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Author	Who Nic Clatk	Date May 2016
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Child Safe Policy

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1. Purpose

Australian National Memorial Theatre is strongly committed to child safety and establishing and maintaining a child safe and child friendly environment.

2. Context

This policy reflects our commitment to provide a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm.

It complies with our obligations under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.) *The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*

- child safe environments and criminal history assessments for people working with children; and
- Mandatory reporting.

3. Scope

This policy, from the date of endorsement, applies to all people involved in the organisation, including:

- employees (permanent and casual)
- volunteers
- contractors
- sub-contractors
- work experience students
- indirect service providers
- any other individual involved in this organisation

Implementation

All staff on employment or contract renewal have to sign to acknowledge having read and will abide by the Child Safe Policy.

Staff members first and foremost report to listed report on the agreements which is usually Head of Department/School or the CEO.

The Head of Department and CEO have responsibility to ensure sign off and acknowledgement by staff members of the Child Safe Policy.

4. Commitment to child safety

All children who come to Australian National Memorial Theatre have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our services and the welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority. We aim to create a

child safe and child friendly environment where all children are valued and feel safe.

We have appointed child safety officers (Ballet Administrator and Drama Administrator) as a first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents, employees and volunteers regarding the safety and well-being of children in our organisation (*note: is not a mandatory requirement for child safe policy*).

5. Children's participation

Australian National Memorial Theatre encourages and respects the views of children and young people who access our services via the Drama and Ballet School. We listen to and act upon any concerns that children, young people or their families raise with us. We teach children what they can do if they feel unsafe via our procedures outlined by teachers in our Policy and Procedures for Schools document. Information is also conveyed to Students via Student Handbook.

We ensure that children, young people and their families know their rights and how to access the complaints procedures available to them.

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

6. Recruitment practices

Australian National Memorial Theatre takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children as outlined in our Policy and Procedures for School documentation. We employ a range of screening measures and apply best practice standards in the screening and recruitment of employees and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all employees.

All Staff have to meet legislative requirements

- **Working with Children Check (WCC)** This is Victorian government policy under the **Working with Children Act 2005**
<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/purpose/working+with+children+act/>
- All teachers, staff and volunteers who deal with children on their own, that is, without parents in the room, are required to work within the guidelines of the Act and have a WCC
- **Police Check** – The National Theatre reserves the right to conduct a Police check on all staff prior to commencing employment.

- **The National Theatre uses the Child Family Community Australia (CFCA) resources sheets as an example of best practice:**

<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/pre-employment-screening-working-children-checks-and-police-checks>

We ensure that criminal history information is dealt with in accordance with The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and Working with Children Act 2005.

7. Code of Conduct

All staff members are made aware of, and must abide by, our Code of Conduct. June 2015.

8. Support for employees and volunteers

As per our Policies and Procedures for Schools, the Australian National Memorial Theatre seeks to attract and retain the best employees and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We ensure that employees/volunteers who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their capacity is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

Strategies we have implemented include:

- All new employees undergo induction and receive a copy of our child safe policy and code of conduct.
- All employees receive regular supervision sessions that include a focus on ongoing learning about child protection and other matters that affect children and young people.
- Child safety officers have been appointed as a first point of contact for all child protection matters.

9. Reporting and responding to suspected child abuse and neglect

Australian National Memorial Theatre will not tolerate incidents of child abuse. All incidents or suspected incidents must be reported.

All employees and volunteers are required to review this policy and understand their obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Hotline on 1800 991099 or Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78 (24 hours, 7 days a week, toll free within Victoria) as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected.

From time to time we provide opportunities for employees to attend information sessions about these mandatory reporting obligations (*Note: offering formal training for staff and volunteers is not a legal requirement*).

We also ensure that employees have access to relevant information resources such as:

- Child safe environment: Guidelines for mandated notifiers and information for organisations (available to view or download from

We ensure that support is also available for the employee making the report, particularly where an ongoing service is provided to the child, young person and their family.

Supporting children, young people and their families

Child Protection is everyone's responsibility. Australian National Memorial Theatre recognises that even where a report is made, we may still have a role in supporting the child or young person. This support may include:

- Referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services
- Displaying information about services that can assist children and their families (such as the Kids Helpline and Youth Health line) in areas accessed by children and their families.

Dealing with reports or concerns relating to the actions of an employee or volunteer of our organisation

In addition to making a report to the Child Abuse Report Line, employees and volunteers must also report to management if reasonable suspicion is formed that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected by another member, employee, or volunteer.

In response to any report to management concerning a member, employee or volunteer of this organisation, management may determine to take disciplinary action.

Other protective actions may also be introduced to ensure the safety of children and young people within our organisation.

Our Procedures and Policy for Schools and Code of Conduct acknowledge confidentiality as a compulsory fundamental requirement in these matters.

10. Strategies to minimise risk

The Australian National Memorial Theatre has a Risk Management Policy including Risk Register to manage organisational risk.

Policies and procedures may address (but are not limited to):

- Transportation
- Taking images of children
- Supervision of children

- Child safety officer
- Complaints procedures
- Physical contact
- Responsibilities
- Procedure for breaches of policy
- Training\cyber safe guidelines
- Protecting privacy and confidentiality
- Procedures for dealing with situations where a member is being investigated for, or is charged with, a serious criminal offence.

Evaluation of these strategies and the development of additional strategies to minimise and control risks to children and young people occur as part of our ongoing risk management process.

The Australian National Memorial Theatre also abides by GENERAL INDUSTRY STANDARDS such as the following

Ausdance – standards for **Safe Dance Practice**.

<http://ausdance.org.au/articles/details/safe-dance-practice>

LPA http://www.liveperformance.com.au/child_safety

11. Harassment/bullying

Australian National Memorial Theatre opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. We take this issue seriously and encourage anyone who believes that they, or another person, has been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise this issue with the School Administrator or management. Please see ANMT Anti-bully Policy.

12. Communication

Australian National Memorial Theatre will ensure that everyone to whom this policy applies is aware of and has had an opportunity to read the policy.

We also ask employees, volunteers and parents (where appropriate) to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and will abide by our child-safe policy. We retain a copy of all signed statements.

13. Related policies and procedures

This may include:

- *Code of conduct*
- *Policy and Procedures for the Schools including Working with Children Checks*
- *Risk Management Policy*

APPENDIX 1

Conducting Working with Children Checks assessments

Assessments required for prescribed positions

All employees and volunteers of Australian National Memorial Theatre who occupy a prescribed position are required to undergo a working with children assessment once every three years.

Working with Children assessments are also required prior to the appointment of new employees or members to prescribed positions.

This requirement applies to all employees who regularly work with or around children in an unsupervised capacity or have access to prescribed records relating to children.

APPENDIX 2

Child Protection guidelines for employees and volunteers of Australian National Memorial Theatre

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for employees and volunteers of this organisation.

All employees and volunteers of this organisation are responsible for promoting the safety and well-being of children and young people by:

- Ensuring the safety and welfare of the child or young person is paramount at all times.
- Treating all children and young people with dignity, equality and respect.
- Adhering to this organisation's child safe policy at all times.
- Listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people within the organisation.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people within the organisation.
- Ensuring children and young people understand their rights and explaining to the child in age-appropriate language what they can expect when participating in a service, activity or program offered by the organisation.
- Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any serious complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian.

- Notifying the **Child Abuse Report Hotline on 1800 991099** as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected.

Employees/volunteers will not:

- Take part in any unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person.
- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Develop any relationships with children or young people outside of the professional relationship.