



Our Commitment to Child Safety

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

At Peninsula School of Dance, we are unwavering in our commitment to creating a safe, empowering, and inclusive environment for all children and young people. We believe every student deserves to feel safe, happy, and valued as they explore the transformative power of dance. Guided by our core values of **Fun & Engagement, Inclusivity, Community, Excellence, and Leadership**, we have established a robust framework of policies and practices to uphold child safety standards and ensure the holistic well-being of every student in our care.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and treat all allegations or safety concerns with the utmost seriousness, following clear protocols to act swiftly and effectively. Our staff and volunteers are held to the highest standards, supported through rigorous recruitment processes, ongoing training, and professional development in child safety. We are equally committed to supporting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with disabilities.

Our dedication extends beyond compliance, with proactive efforts to identify and mitigate risks, foster open communication with families, and continually improve our facilities and practices. By placing child safety at the core of our operations, Peninsula School of Dance strives to empower young people to thrive in a nurturing and inspiring environment.

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



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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.



Our Commitment to Child Safety

Commitment	Demonstration
Our organisation is committed to child safety.	Regular review and updates to child safety policies and procedures, ensuring alignment with Victorian Child Safe Standards. These reviews are conducted bi-annually and involve staff, parents, and student feedback sessions.
We want children to be safe, happy, and empowered.	<p>Children are regularly engaged in discussions about their safety and rights during classes. Anonymous feedback boxes and online surveys ensure students can voice concerns. A student-focused complaint process ensures swift and confidential action.</p> <p>Our Organisational Values support children to be safe, happy and well:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Community</p>



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Commitment	Demonstration
	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Excellence</i> 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.</p> <p><i>Leadership</i> 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.</p>
Zero tolerance of child abuse.	All allegations and safety concerns are promptly investigated by the Child Safety Officer. A clear incident reporting procedure is communicated to staff and families during orientation. Staff training includes role-playing scenarios to handle disclosures and reporting effectively.



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Commitment	Demonstration
<p>Legal and moral obligations to report concerns.</p>	<p>Staff are trained in mandatory reporting laws, including "failure to disclose" and "failure to protect" provisions. This training is refreshed annually, with updates shared as laws evolve. A legal expert reviews reporting protocols every two years.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form¹, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Preventing and identifying risks early.</p>	<p>Annual professional development now includes training on online grooming and cyber safety risks. Risk audits are conducted before major events, with action plans to address potential concerns.</p>

¹ See resource seven in this toolkit.



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<p>Robust HR and recruitment practices.</p>	<p>All staff must hold a current Working with Children Check and Level 2 First Aid Certificate. A detailed recruitment checklist includes reference checks, police record checks, and scenario-based child safety assessments for new hires. Please see the Working with Children Check website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information</p> <p>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.</p> <p>We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>



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<p>Training and educating staff on child abuse risks.</p>	<p>Staff participate in four professional development sessions yearly, focusing on child safety and inclusivity. Volunteers are provided a thorough induction, covering child safety standards and event-specific protocols. Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>



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Commitment	Demonstration
Cultural safety of diverse children.	Staff training includes cultural competency modules to promote the safety of Aboriginal children and children from diverse backgrounds. Workshops and displays celebrate cultural diversity in the studio.
Clear policies and procedures.	Policies are accessible online, mentioned in newsletters, and included in enrolment materials. Reviewed policies are presented during staff meetings and parent information sessions.
Accountability for staff behaviour.	A clear disciplinary process supports accountability. Staff are monitored through observation and mentoring sessions. Behaviour management training ensures staff use positive reinforcement strategies and communicate expectations clearly.
Supportive communication with parents.	Newsletters, email updates, and website postings keep parents informed about child safety protocols. Regular parent-teacher conferences provide a platform for discussing concerns or feedback.
Holistic development of children.	Classes incorporate lessons on physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Dedicated workshops on topics like resilience, teamwork, and health are offered throughout the year.



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Zero tolerance of bullying.	Anti-bullying policies are embedded in studio culture, with annual workshops for staff and students. Accessible online at: Bullying Policy .
Commitment to improving facilities.	Annual facility audits evaluate safety measures, including CCTV coverage, secure entrances, and age-appropriate spaces. Identified improvements are implemented promptly to ensure a safe environment.

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.



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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

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>.



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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.

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.



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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.

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

Peninsula School of Dance

Child Safety Officer - Melanie Gard melanie@peninsuladance.com.au

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>