



The Space Dance & Arts Centre Child Safe Policy

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Scope

This policy applies to any adult person (over the age of 18) engaged by The Space Dance & Arts Centre that may work or interact with children at any time including:

- employees (permanent and casual):
 - leadership and management roles
 - administration
 - education instructors and youth workshop facilitators
 - production and venue personnel (actors, stage management, chaperones, technical crew, ushers, etc.)
- volunteers
- contractors and sub-contractors
- work experience students/interns/secondments
- any other individual or third-party organisations that may deal with children

(Note: In this Policy, the term “employee” is used to cover all persons occupying any position listed above.)

A child includes children and young people up to the age of 18 (unless otherwise specified).

Commitment to Child Safety - Definitions

All children working with or engaged by *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* have a right to



feel and be safe, respected, valued and protected from harm. Children should be made aware of and feel confident in their rights and responsibilities.

The Space Dance & Arts Centre is strongly committed to the safety and well-being of all children that interact with our organisation as employees, audience members, education program participants or otherwise by creating and maintaining a child safe environment. The welfare of children entrusted under our care is our first priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse.

The Space Dance & Arts Centre will take all necessary steps to prevent and protect children from abuse and neglect including:

- *Physical abuse*: purposefully injuring or threatening to injure a child
- *Emotional abuse*: an attack on a child's self-esteem e.g. through bullying, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child
- *Sexual abuse*: any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child
- *Neglect*: harming a child by failing to provide basic physical or emotional necessities.

Harm is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

Child/Children means a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Concerns and complaints

A concern refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction to *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* related to one or more of the following:

- our services or dealings with individuals
- allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, a volunteer or another individual associated with *The Space Dance & Arts Centre*
- disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
- the conduct of a child or young person at *The Space Dance & Arts Centre*
- the inadequate handling of a prior concern
- general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.

Purpose

This Policy outlines how *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.

Supporting Children's Participation, Satisfaction & Empowerment

The Space Dance & Arts Centre supports, enables and promotes the **active participation** of children by:

- encouraging expression of and respecting the views of children and parents (including carers or legal guardians)

- encouraging and empowering children and parents to raise any concerns or complaints
- listening to and acting upon any concerns raised by children and parents, carers or legal guardians
- seeking the input of children when making decisions about matters that concern them
- ensuring children understand their rights and the appropriate behaviour expected of both adults and children
- teaching children what they can do and who they can turn to if they feel unsafe
- ensuring employees dealing with children are skilful in facilitating their participation
- valuing diversity and not tolerating any discriminatory practices.

The Space Dance & Arts Centre aims to create an environment where children gain **satisfaction** from their interaction with our organisation as employees, participants in a class/program/workshop/performances, or other activity by:

- supporting children to feel respected and in control of their behaviour/work
- ensuring children enjoy the overall experience of being engaged with a production or other organisational activity
- encouraging children to assist each other in fulfilling and developing a positive sense of pride in their work (e.g. discussing character development and stagecraft in groups and leading warmup activities)
- offering opportunities for children to derive personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement throughout their experience and the relationships they make
- encouraging children to develop self-discipline in balancing their commitment to their performance, their education and their social and family activities
- offer opportunities to encourage friendships amongst their peers eg: facilitating introductory games at the beginning of each term, encouraging parents to arrange playdates amongst dance friends.

Valuing Diversity

The Space Dance & Arts Centre values diversity and we do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

Our organisation is committed to protecting children engaged with our organisation from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse, as well as neglect and contempt, ridicule, hatred, or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture, religion, gender (including transgender status), sexual orientation or disability.

In our activities with children we will:

- promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children – allowing children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
- promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promote the safety of children with a disability
- consider the needs of children and young people who are unable to live at home
- consider the needs of children lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, non-binary and gender diverse children and young people.
- promote the safety of LGBTI children and young people
- make any necessary adjustments and provide equal protection to all children and young people



Recruitment Practices

The Space Dance & Arts Centre will take all reasonable steps to ensure we engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children.

This involves maintaining a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process.

It is *The Space Dance & Arts Centre's* policy to:

- interview and conduct thorough pre-employment screening referee checks on all employees (with their most recent supervisors) – ensuring an emphasis on child safety and wellbeing
- develop clear duty statements and job descriptions for roles that involve work with children that state clearly our commitment to providing safe environments for children including a child safety policy
- attain and keep a record of Working with Children or criminal history/police checks for anyone with direct and unsupervised contact with children, such as employees designated to supervise or chaperone children
- ensure supervisors, volunteers and chaperones recruited are suitably experienced and qualified to care for the safety and well-being of children in accordance with their age and needs.
- inform staff and volunteers about the organisation's record keeping processes in relation to child safety and wellbeing as well as regarding information sharing and reporting obligations
- educate staff and volunteers to be able to recognise indicators of harm (including harm caused by other children and young people)

Support for Employees

The Space Dance & Arts Centre seeks to support employees by:

- inducting new employees to our Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and other relevant policies and procedures
- encouraging relevant employees to attend periodical information sessions as they become available, to remain up-to-date with knowledge of child protection, nature and signs of child abuse, cultural competency, regulation updates and other matters that affect children
- appointing a Child Safety Officer to be the first point of contact to provide advice and support to employees on the safety and well-being of children engaged with the organisation
- ensuring employees feel encouraged and empowered to report any complaints, concerns or perceived risks to child safety to the Child Safety Officer or other relevant management position
- ensuring designated supervisors and chaperones of children that are new to the role work with experienced supervisors sufficiently before working on productions or programs requiring single supervisors.
- Responding effectively to child safety issues and concerns and supporting colleagues who disclose them

Code of Conduct

The Space Dance & Arts Centre has developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our employees on expected behaviours when in direct contact with or working around children.



All employees must abide by the Code of Conduct.

We ask relevant employees to sign a written statement confirming they have read, understood and will comply with the Code of Conduct. We retain a copy of all signed statements.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organisation.

All third-party contractors are also expected to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and where they are engaging with children will have to sign an agreement to comply with the code, prior to delivering any services.

Communication

The Space Dance & Arts Centre is committed to encouraging employees, children and parents (including carers or legal guardians) to raise any concerns or provide their views on the well-being of children involved with our organisation.

The Space Dance & Arts Centre keeps employees, parents (including carers or legal guardians) and children informed of our organisation's child safe policies and procedures by:

- ensuring that employees have read, understood, and are aware of their obligation under the Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct, and any other relevant policies and procedures
- making relevant documents easily accessible by displaying child safe materials in areas of common traffic, uploading relevant documents to our website, distributing documents to all relevant individuals, and having copies available upon request
- providing children and parents (including carers and legal guardians) with relevant Plain English and easy to understand child safe materials.
- seeking input from families and communities where possible regarding decisions that impact children and young people including child safe policies and practices
- Identify instances where racism is demonstrated – make sure to confront and address with appropriate consequences.
- Ensure child safety standards are displayed on our website for access to all participants
- using stakeholder consultation and best practice models to inform the development of policies and procedures
- ensuring organisational leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.

Parents (including carers or legal guardians) of children employed by *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* as performers are provided with at least one contact from *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* that is available to speak with them or to facilitate speaking with their children at any time during periods of work.

For children being employed by *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* for productions, we provide parents (including carers or legal guardians) and child employees with information on:

- the child's expected role, activities, responsibilities and actions during their period of employment



- the child's progress throughout the production and timely notice of schedules
- the rights of parents and children regarding supervision and workplace conditions, as determined by relevant state regulation
- our Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct, and any other relevant policies and procedures.

Children are encouraged to communicate and ask questions regarding their employment.

Complaints and Reporting Procedure

We believe employees, parents (including carers or legal guardians), and children should feel enabled, empowered and supported to safely raise any concerns or complaints about any perceived risks to a child's safety or signs of abuse. At *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* takes complaints seriously and responds to them promptly and thoroughly.

The Space Dance & Arts Centre has developed a procedure to respond to any complaint of abuse or conduct not in keeping with this Policy and Code of Conduct, including means to take disciplinary action or rectify issues when necessary. Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping in this regard.

The Space Dance & Arts Centre will ensure:

- compliance with law enforcement and will meet and reporting, privacy and employment law obligations
- analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement
- report on the findings of relevant reviews of child safe practices to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

Risk Management

The Space Dance & Arts Centre takes a preventative and proactive approach to minimising the risk of harm to children. As part of our organisation's WH&S risk management process we periodically conduct reviews to identify potential risks to the safety and well-being of children. The key focus is to mitigate risks to children and young people.

The Space Dance & Arts Centre ensures safety within online and physical environments by ensuring the recruitment process is strictly adhered to with regard to working with Children checks and safety induction.

Any contractors or other providers of services will always be supervised by a member of staff while working with us to ensure child safety. See also Code of Conduct above.

Record keeping

The Space Dance & Arts Centre is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns. All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an



investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken. Records will be stored securely and kept by *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* for at least 45 years.

Information sharing

The Space Dance & Arts Centre may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests. *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety.

We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety. More information is available in our complaint handling policy.

Implementation and Review Process

Deb Cantoni, Ariel Bud and the KTY Co-ordinator have been appointed as **Child Safety Officers**, responsible for being the first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents (including carers or legal guardians) and employees regarding the safety and well-being of children engaged with the organisation. This includes being the first point of contact for dealing with any complaint of abuse or conduct not in keeping with this Policy and Code of Conduct.

Our Child Safe Policy will be reviewed every year and we will undertake to incorporate feedback from children, parents (including carers and legal guardians), employees and any other relevant personnel.

Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct

The Space Dance & Arts Centre will enforce this policy, the Code of Conduct and any other child safety and wellbeing policies (see list below). Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action. More information can be found in our disciplinary policy.

Supporting legislation

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* (including Child Safe Standards)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* (including reporting to Child Protection)
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- *Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)* (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse)