



## **CHILD SAFE POLICY & CODE OF CONDUCT**

ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA is committed to child safety. As a dance community, we want children to be safe, happy and confident. We support and respect all children, as well as our team members and any other members of our dance community such as parents, grandparents, siblings etc. We are committed to the safety of all children in our care. There is zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures. We meet our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities if we have reason to be concerned about a child's safety.

ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA is committed to being a Safe Dance School. We follow the Child Safety Standards as follows:

**Standard 1** - Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through leadership arrangements

**Standard 2** - A Child Safe Policy or statement of commitment to child safety

**Standard 3** - A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

**Standard 4** - Screening, supervision, training & other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

**Standard 5** - Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

**Standard 6** - Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

**Standard 7** - Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA is committed to:

- Upholding ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA's statement of commitment to child safety at all times (Child Safe Policy).
- Treating students and families in the dance school community with respect within and outside the studio environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are disclosing that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about the safety of themselves or another student.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Principal.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the students are safe and protected from harm.

## **Our Students**

This policy is intended to empower children who are actively enrolled in dance classes with ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA. We encourage our students to make appropriate decisions and to respect each other. We will respect them and listen to their view points with interest and without judgement. We will promote inclusiveness, diversity and

tolerance of students from all cultural backgrounds and those with a disability. All students, regardless of their background will feel safe and be able to participate equally.

## **Our Team Members**

This policy guides our Team Members on how to behave with children at ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA. All our Team Members, upon signing of their contracts, must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Unacceptable Actions by Team Members include:

- Ignoring or disregard of any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- Developing a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to grooming behaviour. Offering gifts.
- Exhibit behaviours, discuss or engaging in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive or sexual in nature and/or not justified by the educational, therapeutic or service delivery context.
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate.
- Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- Communicate with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc).
- Photograph or video a child in the dance studio environment except in accordance with the ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA Photography/Video policy.

## **Ongoing Safety Procedures**

Ongoing training and education is important to ensure that everyone at the ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

In support of our Team Members, we always have a Senior Member of staff on duty at any time which may also be in the form of a teacher present when classes are running/scheduled. This applies to the 15 mins prior to scheduled classes and 15 mins after classes have finished. New and younger Team Members are supervised regularly to ensure they comply with our policies. We support our Team Members through ongoing training in order to develop their skills.

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services and/or Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

## **Recruitment Procedures**

We take all reasonable steps to employ qualified, experienced and skilled people to work with our students. Team Members are employed based on the above criteria together with an acute understanding of our Child Safe Policy, a commitment to child safety and an understanding of their legal and ethical obligations.

All Team Members are required to have a valid Working with Children Check. These are available for viewing at our studios at any time. At least two Team Members in attendance at any time also hold a valid First Aid Certificate. All Team Members must be conversant with and sign our relevant Staff Handbook.

Any person with any involvement with ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA in a paid or volunteer position is required to provide a copy of their Working with Children Check.

We accept and encourage applications for positions within our Dance School from those with a culturally diverse background. We will conduct reference checks and further police checks on applicants.

## **Fair procedures for Team Members**

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern, however, we respect and value our Team Members. We will make fair and just decisions when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action. We will always be thorough, transparent, and base all actions on appropriate evidence.

## Privacy

All personal information collected by ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA will be considered private and confidential. Any ongoing Court proceedings/actions will be noted on file and known to Team Members but kept private at all times. Individuals have access to their own records.

## Legislative responsibilities

ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA takes its 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
- 🕒 **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 potential danger.

## 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.

ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA has a number of risk management strategies in place to help minimise and reduce child abuse risks. These include but are not limited to:

- A Senior Team Member present at any time on the premises.
- At least one Team Member in attendance with First Aid qualifications.
- Adherence to Safe Dance Practices and affiliation with AusDance.
- Viewing windows
- Security Camera's ( internal & external) constantly operational 24 hours, 7 days per week
- Toilet with lockable door which can also be used as a dressing room when vacant
- Social Media policy for Team Members to not have students under the age of 18 as friends on any social media platforms.
- Photography policy

## Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure 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

ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate any allegations thoroughly and quickly.

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

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).
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it.
- observing of any suspicious behaviour

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