

Complaints and Reporting Procedure

The Space Dance & Arts Centre Complaints and Reporting Procedure

Scope

This Complaints Procedure applies to any person (child or adult) involved with the organisation including:

- any adult (over the age of 18) engaged by an organisation that may work with children at any time such as:
 - 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 in the organisation that may deal with children (Note: In this Complaints Procedure, the term “employee” is used to cover all persons occupying any position listed above.)
- children (under the age of 18 years unless otherwise specified)
- parents (including carers or legal guardians).

1. Making a Complaint

Who can make a complaint?

Any person including employees, parents, carers, legal guardians and children should promptly raise their concerns or lodge a complaint about:

- inadequate working conditions for children (as per relevant state child employment legislation or The Space Code of Practice for Child Employment in Live Entertainment)
- conduct not in keeping with the organisation’s child safe policies and procedures
- suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

If employees suspect or witness an incident of unacceptable behaviour towards a child, they are obliged to report the incident to the appropriate contact as a matter of urgency. In addition to reporting the incident the employee should ensure that the child is safe from any immediate risks.

Any person that believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse should call 000.

The Space Dance & Arts Centre will provide children and parents with clear information on who to contact (and how) if they have any concerns or complaints.

What type of concerns should be raised?

Any of the following should be reported to the appropriate contact promptly:

- alleged, suspected or observed incidents of abuse or neglect (as a matter of urgency)
- conduct not in keeping with our child safe policies and procedures

- perceived risks in the organisation's environment (e.g. inadequate working conditions).

Abuse and neglect includes:

- *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.

Employees will be provided with information on how to recognise signs of potential abuse.

Who should complaints be made to?

Complaints or concerns should be lodged with *the Child Safety Officer (Deb Cantoni, Ariel Bud or KTY Co-ordinator)* or other relevant management position using any method (verbally, email, call, etc.) that the employee, parent (including carers or legal guardians) or child feels comfortable with.

If an act of criminal activity has been alleged, such as physical or sexual abuse, the police will be informed urgently and the child will be kept safe from any immediate risks.

2. Investigating Complaints

How will complaints from children be handled by the first point of contact or Child Safety Officer?

The Space Dance & Arts Centre will inform children of who to talk to if they need to raise an issue. *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* employees that receive a complaint from a child will:

- let the child talk about their concerns in their own time and words, as well as give the child the necessary attention, time and space to raise their issues
- be a supportive and reassuring listener
- tell the child that raising their concerns was the right thing to do and let them know in plain language the process by which their concerns will be addressed and acted upon
- record the nature of the complaint in the child's own words
- contact the child's parents (including carers or legal guardians) if appropriate.

How will all complaints be handled by the organisation?

The Space Dance & Arts Centre is committed to being responsive to concerns raised by employees, children and parents (including carers or legal guardians), and seek to resolve issues with the welfare of children as our first priority.

The appointed Child Safety Officer or relevant management will investigate the nature of the complaint raised in a timely fashion, allowing the person against whom the complaint has been made the opportunity to respond. If a complaint has been made in regards to the actions of another child, their parents (including carers or legal guardians) will be informed.

If appropriate and in the best interests of the child, the Child Safety Officer or relevant

management will seek to resolve the complaint and rectify any issues raised to the satisfaction of all parties in the first instance.

Any complaints or concerns about perceived risks in the organisation's environment (e.g. inadequate working conditions, exposure to adult themes) will be addressed by *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* and rectified promptly.

If *The Space Dance & Arts Centre* becomes aware of, or has been alerted to, a risk of child abuse by someone involved with the organisation, we will act to reduce or remove the risk and protect the child as our first priority. We will promptly contact police when a child or adult alleges any criminal activity has occurred, such as physical or sexual abuse of a child.

The child and (if appropriate) parent/s, carer/s or legal guardian/s will be informed of the steps the organisation is taking to address the complaint.

The Space Dance & Arts Centre may also provide support for the child by referring and assisting children and/or parents, carers or legal guardian to access other appropriate services.

3. Outcome

What happens if unacceptable conduct towards a child has occurred?

In the event a complaint is proven to be accurate, the Child Safety Officer or relevant management will inform [*name relevant leadership position (e.g. producer, director, venue manager, etc.)*] of the allegation and the outcomes of the investigation. The Child Safety Officer or relevant management may also recommend an appropriate course of action.

4. Resolution

How will the complaint be resolved?

The *Child Safety Officer* shall determine if:

- a person should be disciplined in accordance with the misconduct committed and within the organisation's means; or
- the matter should be referred to an appropriate authority for further investigation and action pursuant to the law.

For procedural fairness, any person involved in a complaint about unacceptable conduct towards a child is encouraged to seek support from their union or any other relevant person.

All complaints about unacceptable conduct shall be documented, including:

- record of action taken
- any internal investigation conducted
- any reports made to statutory or external bodies.

In accordance with security and privacy requirements, these records will remain confidential unless otherwise requested to be released by law.

With due consideration of confidentiality and fairness in regards to any person whom a complaint is made against, the risk of harm to children is our primary concern.