

DANCE NETWORK

Child Safety Policy

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Purpose

This policy applies to any adult person (over the age of 18) engaged by Dance Network that may work or interact with children at any time including:

- Staff, contractors & sub-contractors including:
 - leadership and management roles
 - administration
 - teachers and workshop facilitators
 - production and venue personnel (stage management, chaperones, technical crew, ushers, etc.)
 - volunteers
 - any other individuals engaged by the organisation that may deal with children approved by Dance Network.
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Commitment to Child Safety

Dance Network is strongly committed to the safety and well-being of all children that interact with our organisation by creating and maintaining a child safe environment. The welfare of children entrusted under our care is our first priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe, respected, valued and protected from harm.

Dance Network will take all necessary steps to prevent and protect children from abuse (including physical, emotional and sexual abuse) and neglect.

Supporting Children's Participation and Satisfaction

Dance Network is a child-centred organisation – supporting, enabling and promoting the active participation of children by:

- encouraging expression of and respecting the views of children and parents (including carers or legal guardians)
- encouraging and empowering children and parents (including carers or legal guardians) to raise any concerns or complaints
- listening to and acting upon any concerns raised by children and parents (including carers or legal guardians)
- ensuring children understand their rights and the appropriate behaviour expected of both adults and children
- teaching children what they can do and who they can turn to if they feel unsafe
- ensuring Staff & Volunteers dealing with children are skilful in facilitating their participation
- valuing diversity and not tolerating any discriminatory practices.

Dance Network aims to create an environment where children gain satisfaction from their interaction with our organisation by:

- supporting children to feel respected and in control of their behaviour / participation
- ensuring children enjoy the overall experience of being a student of the studio
- encouraging children to assist each other and developing a positive sense of pride in their work
- offering opportunities for children to derive personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement throughout their experience and the relationships they make
- encouraging children to develop self-discipline and awareness of their mental wellbeing in balancing their commitment to their performance, their education and their social and family activities.

Valuing Diversity

Dance Network values diversity and we do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

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 status), sexual orientation or disability.

In our activities with children we will:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families
- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome children with disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- welcome same-sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse children and families

Recruitment Practices

Dance Network will take 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 Dance Network's policy to:

- interview and conduct thorough referee checks on potential staff members
- assess the qualifications required to ensure the potential staff member is appropriately skilled for the role
- communicate effectively to potential staff members our commitment to providing a safe environment for children
- obtain Working with Children Checks, or Victorian Institute of Teaching Registrations, from potential staff members whose roles have contact or responsibility for children and for roles that have influence or authority over children
- Induct staff members into the organisation, making clear their roles and responsibilities in helping achieve a child-safe organisation

Support for Staff & Volunteers

Dance Network seeks to support Staff & Volunteers by:

- inducting new Staff & Volunteers to our Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and other relevant policies and procedures
- encouraging relevant Staff & Volunteers 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
- ensuring Staff & Volunteers feel encouraged and empowered to report any complaints, concerns or perceived risks to child safety

Code of Conduct

Dance Network has a Code of Conduct that provides guidance to our Staff & Volunteers on expected behaviours, including those behaviours when in direct contact with or working around children.

All Staff & Volunteers agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.

We ask relevant Staff & Volunteers to sign a written statement confirming they have read, understood and will comply with the Code of Conduct. A copy of all signed statements will be retained for company records.

Child Safety Officer

The Owner & Principle of Dance Network has been appointed as Child Safety Officer, responsible for being the first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents (including carers or legal guardians) and Staff & Volunteers regarding the safety and well-being 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 Code of Conduct.

Reporting Procedures

We believe Staff & Volunteers, parents (including carers or legal guardians), and children should feel enabled, empowered and supported to safely raise any concerns or complaints about any perceived risks to a child's safety or signs of abuse.

Dance Network Reporting Procedure advises how to respond to an allegation or incident of child abuse. Refer to Appendix 1.

All reports of child abuse shall be recorded and records on reports of child abuse, will maintain confidentiality and privacy for children and families in accordance with legislation.

Risks to child safety that are identified in complaints and reports of abuse will be reviewed and incorporated into the relevant risk management plan.

Risk Management

Dance Network will take a preventative and proactive approach to minimising the risk of harm to children. We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to prevent the potential for child abuse or harm to occur.

- A Risk Management Review will be undertaken regularly for existing activities, as well as for all new activities.
- All identified risks of child abuse are reduced by designing and implementing appropriate preventative measures
- All Staff & Volunteers are made aware of their responsibility for identifying risks of child abuse and their obligation to work with the Owner and Principle to reduce those risks

Communication and reviewing this policy

This policy will be made known, and ways to obtain copies advised, on the Dance Network's website and hardcopies available upon request.

This policy will be reviewed annually, and following significant incidents if they occur. We welcome feedback from Staff & Volunteers, parents (including carers and legal guardians) and children on this policy at any time. Feedback can be provided in person or in writing to the Child Safety Officer.

Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct

Dance Network will enforce this policy and the Code of Conduct. Following any non-compliance we will instigate a review that may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of engagement or other corrective action.

DANCE NETWORK

Child Safety Reporting Process

