pertaining to Child Rights and the Pedagogy of Presence (Preventive System).

**8.2.** The organization will be committed to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of child care, protection procedures and behavioral protocols.

**8.3.** Once a year the staff and volunteers will undergo a self- appraisal, peer appraisal and organizational assessment to evaluate and to monitor their services for the care and protection of children.

**9. DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH**

**9.1** Guided by the Juvenile Justice Act and other relevant policies, efforts need to be made to establish appropriate data collection mechanisms and systems to document effectively information about the children served, about the activities and programmes conducted about the organization itself.

**9.2** Reports generated from the documentation would help to identify existing gaps and to plan the future operations on behalf of the Young at Risk.

**9.3** Child-focused researches and a comprehensive training of personnel will also be initiated to meet the emerging needs and to improve the effectiveness of services to the Young at Risk.

**9.4** The progress of the child under the care of the organization needs to be documented ensuring that all aspects of their growth is taken care of till he/she is positively rehabilitated.

**10. ADVOCACY**

**10.1**. Children at Risk often are not able to make their voices heard at the right places. The YaR Forum aims to find ways to create spaces for their voices before the State and other significant bodies.

**10.2.** It is important to influence political governance and decision making so that issues and concerns of Young at Risk get represented in national policies and programmes.

**10.3.** Efforts will be made to collaborate with the State and its allied systems, mechanisms and programmes and to participate at consultations to help promote the special needs of disadvantaged children.

**10.4.** Efforts should be made to join hands with the State and Non-statal bodies for the care and protection of children by participating and accepting roles and responsibilities in bodies/committees and structures set up by them for the welfare of children.

**11. RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS OF OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN**

**11.1. The** organization encourages open discussion during organizational meetings on the occurrence and the possibilities of child abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence.

**11.2.** Where an allegation has been made that a personnel of the organization has abused a child, the organization will take appropriate action to deal with the allegation.

**11.3.** Where there is an allegation, the Child Protection Officer will be first informed. If he is the subject of the allegation, then the Director is to be informed.

 **11.4.** The allegation will be kept confidential, with only those directly concerned having the information.

**11.5.** Any investigation on allegations will also be kept confidential.

**11.6.** Both the child and the alleged perpetrator will be treated with respect from the start of the process to its close. Extreme care will be taken to protect the child who is more vulnerable. This could include placing the accused on administrative leave until the investigation is completed, without prejudice to the existing state/labour laws.

**11.7.** An accusation of abuse by a child will not be dismissed without appropriate investigation, no matter who the alleged perpetrator is.

**11.8.** Records will be made of all facts related to the investigations of child abuse allegations and they will be carefully and confidentially filed by the committee. It is not necessary to keep a record of an allegation if an inquiry is not initiated regarding the allegation. An inquiry will be initiated only if the allegation is submitted in writing.

**11.9.** If a foreigner is involved in child abuse, the relevant embassy will be informed.

**11.10**. The organization will designate someone to deal with the media and the police if necessary. About how the police and media will be informed, will be decided, after due consideration by the committee.

**11.11.** If the organization has reasonable proofs to believe that a child from the neighbourhood society and not specifically a child under the care of the organization’s care is being abused, the staff must report it to the competent authority in the organization within 48 hours, and the authority will be required to make arrangements to report it to the competent legal authority in the locality.

**12.** **COMMUNICATION ABOUT CHILDREN**

**12.1.** The Organization will not display or publish photos of children in vulnerable or humiliating situations.

**12.2.** Communications about children should use pictures that are decent and respectful. If photographs of children need to be published, the organization will take special care to protect children’s privacy, if so required, in the best interests of the child.

**12.3**. Disclosure of information about the past or present abuse of children and of any of the persons involved should be treated with confidentiality, and disclosure should be limited only to the persons who are entitled to know and on matters they strictly need to know.

**12.4**. The language used in the communication about children should be respectful.

**12**.**5** If the reports regarding children are found to be expressed in indecent and using disrespectful language, appropriate efforts should be undertaken to correct such adverse expressions.

**13. DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT TO THE CHILD POLICY** *(To be signed by all personnel)*

I declare that:

1. I have read and understood the Child Care and Protection Policy of the organization.
2. I will work according to the procedures as laid out in the Child Policy.
3. I have not been convicted of any offence involving moral turpitude or any offence involving physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children, nor are there any such cases pending against me.
4. I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding abuse of children while working with the organization, I will co-operate with the appropriate authorities during the investigation.

Signature……………………………………… Name……………………………………………………………

Designation…………………………………..Date………………………………………………………..

**14. EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF POLICY**

The problems and difficulties being faced by children today may change over time. Current challenges may be overcome and new issues could emerge that require new approaches not covered by this policy. This necessitates that the policy be an evolving document that is periodically reviewed both in approach and implementation methods.

The YaR Child Policy will be reviewed every year at the Annual General Body Meeting of the YaR Forum. However, a comprehensive review spearheaded by the YaR Forum, in consultation with all stakeholders, including children, will be conducted once in 5 years. The review will be done with reference to issues put forth in this document and others-emerging and relevant to the care and protection of children especially the Young at Risk.

**15. WHO ARE GOVERNED BY THIS POLICY?**

All the personnel of YaR Forum which includes members of the management, committee/board members, staff, volunteers and interns and the member organizations and their personnel shall abide by this policy.

 **ANNEXURES**

**a.** ALLEGATION FORM

**REQUEST FOR AN INVESTIGATION INTO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**.

Name of child\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ age\_\_\_\_ [M] [F]

Address\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of parents \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ phone\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Nature and extent of suspected abuse:

Previous injuries, event, and symptoms of note:

Identity and address of alleged offender (if known):

Date, name and signature -------------------------------------------------------

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**YaR FORUM INDIA**

**The Don Bosco National Forum for the Young at Risk**

**Palam Gaon, New Delhi- 110045, INDIA**.

**Ph. 011 25081014, Email: yarindiaforum@gmail.com**