

Our Commitment to Child Safety and Well-being

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Peninsula School of Dance is committed to a culture that has child safety and well-being at the centre of all that we do.

Peninsula School of Dance is committed to having a sound set of policies and procedures relating to child safety in place. These will be reviewed and evaluated regularly. We are committed to remaining up to date with current best practice and implementing this within our own organisation.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. Peninsula School of Dance core values clearly support this commitment.

OUR VALUES

Fun & Engaging

Our classes and activities are underpinned by this value. For students to derive the most benefit and learn they must enjoy what they are doing! Our classes are positive and affirming, they are carefully designed to assist students to develop a love of learning. Our pre-school and junior program is underpinned by the notion that children learn best through play.

Inclusive

We genuinely believe that dance is for everyone. We will work in partnership with parents and students to ensure that class placement is appropriate and we deliver content in a way that meets the needs of learners. We work to create a cohesive and supportive culture within all our classes and events. All students are celebrated and encouraged regardless of ability.

Community

Peninsula School of Dance is a community; we foster supportive and nurturing connections amongst our staff team, business partners, families and students. We will always look for ways to engage our students and families in local activities that promote dance and our students. We believe that PSD can contribute to the vibrancy and social fabric of the Peninsula, particularly for young people.

Excellence

Staff are committed to ongoing training and development. Our professional associations with Cecchetti Ballet, Australian Teachers of Dance and Acrobatic Arts ensure that we remain up to date with best practice. Our assistant teacher and teacher training program is comprehensive and constantly updated. Students are encouraged through exams and performance opportunities to develop strong technique and a commitment to learning and constant improvement. Staff and students together are lifelong learners.

Leadership

Peninsula School of Dance is a platform for young people to step up and take the lead and we strongly believe young people have a powerful capacity to develop leadership skills in a variety of ways. Our classes and teacher training programs are designed to inspire confidence and leadership in our young people. We are deeply committed to unlocking and nurturing these young leaders within our dance family.



We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

Our Child Safety Officer (the Principal) will be the first port of call for all incidents and will guide staff through all procedural requirements

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

We will ensure that we remain up to date with all obligations via our association and memberships with peak bodies such as Dance Arts Alliance, ATOD and Cecchetti Ballet Australia.

Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

We are committed to remaining up to date with current best practice in this area of risk identification.

Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

As a minimum all staff will hold a current Working with Children Check and Level 2 First Aid Certificate. Staff will have relevant qualifications or be in the process of obtaining qualifications under the direction of the Principal. All staff will attend regular internal and external professional development.

Our organisation is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

As a minimum our staff will participate in 4 internal professional development sessions per year. All volunteers will be given a clear briefing and induction prior to assisting with PSD events eg. Annual Performances.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Training and development plans will be put in place each year that identify team and individual training needs. These plans will identify key areas for development and upskilling and will ensure that we remain up to date with current best practice.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

Our staff and volunteers

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process.

If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form¹, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

¹ See resource seven in this toolkit.

Legislative responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.²
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.³
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.⁴

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock, student drop off and pick up procedures), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media). Peninsula School of Dance has comprehensive Code of conduct and set of policies and procedures relating to child safety and well-being for all staff and volunteers.

² A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

³ Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

⁴ Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed⁵
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

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Peninsula School of Dance

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⁵ For example behaviour, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)
<www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>