

Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement of Commitment Ballarat Dance Works



PURPOSE

The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate the commitment of Ballarat Dance Works to child safety and wellbeing, and how our dance school keeps children safe from harm, including child abuse.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

All children who come to Ballarat Dance Works have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm. We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun while enjoying learning dance.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, teachers, children and other individuals involved in our organization and applies to all activities – classes, rehearsals and performances – conducted by Ballarat Dance Works.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director at Ballarat Dance Works, Pamela Waghorn, is primarily responsible for the implementation and conduct surrounding child safety and wellbeing and all related procedures, which includes:

- Staff recruitment, inductions, training and support
- Receiving and responding to complaints
- Risk assessment and management process
- Reporting, record keeping and information sharing
- Code of Conduct

All other employees and workers will support in the activation of this statement and Code of Conduct and the above procedures.

DEFINITIONS

Child/Children means a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse means:

- a sexual offence committed against a child
- an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
- physical violence against a child
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

Harm is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

Concerns and complaints

A concern refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction verbally or in writing to Ballarat Dance Works related to one or more of the following:

- our services or dealings with individuals
- allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, a volunteer or another individual associated with Ballarat Dance Works
- disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
- the conduct of a child or young person at Ballarat Dance Works
- the inadequate handling of a prior concern
- general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Ballarat Dance Works commitment to child safety is based on the following Government mandated standards that guide the organisational culture to protect the children in our care.

Our Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement of Commitment details how we comply to the Child Safe Standards and our Code of Conduct provides behavioural standards that all our teachers, staff and volunteers must abide by.

1. Cultural safety for Aboriginal children: At Ballarat Dance Works, we encourage and support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights. We provide a welcoming environment where a child has the ability to express their culture and actively support their cultural rights and racism of any kind will not be tolerated.
2. A commitment to child safety and wellbeing: Child safety and wellbeing is the foundation of the Ballarat Dance Works environment, stemming from the leadership and modelled throughout the organisation. We encourage anyone involved to report a child safety concern, and will work to create a positive culture around reporting so people feel comfortable raising concerns.
3. Taking child participation and empowerment seriously: Ballarat Dance Works empowers children and young people to enable them to communicate if they feel unsafe, express their views and raise concerns. This is implemented through supportive teachers and the encouragement of friendships as well as trust with the Director. We respect the rights of children and provide them with information about their rights including the right to be safe at Ballarat Dance Works.
4. Involving families and communities: Open communication at Ballarat Dance Works in relation to child safety is promoted within the community to families, ensuring everyone is kept informed and offered the opportunity to raise any views in relation to the wellbeing of their child.
5. Respecting equity and diversity: All children are treated equally at Ballarat Dance Works and any diverse needs are respected. We understand the importance of providing additional support to the needs of children and young people with disability, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and LGBTQIA+ children and young people. Discrimination of any kind based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.
6. Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported: All employees, teachers, guest teachers, contractors and volunteers at Ballarat Dance Works have current working with children checks and are provided with an appropriate induction to their responsibilities of keeping children and young people safe.
7. Child focused complaint system: Any complaints about child safety and wellbeing are handled directly with Pamela Waghorn, the Director. All concerns are welcomed to be raised with teachers, however it will be escalated to Pamela to manage. All complaints will be taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly ensuring privacy and employment law obligations are met.
8. Staff knowledge, skills and awareness: All Ballarat Dance Works team and volunteers have the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe and will be provided with training as required. Support is available from the Director.
9. Safe physical and online environments: Ballarat Dance Works recognises the importance of safety and mitigating risks within online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
10. Review of child safe policies and practices: At Ballarat Dance Works we regularly review, evaluate and improve on all child safe practices and our Code of Conduct.
11. Documenting policies and procedures: Ballarat Dance Works provides a Code of Conduct to all staff and volunteers on behavioural standards that aims to prevent, identify and mitigate risk to children and young people.

CODE OF CONDUCT

BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Where an employee, teacher or guest teacher breaches the Code, Ballarat Dance Works will take serious action that may lead to disciplinary measures or dismissal.

GENERAL COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

When working with children and young people, all bound by this code must:

1. Understand and adhere to the Ballarat Dance Works Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement of Commitment
2. Be familiar with and adhere to all relevant state and federal legislation around child safety and wellbeing
3. Ensure they do everything they can to protect children from abuse and harm
4. Promote the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people

5. Be aware and proactive in terms of all child safety and wellbeing issues
6. Provide appropriate supervision for children and young people
7. Treat all children equally and with respect

ENVIRONMENTS

When working with children and young people, all bound by this code must:

1. Provide a physically safe environment for children and young people
2. Provide areas where children can change clothes and use toilet facilities in private
3. Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all children and young people to interact and socialise

GENERAL BEHAVIOURS

When working with children and young people, all bound by this code must:

1. Not behave in a prejudicial or oppressive manner
2. Not use inappropriate language with or in the presence of children and young people
3. Not express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of children
4. Not discriminate against any child based on culture, age, gender, vulnerability, sexuality, race, ethnicity or disability
5. Not engage in any form of sexual conduct with a child, including making sexually suggestive comments or sharing sexually suggestive material
6. Not engage in any form of physical violence towards a child, including inappropriately rough physical play
7. Not use physical or corporal punishment to discipline or control a child
8. Not engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm, such as isolating, yelling at, harassing or humiliating a child
9. Not develop 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism

CHILD INTERACTION

When working with children and young people, all bound by this code must:

1. Behave as a positive role model to all children and young people.
2. Impart knowledge and skill of dance in a respectful and encouraging manner
3. Use positive and affirming language towards children and young people
4. During teaching ensure physical touch boundaries are established and everyone in the studio is aware of these guidelines
5. Encourage children and young people to express their ideas and listen to them with respect
6. Intervene when children are behaving inappropriately towards others

CHILD PRIVACY AND COMMUNICATION

When working with children and young people, all bound by this code must:

1. Engage in appropriate behaviours with regards to physical contact with children
2. Not be alone or engage in undisclosed private meetings with children
3. Not engage in any inappropriate personal communication with a child through any medium, including online contact or messenger groups
4. Keep all personal information about students and families confidential and never post any identifying information about a child online
5. Always obtain written consent from parents/carers before taking or publishing photos or videos

DIVERSITY

When working with children and young people, all bound by this code must:

1. Treat all children equally, regardless of background, culture, religious beliefs, disability and political differences
2. Encourage participation from linguistically and culturally diverse children and young people as well as children and young people with any kind of disability and promote their safety
3. Proactively contact Traditional owner groups or Registered Aboriginal Party in the area to ensure the organisation is welcoming, inclusive and culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their children
4. Encourage input from parents and families, and use their advice to make your school welcoming and culturally empowering for students of diverse cultural backgrounds, and for students with disabilities

REPORTING CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS

When working with children and young people, all bound by this code must:

1. Provide a comfortable environment to give the child or adult full attention so concerns can be expressed without interruption
2. Remain supportive and reassuring to comfort any distress, ask encouraging questions and let them know they've done the right thing
3. Let them know they will have to act on the information and let other people know
4. Create a detailed record of the interaction for investigation, including the date, time and location of disclosure, notes on the disclosure in the child's words and the child's demeanour
5. Report the disclosure to Pamela Waghorn immediately so that action can be taken
6. If the child is in immediate danger contact 000 or the appropriate external authorities
7. Respect the privacy of the situation and do not involve any more people than are necessary in the situation

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