

SECTION 6.4.4: CHILD SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Australian Ballet School

RESPONSIBLE: Board with reference to the [Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee \(ARCC\)](#)

VERSION 1 APPROVED BY THE BOARD: To be approved at the Board meeting – April 2024

REVIEW DATE: This policy will be reviewed after any significant child safety and bullying incident and at least annually in line with the School's over-arching Risk Management Policy and improved where applicable or when there are legislative changes.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed and updated as needed and for approving this policy.

1. BACKGROUND:

The Australian Ballet School (School) and its boarding community and Marilyn Rowe House (MRH) are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and participation of all children and young people under its care. The School's commitment to keeping children and young people safe cannot be achieved without effectively managing child safety risks.

Standards 2 and 9 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Standards) require the School Board to develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety in the School's environments. Clauses 6 and 13 of Victorian *Ministerial Order 1359* set out particular requirements that must be met when doing so.

2. PURPOSE:

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

While child safety risks within the operations of a school can never be eliminated, risk management practices are actively implemented to ensure that child safety risks are reduced.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the School's approach to managing child safety risks.

3. PRINCIPLES

The School has a zero tolerance for child abuse.

The School and the Board have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected and their voices heard, and where they are safe and feel safe.

In addition to implementing the requirements of the *Victorian Ministerial Order 1359*, the School's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and the School's suite of Child Safe Standards policies, set out the principles that guide the Board and School in the development and regular review of the School's Child Safety Risk Management Policy.

Related Policies: This policy should be read in conjunction with the Statement of Commitment, Risk Management Policy (1.5), Child Safe Standards Policy (6.4) and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (6.4.2) (pending), Child Safety Code of Conduct (6.4.5) (pending), Emergency Management in Boarding (1.1).

4. WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO:

This Policy applies to all members of the **School Community** and refers to all School and MRH environments, including physical, virtual and online environments, and on-site and off-site School grounds (e.g., extra-curricular activities such as sport and other programs, camps and excursions, interstate and overseas travel).

5. DEFINITIONS:

Child Safety Officer: this role is shared by The Head of School/ Director, the Executive Director, the Head of Boarding and the Health and Wellbeing Manager as the designated officers on the School staff who are required to have a thorough knowledge of child safe issues and are the primary point of contact for any member of the School Community who has any concerns with respect to child safety and wellbeing.

Executive Team: comprises the Head of School/Director, the Executive Director and the Director of Development.

Risk: in simple terms, the possibility of something bad happening.

Risk Management: the practice of identifying, analyzing, evaluating and prioritizing risks in advance, followed by the application of resources to minimize, monitor, and control the probability and/or the impact of these events or circumstances.

“School staff” is a particular phrase used in Ministerial Order 1359, and is defined as “an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing body;
- a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by a school governing body to perform child-related work.

This means that, at the School, all **Staff Members**, as well as Direct Contact Contractors associated with the School, are “school staff”.

“School boarding premises staff” is a particular phrase used in Ministerial Order 1359, and is defined as “an individual working in a school boarding environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by the school boarding premises governing authority*;
- a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school boarding premises governing authority to perform child-related work;

*The engagement or employment of all Staff and Contractors at MRH is undertaken by the School on behalf of the Board.

This means that, at MRH, all Staff, as well as Direct Contact Contractors are “school boarding premises staff”.

6. POLICY:

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Identifying and managing child safety risks is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the School Community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students through identifying and managing these risks.

The following people have particular responsibilities under this Policy:

6.1 The Board:

The Board is responsible for:

- understanding the child safety risks relevant to the School, based on the School's operational profile;
- developing, and ensuring the effective implementation of, the School's child safety risk management strategies (noting that the Board has assigned responsibility for implementing the strategies to the Head of School/Director);
- reviewing and approving any changes to the School's child safety risk management strategies;
- promoting a child safe risk management culture within the School;
- establishing clear lines of responsibility and delegations with regard to child safety risk management;
- ensuring that the School communicates its commitment to child safety and to child safety legal and regulatory compliance, and ensuring that operations are consistent with the commitment to child safety;
- ensuring that the School identifies and takes steps to mitigate child safety risks, including by:
 - ensuring that the School has a *Child Safety Risk Register* in which child safety risks and risk controls are recorded;
 - receiving regular reports regarding child safety risk management at the School and the School's *Child Safety Risk Register*;
 - monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the School's child safety risk controls;
 - reviewing risk ratings for child safety risks, risk movement, new and emerging child safety risks and the proposed controls for these risks;
 - receiving regular reports regarding child safety legal and regulatory compliance at the School.
- ensuring that appropriate guidance, training and information is provided, at least annually, to:
 - the individual members of the Board about:
 - their individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse at the School;
 - child safety and wellbeing risks in the School's Kavanagh Street campus and MRH environments;
 - the School's child safety policies, procedures and practices.
 - Staff Members, including MRH staff and Direct Contact Contractors, about a number of matters, including guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the School and MRH environments (noting that the ABS Board has assigned responsibility to the Head of School / Director for ensuring that Staff, including Direct Contact Contractors, receive this guidance, training and information and responsibility to the Head of Boarding for ensuring that MRH staff and Direct Contact Contractors receive this guidance, training and information.

6.2 The Head of School / Director:

The Head of School / Director is responsible for the effective day-to-day management of risk and for:

- effectively implementing the School's child safety risk management strategies, and effectively deploying all available resources for that purpose;
- communicating openly and honestly with, and providing advice to the Board in relation to:
 - child safety risk management at the School;
 - any instances of non-compliance with child safety legal and regulatory requirements;
 - any breakdown in child safety risk controls, systems or processes;
 - identifying child safety risks (including new and emerging risks) relevant to the School and the steps taken (or that should be taken) to mitigate these risks;
 - the resources required for the School to meet its legal and regulatory compliance requirements, effectively manage child safety risks and be a child safe organisation.
- promoting a child safe risk management culture within the School;
- ensuring that the School's *Child Safety Risk Register* is maintained, regularly reviewed, reported to the Board and updated as set out in Section 7 - **Procedures** of this policy;
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the School's child safety risk controls;
- ensuring that the School's current programs and activities and any new programs and activities are assessed to ensure that any child safety risks associated with them are effectively managed and communicated to staff;
- ensuring that appropriate guidance, training and information is provided to all Staff Members, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors, at least annually, about a number of matters, including guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety risks at the School's Kavanagh Street campus and MRH environments.

6.3 The Head Of Boarding:

The Head Of Boarding is responsible for the effective day-to-day management of risk and for:

- effectively implementing the School's child safety risk management strategies, and effectively deploying all available resources for that purpose at MRH;
- communicating openly and honestly with, and providing advice to, the Board in relation to:
 - child safety risk management at MRH;
 - any instances of non-compliance with child safety legal and regulatory requirements;
 - any breakdown in child safety risk controls, systems or processes;
 - identifying child safety risks (including new and emerging risks) relevant to MRH and the steps taken (or that should be taken) to mitigate these risks;
 - the resources required for MRH to meet its legal and regulatory compliance requirements, effectively manage child safety risks and be a child safe organisation;
- promoting a child safety risk management culture within MRH;
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the School's child safety risk controls in the MRH;
- ensuring that the current programs and activities and any new programs and activities at MRH are assessed to ensure that any child safety risks associated with them are effectively managed and communicated to Staff Members;
- ensuring that appropriate training and information is provided to all school MRH staff, and Contractors, at least annually, about a number of matters, including guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety risks in the MRH environments.

6.4 The Executive Team:

The Executive Team is responsible for:

- reviewing, in consultation with the Head of School / Director, the School's child safety risk management strategies, the *Child Safety Risk Register* and the Child Safety Program in accordance with the policies and procedures set out below;
- identifying and reporting to the Head of School / Director, any instances of non-compliance with child safety legal and regulatory requirements and any breakdowns in child safety risk controls;
- ensuring that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the School's child safety risk management strategies to be effectively implemented within the School;
- supporting the Head of School / Director, in the practical application of the School's child safety risk management strategies, policies, procedures and work systems;
- promoting a child safe risk management culture within the School.

6.5 The Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee (ARCC):

The ARCC is responsible for:

- promoting a child safe risk management culture within the School;
- ensuring that the School's *Child Safety Risk Register* is maintained, regularly reviewed, reported to the Board and updated as set out in Section 7 - **Procedures** below;
- ensuring that the School communicates its commitment to child safety and to child safety legal and regulatory compliance and ensuring that operations are consistent with the commitment to child safety;
- receiving and reviewing child safety risk reports;
- supporting, advising and assisting the Executive Team in relation to effective child safety risk management.

6.6 Development of Child Safety Risk Management Strategies:

The child safety risk management strategies set out below have been developed, and are implemented, based on:

- the nature of all School environments (physical, online and off-campus);
- the operational profile of the School;
- the activities that students undertake at the School (including the provision of services by Contractors or outside the School's physical environment);
- the characteristics and needs of all of students, including age, gender mix, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and students with disability.

6.7 Child Safety Risk Management Strategies:

The School has developed and implemented the following risk management strategies to identify and mitigate possible child safety risks:

- **Risk management program:** The School has a risk management program, that was drafted in accordance with the principles and standards of the International Risk Management Standard AS/ISO 31000, for managing risks relating to its operations, including child safety risks.
- **Risk assessments:** The School conducts a risk assessment of its environments, activities and characteristics, taking into account the needs of students and applicable control measures (such as systems, policies and procedures), at least annually to ensure that all child safety risks are identified and that there are not gaps in the child safety strategies and systems that a person motivated to harm or abuse students could exploit.
- **Child Safety Risk Register:** The School identifies and records all reasonably foreseeable risks of child abuse and other harm in all School and MRH environments, as well as all other risks relevant to child safety, in a *Child Safety Risk Register*, and assesses these risks with regard to the likelihood of the risk event occurring and the potential consequences if it were to occur.
- **Child Safety Risk Register annual reviews:** The *Child Safety Risk Register* is reviewed and approved annually by the Board and reviewed at least annually by the Executive Team and ARCC. These reviews include:
 - reviewing the effectiveness of child safety risk control measures and evaluating the overall risk rating for all child safety risks;
 - analysing child safety incidents that may indicate a breakdown in risks controls;
 - analysing any instances of non-compliance with child safety legal and regulatory requirements and the systems and procedures that should be put in place to avoid any further non-compliance;
 - considering the need to implement risk treatments to further control risks.
- **Child Safety Policies:** The School has developed and implements a comprehensive suite of Child Safety Policies. These policies and procedures include, in particular:
 - child safety standards, set out the School's our Child Safe Standards Policy (6.4);
 - policies, procedures and guidance, set out in the School's Child Safety Harm, Abuse and Complaints Policy (6.4.3), on identifying risks of child abuse and other harm in the School's Kavanagh Street campus and MRH environments, legal obligations, responsibilities for managing these risks, and how to report and how to respond to child safety incidents and concerns;
 - a Working with Children Clearance Policy (5.3.5);
 - a Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy (6.4.1);
 - a set of policies and procedures for Child Safe Human Resources Management.
- **Child Safety Training and Information:** The School provides child safety training at induction, and annual refresher child safety training, for all school staff, which includes all MRH staff. Relevant Volunteers also receive child safety training and/or information as set out in that Policy. See: Volunteers Policy (5.3.9);
- **Child Safety Officers:** The School has appointed four of Child Safety Officers who are "Child Safety Champions" at the School;
- **Approvals for specific contexts and activities:** The School has an approvals process and/or ongoing risk management process for certain School contexts and activities (set out in **Procedures** below), which require/s that a specific risk assessment be undertaken and provided either to the Head of School / Director or a relevant Board sub-Committee for their consideration;
- **Reporting:** The Board and the Executive Team receive regular reports regarding child safety risk management and any instances of non-compliance with the School's policies and with legal and regulatory requirements, as well as any other information or incidents that may suggest a breakdown in child safety systems, procedures and risk controls;

- **Continuous improvement:** The School and the Board are committed to a continuous improvement process which involves regular review of the child safety program and child safety risks to identify areas for improvement.

6.8 Child Safety Risk Appetite:

The School has no appetite for any increase to any risk rating for child safety risks.

As a result, the School regards any non-compliance with legal and regulatory requirements related to child safety and wellbeing as unacceptable and requiring of immediate rectification.

The School has no appetite for implementing any new programs or initiatives that:

- may increase the School’s child safety risks;
- may result in a breakdown of the School’s existing child safety risk controls and their effectiveness.

7. PROCEDURES:

7.1 Risk Assessment, Risk Evaluation and Risk Treatment:

Assessment of risk includes consideration of the effectiveness of risk controls (the School’s current policies, procedures, systems and work practices), the likelihood of the risk happening and the consequence if the risk were to occur. Risks are then evaluated and matched to a risk matrix to determine the risk rating. The risk rating defines the level of governance oversight required and whether any additional measures (“risk treatments”) are required to reduce or remove the risk.

The School’s risk assessment methodology is based upon identifying the risk, consequence and impact for those involved and the School as a whole. Each risk must be identified as specifically as possible. Each identified risk must be assigned a risk tolerance rating (low, Medium, High). The higher the impact, the less likely the risk will be tolerated.

Risk treatments are implemented using the methodology outlined below:

Propensity Risks	Situational Risks	Vulnerability risks	Institutional risks
Arise from the possibility of adults with an inclination (propensity) to abuse children. It could also arise from children within the organisation displaying harmful sexual behaviours	Arise from the environment, which may for example provide people with the opportunity to be alone with or groom a child.	Arise from the characteristics of the children present in the organisation e.g., children who have additional support needs, such as a child with a disability, mental health or other vulnerability concerns.	Arise from characteristics of the organisation – such as structure, attitudes, and practices) that may abuse more likely to occur and less likely to be identified and responded to effectively.

7.2 Reporting Child Safety Risks:

All staff members must be aware of the School’s child safety risk management practices and must report to the Child Safety Officer(s):

- any incidents, issues or concerns that may indicate a breakdown in the School’s child safety risk controls;
- any new or perceived child safety risks.

7.3 Risk Assessments for Specific School Contexts and Activities:

The Executive Team, and any Staff Members who have or who have been delegated the required level of responsibility, must ensure that child safety risks are considered and reviewed when there are changes to the School’s operational profile or when new activities, buildings and facilities are planned and operating.

The following School contexts and activities require, as part of their approvals or ongoing risk management processes, that specific risk assessments be undertaken and provided either to the Head of School / Director or a relevant Board sub-committee for their consideration:

- **Physical Environment**
Ongoing, periodic reviews must be undertaken of all physical School and the MRH environments, to eliminate physical isolation risks such as solid classroom doors or rooms with no windows, and of any procedural controls where elimination is not possible, including random checks of obstructed or out-of-the-way locations.
- **Online Environment**
Regular monitoring, and ongoing periodic reviews must be undertaken of the online School environment and electronic communications, to identify and eliminate online child safety risks such as access controls, inappropriate sharing of information/data security, online grooming, and breaches of the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy (6.4.5), Social Media Policy (3.1.2) and Appropriate Use of Technology Policy (4.3).
- **Excursions and Tours**
The School has developed and implements specific policies and procedures relating to excursions and tours ensuring that child safety risks specific to excursions and overnight stays are identified and controls are put in place.
- **Student Work Experience and Work Placement**
The School has developed and implements specific policies and procedures relating to work experience placements, including the completion of the Student Work Experience Checklist that outlines key child safety requirements.
- **Extra-Curricular Activities**
The School has developed and implements specific policies and procedures to manage child safety risks specific to the variety of extra-curricular activities at the School. These risks include the use of Casual Staff and Volunteers, maintaining professional boundaries, appropriate demonstration techniques and supervision both on School grounds and in off-site locations.
- **Marilyn Rowe House**
The School has developed and implements policies and procedures to manage child safety risks specific to the boarding environment at Marilyn Rowe House.

7.4 The Marilyn Rowe House Child Safety Risk Register:

The School's commitment to keeping children and young people safe cannot be achieved without effectively managing child safety risks. As a result, the School has developed a *Marilyn Rowe House Child Safety Risk Register* to actively monitor child safety risks in boarding and their mitigation.

This register ensures that the School's Board and the Executive Team have clear visibility and oversight of child safety risks in the boarding environment, and it enables the School to effectively manage its legal and regulatory child safety obligations under Ministerial Order 1359.

The *Marilyn Rowe House Child Safety Risk Register* is reviewed annually by ARCC in the first instance and the Board and at least annually, as well as following any child safety incidents, by the Executive Team. These reviews involve reviewing the child safety risks that are included in the *Marilyn Rowe House Child Safety Risk Register* and the effectiveness of risk controls for each child safety risk. Where

new child safety risks are identified, these are discussed and added to the *Marilyn Rowe House Child Safety Risk Register* and risk controls for the new risks are identified and implemented.

8. IMPLEMENTATION:

The Child Safety Risk Management Policy is made available to all Staff via the School's online internal IT network. Training about the Child Safety Risk Management Policy and Procedures is included in induction and annual refresher training for Staff and relevant **Volunteers** and **Contractors**.

The Child Safety Risk Management Policy is also communicated to Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers, students and the wider School Community.

9. BREACH OF THE CHILD SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The School enforces this Policy and its Procedures. In the event of any non-compliance/breach, a review of potential breaches will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and where appropriate Confidentially and in accordance with the principles of Natural Justice.

The School aims to take such disciplinary action as is appropriate, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education;
- counselling;
- increased supervision;
- the restriction of duties;
- suspension;
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

For more information, refer to the Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy (6.4.5).

10. SOURCE OF OBLIGATION:

Standard 2 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards requires that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in the School's leadership, governance and culture. In particular, the School's governance arrangements must facilitate implementation of its child safety and wellbeing policies at all levels.

To implement this Standard, clause 6 of Ministerial Order 1359 requires the School Board to:

- develop and implement risk management strategies that:
 - focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the School's and the Boarding House's environments;
 - take into account a number of matters specific to the School and the Boarding House.
- record the risks and the actions that the School has taken or will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls and risk treatments);
- as part of its risk management strategy and practices, monitor and review the risks annually, and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

Clause 12 of Ministerial Order 1359 requires the ABS Board to ensure that, among other things, appropriate guidance, training and information is provided, at least annually, to:

- the individual members of the Board about:
 - individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse;
 - child safety and wellbeing risks in the School's Kavanagh Street campus and Boarding House environments;
 - the School's child safety policies, procedures and practices;
- school staff and school boarding premises staff about a number of matters, including, guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school

environment without compromising a student’s right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority, [Child Safety Risk Management Strategies](#)
- Department of Health and Human Services, [Resource 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse](#)

DRAFT