

SECTION 6.4.5: CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

The Australian Ballet School

RESPONSIBLE: Board

VERSION 1 APPROVED BY THE BOARD: to be approved at Board meeting - April 2024

REVIEW DATE: This policy will be reviewed after any significant child safety and bullying incident or at least every 2 years and improve where applicable.

POLICY ACCESS LOCATION: Staff Portal, Student Portal and The Australian Ballet School website

1. BACKGROUND

The Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of staff and students at The Australian Ballet School (School). All members of the **School Community** and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The School is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and participation of all children and young people under their care. The School has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its policies and procedures meet all *Child Safety Standards as* specified in *Victorian Ministerial Order 1359 (2022)*. Standards 2 and 9 require the Board of the School to develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety in the School's environment's, this includes the boarding community and Marilyn Rowe House (MRH). Keeping children and young people safe cannot be achieved without effectively managing child safety risks.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours whilst on the School Premises and in other locations provided by the school for student use at Marilyn Rowe House Boarding House (MRH), and travel to and from the School and or to and from MRH and other excursion locations.

2. PURPOSE

The School has a broad range of risks associated with its activities and operations, including risks related to child safety. Effectively managing child safety risk is a vital element in ensuring that the School is keeping children and young people safe.

The School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and, recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring the School is a safe, supportive and enriching environment, which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development. This policy aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also

assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to support the *Child Well-being and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*, other child protection legislation, other policies and procedures and professional standards as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Executive Team will support implementation and monitoring of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly school and learning environments. The Executive Team will also provide information and support to enable the Child Safety Code of Conduct to operate effectively. All staff, **Contractors, Volunteers** and any other member of the School Community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Child Safety Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. To promote child safety in the school and MRH the following is acknowledged:

All students have a right to:

- Take part in learning programs that meet their individual needs;
- Feel secure and to be safe in a caring and supportive environment;
- Receive respect, kindness and courtesy and to be treated with fairness;
- Have learning continued without disruption in a supportive environment;
- Be valued for their individuality including; race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual diversity;
- Expect the school rules are fair, consistently implemented and respect the rights of all involved;
- To be safe in every aspect of daily life at school, including all School Activities.

All students have a responsibility to:

- Care and value themselves, others, teachers and the School Community;
- Be safety conscious in relation to themselves and others;
- Treat others with respect and courtesy;
- Keep the guidelines of good behaviour, modelling and supporting school value;
- Develop a sense of accountability for their own actions;
- Work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same;
- Allow for others to learn and to respect the rights of others;
- Explore their full potential in their learning.

Staff adheres to the following standards with respect to the way in which they are expected to behave with students:

- Staff provide opportunities for all students to learn;
- Staff treat their students with courtesy, respect and dignity;
- Staff work within the limits of their professional expertise;
- Staff maintain objectivity in their relationships with students;
- Staff are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school and/or boarding premises or not;
- Photograph or video a student in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes;
- In the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

Related Policies: This policy should be read in conjunction with Social Media Policy (3.1.2), Photography, Film and Recording Policy (4.3.2), ICT and Cyber Security Policy (4.3.3), Safety, Health and Wellbeing – Occupational Health and Safety (5.2), Duty of Care (6.1), Physical Injury

Management Policy (6.1.1), Child Safe Standards Policy (6.4), Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy (6.4.1) and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (6.4.2) (pending).

2. WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO

This policy applies to all members of the **School Community**.

3. CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT APPROACH

Acceptable behaviours:

All members of the School Community involved in child-related work individually, are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's Child Safe Standards Policy (6.4) and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (6.4.2);
- Treating everyone in the school community with respect both within and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities;
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- Taking into account the needs of all children and students;
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child;
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification);
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students;
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child/student;
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the School's Executive Team or Child Safety Officer(s);
- Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) and procedures and the PROTECT Four Critical Actions;
- Understanding and complying with all obligations as they relate to the Reportable Conduct Scheme including reporting allegations of reportable conduct in accordance with the School's Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy (6.4.1);
- Reporting any child safety concerns to the Child Safety Officer(s);
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm;
- Reporting to the Board any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or specific allegations or concerns about a Member of Staff;
- Ensuring they comply with any and all applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct.

Unacceptable behaviours:

All members of the School Community involved in child-related work must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm;
- Develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts or special treatment for specific children);
- Display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context (for example, construed as unnecessarily physical, inappropriate sitting on laps);
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with students or do things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves (for example changing clothes or toileting);
- Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
- Ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- Discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance;
- Treat/discriminate against a student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity;
- Work with students while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of students (for example, personal social activities);
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of students;
- Express personal views on cultures, race, sexuality in the presence of children;
- Communicate directly with a student or their family through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school related work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter;
- Use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account;
- Photograph or video a child or student without consent of the parents/carers except in accordance with the Photograph, Film and Recording Policy (4.3.2) or where required for duty of care purposes;
- Consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events where students are present;
- Have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.

Teachers:

Teachers are required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the School's Code of Conduct. These principles include:

- Knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities;
- Working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect;
- Modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language;
- Respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters.

4. Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All members of the School Community involved who breach this Policy may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy (6.4.1) and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police. Complaints can be made to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) if there is a concern that the School is not complying with the Child Safe Standards.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Head of School/Director. If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Director, contact the Executive Director.

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