



# Youth and Young Adult Policy

Approved by the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW State Council on 21 NOVEMBER 2012

## Version Control

Contact names	Role / position	Version number	Date	Review date
		1 (Policy & Procedures)	2006	
Sarah Lentern	Youth & Young Adult Coordinator	2 (Policy)	November 2012	November 2013

## Contents

<b>SCOPE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS POLICY.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Youth and the Charism of the Society .....	3
Formation .....	3
Young Members and Conferences .....	3
Youth Representatives, Youth Conferences and Councils .....	4
State Youth Team .....	4
Youth Coordinators and support roles .....	5
Programs .....	5
Roles of Members and Volunteers .....	5
Care of Children and Young People.....	5
Privacy and Use of Media.....	6
Conclusion.....	6
<b>YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>6</b>

## **SCOPE**

This policy is addressed to all St Vincent de Paul Society NSW members, volunteers and employees. It emphasises the importance of all Society people to include, value and support youth and young adults. The programs section of this policy is intended to apply to programs run by 'Youth and Young Adults' but can also be used as a guide in other circumstances.

## **YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS POLICY**

### **Youth and the Charism of the Society**

The St Vincent de Paul Society is founded on youth leadership as initiated by its founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his young friends.

The St Vincent de Paul Society strives to empower young people to participate fully and become leaders at all levels of the Society.

Young people are encouraged and assisted to form conferences with their peers and to join general conferences of the Society. This reflects the origins of the Society, "a worldwide Christian community, founded in Paris in 1833, by a group of young Catholic lay people and an older person, who joined together to create the first Conference" (The Rule, 2005, Part 1, 1.1).

### **Formation**

The Society animates, encourages and empowers young people to be formed as Vincentians. The Society is renewed by young people.

The Society recognises that Vincentians of all ages have an important role to play in the Society. It encourages genuine participation of all young people by consciously providing flexibility and opportunity for young Vincentians.

Young people should be welcomed into the Society as volunteers, members or employees.

### **Young Members and Conferences**

"The Society is open to all those who seek to live their faith loving and committing themselves to their neighbour in need." (The Rule, 2005, Part I, 3.1).

"Young people should be welcomed as full members of the Society. There are no age barriers to membership of the Society" (The Rule, 2005, Procedures, Youth in the Society). All members of the Society, from Mini Vinnies onwards, are full and equal members of the Society.

"Young members keep the Society young. They see with new eyes and often look far ahead. The Society works constantly to form Youth Conferences and welcomes young members into all Conferences. Their experience in a community of faith and love and their exposure to

poverty deepen their spirituality, spur them to action and help them to grow as human beings.” (The Rule, Part 1, 2005, 3.7).

Youth conferences, like all conferences, must first exist as an un-aggregated conference. Councils have a particular call to create new conferences and serve all the conferences they coordinate (The Rule 2005, Part I, 3.6). Councils should support youth conferences to seek aggregation where appropriate.

“The members meet...in conferences that are genuine communities of faith and love, of prayer and action. Spiritual bonds and friendship between members are essential, as is the common mission to help the poor and marginalised.” (The Rule, 2005, Part I, 3.3)

The Society embraces the principle of subsidiarity of all conferences. The freedom of action of conferences has been kept faithfully since the origins of the Society (The Rule, 2005, Part I, 3.9).

Youth conferences should engage in service, support of each other (meeting together) and spiritual development. Youth conferences should be given flexibility and support.

## **Youth Representatives, Youth Conferences and Councils**

Youth Conferences are grouped under various levels of Councils. The Council exists to support all conferences including youth conferences. Youth Conference Presidents can sit on the Regional Council. Youth Conference Presidents should always be encouraged and supported to understand their role as a member of the Council.

Flexibility is important in fostering the participation of all Vincentians in the Council structure and the broader Society. Youth Conference Presidents should be invited and encouraged to be part of Regional and Central Councils and may be able to provide written or multimedia reports or send a proxy if physical attendance is not possible. Flexibility and creativity should be encouraged to embrace Youth Conference presidents in the wider Society.

The President of a council, after consultation with young members, appoints a Youth Representative who is able to reflect the opinions of young people in all matters discussed by the Council. The Youth Representative is appointed as a full member of that council.

Presidents of councils should also look at other opportunities to provide leadership opportunities to young members on councils and relating to council activities. As per The Rule, there are no age barriers to holding positions on a council.

## **State Youth Team**

The State Council has a standing advisory committee called the State Youth Team which is chaired by the State Youth Representative.

Like other advisory committees it allows young members to come together and discuss issues relevant to them, provide input to the State Council and connect with young members nationally. Like all advisory committees the State Youth Team has terms of reference agreed on by the State Council.

## **Youth Coordinators and support roles**

The Society employs Youth Coordinators and Youth Officers to work closely with youth representatives and young Vincentians. These roles animate and support Youth Conferences and assist in the formation and development of young people and their Programs.

The Society also encourages the appointment of suitably formed and trained Baillys and Spiritual Advisors to support the spiritual and formative needs of young Vincentians.

## **Programs**

The Society has processes and structures in place to ensure that youth and young adults are supported to actively carry out their roles in the Society and to ensure that programs, events and activities involving youth and young adults are run in a safe and effective way at all times.

The Society encourages the development of innovative programs by young people to address issues in their communities. The Society has an approval process in place to ensure proper planning and risk management strategies are in place for new and existing programs. The approved Program Guidelines set standards for common programs..

## **Roles of Members and Volunteers**

The Society is committed to ensure that all youth and young adults are supported in their roles. This includes providing position descriptions, training and support for all Youth and Young Adults program and membership positions.

Volunteers or members seeking to volunteer for programs involving children and/or young people must always undergo screening and selection procedures.

Procedures, appropriate Training Modules and Program Guidelines will be developed and approved by State Youth Team to support the running of youth programs.

All persons acting on behalf of youth in the Society are expected to act with appropriate professionalism and maintain professional boundaries. Codes of Conduct and guidelines for professional boundaries exist to uphold this high standard.

## **Care of Children and Young People**

Appropriate consent will always be obtained before the Society takes a child or young person on any of its programs or activities.

The Society always provides appropriate supervision to children and young people and sets suitable ratios and other parameters to facilitate this.

The Society is committed to providing a Child Safe, Child Friendly environment (<http://kids.nsw.gov.au/kids/childsafeargansisations.cfm>) . Child Protection training of an

appropriate level will be provided to all members, volunteers and employees who are engaged in the provision of Youth programs involving children and young people. This facilitates the implementation of the Society's Child Protection Policy in Youth Programs and membership activities.

Youth Programs must always be risk assessed and managed to ensure a safe environment for children and young people and workers. Work Health and Safety training will be provided and guidelines around safety on programs exist to ensure this.

## **Privacy and Use of Media**

Privacy of young members and volunteers is particularly important and the Society will ensure that particular care is taken with the personal information of any person under 18. Volunteers working with clients will receive training to ensure they fulfil requirements of the Society Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

Media and technology play an important role in young people's lives. Their use is encouraged as an effective communication strategy. The Society sets parameters for acceptable use to ensure that privacy and boundaries are maintained.

## **Conclusion**

The St Vincent de Paul Society has an imperative from its foundations to engage and form young people in the Society. Youth and Young Adults conduct works in the spirit of the Society and aim to uphold the dignity of all those they serve.

The Society has a duty of care to all participants, members, volunteers and employees. Common law duty of care requires everything 'reasonably practicable' to be done to ensure the safety any activity being conducted on behalf of the Society. This Policy, Procedures and accompanying documents aims to ensure that this duty of care is upheld and that young people are welcomed and nourished in their journey with the Society.

## **YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS PROCEDURES**

This Policy document should be read in conjunction with the Youth and Young Adults Procedures document and attachments which are available on Vintranet at: <http://vintranet.vinnies.org.au/MembershipDevelopmentServices/YouthandYoungAdults/YYA%20Procedures%20and%20attachments/Forms/AllItems.aspx> or by contacting the State Support Office at [youth@vinnies.org.au](mailto:youth@vinnies.org.au) or 9568 0255.