

# Welcome!



## STAFF HANDBOOK 2026

Welcome to Sydney Performing Arts Academy (SPAA).

We are proud of the culture, community and standard of excellence we uphold. Our teachers and staff are the heartbeat of the Academy, and this handbook exists to support you in delivering consistent, safe and inspiring experiences for every child and family.

This handbook outlines expectations, procedures and standards that apply to all staff. It should be read carefully and used as a reference throughout your employment.

If you are ever unsure what to do in a situation, pause and escalate to Bec.

All information contained within this handbook is confidential and must not be shared outside of Sydney Performing Arts Academy.

### QUICK REFERENCE STUDIO INFORMATION

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Sydney Performing Arts Academy

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# Mission and Values

## Our Mission

### **NURTURING, EMPOWERING, INSPIRING — IN THE ARTS AND IN LIFE**

Sydney Performing Arts Academy exists to provide a caring, safe and inspiring environment where children grow in confidence, skill and joy through dance. Through exceptional teaching and thoughtfully structured programs, we balance technique and fun, nurturing both creative potential and self-belief.

Our teachers are at the forefront of this mission. Every class is an opportunity to positively impact a child's confidence, sense of belonging and belief in themselves.

## Our Values

The values that guide every decision, interaction and expectation at SPAA are:

- Kindness
- Community
- Excellence
- Diligence
- Progress
- Teamwork

All staff are expected to actively model these values at all times.



# Employment Essentials

Employment at Sydney Performing Arts Academy is based on professionalism, trust and alignment with Academy values.

## **Working With Children Check (WWCC)**

All staff must:

- hold a valid Working With Children Check
- ensure it remains current for the duration of employment
- provide updated details to the Academy if their status changes

## **Confidentiality**

All information relating to:

- students and families
- staff
- Academy operations
- medical, financial or personal information

is strictly confidential and must not be shared outside authorised Academy channels.

## **Visitors & Open Door Policy**

Sydney Performing Arts Academy operates an Open Door Policy for transparency and child safety.

Permitted attendees include:

- enrolled students
- trial students
- parents or guardians
- approved relatives

Staff must not bring personal visitors (friends, partners or family) to classes or Academy activities.

## **Drug & Alcohol Expectations**

Staff must not attend work or Academy events under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs, or have them in their possession while on duty.

# Teaching Standards

## **The SPAA Teacher Standard**

A Sydney Performing Arts Academy teacher is more than an instructor.

SPAA teachers are:

- a child's biggest cheerleader
- technically intentional and purposeful in their teaching
- strong classroom leaders
- contributors to our dance family

Students should feel seen, supported, challenged and celebrated every time they walk into class.

## **Lesson Planning, Goals & Progression**

Teachers are expected to plan with clear intention and progression.

Teachers must set:

- clear goals for the year
- clear goals for each term

Lesson planning must intentionally work toward these goals.

Throughout the term, teachers must take time to self-reflect:

- Are students working towards their end-of-term goal?
- If not, what can be adjusted to help students achieve the goal?

This may include modifying exercises, breaking skills into smaller steps, revisiting foundations, changing teaching strategies, increasing repetition, or adjusting class structure.

Classes are expected to be a balance of fun and technique.

## **Classroom Leadership**

Teachers must:

- actively lead the class at all times
- remain engaged, present and attentive
- maintain clear structure, routines and expectations
- manage behaviour calmly, respectfully and consistently

## **Language, Culture & Student Experience**

Teachers are expected to be their students' biggest cheerleaders.

Language must always be respectful, inclusive and age-appropriate.

Swearing, sarcasm, intimidation or demeaning language is not permitted.

Students should leave class feeling valued, capable and connected.

## **Classroom Environment**

Teachers are responsible for creating a classroom environment that is calm, encouraging and inclusive.

Students should feel safe to try, make mistakes and grow without fear of embarrassment or criticism.

Teachers are expected to address disruptions early and respectfully, maintaining dignity and emotional safety for every student.

A positive classroom environment is essential to learning, confidence and connection within our dance family.

## Physical Boundaries

Teachers must:

- maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- use a broad and appropriate toolkit of teaching skills
- never use physical discipline

## Uniform & Presentation

Teachers must:

- wear SPAA uniform while teaching
- wear correct dance shoes
- female staff wear light, professional makeup

At performances and events, staff must wear SPAA uniform unless otherwise directed.

## Staff Absences, Illness & Leave (Including Substitutes)

If a teacher is unable to attend a scheduled class, they must:

- inform Bec as soon as possible
- outline which classes are affected

Teachers are expected to take responsibility for organising a suitable substitute teacher.

Bec can assist in finding a substitute if required; however:

- teachers must notify Bec as early as possible
- teachers must provide all relevant class information
- teachers must remain involved until cover is confirmed

**All absences – including when a substitute teacher is arranged – must be submitted via the Leave Request Form on the SPAA Staff Website.**

The Leave Request Form includes space for teachers to provide the substitute with:

- class details
- lesson focus and goals
- music and choreography notes
- important student information



# Class Operations

## **Music, Sound & Technology**

Teachers are responsible for:

- bringing their own music and speaker
- ensuring devices are charged and functioning
- having appropriate adapters or backups

Music must be:

- age-appropriate
- free from swearing or inappropriate themes
- aligned with SPAA values

## **Equipment & Shared Resources**

Teachers must:

- use equipment safely and appropriately
- return shared equipment neatly after class
- report broken, damaged or unsafe equipment immediately

## **Phones, Filming & Recording**

Teachers must:

- use phones only for class-related purposes (music, BAND content, social media uploads)
- ensure filming is appropriate, respectful and Academy-aligned

Personal phone use (texting, scrolling or calls) during class is not permitted.

## **Water Breaks & Transitions**

Teachers must manage water breaks efficiently and maintain supervision during transitions.

## **After-Class Responsibilities**

After each class, teachers must:

- ensure the space is left tidy
- pack away any equipment used
- complete required administration (BAND and/or social media uploads)

# Safety and Child Protection

Child safety is a shared responsibility and a non-negotiable priority.

## **Duty of Care & Supervision**

Teachers are responsible for students from the start of class until safe dismissal.

Classes must never be left unattended.

## **Emergency Procedures (Including Lockdowns)**

In the event of an emergency, including fire alarms, evacuations or lockdowns, teachers must:

- remain calm
- maintain supervision of all students
- follow venue emergency procedures
- conduct headcounts as required
- await instructions from emergency services or Academy leadership

Students must not be released unless directed by emergency services or Bec.

## **Mandatory Reporting & Incident Reporting**

All mandatory reporting information, child protection procedures and incident reporting forms are located on the SPAA Staff Website.

### **Staff Website:**

<https://join.sydneyperformingartsacademy.com/home>

### **Password:**

SPAA2024\*

Bec must be notified immediately when a report or form is submitted.



# BAND Communication

BAND is Sydney Performing Arts Academy's primary communication platform between teachers, families and the Academy.

BAND exists to build connection, celebrate progress and strengthen our dance family.

Teachers are paid 15 minutes of administration time per shift to complete BAND communication.

For each class taught, teachers must:

1. Post a class update
2. Upload appropriate photos or short videos
3. Send **one positive, individual private message** to a parent highlighting their child's effort, attitude or progress

Content must always be positive, age-appropriate and aligned with SPAA values.

Teachers must not post:

- confidential or sensitive information
- public disciplinary matters
- reactive, emotional or defensive communication

If unsure, pause and seek guidance from Bec before posting.

## Social Media Contribution

In addition to BAND communication, staff will be allocated 15 minutes per shift to contribute to the Sydney Performing Arts Academy social media account.

For each teaching shift, staff are required to upload 2–3 Instagram stories.

Social media content:

- must be **age appropriate**
- must be **encouraging and positive**
- must align with **SPAA values and culture**

Stories may include:

- a photo from class with fun graphics or a short caption
- a short video clip
- a behind-the-scenes moment that celebrates effort, joy or progress

All content must reflect the nurturing, empowering and inspiring environment of Sydney Performing Arts Academy.

If staff are unsure whether content is appropriate, they must seek guidance before posting.

# Parent Communication

Parent communication exists to build community and foster our **dance family**. Teachers may engage in brief, positive interactions with parents before and after class while maintaining supervision and class flow.

Teachers must not:

- manage complaints or dissatisfaction
- address wellbeing or behavioural concerns independently
- provide counselling, promises or outcomes

Any concerns must be raised with Bec **before** discussing with parents.

# Social Media Policy

This Social Media Policy applies to all Sydney Performing Arts Academy staff and covers all online platforms, including:

- social networking sites
- video and photo sharing platforms
- blogs, forums and messaging apps
- micro-blogs
- geo-tagging and location check-ins

Teachers must remain mindful that online anonymity is never guaranteed and that behaviour on social media reflects on Sydney Performing Arts Academy at all times.

## **Professional Responsibility Online**

All staff are representatives of Sydney Performing Arts Academy, both inside and outside the classroom.

Online behaviour must:

- align with Academy values
- reflect professionalism, care and respect
- uphold child safety and privacy standards

Staff must assume that anything posted online:

- may be seen by families
- may be shared beyond its intended audience
- may exist permanently

If you would not say it publicly or professionally, it must not be posted.

## **Students, Privacy & Images**

Teachers must not:

- post photos or videos of students on personal social media accounts
- identify students by name online
- tag student locations, classes or Academy events
- share content that reveals personal, medical or sensitive information

All student photos and videos must only be shared through approved Academy platforms.

## **Academy Information & Intellectual Property**

Teachers must not post or discuss:

- internal Academy matters (fees, enrolments, placements, timetables, complaints)
- confidential staff or family information
- Academy processes or internal decisions

All choreography, costuming, branding and Academy policies remain the intellectual property of Sydney Performing Arts Academy.

## **Conduct & Content Standards**

SPAA will not tolerate social media content that is:

- offensive, discriminatory or inflammatory
- sexually explicit or inappropriate
- politically, religiously or personally divisive when linked to the Academy
- damaging to the reputation of the Academy, its staff, students or families

## **Boundaries & Personal Accounts**

Staff are discouraged from forming social media connections with students or families unless there is a pre-existing relationship approved by leadership. Professional boundaries must always be maintained.

## **Common Sense & Accountability**

If unsure about posting content relating to SPAA:

- pause
- seek guidance from Bec
- do not post until approved

Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.



# Timesheets and Pay

Timesheets must:

- be accurate
- reflect actual hours worked
- be submitted by 10:00pm Sunday each week

Teachers are paid 30 minutes of administration time per shift, allocated as:

- 15 minutes for BAND communication
- 15 minutes for social media uploads

Honesty is essential when claiming time.

If social media uploads cannot be completed, the 15 minutes of BAND communication remains essential and must still be completed.

# Performances

Teachers are expected to attend and support:

- Mid-Year Production
- End-of-Year Production

This may include rehearsals, backstage supervision and student care as directed.



# Empowering, Nurturing and Inspiring

At Sydney Performing Arts Academy, how children feel matters as much as what they learn.

## **Student Recognition Systems**

Recognition systems apply to school-aged students only.

Preschool and toddler classes do not participate.

## **Dancer of the Week – Trophy**

- One trophy per class, per week
- Students keep the trophy for the week and return it the following class
- The trophy may be awarded for kindness, focus, effort, manners, perseverance or progress
- Trial students are not eligible

Teachers must:

- take a photo
- tell parents the trophy must be returned the following week
- keep a record so every student receives a turn

## **“I See You Shine” Cards**

- Maximum one card per class
- No writing required
- Card wording remains exactly as printed

## **Sticker Charts & “I AM” Affirmations**

Sticker charts are printed on sturdy card.

Affirmations include:

- I am Smart
- I am Strong
- I am Brave
- I am Kind
- I am Creative
- I am AMAZING

When placing stickers, teachers are expected to invite students to read their affirmation aloud.

Consistency matters more than perfection.

## **FINAL NOTE**

**By upholding these standards, staff help create a safe, nurturing and inspiring Academy where children thrive – in the arts and in life.**