

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Compliance

Child Safe Standards Ministerial Order No. 870
Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standards 3 and 7

Relevant Legislation

- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)

In 2014 and 2015 new criminal offences were introduced under this act:

a. Failure to disclose offence

The new offence requires that any adult (aged 18 and over) who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child (aged under 16) disclose that information to police.

b. Failure to protect offence

The offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

c. Grooming offence

This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

Related documents

Ausdance Child Safety Statement of Commitment (V.2 2016)

Ausdance Working with Children Check Policy

Ausdance Student Support Policy

Definitions

Child	Any person under the age of 18
Child Abuse	1. Any act committed against a child involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A sexual offence The offence of grooming 2. The infliction, on a child of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Physical violence Serious emotional or psychological harm 3. Serious neglect of a child
Child neglect	The failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in the position to do so) with conditions that are culturally acceptable as being essential for the child's physical and emotional development and wellbeing.
Child Safety	All matters related to protecting children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

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Purpose/explanation

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Ausdance Vic to the safety, protection and wellbeing of all children and young people in our care. Ausdance Vic has zero tolerance for child abuse or the harm of children. We are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe when they are engaging in Ausdance activities.

Ausdance Vic sets the benchmark for best practice and behaviour in the dance sector. Ausdance Vic is committed to ensuring compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations, and to developing and maintaining a child safe culture across the dance sector.

This Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards children. The Code serves to protect children and promote child safety. By following the Code, adults will reduce opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. The Code provides guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid situations which may potentially put adults at risk of breaching the Code, and how to report a breach.

As the peak body for Dance we also undertake to communicate this code of conduct throughout the Victorian Dance sector to ensure our members and non-members are aware of the Child Safety Standards and expectations around this. Ausdance Vic reviews the Code annually.

Consequences of Breaching the Code of Conduct

Where a staff member breaches the Code, Ausdance Vic may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal. If the breach occurs at a Partner School, the Partnership Agreement may be terminated.

Scope

Ausdance Vic requires all adults interacting with children under the Ausdance banner to abide by the behaviours and respect the boundaries set out in the Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct applies to and is binding on, all Ausdance Vic employees, employees and any third party contractors, agents and volunteers working with children on behalf of Ausdance Vic.

Responsible parties

The Executive Director, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, and RTO and Education Coordinator are jointly responsible for the implementation of the Code of Conduct.

General Principles when interacting with children and young people

- Adhere to our Child Safety Policy and all relevant state and federal legislation.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children and young people.
- Be vigilant and proactive regarding child safety and child protection issues.
- Provide appropriate supervision for children and young people.
- Treat all children and young people with respect.

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Transparency, confidentiality and privacy

- Work with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children.
- Do not engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact or behaviours, including doing things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Never be alone or engage in undisclosed private meetings with a child that is not your own. If you offer private lessons, parents or caregivers should be allowed to watch, either in the room or through a viewing window or open door.
- Do not engage in inappropriate personal communications with a child through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.
- Personal information about students and their families should be kept confidential. In particular, never post identifying information online about a child, such as their full name, age, e-mail address, telephone number, residence, school, or details of their membership in a club or group.
- Always obtain written consent from parents/carers before taking or publishing photos or videos.

Communication and social interactions

- Behave as a positive role model to all children and young people.
- Impart knowledge and skill of dance in a respectful and encouraging manner.
- Use positive and affirming language towards children and young people.
- Encourage children and young people to express their ideas and listen to them with respect.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all children and young people to interact and socialise.
- Intervene when children are behaving inappropriately towards others.

Physical safety

- Provide a physically safe environment for children and young people.
- Provide areas where children can change clothes and use toilet facilities in private.
- If you use touch as part of your teaching or in your dance style, work with the children and young people in your studio to develop guidelines for physical touch that everyone must follow.

Cultural and emotional safety

- Respect all differences, especially (but not limited to) cultural, religious and political differences.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse children and young people.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with any kind of disability.

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- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Actively seek input from parents and families, and use their advice to make your school welcoming and culturally empowering for students of diverse cultural backgrounds, and for students with disabilities.
- Seek out the Traditional owner groups or Registered Aboriginal Party in your area, and work with them to develop ways to make your organisation welcoming, inclusive and culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Do not engage in or tolerate by others any form of inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people, including but not limited to any of the following.

- Do not behave in a prejudicial or oppressive manner.
- Do not use inappropriate language with, or in the presence of, children and young people.
- Do not express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
- Do not discriminate against any child based on culture, age, gender, vulnerability, sexuality, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Do not engage in any form of sexual conduct with a child, including making sexually suggestive comments or sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Do not engage in conduct that exposes a child to sexually suggestive comments by others or by creating sexually suggestive material to be presented by the child. This includes movement material, costumes and themes in class, rehearsal and performance.
- Do not engage in any form of physical violence towards a child, including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Do not use physical or corporal punishment to discipline or control a child.
- Do not engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm, such as isolating, yelling at, harassing or humiliating a child.
- Do not develop 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, offering gifts or special treatment for specific students).

How to respond when a child makes an allegation of abuse

Children and young people reporting abuse or safety concerns must be treated with sensitivity and provided with support.

- Provide a quiet, safe space and give your full attention to the child, so they can talk about their concerns in their own time and in their own words.
- Be supportive and reassuring, and comfort them if they are distressed.
- Ask open ended questions such as "what happened?"
- Reassure the child it was not their fault and that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Let them know you will act on this information and that to do so you need to let other people know.

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Alert the relevant person in your school and follow your schools' procedure for reporting abuse, as documented in your schools' policy.

You will need to promptly report the child's disclosure. To avoid contamination of evidence:

- Record the child's disclosure in their own words
- Note the time, date and location of the disclosure
- Note their demeanour and appearance at the time
- Note any physical evidence
- Keep the record of disclosure confidential
- Give the record only to the person(s) or organisation(s) who are authorised to investigate the incident

Report concerns or breaches appropriately and immediately

- Report concerns about child safety - ensure that your legal obligations to report allegations to relevant external authorities are met.
- Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child involved is safe.
- Call the Police on 000 if you have concerns that a child is in immediate danger.
- Respect the privacy of children and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

I have read and understood the requirements of this Code of Conduct.

I commit to complying with this Code of Conduct at all times.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

School/Studio: _____