

Child Safety Policy

Policy and Procedure Title	Child Safety Policy
Department	SCHOOLS
Policy Number	S10 V2
Prepared by	Shelley Wakefield
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Policy Endorsed By	TBC
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Last Revised By	Shelley Wakefield

1. Purpose of this Policy

The National Ballet and Drama Schools are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all children and young people. This policy outlines our commitment to child safety, wellbeing, and protection in line with the **Victorian Child Safe Standards** and **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**.

As a dance and drama studio, we recognise our legal and ethical responsibility to protect children from harm, abuse, and exploitation. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, guest teachers, students, and parents associated with our studio.

2. Our Commitment to Child Safety

At The National Ballet and Drama Schools, the safety, wellbeing, and protection of children and young people are our highest priorities. We are committed to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where all students feel valued, respected, and free to express themselves through dance and drama.

We have **zero tolerance** for any form of abuse, bullying, or inappropriate behaviour. Our policies and procedures align with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

We commit to:

- Ensuring all staff and volunteers hold valid Working With Children Checks (WWCCs) and receive child safety training.
- Maintaining strict professional boundaries, including social media and online communication policies.
- Providing clear, confidential reporting processes for concerns or complaints.
- Ensuring teaching practices promote physical, emotional, and psychological safety.
- Actively engaging parents and guardians in our child safety approach.
- Promoting cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal children and young people.
- Creating an inclusive and culturally safe environment for all children.
- Continuously reviewing and improving our child safety measures.

Child Safe Officer: Shelley Wakefield **Email:** office@nationaltheatre.org.au

3. Scope – Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to:

- All employees, teachers, and choreographers
- All volunteers, assistant teachers, and work-experience students
- All guest teachers, industry professionals, and adjudicators
- All students, parents, and guardians

4. Legal & Regulatory Responsibilities

This policy aligns with:

- **Victorian Child Safe Standards**
- **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**
- **Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)** – Failure to Protect & Failure to Report
- **Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic)**
- **Mandatory Reporting Guidelines for Child Abuse and Neglect**

National legislative alignment includes:

- Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
- Care and Protection of Children Act 2014 (NT)
- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 (QLD)
- Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (VIC)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (VIC)
- Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (TAS)

- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)

Our child safe framework is built on:

- *Keep Them Safe: A Shared Approach to Child Wellbeing* (NSW)
- *Child Safe Standards* (VIC)

As a child safe organisation, we:

- Maintain a visible culture of child safety
- Demonstrate strong leadership and governance
- Prioritise the safety of children in all decisions
- Implement clear policies and procedures
- Encourage participation and empowerment
- Assess and manage risks of abuse
- Engage with children to ensure their voices are heard
- Ensure inclusive approaches for children with disabilities, Aboriginal children, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

5. Child Safety Code of Conduct

All staff, volunteers, and contractors must:

- Treat all students with respect, kindness, and professionalism
- Prioritise student wellbeing over competition or reputation
- Avoid being alone in private spaces with students
- Use appropriate language, corrections, and physical contact
- Avoid private communication with students on personal social media
- Report any suspected abuse, grooming, or inappropriate behaviour immediately

Staff must never:

- Engage in sexualised, romantic, or overly personal relationships with students
- Use physical discipline or verbal abuse
- Allow favouritism, grooming behaviours, or inappropriate physical contact
- Transport students alone or meet privately outside studio activities

All personnel must:

- Adhere to this Child Safety Policy at all times
- Take reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Listen and respond to children's concerns
- Promote cultural safety for Aboriginal children
- Support children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Support children with disabilities
- Ensure adults are not left alone with a child where practicable

- Report allegations or concerns to the Child Safety Officer and management
- Ensure children are safe if an allegation is made
- Encourage children to participate and express their views

Personnel must not:

- Develop “special” relationships with children
- Engage in unnecessarily physical behaviour
- Put children at risk
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do themselves
- Discuss mature or adult topics in front of children
- Use inappropriate language
- Express discriminatory views
- Have unauthorised contact with children or families
- Ignore or disregard suspected abuse

6. Safe Physical & Online Environments

Physical Safety

- Maintain clear sightlines in studios
- Follow the open-door policy for private lessons
- Avoid isolated one-on-one situations
- Ensure age-appropriate costumes and choreography

Online Safety

- Staff must not friend, follow, or message students on personal accounts
- All communication must occur through official studio channels
- No photos or videos of students may be shared without parental consent

7. Working With Children Checks (WWCC) & Recruitment

All staff, teachers, and volunteers must:

- Hold a valid WWCC before commencing work
- Undergo reference checks
- Complete child safety training during induction

Studio owners must verify WWCCs annually and maintain accurate records.

8. Reporting & Responding to Concerns

Who can report?

Anyone — students, parents, teachers, staff, or volunteers.

How to report:

- **In person:** Child Safe Officer or Studio Owner
- **Email:** schools@nationaltheatre.org.au or office@nationaltheatre.org.au

External Authorities:

- Child Protection Services
- Police (immediate danger)
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

Our response:

- All concerns are taken seriously
- Reports are treated confidentially
- Action is taken immediately where required
- No student will face retaliation

Child Abuse:

Child abuse includes:

- Physical violence
- Sexual offences
- Serious emotional or psychological abuse
- Serious neglect

Call 000 immediately if a child is in danger.

All personnel must report to police if they reasonably believe a sexual offence has been committed against a child under 16.

Reasonable belief includes:

- A child discloses abuse
- A child discloses knowledge of abuse
- Another person reports abuse
- Observations or signs indicate abuse

A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold to enable authorities to act.

9. Parental & Community Involvement

Parents and guardians should:

- Be involved in their child's education
- Receive child safety policies upon enrolment
- Attend information sessions where available
- Raise concerns directly with studio leadership

10. Review & Continuous Improvement

The National Ballet and Drama Schools will:

- Conduct annual policy reviews
- Seek feedback from students, staff, and parents
- Implement new safety measures as best practice evolves

11. Acknowledgement & Agreement

All staff, volunteers, and guest teachers must sign this policy.

I confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to adhere to the Child Safety Policy at [Studio Name].

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Final Thoughts: Why This Matters

This policy is more than a legal requirement — it is a commitment to creating a culture that protects, uplifts, and supports young dancers. By implementing these standards, we ensure every child feels safe, valued, and inspired.