

CHILD SAFETY

The Academy: Policy

Commitment to Child Safety

All children attending The Australian Academy of Dance (The Academy) have the 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 responsibility.

The Academy is strongly committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children that interact with our organisation, as students, siblings or friends of students, or audience members of performances.

The welfare of children entrusted in the care of The Academy is our first priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse.

The Academy 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 through bullying, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating a child
- neglect: harming a child by failing to provide basic physical or emotional necessities
- sexual abuse: any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to any adult person (over the age of 18) staff member engaged by The Academy that may work or interact with children at any time, including:

- teachers
- administration staff
- volunteers (at performances)

Notes:

In this policy, the term 'staff member' relates to any person occupying the above role, regardless of their employment status with The Academy (whether they are independent contractors, volunteers, etc).

The term 'parents' applies to parents, carers and legal guardians of children at The Academy

Where children are in the care of The Academy, but in another venue (such as a theatre for a performance), they will also be protected by that venue's Child Safety Policy.

Supporting children's participation and satisfaction

The Academy supports, enables and promotes the active participation of children by:

- encouraging expression of, and respecting the views of, children and parents
- encouraging and empowering children and parents to raise any concern or complaints
- listening to, or acting upon, any concerns raised by children and parents
- seeking input of children when making decisions about matters that concern them
- ensuring children understand their rights and the appropriate behavior expected of both children and adults
- teaching children what they can do and who they can talk to if they feel unsafe
- ensuring staff dealing with children are skillful in facilitating their participation
- valuing diversity and not tolerating any discriminatory practices

The Academy fosters an environment where children gain satisfaction from their interaction with our organisation as staff, participants in a class/workshop, or other activity by:

- supporting children to feel respected and in control of their behavior/learning
- ensuring children enjoy the overall experience of being engaged with a production or other organisational activity
- encouraging children to assist each other in developing a sense of pride in their learning (eg working together in routines, helping study/remember choreography, encourage students who haven't mastered a particular dance sequence or step)
- offering opportunities for children to derive personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement throughout their learning and friendships they make with each other
- encouraging children to develop self-discipline in balancing their commitment to their education, their performance, and their social growth

Valuing diversity

The Academy values diversity and we do not tolerate any discriminatory practices or behavior from staff, visitors or other students. 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), sexual orientation or disability.

In our activities with children we will:

- promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promote the safety of children with a disability
- promote the safety of LGBTI children or those from LGBTI families

Recruitment processes

The Academy takes 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 Academy's policy to :

- interview and conduct thorough referee checks on all staff (with their most recent supervisors)
- 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
- obtain and keep a record of Working with Children checks for all teachers (and have teachers include us as an employer so we are immediately notified of any changes to their status in their Working With Children check)
- ensure all volunteers at performances are suitably experienced and qualified to care for the safety and wellbeing of children in accordance with their age and needs. We will only accept volunteers who have children attending The Academy and those with current Working with Children checks

Support for staff

The Academy supports its staff by:

- inducting new staff to our Child Safety Policy, Student Engagement Policy and other relevant policies and procedures
- encouraging relevant staff 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 staff on the safety and wellbeing of children engaged with the organisation
- ensuring staff 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.

Communication

The Academy is committed to encouraging staff, children and parents to raise any concerns or provide their views on the wellbeing of children involved with our organisation. The Academy keeps its stakeholders informed of our Child Safety Policy and relevant procedures by:

- ensuring staff have read, understood, and are aware of their obligations under the Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct, and any other relevant policies and procedures
- making relevant documents easily accessible by providing them on our website, distributing them to staff and having copies available on request
- providing children and parents with relevant plain English information about our Child Safe Policy

Complaints and reporting procedures

We believe staff, parents and children should feel enabled, empowered and supported to safely raise any concern or complaints about any perceived risk to a child's safety or signs of abuse.

The Academy has developed a procedure to respond to any complaint of abuse or conduct not in keeping with this policy and Code of Conduct, including to take disciplinary action or rectify issues when necessary.

Implementation and review process

Mike Harrison (Director) has been appointed as Child Safety Officer, responsible for being the first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents and staff regarding the safety and wellbeing 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 the Code of Conduct.

Our Child Safety Policy will be reviewed every 2 years and we will commit to listening, and incorporating where possible, feedback from children, parents and staff into this policy.