



Child Safety Policy

The Australian Dance Council - Ausdance VIC

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Amendment 3

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The following content may contain discussions of sensitive topics related to child safety policies, including child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm. Please be advised that this content may be triggering or distressing for some individuals, especially those who have experienced trauma or abuse. It is important to prioritize your mental and emotional well-being and seek support if you feel triggered by this content.

Contact Information

Emergency	000
Victoria Police	13 14 44
Lifeline	13 11 14
Beyond Blue	1300 22 46 36

The Commission for Children and Young People - 1300 78 29 78 or [make a report to CCYP here](#)

Ausdance VIC leadership team

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You may call the Ausdance VIC office mobile at any time to speak with Ausdance VIC:

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Ausdance VIC acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live, work and dance. We celebrate the history and contemporary creativity of the world's oldest living culture and pay our respect to Elders – past and present.

We acknowledge the Yalukut Weelam Clan of the Boon Wurrung who are part of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the unceded land where our office is located.

Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 1

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic), Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Standard 1 – Culturally Safe Environment

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) minimum requirements:

- 1.1 A child’s ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
- 1.2 Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- 1.3 Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- 1.4 The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- 1.5 All of the organisation’s policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Ausdance VIC Commitment and Policy

Scope of policy

This standard and its objectives apply to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, Ausdance VIC, where appropriate. This includes all staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children, the executive leadership and the Board of Directors.

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 1

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic), Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Ausdance VIC Commitment

Ausdance VIC will create a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations children and their families whereby:

- children will be encouraged and actively supported to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights;
- staff, volunteers, members and the organisation's community will be equipped to acknowledge and appreciate, and to help others acknowledge and appreciate, the strengths of a child's culture and its importance to their wellbeing and safety;
- measures are in place to ensure racism is identified, and not tolerated;
- instances of racism will be met with appropriate consequences; and
- active support will be provided for the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations children and their families.

The Board of Directors will:

- approve the policy, plan or statement prior to 31 December 2022;
- ensure this policy, plan and statement are implemented;
- ensure all organisational policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment, meeting the needs of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations children and their families; and
- ensure that this policy is reviewed and amended regularly and where required.

Standard 1a – Aboriginal Wellbeing and Safety

Ausdance VIC embraces and celebrates the culture, knowledge and experiences of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations Peoples. We are committed to creating and maintaining an environment that empowers people to feel valued, respected and culturally strong.

Our organisation has a number of measures in place to ensure we acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of these cultures and support children to feel empowered and comfortable to express their culture. Ausdance VIC is committed to implementing, or continuing to implement, the measures set out below to achieve these objectives by 1 July 2023. A review of the success of these measures will be conducted at that time or when appropriate.

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Family and community perspectives and feedback

Ausdance VIC will actively seek participation and feedback from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations Peoples by:

- acknowledging the existing knowledge of First Nations students and their families and seeking their feedback on decisions that affect them, and on how well we are meeting their needs, through initial enrolment meetings, Student Support Groups and during the development of Individual Education Plans;
- asking our local traditional owners for advice on how we can create a culturally inclusive environment and to build our capacity to provide support for individuals engaged with our organisation; and
- partnering with members of the local Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations Peoples community to seek feedback and advice on existing and new actions we can take to support the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations Peoples children who are engaged within our organisation and to provide feedback and advice on actions that support diverse and unique identities and experiences.

Training and professional development of staff

Ausdance VIC will provide staff with the skills and knowledge necessary to create and maintain a positive and inclusive work environment by:

- regularly providing tailored training and professional development to build knowledge for specific staff based on any emerging or current areas of need;
- ensuring Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations cultural training and professional development is delivered by people with suitably qualified perspectives; and
- ensuring training and professional development equips staff with an understanding and appreciation of the strengths of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations culture

Events, meetings and gatherings

Ausdance VIC will ensure all our activities acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations culture by:

- acknowledging the Country and Traditional Owners of the land on which our primary office space is located along with the Country and Traditional Owners of the lands of which participants are joining;

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- arranging a Welcome to Country by local Elders at major organisational events where possible; and
- recognising and highlighting key events and anniversaries that celebrate Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations culture.

Digital environment

Ausdance VIC will ensure our digital environment and website demonstrates an appreciation and acknowledgment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture by:

- including an Acknowledgement of Country and Traditional Owners on our website home page; and
- including an Acknowledgement of Country and Traditional Owners on all documents intended for external delivery.

Resources and References

Please refer to Ausdance VIC document '**Resources and References**'.

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Draft 3	26/01/2023	Board of Directors 01/02/2023	1 July 2023

Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 2

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 2

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Standard 2 – Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) minimum requirements:

- 2.1 The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety.
- 2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up.
- 2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at all levels.
- 2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- 2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- 2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

Ausdance VIC Commitment and Policy

Purpose

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our organisation has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

The Ausdance VIC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our organisational commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe. Children have the fundamental right to be safe

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from any form of abuse or neglect. We are committed to acting in the best interests of children and young people in our care and in keeping them safe.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our children, students within our RTO, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

This policy informs our sector of everyone’s obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of children across all areas of our work.

Scope

This policy:

- applies to all Ausdance VIC Board members, staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children.
- applies in all physical and online environments used by children during or outside of organisation hours, including other locations provided by for a child and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related policies section below.

Statement of commitment to child safety

Ausdance VIC is committed to being a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where children are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices will continue to be inclusive of the needs of all children.

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We have a zero tolerance approach to child abuse and will take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to children in our environments.

We promote positive relationships between children and adults and between children and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to children in our environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, First Nation's children, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international children, children with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as Intersex or lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse and queer (LGBTQ+) and other children experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting children based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, is not tolerated at our organisation, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Directors

Our organisation's Board of Directors are responsible for ensuring that senior employees within Ausdance VIC discharge their responsibilities concerning child safety with care and diligence, such that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented.

The Board will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture both internally and externally;
- ensure that child safe policies are an annual agenda item for review, including the organisation's Child Safety Induction manual;

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- identify and assign responsibility to suitably qualified and experienced senior staff for ensuring Ausdance VIC's compliance with the Child Safe Standards, and ensure that this responsibility is reflected in delegation charters and relevant employment documentation;
- monitor and hold members of the senior leadership team accountable for the performance of duties relating to identifying, preventing and reducing risks of child abuse and harm;
- ensure that Board appointees and applicants for Board appointments are screened for suitability for working in a child safe organisation;
- hold members of the Board and senior leadership team accountable for breaches of child safety policies and procedures;
- undertake internal and external child safe training; and
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with, the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Senior leadership team

Ausdance VIC's senior leadership team, namely its Executive Director and General Manager, must:

- ensure that risk assessment, supervision and management practices in the organisation are properly focused on identifying, preventing and reducing risks of child abuse and harm, with a particular focus on higher-risk activities.
- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed, and that members of the community are made aware of those policies and procedures;
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of children, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing;
- enable inclusive practices where the needs of all children are considered;
- reinforce robust standards of respectful behaviour among children and adults, including through implementing appropriate disciplinary processes if staff, volunteers and (where applicable) contractors are alleged to have breached child safety policy and procedure;

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- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues amongst stakeholder groups, including at leadership meetings, staff meetings, partnership meetings and Board meetings;
- provide professional learning / development for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety and child wellbeing, as well as how to prevent and respond to instances of child abuse;
- monitoring the organisation’s compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our organisation community should approach members of the organisation leadership team if they have any concerns about the organisation’s compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
- informing the organisation community about this policy, and making it publicly available;
- meeting regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing, which provides an opportunity for children to have input into organisation strategies and monitors the Child Safety Risk Register; and
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns can be raised safely, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

For recruitment and engagement, the senior leadership team will ensure that:

- the selection process includes the collection of a valid Victorian Working with Children Check and the contractual commitment to complete and pass the organisation’s internal Child Safety Induction; and
- current and new employee contracts are updated to ensure that all employees, volunteers, contractors and subcontractors who engage with Ausdance VIC hold a valid Victorian Working with Children Check (or registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, if applicable) and complete and pass the organisation’s internal Child Safety Induction.

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Staff generally

All staff, Board members, contractors, sub-contractors and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the organisation and always follow the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures;
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- ensure children' opinions are taken seriously and their voices are heard relating to decisions which affect their lives and safety; and
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of children.
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviour between adults and children. It also clarifies behaviour that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

The Code of Conduct articulates our expectations to everyone that is connected to us and our activities. We aim to ensure that children also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the organisation.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

Ausdance VIC will identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online organisation environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our organisation leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

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Establishing a culturally safe environment

Ausdance VIC is committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe organisation where the strengths of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations culture, values and practices are respected.

Our aim is to provide every child with a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nation children and their families, we recognise the link between culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for children and their communities to have a voice and presence in our planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nation children in our organisation:

- beginning events, meetings and activities with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item;
- prioritising Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nation voices as part of decision making in matters that affect them;
- celebrating the local Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nation community in communications, including sharing information through organisation newsletters, social media, events and activities;
- championing safety and inclusion for all Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nation and their families;
- learning more about Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nation histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia; and
- building organisation-wide knowledge of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nation histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes.

Child empowerment

Ausdance VIC aims to support child safety and wellbeing. We will continue to work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages children and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

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Respectful relationships between children are reinforced and we encourage friendships and peer support in the organisation to ensure a sense of safety and belonging. This is achieved through our approach to child wellbeing including our organisational values.

We will inform children of their rights through our organisation-wide approach to child safety. We will ensure our children know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we will encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Children and families will also have access to information on how to report concerns at the organisation.

When the organisation is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the child and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed throughout the process.

Family engagement

To support family engagement, Ausdance VIC is committed to providing families with accessible information about our child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will encourage families to have input into the development and review of our child safety and wellbeing policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We will do this by:

- ensuring our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures will be available for children and families;
- electronic direct mailouts and social media will inform members and the sector about any significant updates to our child safety and wellbeing policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure child safety; and
- including our Child Safety policies in all RTO-related handbooks.

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Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our sector, children, families and members and promote environments free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw upon.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nation children and young people;
- children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- children and young people with disabilities;
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence;
- international children and young people;
- children and young people who identify as LGBTQ+; and
- children and young people who identify as intersex or gender non-binary.

Suitable staff and volunteers

At Ausdance VIC, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all board members, staff, sub-contractors, contractors, and volunteers are suitably qualified and educated to work with children and young people.

Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, we require all successful candidates to:

- provide us with a current Victorian Working with Children's Check (or registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, if applicable);
- fully read and understand our Child Safety policies and procedures;

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- complete our internal Child Safety induction modules aligned to this policy and the 11 Child Safe Standards; and
- declare any potential conflicts which may put the safety of children and young people at any level of risk.

When engaging staff, contractors, subcontractors or volunteers to perform child-related work, we will also sight, verify and record the person's valid Victorian Working with Children clearance (or registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, if applicable) and if relevant any equivalent background checks such as proof of identity, professional qualifications or a national police check.

Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety induction program. The program includes:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document);
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures; and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that organisation leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role, as may be amended or introduced from time to time.

The induction is aligned with the 11 Child Safe Standards set out by the Commission for Children and Young people which came into effect on 1 July, 2022.

Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All board, staff, subcontractors, contractors and volunteers engaged in child-connected work will be held appropriately accountable to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

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Board members, staff, subcontractors, contractors and volunteers will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by observation, performance and development processes.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our organisation policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to meet the standards set out in the policy and in their individual agreements in order to be engaged with the organisation. Without exception, all volunteers must:

- provide us with a current Victorian Working with Children’s Check (or registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, if applicable);
- fully read and understand our Child Safety policies and procedures;
- complete our internal Child Safety induction modules aligned to this policy and the 11 Child Safe Standards; and
- declare any potential concerns (whether substantiated or otherwise) with their suitability to work with children and young people.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that roles and responsibilities develop everyone's capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters. In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in an annual review of the child safe policies and procedures and partake in skill development programs to ensure the safety of children and young people remains paramount.

Other learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

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Board training and education

To ensure our Board of Directors are equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of child safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our organisation environment, the Board will receive training on at least a bi-annual basis, either at the commencement or renewal of their term.

This training will include:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse;
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our organisation and sector;
- fully read and understand our Child Safety policies and procedures;
- complete our internal Child Safety induction modules aligned to this policy and the 11 Child Safe Standards;
- declare any potential conflicts which may put the safety of children and young people at any level of risk; and
- undertake any necessary update training modules.

Complaints and reporting processes

Ausdance VIC fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, children, parents, and the organisation's broader community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety. The purpose of this reporting culture is to make it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant organisation staff have been informed, we will ensure our organisation follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child; and
- the [Four Critical Actions: Child Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to child sexual offending.

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Communications

Ausdance VIC is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the organisation community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website;
- updates in our organisation EDM's and Social Media communications; and
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at organisation leadership meetings, staff meetings and organisation board meetings.

Privacy and information sharing and records management

Ausdance VIC collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws.

Ausdance VIC acknowledges that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy.

Ausdance VIC will ensure that staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of their obligations with respect to information sharing and record keeping through training and compliance monitoring.

Review of child safety practices

At Ausdance VIC, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident;
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice; and
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with organisation staff and our organisation community.

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Policy status and review

The Board are responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from children, parents/carers and the community.

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Standard 2a – Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Purpose

This Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of our organisation community when interacting with children.

The Code serves to protect children and promote child safety, by setting expectations of conduct which will reduce opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. The Code provides guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid situations which may potentially put adults at risk of breaching the Code, and how to report a breach.

As the peak body for dance education, Ausdance VIC will communicate this Code throughout the Victorian Dance sector to ensure our members and non-members are aware of the Child Safety Standards and expectations.

All Ausdance VIC staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, and Board members must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by children. It applies during and outside of normal business hours and outside of Ausdance VIC's premises.

Acceptable behaviour

Ausdance VIC, staff, volunteers, contractors, and Board members are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding our Ausdance VIC commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our child safety policies and procedures;
- keeping personal information about students and their families confidential;

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 2

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- treating children and families in our organisation community with respect in our organisation environment and outside our organisation environment as part of normal social and community activities;
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or child have been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or themselves. We will actively seek input from parents and families, and use their advice for welcoming and culturally empowering for students of diverse cultural backgrounds, and for students with disabilities;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, international children, children who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) children;
- respecting all differences, including cultural, religious and political differences;
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a child – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult;
- where performing work at a school or any other third party organisation, complying with that organisation’s child safety and student safety policies and procedures;
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Child Safety Champion;
- understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our child safety responding and reporting policy and procedures;
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(s) are safe and protected from harm;
- showing children that they respect them and their rights, and prioritising the needs and concerns of children;
- providing a safe environment for children and young people both physically and online, including having an understanding of higher-risk activities in these environments;

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 2

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- providing areas where children can change clothes and use toilet facilities in private;
- providing physically safe dance facilitation and teaching practices;
- using positive and affirming language towards children and young people;
- encouraging children and young people to express their ideas and listen to them with respect; and
- intervening when children are behaving inappropriately towards others.

Unacceptable behaviours

Ausdance VIC staff, volunteers, contractors and Board members involved in child-connected work must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm, including concerns arising from overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a child;
- develop a relationship with any child that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts);
- display behaviours or engage with children in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context;
- engage in overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a child;
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except for the purpose of enforcing the organisation's behavioural standards and providing education on child safety matters;
- treat a child or group of children unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity;
- communicate directly with a child through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.), or request from or provide to a child personal contact details, except where necessary for the performance of the individual's duties to Ausdance VIC, or for discharging the organisation's duty of care to the child (e.g. in an emergency);

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- photograph or video-record a child, except in accordance with the terms of a signed agreement by a parent or guardian providing consent;
- consume alcohol in breach of Ausdance VIC's policy or take illicit drugs in the presence of children;
- have contact with any child outside of organisation hours except when necessary for the performance of the individual's duties to Ausdance VIC or for discharging the organisation's duty of care to the child, and (except in an emergency) where prior permission has been granted in writing by the Child Safety Champion;
- allow or encourage any child to engage in sexually suggestive behaviour, or any conduct with sexual connotations, in relation to any activity associated with Ausdance VIC. This includes choreography, costumes and themes in class, rehearsal and performance;
- engage in any form of physical violence towards a child, including inappropriately rough physical play;
- use physical or corporal punishment to discipline or control a child; or
- 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.

Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All Ausdance VIC staff, volunteers, contractors and Board members who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with Ausdance VIC's reporting policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Ausdance VIC Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Executive Director or General Manager the designated Child Safety Champions, via email to victoria@ausdance.org.au.

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 2

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the senior leadership team, complaints or notifications may be reported to the President of the Board via ausdancevic.board@gmail.com.

Review

This standard, as well as the actions that have been outlined above (including their implementation and their success) will be reviewed at least every 2 years and more frequently when appropriate.

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Draft 3	26/01/2023	Board of Directors 01/02/2023	1 July 2023

Compliance: Child Safe Standards Ministerial Order No. 870 and Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 3
Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Standard 3 – Child Empowerment

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) minimum requirements:

- 3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including safety, information and participation.
- 3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- 3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.
- 3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- 3.5 Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.
- 3.6 Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

Ausdance VIC Commitment and Policy

Scope of policy

This standard and its objectives apply to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, Ausdance VIC., where appropriate. This includes all staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and

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Compliance: Child Safe Standards Ministerial Order No. 870 and Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 3
Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children, the executive leadership and the Board of Directors.

Standards of behaviour for children associated with the organisation

The right for children to engage with and feel safe is underpinned by clearly articulated and well promoted standards of behaviour. Standards of behaviour extend across the organisation community (children, staff, Board members, contractors, sub-contractors, volunteers and parents/carers), setting a positive tone for safe and supportive relationships, articulating clear boundaries and supported pathways for children.

Ausdance VIC will ensure that there is a process in place to support or discipline (as appropriate) children who:

- are impacted by the behaviour of others (ensuring children know when and how to seek help); and
- who do not uphold the behaviour standards (ensuring that there is support for children to address and mitigate these behaviours and address any underlying factors).

Standards of behaviour at Ausdance VIC also extend to online environments. Setting clear online standards of behaviour helps to prevent cyber-bullying and helps to keep children safe from predatory behaviour.

Healthy and respectful relationships

Ausdance VIC recognises that evidence from studies has indicated that:

- equipping children with the skills to build positive relationships and communicate respectfully is essential preparation for productive and healthy adult lives;
- building resilience (the ability to cope and thrive in the face of negative events, challenges or adversity) has a positive impact on both social and academic outcomes, and is particularly critical for children who may be impacted by abuse; and
- children who are well informed about sexuality are more likely to make positive and informed decisions and less likely to place themselves at risk in adolescence.

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Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Standards of behaviour for children attending the organisation

REQUIREMENT

We expect that children engaging with Ausdance VIC will:

- be respectful of others, including children and adults;
- act inclusively;
- follow the rules (of engagement or of the space) and support others to follow the rules, such as arrival + departure, keeping the space safe, safe dance instruction, privacy, social media; and
- communicate difficulties with adults in charge.

AUSDANCE VIC PRACTICE

- Ausdance VIC will engage children when reviewing these standards.
- These standards empower children to speak up and be heard.
- These standards are promoted across the organisation community and regularly reviewed.
- The organisation draws on evidence-based materials to deliver child abuse awareness and prevention education to build child capacity to:
 - identify when they feel safe and unsafe and when they are at risk
 - identify safe and unsafe touching (using the anatomical names for their body parts)
 - promote their personal safety (avoiding harm where possible)
 - seek help, using their identified safety networks
 - overcome barriers to disclosure (e.g. guilt or disbelief)

Ausdance VIC representatives engaging with children will apply child abuse awareness and prevention education strategies to build the capacity of children in our care to:

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Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- identify when they feel safe and unsafe and when they are at risk;
- identify safe and unsafe touching (using the anatomical names for their body parts);
- promote their personal safety (avoiding harm where possible);
- seek help, using their identified safety networks; and
- overcome barriers to disclosure (e.g. guilt or disbelief).

Ausdance VIC will:

- educate and engage with children about their rights, about the kind of safe environment they deserve and how to raise concerns and access support services;
- provide processes or opportunities for children to participate and contribute to decision-making on issues that affects them, including on safety and wellbeing issues;
- seek out the views of children and encourage their participation;
- ensure information and/or training is provided to staff and volunteers so they understand the rights of children, as well as recognise and act on the signs of child abuse and harm;
- train our staff and volunteers to develop skill in engaging with children and including/encouraging them to participate in decision-making;
- promote friendships and peer support for children; and
- offer sexual abuse prevention information to children (where appropriate and as needed).

Resources and References

Please refer to Ausdance VIC document '**Resources and References**'.

Review

This standard, as well as the actions that have been outlined above (including their implementation and their success) will be reviewed at least every 2 years and more frequently when appropriate.

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Compliance: Child Safe Standards Ministerial Order No. 870 and Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 3
Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

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Compliance: Child Safe Standards: Standard 4

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Standard 4 – Family Engagement

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) minimum requirements:

- 4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child.
- 4.2 The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.
- 4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation’s policies and practices.
- 4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation’s operations and governance.

Ausdance VIC Commitment and Policy

Scope of policy

This standard and its objectives apply to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, Ausdance VIC., where appropriate. This includes all staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children, the executive leadership and the Board of Directors.

Overview

This standard highlights the importance of an open and transparent child safe culture for families and communities.

Ausdance VIC will provide families and communities with accessible information about their child safe policies and practices and involve them in their approach to child safety and wellbeing.

Benefits of keeping families and communities informed

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Compliance: *Child Safe Standards: Standard 4*

Relevant Legislation: *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*

Ausdance VIC recognises that involving families and communities in decisions relating to their children's safety and wellbeing:

- recognises the important role they play in monitoring children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to disclose concerns;
- creates an open and transparent culture;
- promotes a greater understanding of child safety; and
- encourages them to raise concerns or ideas for improvement.

Providing accessible and inclusive child safe information encourages families to engage in child safety and wellbeing discussions.

Actions

Ausdance VIC will:

- invite families to participate in child safety and wellbeing decisions which affect their child through consultation meetings and surveys;
- engage and openly communicate with families and the organisation community about its child safe approach by making our policies accessible;
- make child safety information easily accessible on our website and in RTO packs;
- Ensure our partners have access to our policies and procedures; and
- inform families and carers about the organisation's governance and approach to child safety and wellbeing, including roles and responsibilities of organisation staff.

Ausdance VIC will also consider:

- how families can participate in decisions that impact their child;
- how families and communities are given information about the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies;
- how the organisation provides information about the organisation's governance and operations, complaints processes and disciplinary processes;
- how the organisation seeks and responds to feedback from family and community members;

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Compliance: Child Safe Standards: Standard 4

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- ways the organisation seeks the input of families and communities on the organisation's approach to child safety and wellbeing; and
- how the organisation engages with families and communities to build cultural safety for children in the organisation.

Ausdance VIC and our partners will take the following actions to support family engagement and to create a welcoming environment:

- nominate a contact person for new enrolments and provide their details in induction materials or organisation packs;
- provide new enrolments with family welcome packs that include information about child safety, the organisation's complaints processes and how to raise concerns;
- conduct open days or host community events, such as an information night, and events to welcome families and the broader community. This could be managed by Ausdance VIC, but in most cases this will be actions that our VCE VET partners will lead on;
- create a welcoming environment so community children and families feel respected, included, and safe to attend the organisation; and
- Ausdance VIC will communicate our expectations re child safety and family engagement to our delivery partners through Professional Learning Days, EDMs, internal communications and our Working with Children Induction program.

Ausdance VIC will engage families and communities in building a child safe organisation by:

- asking parents and carers about their children. This can be in formal and informal settings;
- providing parents and carers with information about children's rights via newsletters, EDM's, web updates and direct communications; and
- regularly engaging with parents, carers and children and discuss the needs of children

Ausdance VIC will provide regular opportunities to communicate by:

- providing frequent opportunities for parents and carers to engage with staff to discuss their children's experiences;

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Compliance: Child Safe Standards: Standard 4

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- organising interpreters and translations to engage families from non-English speaking backgrounds in conversations about the organisation’s child safety strategies;
- asking families and carers about their preferred methods of communication, including email, phone calls, meetings and workshops and use their responses to inform the organisation’s communications approach;
- incorporating child safety questions in parent and carer surveys to measure awareness and confidence in the organisation’s child safety approach and to support ongoing improvement; and
- communicating with and appropriately involve families at all stages of the process if a concern raised or complaint is made.

Ausdance VIC will reflect the diversity of the organisation community by:

- making communications inclusive;
- normalising diversity and reflecting the characteristics of the Victorian dance sector;
- selecting venues that are physically accessible, welcoming and culturally safe; and
- encouraging positions from people of diverse backgrounds, including people with a disability, Aboriginal people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Ausdance VIC will provide inclusive and accessible information by:

- making sure child safety information is easy to read. Consideration will be given to font size, font style, colours used, formatting and visual presentation;
- providing links to the organisation’s child safety and wellbeing policies;
- checking that the children, organisation staff, and members of the organisation community know who to contact if they have a concern about child safety. There will be a focus on keeping this information up to date and accessible and to review it regularly;
- using images and other accessibility aids to help child safety information be understood by families that have low literacy or vision; and
- translating child safety information into multiple languages.

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Compliance: Child Safe Standards: Standard 4

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Ausdance VIC will build family and community involvement in child safety into “business as usual” by:

- making child safety a standing item at Board meetings;
- reporting on the outcomes of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children to show transparency and accountability;
- encouraging families and carers to advocate for their children and champion their safety while attending organisational events;
- promoting [Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships Education](#);
- acknowledging the important role that families and communities play in monitoring children’s safety and wellbeing and helping children to disclose concerns; and
- communicating with and appropriately involving families at all stages of the process if a concern or complaint is raised.

Review

This standard, as well as the actions that have been outlined above (including their implementation and their success) will be reviewed at least every 2 years and more frequently when appropriate.

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 5

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Standard 5 – Diversity and Equity

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) minimum requirements:

- 5.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people’s diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- 5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- 5.3 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- 5.4 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Ausdance VIC Commitment and Policy

Scope of policy

This standard and its objectives apply to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, Ausdance VIC, where appropriate. This includes all staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children, the executive leadership and the Board of Directors.

Overview

This standard focuses on creating environments where all children and young people feel welcome.

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 5

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Equity is a state of fairness in which all children and young people can participate freely and equally in areas of life, regardless of their background, characteristics, or beliefs. This means their safety is not dependent on their socio-economic, family, or personal circumstances.

As part of this standard, Ausdance VIC will:

- recognise and respond to children’s diverse circumstances;
- understand that some children are at higher risk of harm than others;
- provide easy access to information;
- adjust procedures to respond to different needs; and
- make sure complaints processes are child-friendly, culturally safe and easy to understand.

Benefits of respecting equity and diverse needs

Children and young people have unique abilities, skills and life experiences. Differences in backgrounds, personality and beliefs shape a child’s experiences and needs. Their individual identity and sense of self can be fundamental to their wellbeing.

Children have better opportunities to fulfill their potential when diversity is valued. Negative experiences like exclusion and discrimination can be harmful. They increase the risk of harm and abuse to a child and decrease the likelihood of them telling someone and receiving an effective response.

Upholding equity and respecting diverse needs are relevant in implementing all of the Child Safe Standards.

Actions to support diversity and equity

- Ausdance VIC Child Safety Induction training will help our staff, delivery partners and volunteers to recognise the range of diverse child and family attributes.
- Ausdance VIC aims to identify and address challenges that children experience due to their diverse attributes, paying attention to:

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 5

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- the needs of children with disability and responses to disability;
- the needs of children from diverse religious and cultural communities;
- the needs of very young children and children;
- the impact of prior trauma;
- gender differences;
- the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) children;
- challenges for children who are in foster care, out of home care, living away from home or international children;
- children experiencing pregnancy or who are young parents;
- socio-economic factors (experiencing family homelessness, insecure employment or accommodation, individual or family contact with the justice system, poverty, addiction, low educational attainment, remote or regional isolation);
- diverse child cohorts and individuals in your community, recognising that these children may have higher risk of harm;
- normalising asking for and using people’s preferred pronouns and names for children; and
- using contemporary, culturally sensitive and inclusive examples when discussing families, relationships or professions and vocations.

Ausdance VIC will put in place policies and strategies to help meet the diverse needs of children and ensure the organisation’s environments are welcoming and inclusive, for example by:

- providing child safety information in accessible, child-friendly language and formats;
- accompanying child safety information with the support materials needed to help children and families interpret it;
- anticipating the needs of children from diverse backgrounds and life circumstances, which includes a recognition that not all children will feel equally empowered to ask for what they need;

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 5

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- providing staff and volunteers with training to identify and address racism, bullying and discrimination;
- creating opportunities to remind staff and volunteers about child diversity and accommodating children and young people’s needs; and
- seeking out expert advice as needed to support inclusion, such as an occupational therapist, speech pathologist, provision planning.

Ausdance VIC will identify and address challenges that children experience due to their diverse attributes by:

- engaging genuinely with children, by finding out what matters to them, what they know and don’t know about safety, and what they need to be safe and feel safe;
- communicating that discrimination and bullying are not tolerated. Where incidents of bullying or discrimination occur, these will be addressed in line with organisation’s policy;
- informing children that they can raise concerns or report incidents that occurred within the organisation and outside the organisation;
- validating children’ feelings, recognising that children may feel that they have not been listened to or believed in the past;
- offering buddying and mentoring for children who are at risk of social isolation;
- discussing how children feel about discussing their personal circumstances and respect their wishes. Note that where staff or volunteers have formed a reasonable belief that sharing information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to an individual’s life, health, safety or welfare, they may be required to share information despite the wishes of the child that their information remain confidential;
- taking a holistic approach when responding to family violence; and
- responding to family violence in a way that is accessible, culturally responsive, safe, child-centered, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

Ausdance VIC will support diversity through organisation planning and resources by:

- recognising dates that connect with our organisation community, for example:

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 5

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- Cultural Diversity Week (March)
 - Hearing Awareness Week (March)
 - IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexes' and Transphobia, (May)
 - National Reconciliation Week (May/June)
 - Crazy Hair Day (Cystic Fibrosis Awareness (May))
 - World Mental Health Day (October)
 - International Day of Persons with Disability (December)
- using images of children with diverse characteristics in organisation publications to reflect the organisation community (keeping in mind the unique sensitivities of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and First Nations Peoples).

Review

This standard, as well as the actions that have been outlined above (including their implementation and their success) will be reviewed at least every 2 years and more frequently when appropriate.

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 6

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Standard 6 – Suitable Staff and Volunteers

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) minimum requirements:

- 6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasize child safety and wellbeing.
- 6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.
- 6.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- 6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Ausdance VIC Commitment and Policy

Scope of policy

This standard and its objectives apply to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, Ausdance VIC, where appropriate. This includes all staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children, the executive leadership and the Board of Directors.

Overview

This standard focuses on ensuring that people who work with children and young people are suitable and supported to act in a child safe way. Organisations should make child safety and wellbeing a key consideration when recruiting staff and volunteers.

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 6

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

As part of this standard, Ausdance VIC will:

- develop robust procedures to ensure only suitable people work with children;
- supervise staff and volunteers to ensure they prioritise the safety of children; and
- support staff and volunteers to understand their responsibilities.

Benefits of recruiting suitable staff and volunteers

Ausdance VIC recognises that selecting suitable people to work with children is vital to protecting children from harm. It is acknowledged that good recruitment practices:

- create a safer workplace;
- reduce the opportunity for harm to occur;
- prevent, screen out or deter people who are unsuitable to work or volunteer with children; and
- recruit staff who uphold the organisation.

Recruitment Actions

To comply with this standard, Ausdance VIC will:

- make sure job advertisements have clear statements about:
 - the job’s requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing;
 - the job occupant’s essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- advise job applicants about the child safety practices of the organisation, including the Code of Conduct;
- make volunteers aware of the organisation’s Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- screen organisation staff applicants:
 - sight, verify and record a Working with Children clearance;

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- collect and record proof of identify, qualifications, history of working with children and references.
- screen volunteers:
 - sight, verify and record a Working with Children clearance;
 - consider the child safety risks relevant to the volunteer’s role and, if reasonable and appropriate collect and record proof of identify, qualifications, history of working with children and references.
- provide an induction to staff, volunteers and contractors engaged in child-related work, regarding child safety and wellbeing that is appropriate to the nature of the role;
- ensure that induction addresses the following Ausdance VIC policies and procedures:
 - the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
 - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
 - procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse.
- make sure staff, organisation council members, and volunteers engaged in child-connected work, are aware of their responsibilities for:
 - children;
 - information sharing and reporting obligations;
 - recordkeeping obligations.
- provide supervision and people management of staff and volunteers that focuses on child safety and wellbeing.

Examples of actions that Ausdance VIC will take to engage suitable staff and volunteers

Robust recruitment and screening

- Ensure recruitment advertisements for staff in child connected work contain:
 - the job’s requirements, including expected knowledge of child development appropriate to the role;
 - an outline of duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing; and

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- essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- Provide all job applicants with the organisation’s Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct and links to child safety resources.

Screening

- Include selection criteria relevant to the role, such as:
 - experience working with children, or particular groups of children, including children with a disability or Aboriginal children;
 - engaging with families;
 - child safety experience; and
 - cultural safety in their work.
- Screen all staff, volunteers, leaders and organisation governing Board members for their suitability during recruitment.

Interviews

- Think carefully about who will be on the interview panel and ensure panel members have the right skills and experience to perform their role.
- Ensure that panel members are provided with information and guidance on how to prioritise child safety in the recruitment process, including how to identify and manage any child safety concerns raised through the application, interview and screening process.
- Develop values-based questions about child safety in job interviews to establish suitability.
- Seek referees for both staff and volunteers as appropriate, including their last employer, and overseas referees if they’ve worked overseas.
- Ask referees about the person’s character and experience in working directly with children and young people.

Supervision and people management focused on child safety and wellbeing

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Ausdance VIC will:

- undertake a risk assessment (refer to [Standard 9](#)) to determine what level of ongoing supervision and management is necessary to ensure staff and volunteers perform their role in a way that promotes child safety and wellbeing;
- set out standards for child safety performance in staff contracts and state how performance will be assessed;
- include child safety considerations in supervision between people managers and individual staff;
- give line managers guidance on steps to take when managing a staff member whose behaviour raises child safety concerns, and when to escalate concerns about staff behaviour;
- communicate regularly with staff and volunteers about the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct and Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures in supervision meetings, at staff meetings, in newsletters and staff updates;
- provide refresher child safe training for staff and volunteers;
- include child safety and wellbeing as a regular agenda item for staff meetings at all levels of the organisation;
- include child safety and wellbeing goals in staff professional development plans;
- include a term in all staff employment contracts and volunteer agreements requiring individuals to notify Ausdance VIC's Child Safety Champion of any concern or allegation (whether or not substantiated) about their suitability to work with children; and
- ensure that qualifications, Working with Children Checks and other registrations or ongoing screening checks are regularly reviewed for changes and/or to check that they remain valid. Appropriate action will be taken where such registration or checks have lapsed.

Training and support to uphold child safety

Ausdance VIC will:

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- nominate a Child Safety Champion and support them to facilitate the induction and training programs for staff and volunteers;
- provide induction that covers:
 - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
 - the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
 - the Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures;
 - how to contribute to identifying, removing or reducing risks;
 - recordkeeping and information sharing requirements;
 - organisation values and philosophy;
 - procedures for managing complaints;
 - privacy and reporting protocols.
- train all staff and volunteers as appropriate to their roles, on topics such as:
 - child safety (including family violence);
 - mandatory reporting;
 - responding to child sexual offending;
 - human rights and the rights of children;
 - diversity and inclusion;
 - harassment and bullying;
 - cultural safety;
 - privacy and information sharing.
- cover important topics in your child safety training, including:
 - risk factors and **signs of harm**, including intentional and unintentional harm, physical or emotional harm, bullying or cyberbullying, abuse and neglect;
 - how to identify and respond to child safety risks, especially for vulnerable children;
 - how to facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision making and raise concerns;
 - how to engage with families to support child’s safety and wellbeing;

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- how to appropriately handle or share sensitive information relating to a child’s wellbeing, health or safety.
- deliver regular child safety briefings for all staff, for example through staff meetings, newsletters, year level briefings; and
- inform staff and volunteers, as appropriate, of their responsibilities under the [information sharing and family violence reforms](#).

Refer to [Standard 8](#) for further guidance on building child safety knowledge, skills and awareness.

Review

This standard, as well as the actions that have been outlined above (including their implementation and their success) will be reviewed at least every 2 years and more frequently when appropriate.

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Standard 7 – Complaints Process

Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) minimum requirements:

- 7.1 The organisation has an accessible, child-focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.
- 7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- 7.3 Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- 7.4 The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.
- 7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

Ausdance VIC Commitment and Policy

Scope of policy

This standard and its objectives apply to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, Ausdance VIC, where appropriate. This includes all staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children, the executive leadership and the Board of Directors.

Overview

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This standard focuses on ensuring that organisations have complaints processes that are child focused, culturally safe and accessible to everyone.

Ausdance VIC must have policies, procedures and practices to:

- have a complaints handling process focused on children and their safety needs;
- take complaints and concerns seriously;
- respond promptly and thoroughly;
- identify and respond to all forms of child abuse; and
- report any and all child abuse to relevant authorities, whether there is a legal obligation to report it.

Standard 8 - Benefits of child-focused complaints processes

Ausdance VIC recognises that making a complaint can be challenging. Complaints are more likely to be raised when there are clear, well-communicated policies and procedures for concerns or allegations.

Complaints handling processes need to focus on children and their safety needs. The process should be able to handle all kinds of complaints and concerns. A complaint might reveal a bigger issue or prevent a situation from escalating.

Empowering children to raise low-level concerns improves the likelihood that they will feel comfortable making a disclosure or reporting abuse.

Staff, volunteers and families can report concerns more easily if the organisation has procedures that are child-friendly and accessible to children and the organisation community.

To comply with this standard, Ausdance VIC will ensure they have:

- complaints handling policy which;
- is publicly available and accessible:
 - child-focused;
 - culturally safe and easily understood by the organisation community;

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- has information about the process for making a complaint about the organisation or any person within the organisation;
- requires that complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse that is:
 - publicly available and accessible o child-focused;
 - culturally safe and easily understood by the organisation community;
 - ensures complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly;
 - covers all forms of child abuse;
 - sensitive to the characteristics of the organisation community;
 - able to address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and cooperate with law enforcement;
 - able to provide details of recordkeeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations to be met when responding to complaints and concerns.

Ausdance VIC complaints processes will be child-centred and empowering. They will:

- Encourage children to raise concerns with a trusted adult if anything makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- Facilitate child discussions about what would help them speak up when they have concerns.
- Ask children about their experiences making complaints and act on feedback from children in your policies and the complaints process.
- Make sure it is easy for children, families, staff and volunteers to access and understand the complaints process. The Complaints Policy will be hosted on a public facing website, with physical copies available from the organisation and include information about how to make a complaint in the organisation welcome pack.
- Include information to children and their families about:
 - how to make a complaint;
 - what to expect the organisation to do when responding to a complaint;

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- how the organisation will support complainants.
- Support children to develop the skills to make complaints and raise concerns by using teaching and learning materials like the Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships materials.
- Let children know that they can make a complaint about any kind of harm, perpetrated at organisation, outside organisation, by an adult or by other children, including bullying or cyberbullying and all forms of abuse.
- Advertise assistance and support services for children, families, staff and volunteers who wish to raise concerns, including the availability of translating and interpreting services.
- Receive complaints thoughtfully, taking care to validate children' experiences – what may seem small to an adult might not be to a child.
- Ensure complaint handling systems and processes are confidential, and that only authorised staff can access complaint records.
- Commit to making improvements following a complaint to address the source of the problem and follow through on the commitment.
- Provide feedback mechanisms that allow for anonymity, such as secure suggestions boxes. Regularly review and action the suggestions received.

Ausdance Vic will be transparent and open about the steps in the complaints process:

- Name multiple people or positions that children and families can approach to raise concerns.
- Be transparent and open about the steps in the complaints process.
- Let children know that they can bring a support person of their choice to any interviews or meetings related to the complaint.
- Explain what happens next and check that complainants understand the proposed action.
- Ensure that children understand who will be told about their complaints.
- Report back to complainants to close the loop, where appropriate.
- Offer counselling or support services to complainants as appropriate.

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Ausdance VIC will be transparent and open about procedures for responding to child abuse:

- Set out actions when the complaint is about a staff member, volunteer, parent or another adult in line with the organisation's Complaints Policy, the PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Reportable Conduct obligations.
- Set out approaches for responding to harm caused to children by other children, including children displaying potentially harmful sexual behaviours and sexual offending.
- Display the PROTECT Four Critical Actions poster in the staff room.
- Specify the steps that need to be taken to make sure the process is fair for all people involved in a complaint.
- Name the types of behaviour that must be reported to police, child protection authorities and other government agencies or regulatory bodies in line with PROTECT Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse.

Ausdance VIC will support staff and volunteers to participate in building a child-focused environment:

- Outline the responsibilities organisation leaders have to act on complaints and concerns related to child safety and wellbeing, including the responsibilities of the child safety champions. Nominated staff should have a detailed understanding of the complaints process and;
 - investigative or interviewing skills, or authorisation to engage people with these skills;
 - high levels of rapport and engagement with children;
 - ability to respond to children with diverse needs;
 - willingness to work with police and child protection authorities;
 - information on support services for people affected by complaints.
- Train staff and volunteers to recognise the different ways children express concerns or distress, such as changing their behaviours or demeanour.

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- Encourage staff to maintain an approachable, professional standard to help children feel confident and supported to raise issues at any time.
- Ensure staff and volunteers understand the complaints policy, the Four Critical Actions, failure to report and failure to protect offences, grooming, child abuse and family violence, mandatory reporting and their roles in the process.
- Empower all staff and volunteers to act on concerns about behaviour and report their concerns, complaints or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct to organisation leadership or the regional office.
- Make sure that the organisation meets all recordkeeping, information sharing, privacy and employment law obligations.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to contribute to the development and review of complaints policies and processes.

Review

This standard, as well as the actions that have been outlined above (including their implementation and their success) will be reviewed at least every 2 years and more frequently when appropriate.

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Standard 7a – Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures our organisation has in place to respond to child safety complaints or concerns and to ensure that all staff and members of our organisation community understand and follow the various legal obligations that apply to the reporting of child safety concerns to relevant authorities.

SCOPE

This policy applies to child safety complaints and concerns made by any person, in connection with Ausdance VIC.

Ausdance VIC staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and contractors, executive leadership and the Board of Directors are required to follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- physical violence inflicted on a child;
- sexual offences committed against a child;
- grooming of a child by an adult;
- family violence committed against or in the presence of a child;
- serious emotional or psychological harm to a child; and
- serious neglect of a child.

The definition of child abuse is broad and can include child-to-child incidents and concerns, as well as behaviour committed by an adult.

Grooming

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Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* and is a form of child abuse and sexual misconduct. This offence prohibits predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating (including electronic communications) and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.

Organisation staff member

For the purpose of this policy, an organisation staff member includes a contractor engaged by the organisation or organisation council to perform child-related work.

POLICY

Ausdance VIC understands the important role our organisation plays in protecting children from abuse. We have a range of policies and measures in place to prevent child abuse from occurring at our organisation or during organisation activities.

Information for children

- All children should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.
- If a child does not know who to approach at Ausdance VIC, they should approach their facilitator, Child Safety Champion, or the General Manager.

Identifying child abuse

To ensure we can respond in the best interests of children when complaints or concerns relating to child abuse are raised, all staff and relevant volunteers must:

- understand how to identify signs of child abuse and behavioural indicators of perpetrators – for detailed information on identifying child abuse and behavioural indicators of perpetrators refer to [Identify Child Abuse](#);
- understand their various legal obligations in relation to reporting child abuse to relevant authorities – for detailed information on the various legal obligations refer to **Appendix A**; and

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- follow the below procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse, which ensure our organisation acts in the best interests of children and children and complies with both our legal and Department policy obligations.

At Ausdance VIC we recognise the diversity of the children, young people, and families at our organisation and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering and responding to child safety incidents or concerns.

Procedures for responding to an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse

In responding to a child safety complaint or concern, Ausdance VIC will follow:

- the [Four Critical Actions for Organisations](#) for complaints and concerns relating to all forms of child abuse;
- the [Four Critical Actions: Child Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to child sexual offending; and
- our Child Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy for complaints and concerns relating to child physical violence or other harmful child behaviours.

Organisation staff and volunteer responsibilities

1. Procedures

If an organisation staff member or volunteer witnesses an incident of child abuse, or receives a complaint or concern about child safety, they must:

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, ensure that any children are safe from immediate risk of harm, administer first aid (appropriate to their level of training) and call 000 for urgent medical or police assistance.
- Notify the Child Safety Champion as soon as possible, who will ensure our organisation follows the steps in these procedures.

NOTE for staff and volunteers:

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- If you are uncertain if an incident, complaint or concern relates to child safety you must always err on the side of caution and report the concern to the Child Safety Champion.
- If the Child Safety Champions are unavailable, you should make your report to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning – education.vic@ausdance.org.au
- If the concerns relates to the conduct of the senior leadership team: Executive Director, General Manager or Director of Education and Lifelong Learning contact the President of the Board.

Refer to **Appendix B** for guidance on how to respond to a complaint or concern about child safety.

2. Reporting to authorities and referring to services

Once any immediate health and safety concerns have been addressed, and relevant organisation staff have been informed, the Executive Director must make any reports as necessary to comply with Ausdance VIC’s obligations under applicable laws, in consultation with the Child Safety Champion. In particular, if the complaint or concern:

- involves an alleged criminal offence, a report should be made to Victoria Police;
- gives rise to a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection, a report must be made to Child Protection in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (**DFFH**); and

involves a reportable allegation, a report must be made to the Commission for Children and Young People. **NOTE:** Staff members/volunteers may have reporting obligations that apply to them personally with respect to certain types of complaints or concerns.

If a staff member/volunteer believes that a report must be made and AusDance VIC disagrees or otherwise does not make a report, this does not absolve the staff member of his or her responsibility to consider whether he or she is obliged by law to report the matter, and, if he or she considers that an obligation exists, to make such a report.

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice

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from Child FIRST or The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support) DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police.

3. Contacting parents or carers

Where a report has been made to Child Protection or Victoria Police and potentially concerns domestic abuse, the Child Safety Champion must seek advice from the relevant authority before contacting the child’s parents, or notifying parents of any interviews that have been scheduled or further developments in the matter.

Otherwise, the Child Safety Champion must ensure that the parents are notified of any child safety complaints or concerns involving their child.

4. Ongoing protection and support

The Leadership team must ensure appropriate steps are taken by the organisation to protect the child and other children from any continued risk of abuse.

Appropriate, culturally sensitive and ongoing support must be offered and provided to all affected children. Ongoing support will be based on any available advice from the parents and carers, health practitioners, and other authorities (such as DFFH or Victoria Police) and may include referral to wellbeing professionals, development of a safety plan, child support group meetings, and, for child-to-child incidents, behaviour management and support measures.

5. Recordkeeping

The Child Safety Champion will ensure that:

- detailed notes of the complaint or concern are taken in accordance with the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template](#) or the [Responding to Child Sexual Offending: Template](#) including, where possible, by the staff member or volunteer who reported the incident, complaint or concern;
- detailed notes are taken of any immediate or ongoing action by the organisation to respond to the incident, complaint or concern; and

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- all notes and other records relating to the incident, complaint or concern, including the organisations immediate and ongoing actions, are stored securely on Compass Chronicles and/or in a secure filing cabinet, and are only accessible to those who have a need to know in order to perform their duties to Ausdance VIC.

For organisation visitors and organisation community members

All community members aged 18 years or over have legal obligations relating to reporting child abuse – refer to **Appendix A** for detailed information.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. For contact details, refer to the [Four Critical Actions](#).

Members of the community do not have to inform the organisation if they are making a disclosure to DFFH Child Protection or the Victoria Police. However, where a community member is concerned about the safety of a child or children at the organisation, the community member should report this concern to the Child Safety Champions so that appropriate steps to support the child can be taken.

Additional requirements for all staff

All staff play an important role in supporting child safety and wellbeing and have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to children.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in the above procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our organisation in the following ways:

- All staff will undertake training and an assessment of the policies.
- Included in staff induction processes and annual staff training.
- Included in volunteer induction processes and training for relevant volunteers.

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- Discussed an annual staff briefings or meetings.
- Included on staff intranet.
- Hard copy available from organisation administration upon request.

Review

This standard, as well as the actions that have been outlined above (including their implementation and their success) will be reviewed at least every 2 years and more frequently when appropriate.

Approval and review

Last reviewed on	
Consultation	
Endorsed by	
Next review date	

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APPENDIX A LEGAL OBLIGATIONS RELATING TO REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

The following information outlines the various legal obligations relating to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.

Mandatory reporting to Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection

The following individuals are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic):

- registered teachers and early childhood teachers (including principals and organisation staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT);
- organisation counsellors including staff who provide direct support to children for mental, emotional or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) organisation health and wellbeing staff, primary welfare coordinators, child wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners, chaplains, and Child Support Services staff;
- nurses;
- registered psychologists;
- police officers;
- registered medical practitioners;
- out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers);
- early childhood workers;
- youth justice workers;
- people in religious ministry; and
- midwives.

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse; and

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- the child’s parents or carers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at Ausdance VIC to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal or any other mandatory reporter does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

If charged with not making a mandatory report, it may be a defense for the person charged to prove that they honestly and reasonably believed that all of the reasonable grounds for their belief had been the subject of a report to child protection made by another person.

The identity of a person who reports any protective concerns to DFFH Child Protection is protected by law. It is an offence for a person, other than the person who made the report, to disclose the name of the person who made a report or any information that is likely to lead to their identification.

At our organisation, all mandated organisation staff must undertake the Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module bi-annually. We also encourage all other staff to undertake this module, even where they are not mandatory reporters.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection (131 278 – 24-hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection even if they are not a mandatory reporter listed above.

Reporting child wellbeing concerns to Child FIRST/Orange Door

We also encourage staff to make a referral to Child FIRST/Orange Door when they have significant concern for a child’s wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST/Child FIRST see the Policy and Advisory Library: [Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#).

Reportable Conduct

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 7

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is focused on worker and volunteer conduct and how organisations investigate and respond to suspected child abuse. The scheme aims to improve organisational responses to suspected child abuse and to facilitate the identification of individuals who pose a risk of harm to children.

There are five types of ‘reportable conduct’ listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic):

- sexual offences against, with or in the presence of, a child;
- sexual misconduct (which includes grooming) against, with or in the presence of, a child;
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of, a child;
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; and
- significant neglect of a child.

A reportable conduct allegation is made where a person makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief, that a worker or volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct.

If organisation staff or volunteers become aware of reportable conduct by any current or former employee, contractor or volunteer, they must notify the organisation Leadership team immediately.

Failure to disclose offense

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (i.e. persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a “reasonable belief” that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 in Victoria.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000, local police station or the Police Assistance Line 131 444) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a “reasonable excuse” or exemption from doing so.

“Reasonable belief” is not the same as having proof. A “reasonable belief” is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a “reasonable belief” might be formed when:

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- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

“Reasonable excuse” is defined by law and includes:

- fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation); or
- where the information has already been disclosed to Victoria Police and you have no further information to add (for example, through a mandatory report to DFFH Child Protection or a report to Victoria Police from another member of organisation staff).

Failure to protect offence

This offence applies to organisation staff in a position of authority. This can include any staff member who, by reason of their position within the organisation, has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk of child sexual abuse.

A person in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a substantial risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (i.e. persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If an organisation staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offense.

Further information

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Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

For more information about the offenses and reporting obligations outlined in this fact sheet refer to: [Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#).

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APPENDIX B: MANAGING DISCLOSURES OF CHILD ABUSE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STAFF

When managing a disclosure relating to child abuse you should:

- listen to the child and allow them to speak;
- stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child);
- be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout;
- highlight to the child it was important for them to tell you about what has happened;
- assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred;
- do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?";
- be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words;
- do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals, and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times;
- reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do;
- use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way ("what happened next?");
- tell the child in age-appropriate language you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying "I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you"); and
- take prompt action in relation to following the procedures outlined below.

When managing a disclosure, you should AVOID:

- displaying expressions of panic or shock;

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- asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the child feel uncomfortable and may cause the child to withdraw);
- going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority);
- making any comments that would lead the child to believe that what has happened is their fault;
- making any promises you will keep the information the child provided confidential; and
- making promises to the child about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each child depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).

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Standard 8 – Child Safety Knowledge Skills and Awareness

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) minimum requirements:

- 8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation’s Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- 8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.
- 8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- 8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Ausdance VIC Commitment and Policy

Scope of policy

This standard and its objectives apply to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, Ausdance VIC, where appropriate. This includes all staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children, the executive leadership and the Board of Directors.

Overview

This standard focuses on building child safety knowledge, skills and awareness in staff, volunteers and organisation governing authorities.

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All organisations should deliver training to new and existing staff and volunteers. The training must be tailored to the needs of the organisation and the role the person performs at the organisation.

Benefits of child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

By delivering tailored training to all staff and volunteers, everyone will share an understanding of:

- what child safety means;
- the importance of child safety;
- what to look for; and
- what to do.

This provides staff and volunteers with the knowledge and skills they need to create an organisation-wide culture of child safety.

Appropriate training and supervision helps keep staff and children safe and helps organisations meet their child safety and occupational health and safety legal requirements.

Standard 6 provides more information about child safe recruitment and support for staff and volunteers.

Actions

To comply with this standard, at minimum, Ausdance VIC will:

- provide child safety training to staff engaged in child-connected work every year, including:
 - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
 - the procedures for responding to complaints and concerns about child abuse;
 - guidance on recognising indicators of child harm, including harm caused by other children and children;

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Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- guidance on responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm;
 - guidance on how to build culturally safe environments for children and children;
 - guidance on their information sharing and recordkeeping obligations;
 - guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the organisation environment without compromising a child or child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- provide training and information to volunteers engaged in child-connected work that is appropriate to their role that will equip them with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe;
 - support staff and volunteers to implement the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct where these policies apply to their role and responsibilities; and
 - provide appropriate training and guidance to the members of the organisation Board every year. This training should include:
 - individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse;
 - child safety and wellbeing risks in the organisation;
 - the child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices of the organisation.

Actions to equip staff and volunteers with knowledge, skills and awareness

To assist with the induction of new staff and volunteers to child safety requirements, Ausdance VIC will:

- nominate a Child Safety Champion and support them to facilitate the induction and training programs for staff and volunteers; and
- provide an induction for new staff, volunteers and new organisation council members on child safety, appropriate to the person's role that covers:

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Compliance: Victorian Child Safe Standards: Standard 7

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (incl. mandatory Reporting) policy and procedures;
- signs of harm and risk factors caused by peers or adults (including grooming and family violence) and the different ways young people express concerns or disclose harm;
- building culturally safe environments;
- privacy, information sharing and recordkeeping obligations;
- how to facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision making and raise concerns.

In providing ongoing education and training, Ausdance VIC will:

- deliver regular child safety briefings for all staff, for example through staff meetings, newsletters, year level briefings.
- require all staff with Mandatory Reporting obligations to refresh their Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations (Mandatory Reporting) training at least once a year. AV will ensure there is budget for this;
- inform staff and volunteers (as appropriate) of their responsibilities under the information sharing and family violence reforms. These reforms support staff to meet their child safety obligations by enabling them to maintain records of annual child safety programs including presentation materials, agenda, minutes and list of attendees.
- Identify staff to attend information sharing and family violence reforms training, available as online webinars or eLearning modules.
- offer further training appropriate to staff and volunteers’ level of involvement in the organisation community, on topics such as:
 - child safety (including family violence);
 - mandatory reporting;
 - responding to child sexual offending;

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Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- human rights and the rights of children;
 - diversity and inclusion;
 - harassment and bullying;
 - cultural safety;
 - privacy and information sharing.
- offer a range of optional and compulsory education and training activities, including:
 - staffroom briefings and ‘toolbox talks’;
 - professional Learning Communities;
 - peer discussions, scenarios and worked examples;
 - presentations, seminars or webinars;
 - training days;
 - E-learning modules, for example the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations modules.
 - remind staff regularly that they need to be alert for signs of harm and risk factors and aware of physical and online risks to child safety;
 - provide staff and relevant volunteers with up-to-date contact details for local support services for children and families;
 - consider staff needs when designing training, such as:
 - cultural safety for the needs of staff and volunteers who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander;
 - cultural sensitivity for staff and volunteers who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
 - inclusivity of gender diversity and sexuality;
 - accessibility for those with a disability, including individual’s mobility, visual or hearing impaired;
 - accessibility to those who are rurally or remotely located or unwilling to attend physically.

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Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Ausdance VIC's plan to resource and prioritise child safety training includes:

- developing and communicating a Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy;
- including child safety improvement and training in organisation planning; and
- keeping a record of all staff and volunteers who complete child safety training to ensure all are appropriately trained and training is refreshed as required.

Further information is available at the Commission for Children and Young People website at: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-8/>

Review

This standard, as well as the actions that have been outlined above (including their implementation and their success) will be reviewed at least every 2 years and more frequently when appropriate.

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Standard 9 – Child Safety in Physical and Online Environments

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) minimum requirements:

- 9.1 Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child’s right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- 9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation’s Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and practices.
- 9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational setting, activities and the physical environment.
- 9.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Ausdance VIC Commitment and Policy

Scope of policy

This standard and its objectives apply to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, Ausdance VIC, where appropriate. This includes all staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children, the executive leadership and the Board of Directors.

Overview

This standard focuses on child safety and wellbeing in physical and online environments and ensuring that procurement also reflects child safety.

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Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Organisations need to have policies and strategies:

- for identifying and responding to risk and reducing or removing the risk of harm;
- for online conduct and online safety; and
- ensuring that procurement policies for facilities and services ensure the safety of children and children.

Organisations must analyse and understand potential risks to children. It is important to think about risks created by organisation structure and culture, activities and physical and online environments.

Online technologies are constantly changing which presents significant challenges for organisations, parents and carers. Online behaviour needs to be addressed in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Codes of Conduct to promote child safety.

Arrangements with external agencies also create child safety risks. They create opportunities for unknown people to have contact with children.

Benefits of considering risks

Ausdance VIC recognises that actively considering risks, organisations can act preventatively to reduce the chances of risks happening. A thorough risk analysis is the first thing organisations should do to promote child safety. It provides the foundation to inform all other child safety work, including policies, procedures and practices.

Organisations will be in the best position to know where risks are located and how plans can be put in place to prevent or reduce them. Effective risk analysis will consider all of the child safe standards and risks in physical and online environments and procurement.

Actions to be taken

To comply with this standard, at minimum, Ausdance VIC must:

- make sure child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices enable organisation staff and volunteers to identify and mitigate risks without compromising

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a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities;

- develop and endorse a policy or statement on online conduct and online safety; and
- develop procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties that ensure the safety of children.

Examples of actions to support child safety in physical and online environments:

- Promote a culture of online and physical safety for all children.
- Ensure procedures involve regular assessments of the risks posed by the online environment and the actions that can be taken to respond to specific risks.
- Supervise children properly in all settings.
- Give particular attention to the safety, diverse needs and vulnerabilities of children in each activity or setting. Consider whether there are any barriers that might prevent children from raising concerns.
- Inform children and their families about appropriate use of the organisation's technology, safety tools and how to seek help and report concerns including cyberbullying and online grooming.
- Keep up to date with current online safety issues.
- Promote activities in the organisation community that connect organisations and communities and raise awareness to prevent bullying and violence (e.g. National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence).
- Create a respectful, sensitive and safe environment for everyone.

Examples of how to manage risk in physical spaces:

- Identify and document the organisation's child safety risks in the organisation's risk register or equivalent and ensure strategies are in place to manage those risks.
- Consider the range of organisation environments and the nature of physical spaces including onsite buildings and grounds, classrooms, corridors, and pick-up and drop off areas.

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Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- Consider off-site physical environments for child use and where reasonably possible, inspect these sites and venues for events ahead of time.
- Consider risks arising from child-to-child and adult-to-child interactions in physical and online spaces.
- Consider cultural safety. Are there elements of the physical organisation environment that would be unwelcoming to Aboriginal people?
- Inform staff, volunteers and children where appropriate of identified risks and risk management strategies.
- Keep records of risk management activities, including risk assessments for events.
- Provide training and refresher training to staff and relevant volunteers on risk management policies and procedures.

Examples of how to supervise appropriately:

- Be aware of risks posed by dark spaces, stairwells, private spaces and corners in organisation environments and develop strategies to address these risks.
- Inform children about spaces that are off limits, including out-of-bounds areas, storerooms and staff rooms.
- Nominate ratios of staff and volunteers to children for different types of activities.
- Use observation aids when appropriate, such as observation windows, concave mirrors, CCTV and consider the balance between appropriate visibility and respecting staff and children' privacy.
- Let children know how to raise concerns and where to go if they need help.
- Organise professional learning to discuss risk and harm prevention and hazard awareness with staff, volunteers and organisation council members.
- Keep records of incidents that occur, including accidents and medical events.
- Review incidents against policies and procedures, including seeking child feedback on how incidents were handled and how safe they felt, and make improvements as needed.

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Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Promotion of child safety will be achieved by Ausdance VIC and our partners through the following:

- Giving children opportunities to learn, play, create, entertain, make new friends and stay connected.
- Facilitating age-appropriate ways to use the internet and social media for children utilising [Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships](#), Organisation-wide Positive.
- Utilising resources such as the [Behaviour Support Framework](#), [Safe Organisations](#) and also [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#).
- Informing children about online safety risks, including:
 - cyberbullying and trolling;
 - invasion of privacy or digital surveillance;
 - inappropriate sharing of images;
 - phishing, harvesting of personal information or data theft;
 - identity theft;
 - malevolent software (malware);
 - offensive images and messages;
 - age-inappropriate online content impersonation/catfishing; and
 - grooming.
- Outlining acceptable use of personal devices for children.
- Prohibiting the use of child email addresses to sign up to unauthorised third-party services and communicate this expectation to children and the organisation community.
- Using filtering software on organisation-based devices.
- Encouraging parents to use parental controls on personal devices.
- Advising children on how they can seek help from a trusted adult if they are exposed to inappropriate imagery or content that upsets them.
- Monitoring online activity and respond to breaches of the online policies and procedures with appropriate consequences.

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Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Promotion of acceptable behaviour by staff and volunteers will be achieved by the following:

- Addressing acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour in online environments in the organisation’s Child Safety Code of Conduct. Cover social media, email, instant messages, SMS and other apps in your code.
- Outlining acceptable use of personal devices by staff and volunteers.
- Having guidelines for taking, storing and using images of children and children – including photos and video recordings.
- Dealing with misuse of digital devices and unacceptable behaviour in accordance with organisation policy.
- Reviewing communication protocols regularly, considering emerging services and technologies, such as disappearing message services.
- Upholding policies and report breaches in accordance with the organisation’s complaints handling processes and Code of Conduct.
- Providing avenues for children, families, carers, communities and staff to report online issues or concerns.
- Protecting child privacy by supporting children to limit the amount of information provided online.
- Requiring organisation staff to undertake information security training to reduce the risk of online phishing or malware attacks.

Procurement and engagement with third parties will be considered in compliance with the following:

- Undertaking child safety due diligence when engaging third parties. A new vendor presents new risks.
- Requiring vendors to provide evidence of compliance with the Child Safe Standards when establishing contracts to deliver services to children.
- Ensuring a Privacy Impact Assessment is undertaken for any software handling child personal information.

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Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

- Making child safety a feature in legal contracts. The Victorian Government Common Funding Agreement has this as standard.
- Asking contractors to provide their Working with Children Clearance upon entry to the organisation.
- Providing contractors with a copy of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Nominating a staff member who is responsible for collecting child safety compliance information about third party providers.
- Keeping records of due diligence processes.
- Where a vendor is found to be non-compliant with the Child Safe Standards, Ausdance VIC will:
 - cease all activities with the vendor until the issue is resolved;
 - if appropriate, inform the vendor of the non-compliance and provide an opportunity to rectify the problem, or
 - if the issue is serious, contact the relevant authorities.

Review

This standard, as well as the actions that have been outlined above (including their implementation and their success) will be reviewed at least every 2 years and more frequently when appropriate.

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Compliance: Child Safe Standards: Standard 2

Relevant Legislation: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Standard 10– Review of child safe practices.

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) minimum requirements:

- 10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.
- 10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analyzed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- 10.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families, and children and young people.

Ausdance VIC Commitment and Policy

Scope of policy

This standard and its objectives apply to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, Ausdance VIC. This includes all staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children, the executive leadership and the Board of Directors.

Overview

This standard focuses on continuous improvement in child-safe policies, procedures and practices. Organisations must:

- regularly review and evaluate policies and strategies;
- analyse child safety incident data; and
- share review findings with the organisation community.

Benefits of regularly reviewing child safety practices

Being a child-safe organisation requires ongoing effort.

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Compliance: *Child Safe Standards: Standard 2*

Relevant Legislation: *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*

Child safe organisations have an open and transparent culture, learn from their mistakes, and put the interests of children first. Taking time to review policies, procedures and practices put child safety and wellbeing at the centre of the organisation’s activities.

Regular reviews of policies, procedures and practices:

- makes sure they are adequate, up-to-date and effective, fully implemented and followed by everyone; and
- helps organisations maintain the best approach to child safety and wellbeing and minimise the risk of harm.

Actions

To comply with this standard, at minimum, Ausdance VIC will:

- review and evaluate its child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices after any significant child safety incident, or at least every 2 years and improve where applicable;
- ensure adequate records of complaints, concerns, allegations and any actions take in response are kept;
- analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents, as well as feedback from the organisation community regarding its policies and procedures and Ausdance VIC’s compliance with the Child Safe Standards, in order to identify causes and systemic failures and to inform continuous improvement; and
- report on the outcomes of relevant reviews to staff, volunteers, the community, families and children.

Review

This standard, as well as the actions that have been outlined above (including their implementation and their success) will be reviewed at least every 2 years and more frequently when appropriate.

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Standard 11 – Implementation of Child Safe Practices

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) minimum requirements:

- 11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- 11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- 11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- 11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- 11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

Ausdance VIC Commitment and Policy

Scope of policy

This standard and its objectives apply to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, Ausdance VIC, where appropriate. This includes all staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children, the executive leadership and the Board of Directors.

Overview

This standard focuses on incorporating the 11 Child Safe Standards into organisations policies, procedures and practices, which work together to create a child-safe culture.

Ausdance VIC will ensure these policies and procedures are:

- informed by community consultations so they are relevant to the organisations;
- accessible to all;

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- informed by best practice;
- championed by leaders;
- well understood by those they apply to; and
- implemented effectively.

Benefits of being a child-safe organisation

Being a child-safe organisation requires ongoing effort.

Organisations are safer for children when child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures are championed by leaders and understood by all members of the organisation community.

Actions

To comply with this standard, at minimum, Ausdance VIC must:

- implement practices for a child-safe environment;
- establish policies and procedures that meet all the Child Safe Standards;
- make sure all relevant organisation staff, governing body and volunteers understand and implement the policies and procedures;
- champion and model the policies and procedures for a child-safe environment;
- document their policies and procedures and make them easy to understand; and
- make sure their policies and procedures are informed by best practice models and stakeholder consultation.

Implementing the standard

Policies and procedures should be informed by stakeholder consultation, which can include:

- informal feedback, such as talking with parents when they pick up their children;
- formal feedback, such as scheduled parent or carer interviews;
- other feedback processes, such as surveys or focus groups;
- reviews, such as reviews of your policies and procedures; and

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- processes for raising concerns and handling complaints.

Child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures should include:

- an effective date, review date and approval details;
- contact details for support;
- references to related documents;
- the organisation’s underlying child safety and wellbeing values and principles;
- definitions of any specialised terms used;
- who the policy applies to;
- responsibilities of leaders, staff and volunteers;
- how to recognise child harm;
- how to recognise and report complaints or allegations of child harm;
- legal reporting obligations;
- reporting lines (which can be shown by a diagram);
- what actions to take if a child or young person is at risk or has disclosed harm; and
- education and training requirements, including frequency.

Implementing child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures

Policies and procedures will be easily accessible via:

- an easily accessible, public-facing location, such as the organisation website;
- induction processes, ongoing education, training and supervision for all staff and volunteers; and
- in our welcome packs.

Ausdance VIC will create important positions of responsibility by:

- nominating one or more Child Safety Champions to promote, monitor and report on the implementation of the organisation’s child safety strategies; and

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- supporting the Child Safety Champions by empowering them to investigate child safety issues and allocate time for child safety.

Ausdance VIC will build a culture of ongoing monitoring and reviewing by:

- highlighting child safety in recruitment processes;
- having child-focused complaints policies and procedures;
- reviewing recordkeeping of child safety complaints to make sure it captures all relevant information;
- managing child safety risks relating to child abuse using the [Child Safety Risk Register Template](#); and
- considering the use of the Child Safety Risk Register to include other child safety risks, or use another register or format to record these risks.

Ausdance VIC will champion and model compliance with policies and procedures by:

- allocating regular time for a child safety agenda item for all-staff or faculty meetings;
- scheduling child safety briefings at information evenings and orientation days; and
- including a regular child safety item in newsletters to families.

Ausdance VIC will use best-practice models and stakeholder consultation, for example by:

- seeking feedback on policies and procedures from the organisation community, staff, families, and children; and
- being aware of emerging legislation, research and resources in child safety and wellbeing and ensure that policies and procedures are informed by any new developments.

Ausdance VIC will integrate child safety into policies, procedures and practices by:

- nominating Child Safety Champions to support organisation leaders in effectively implementing and monitoring the child safe policies and practices;
- documenting the organisation's policies, procedures and statements required across all 11 Child Safe Standards;

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- seeking feedback from children, families, staff and volunteers on whether the policies and procedures are easy to understand, and making any relevant improvements;
- producing child safety material in different formats including child-friendly and plain language and translated versions;
- maintaining high visibility of child safety and wellbeing, including discussing child safety at staff and parent meetings and organisation assemblies, and displaying posters, writing articles, newsletters and staff bulletins on child safety topics;
- training staff and volunteers on organisation policies and their responsibilities, including creating regular opportunities to discuss and reinforce understanding;
- identifying formal and informal ways to monitor policy implementation, including analysing whether current processes achieve the outcomes for each child's safety standard; and
- monitoring how staff and volunteers contribute to child safety through supervision, discussions, staff meetings and surveys.

When to review

Outside of the regular review process, reviews of child safety and wellbeing policies and practices may be prompted by:

- a concern expressed by a child, family member, staff member, volunteer or community member;
- a complaint or confirmed incident of child harm;
- a legislative or regulatory change new issues or new activities proposed, such as new technologies or building changes; or
- discovery that staff or volunteers are not aware of child safety and wellbeing policies, or not implementing child safety and wellbeing policies as intended after a pre-determined period has passed.

What to review

Organisations should conduct thorough reviews and consider:

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- Child Safety and Wellbeing policy.
- Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Child Safety Risk Register.
- Complaints Policy.
- Procedure for responding to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse.
- Recordkeeping and information management protocols.
- Policies and practices on accessibility, cultural safety, diversity and inclusion.
- Recruitment policies and practices for staff and volunteers.
- Induction programs.
- Training for staff and volunteers.
- Communication aimed at children, their families and the community about child safety.

What to consider

- What's changed since the organisation last reviewed child safety?
- Can the organisation adapt its environment to better support child safety?
- What is the organisation doing well in terms of child safety practice?
- What is the root cause of a complaint or incident?
- What can be learned from incidents, concerns and complaints?
- How can the organisation address weaknesses, failures and gaps?
- Are child safety and wellbeing policies understood and implemented by staff and volunteers as intended?
- Are children, families and community members involved in the organisation's approach to child safety and wellbeing?
- Who is responsible for actions to improve child safety?
- Who is accountable for child safety incidents?
- Does the organisation need to seek advice from independent specialists?

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Examples of actions to support the review of child safety practices

Create and update child-safe policies

- Develop a register of existing child safe standard policies, noting the date the policy was approved, and schedule a review date every 2 years.
- When required, develop a work plan and establish a working group led by the child safety champion, to review and update policies and procedures.
- Monitor and manage child safety risks using a risk register.
- Determine the causes of child safety incidents and monitor for repeat issues or systemic failures.
- Use complaints and incidents as a learning opportunity to inform continuous improvement.
- Identify ways to involve staff, volunteers, children, families and community members in review processes. Refer to [Child Safe Standard 4](#) for actions on how to engage families and communities.

Implement current child safe policies and procedures

- Keep records of documentation, such as board meeting papers and minutes, outlining recommendations on how child safe practices can be improved and implemented.
- Develop an audit log (that is appropriately secured and has version control) of complaints and concerns, demonstrating appropriate responses and mitigations.
- Review complaints received and incidents reported for gaps, weaknesses or failures in policies.
- Make review findings and recommendations easy to access and understand.
- Include findings from child safety reviews in child safety training for staff and volunteers.
- Communicate review outcomes to children in age-appropriate ways.
- Inform the organisation community of any child safety and wellbeing policy changes that were relevant or applicable.

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- Use surveys, focus groups and discussions to review the accessibility and level of awareness of child-safe policies and procedures by children, families, staff and volunteers.

Review

This standard, as well as the actions that have been outlined above (including their implementation and their success) will be reviewed at least every 2 years and more frequently when appropriate.

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