



THE DANCE COMPANY

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

2024

Commitment to Child safety

TDC The Dance Company is committed to ensuring that all children attending our establishment have the right to feel and be safe, values respected and protected from harm and all children should be made aware of and feel confident in their rights and responsibilities

At TDC we continually strive to promote and provide an environment in which children, staff and volunteers are encouraged to speak up when they feel uncomfortable or concerned.

At TDC the welfare of all children entrusted in our care is of optimum priority and we have zero tolerance for any type of child abuse.

TDC The Dance Company is strongly committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children that interact with our organisation whether students, siblings, friends of students or an audience member of a TDC performance.

TDC The Dance Company will take all the necessary steps to prevent abuse and protect children from:

- Physical abuse: purposefully injuring or threatening to injure a child
- Emotional abuse: an attack on a child's self-esteem through bullying, threatening, ridiculing, or isolating a child
- Neglect: harming a child by failing to provide basic physical or emotional necessities
- Sexual abuse: any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child

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 are committed to identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred.

Parents are an important part of our dance community and should always feel their child are safe. We expect all parents and carers to uphold the child safe standards and code of conduct.

We have a zero tolerance policy of bullying and regularly working with our staff teachers and students to ensure that this is embedded in our culture. Our strict anti bullying policy supports our commitment to child safety.

This policy applies to:

- Teachers both fulltime and guest teachers.
- Directors, Managers and Admin staff.
- Volunteers including at performances and outside venues.
- Parents who are involved with and/or attend TDC The Dance Company.

Valuing and respecting Diversity

TDC The dance company always supports diversity and will not tolerate any discriminatory behaviour or practices from staff, volunteers or other students .

TDC The Dance Company is committed to protect or children engaged in our organisation from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse as well as neglect, contempt ridicule hatred or negativity toward a child because of their race, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Our Staff and Volunteers

TDC The Dance Company applies best practice standards in the recruitment of new staff members.

A valid Working With Children is mandatory for all new staff members, and all staff members must pass the screening and recruitment process prior to commencing at TDC The Dance Company. This includes addressing and signing the Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct, providing appropriate references and director/peer observations during their first classes. All new staff are encouraged to ask questions and clarify their understanding of all our policies.

All fulltime and part time workers must complete the KKSID training before commencing employment and attend any child safety sessions to ensure they are up to date with any knowledge pertaining to the child safety act.

If a confirmed allegation is made against a member of staff, the safety of the child is of the utmost importance. The staff member will be removed and stood down from instructing classes while under investigation from the relevant authorities into the seriousness of the allegation.

We will only accept volunteers that have a working with children certificate and there will always be first aid accredited volunteers present at all performances/events.

Reporting a safety complaint, allegation or concern

We take child safety very seriously. Anyone is able to raise a complaint, allegation or concern about our organisation's child safety practices. We treat all complaints, allegations or concerns raised with our organisation very seriously and respectfully. Nominated staff members have been trained to deal with allegations of abuse. If TDC receives an allegation of abuse, our trained staff will investigate that allegation thoroughly and in a professional manner.

We are committed to ensuring that the appropriate authorities are notified where we are concerned about the safety, abuse or potential abuse of children.

Participation

TDC are committed to providing an environment where all young people feel valued and can learn in a supported environment regardless of their skill level

Each teacher will have very clear expectations for behaviour in class and this will be communicated directly to students, whilst all students are expected to comply with these expectations we must all agree that they are fair and just.

Whilst we believe that discipline is important in the dance environment this does not involve demeaning, isolating, threatening, bullying or victimising students.

We encourage both parent and students to approach us with any feedback pertaining to any issues they have with the behaviours of any staff at TDC or their participation in any TDC classes.

Code of Conduct

All of our staff and volunteers must abide by our Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct sets out our organisation's expectations for appropriate behaviour with children. We require all of our staff and volunteers to act in accordance with our Code of Conduct.

A copy of our Code of Conduct can be found on our website and in the studio.

Policy promotion and review

This Child Safe Policy is made available to all parents and guardians of children and young people who attend TDC. A copy of the Child Safe Policy is available on the TDC The Dance Company Website and is displayed in the studio for all new and prospective participants.

The Child Safe Policy is communicated all staff, management, instructors and contractors of TDC

This Child Safe Policy is reviewed on a biennial basis by TDC management. Feedback or recommendations for changes can be submitted to Management for review.

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

Risk Management

TDC proactively manages risks and has a risk management framework and policies in place to identify, assess and mitigate risks to children in our care. Our terms and conditions and child safety policy covers the management of risks, such as occupational health and safety risks and risks of child abuse to children, which are outlined and distributed to all staff, parents/carers.

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. 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), and online environments.

If a risk is identified, the Child Safety Officer Director Lisa Hammer will be notified, followed by contact to the relevant families, authorities and/or any other individual identified will be made to ensure the child's safety is the number one priority.

Legislative Responsibilities

TDC The Dance Company takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose
- Failure to protect

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.

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.

General health & safety information

At TDC The Dance Company the safety and well-being of our students is our top priority. We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in accordance with the Victorian Government laws and regulations.

- All staff and volunteers at TDC are required to have a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) before working with children.
- We provide a safe and healthy environment for children, including appropriate supervision and risk management.
- We have a process in place for responding to and reporting suspected abuse or neglect of children.
- We have a code of conduct for staff, volunteers, and students that clearly states expectations for appropriate behaviour.
- We provide education and training for staff and volunteers on child safety and abuse prevention.
- We have a clear process for handling complaints or concerns about child safety.
- We have a process for selecting, recruiting and retaining staff and volunteers who are suitable to work with children.

We will be sharing with you our policies, standards and code of conduct shortly.

If you have any questions or concerns about our child safety standards, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Emergency protocols

Emergency evacuation maps, emergency exit signs and fire extinguishers are located around the premises.

Health & safety policy

INJURIES

It is the responsibility of the student or parent/guardian to inform TDC of any prior or current illnesses or injuries prior to enrolment or prior to class. In the event of an injury, TDC staff will assess and if deemed necessary, First Aid treatment will be administered. If medical services are necessary and an ambulance is required, TDC will NOT be liable for the costs - the student/parent will incur the costs. To manage any injuries on site, please note that physical contact may be required.

Any incidents will be recorded in our incident report folder.

SUPERVISION AND LEAVING THE PREMISES (INCLUDING EMERGENCY EVACUATION)

Children are not to exit TDC premises unless accompanied by an adult. Parents must ensure children understand this important guideline. Should students be collected from TDC by anyone other than a parent/guardian, TDC should be notified.

While not participating in dance class, children remain the responsibility of parents/guardians at all times. This includes siblings.

In the event of an emergency evacuation, TDC staff will follow set guidelines to ensure the safety of all students. The main evacuation assembly point is on the gravel area opposite the studio front entrance. Here, dancers will be supervised and parents/guardians will be contacted to collect students.

CCTV AND SECURITY ON THE PREMISES

TDC operates a CCTV system to deter anti-social and/or criminal behaviour. This system aims to provide a secure & safe environment for the children, parents / guardians, and staff involved. Access to the CCTV system display monitor will be limited to authorised staff only. Authorised staff include the office receptionists and the Director. Authorised staff will utilise the system for OHS (Occupational health and safety) and security reasons only.

It should be noted that cameras are not located in private areas, such as the toilets and/or change rooms. It should be noted that footage will not be used to assess or evaluate staff or student performance.

DRINK & ALLERGIES

TDC staff must be notified of any allergies that a student may have.

Any student who has been diagnosed by a Qualified Medical Practitioner as being at risk of anaphylaxis should bring an epipen to class and leave it at reception, labelled with their name. This epipen will be administered by a first aider if required, under the instruction of 000 staff if an emergency arises. TDC reserves the right to arrange medical transportation, at the student's expense, in the event of an emergency.

Waiver and release

During all such times that you are on TDC premises both your property and your person shall be at your own risk.

You agree that TDC shall not be liable for any loss, damage or theft of any property belonging to you or your guest (including minors) occurring on TDC premises except where caused by gross negligence of TDC.

Additionally, TDC shall not be liable for any death, personal injury or illness occurring to you or your guest (including minors) on TDC premises or as a result of the use of any facilities or equipment provided by TDC, except to the extent that such death, personal injury or illness occurs from the gross negligence of TDC.

Photography / Filming policy

Students, parents/guardians and guests are not permitted to video or photograph classes, students or staff at any time, unless given permission by the staff or individuals involved. Students' performance in the concert, rehearsals or during the year practice may be photographed, filmed and/or otherwise recorded for training and reference purposes.

Upon enrolment, students and their parents/guardians agree that images and recordings may be used for promotional material/ including being on the official website and social media for TDC. If you do not wish for your child to be photographed/recorded, please notify TDC reception upon enrolment. Please note: We have CCTV that operates within all TDC studios and foyer at all times.

Social media policy

We encourage students use social media in a positive and supportive manner at all times. We love to see our students support and "tag" their studio in dance related activities.

We of course find that social media is a great tool for staying connected with students and their families. As a side note, with over 150 students, it would be impossible for TDC to personally comment on and follow all of our students stories and posts all the time, let alone engage with every student within the school on social media on a daily basis. We of course support all our students no matter what and inability to always comment / like a posts is not a reflection of our commitment and support to them.

We have a number of staff who are responsible for our social media account.

Behaviour, conduct & grievance policy

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

TDC does not tolerate inappropriate communication including swearing, indecent or disrespectful language, defamatory comments, or indecent or disrespectful conduct from students, parents/guardians, family members or visitors. Any individual who demonstrates any of the above will be asked to withdraw from TDC immediately. This behaviour includes at the Premises or outside of the Premises, social media or on the internet.

Any person who does not comply with TDC's Terms and Conditions with regards to the Behaviour & Conduct Policy will forfeit their position at TDC and, to the extent permitted by law, will not be entitled any refund.

BULLYING

The following will not be tolerated in person, via email, via text messaging or via the internet: verbal abuse or shouting, physical abuse, excluding or isolating a person, psychological harassment, humiliating a person through sarcasm, criticism or insults, ignoring or belittling a person's contribution or opinion. Where any person feels that they are the victim of bullying, they should discuss the matter directly with the person/people concerned and request an end to the behaviour. Should this approach fail or be inappropriate, the victim can communicate with the teacher or contact the TDC office for assistance in resolving the matter.

GRIEVANCES

A grievance is a real or perceived cause for complaint. TDC recognises that open communication and feedback are essential elements of a satisfying and productive environment. Every effort will be made to solve problems cooperatively and informally before presenting them in writing as a formal grievance. Students can be assured that they will not be disadvantaged by the use of such procedures whether decisions are found for or against their grievance.

AGREEING TO TDC TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All Terms & Conditions are agreed to at the time of enrolment.

Enrolments will not be processed without the Terms & Conditions being agreed to.

It is the duty of parents and guardians to read the Terms & Conditions thoroughly before enrolling.

TDC reserves the right to update Terms & Conditions at any time.

ALL STUDENTS, PARENTS AND GUARDIANS AGREE TO ABIDE BY THESE TERMS, CONDITIONS AND POLICIES AUTOMATICALLY UPON ENROLMENT WITH TDC.

Record keeping

Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns.

All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

Records will be stored securely and kept by Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy for at least 45 years.

Information sharing

Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests. Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety. We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety. More information is available in our complaint handling policy.

Risk management

We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse in the physical and online environments operated by Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy.

We conduct regular risk assessments and have a risk management plan to address the risk of child abuse and harm at Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy. The risk management plan will be developed in consultation with our staff, volunteers, parent representatives and children. We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the benefits of participating at Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy. The Management Committee is responsible for approving the risk management plan.

Any contractors or other providers of services will always be supervised by a member of staff while working with us to ensure child safety. See also Code of Conduct above.

Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct

Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy will enforce this policy, the Code of Conduct and any other child safety and wellbeing policies (see list below). Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action. More information can be found in our disciplinary policy.

Review

Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy will review all child safe practices and policies at least every two years. We also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Findings from reviews will be reported to the people involved in our organisation and also inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices. Reviews are overseen by the Management Committee and will be informed by consultation with children, families and staff.

Supporting documents – Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy child safety and wellbeing system

- The following policies and procedures work together to support child safety and wellbeing across all of our operations:
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- complaint handling policy
- recruitment and screening policy
- disciplinary policy
- risk management plan
- child safe training plan.

Supporting legislation

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* (including Child Safe Standards)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* (including reporting to Child Protection)
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- *Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)* (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse)

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Child Safety Person

Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy has two trained child safety persons with responsibility for responding to any child safety related complaints or concerns.

Child safety persons are introduced to children so they know and understand who the appointed officers are, and how and when they may contact them. Photos and names of the child safety persons are displayed on our noticeboard and in our newsletters.

If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to a child safety person, they may report their concern to the Chair of the Management Committee.