



Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

Purpose and Statement of Commitment

This Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy has been prepared by Southern Federation of Dance to demonstrate our commitment to child safety and to promote the importance of creating and maintaining a safe environment for the children in our care.

The safety and wellbeing of children is of fundamental importance to Southern Federation of Dance. We have zero tolerance for all forms of child abuse.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors involved with Southern Federation of Dance business and events, whether or not they work in direct contact with children. This includes, but is not limited to examiners, dance teachers, Committee of Management members, parents and adjudicators.

The Southern Federation of Dance Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy is to be read and understood in conjunction with the [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#) and Ministerial Order 1359, and the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) (Australian Human Rights Commission, National Principles).

Roles and Responsibilities

Child safety and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility at Southern Federation of Dance and everyone is expected to contribute to the safety and protection of children.

Committee of Management are expected to:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing

- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the community including at Conventions, Examiner Training and Teacher Training events
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

Adult staff, contractors and volunteers are expected to:

- ensure that students are given the opportunity to learn, perform and train in a safe, secure and nurturing environment
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students, including the use of positive, respectful language
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students
- respect the rights and privacy of children and their families
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by Southern Federation of Dance and follow child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

Children are expected to:

- *respect the rights and privacy of their fellow dancers*
- *use appropriate respectful language around fellow students and teachers*

Cultural Safety

We are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe environment where the strengths of all cultures, values and practices are respected.

Diversity & Equality

Southern Federation of Dance values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. We commit to ensuring our programs and facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

We recognise that some individuals, particularly children, face additional vulnerabilities to child abuse and other harm, as well as additional barriers to disclosing child safety incidents or concerns.

We tailor our child safe strategies to support the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people,
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds,
- children and young people with disabilities,
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence,
- international students,
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Empowerment & Participation

Southern Federation of Dance has a responsibility to:

- ensure children know about their rights to safety, information and participation;
- communicate with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe;
- actively seek children's voice in decisions that affect them;
- reinforce respectful relationships and ensure a sense of belonging.

Community Engagement

We are committed to providing members and community with accessible information about Southern Federation of Dance's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing. We will create opportunities for members to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

This policy is published on the Southern Federation of Dance's public website for members and the broader community.

Recruitment

Southern Federation of Dance applies robust processes to recruit staff and volunteers that are suitably skilled to work with children. All people engaged in child related work, including volunteers, are required to hold and maintain a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.

This policy is provided to new members, staff, contractors and volunteers.

Training & Supervision

We encourage our members and examiners to attend regular training on child safety. We provide training to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. Child protection training is mandatory for all examiners and committee members. Nominated staff members have been trained to deal with allegations of abuse.

We support our members and examiners to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

Risk Management

Southern Federation of Dance proactively manages risks to identify, assess and mitigate risks to children in our care.

Legislative Responsibilities

Southern Federation of Dance understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

Southern Federation of Dance takes our 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 under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

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 risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

Privacy & Information Sharing

Southern Federation of Dance collects, uses and discloses information about students and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws and other relevant laws, including laws that permit the association to disclose information about child safety and wellbeing to external people and agencies.

Program & Practice Review

Southern Federation of Dance is committed to the continuous improvement of our child safe practices. Processes and practices are reviewed regularly for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child safety related laws, regulations and standards.

Reporting Procedures

We encourage members, staff, volunteers, children or others to speak out if they witness behaviour or practices which are not safe for children. Anyone is able to raise a complaint, allegation or concern about our organisation's child safety practices. Complaints may be formal or informal, and may be anonymous. We treat all complaints, allegations or concerns raised with our organisation very seriously and respectfully.

If Southern Federation of Dance receives an allegation of abuse, the Executive Members of our Committee of Management or nominated staff member will investigate that allegation promptly, 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.

Reporting procedures may include the following, as appropriate in the given situation:

- external reporting to the appropriate agency which may include Child Protection, Police, The Orange Door (previously Child FIRST), eSafety Commissioner, and/or Commission for Children and Young People, consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions
- calling triple zero (000) and requesting urgent Police assistance if a child is in immediate danger
- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency, including sharing of information as required under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and/or the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme
- protecting any child connected to the child safety incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, a student with disability, and other vulnerable students (such as students who are unable to live at home or students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex)
- securing and retaining records of the incident or concern and the subsequent response
- taking broader actions to improve child safety at Southern Federation of Dance events
- supporting the child and keeping them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress

Review Timeline

Approved on: _____

Review Date: _____

Acknowledgement

Name: _____

Date: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____