

EVOLVE

PERFORMING ARTS

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

1. Purpose

- a. This policy outlines how Evolve Performing Arts prioritises the safety and well-being of children and the steps we take to create and maintain a child-safe organisation in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

2. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

- a. Evolve Performing Arts has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- b. All children who attend our studio have the right to feel and be safe. The safety, well-being and empowerment of children is our highest priority and is embedded in our leadership, culture and daily practices.

3. Scope

- a. This policy applies to:
 - i. all staff
 - ii. volunteers
 - iii. contractors
 - iv. teaching staff

- v. event staff
 - vi. management
 - vii. any person engaged in work or activities with Evolve Performing Arts
- b. This policy applies to all studio activities, including classes, rehearsals, performances, competitions, events and online interactions.

4. Definitions

- a. Child means a person under 18 years of age.
- b. Child abuse includes physical, emotional, sexual abuse, grooming, neglect and exposure to family violence.
- c. Child Safety Officer is the nominated person responsible for receiving and responding to child safety concerns.

5. Responsibilities

- a. Management is responsible for embedding child safety into governance, decision making and culture.
- b. All staff, volunteers and contractors are responsible for complying with this policy, the Code of Conduct and reporting concerns.
- c. The Child Safety Officer is responsible for managing reports and liaising with authorities.

6. Standard 1 – Cultural safety for Aboriginal children

- a. Evolve Performing Arts is committed to creating an environment where Aboriginal children and families feel safe, respected and valued.
- b. We do this by:
 - i. providing training to staff on cultural safety
 - ii. encouraging children to express cultural identity
 - iii. maintaining zero tolerance for racism

- iv. welcoming participation of Aboriginal families in studio life

7. Standard 2 – Commitment to child safety and wellbeing

- a. Child safety is embedded in our leadership, governance and daily practices.
- b. All staff sign the Code of Conduct
- c. Child safety is part of induction and ongoing training
- d. Leadership models child safe behaviours
- e. Records and information are securely maintained
- f. Policies are reviewed regularly

8. Standard 3 – Child empowerment and participation

- a. Children are supported to understand their rights and speak up.
- b. We:
 - i. talk to children about safety and who they can speak to
 - ii. encourage respectful peer relationships
 - iii. listen to children's concerns and act on them
 - iv. create an environment where children feel heard and valued

9. Standard 4 – Families and communities

- a. Families are partners in child safety.
- b. We:
 - i. make this policy and the Code of Conduct publicly available
 - ii. encourage feedback from parents
 - iii. maintain transparent communication
 - iv. involve families in supporting safe practices

10. Standard 5 – Equity and diversity

- a. We provide an inclusive environment for all children including:
 - i. children with disabilities
 - ii. children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - iii. LGBTQIA+ children
 - iv. children in vulnerable circumstances
 - v. We have zero tolerance for discrimination.

11. Standard 6 – Suitable staff and volunteers

- a. We ensure only suitable people work with children through:
 - i. Working With Children Checks
 - ii. reference checks
 - iii. appropriate qualifications
 - iv. screening during recruitment
 - v. supervision of new staff

12. Standard 7 – Child-focused complaints process

- a. All concerns are taken seriously and responded to promptly
- b. Children, families and staff can raise concerns
- c. Reports can be made to the Child Safety Officer
- d. Mandatory reporting obligations are followed
- e. Immediate risk requires calling 000
- f. Records of all complaints are kept securely

13. Standard 8 – Ongoing training and awareness

- a. All staff and volunteers receive regular training on:

- i. recognising abuse
- ii. responding to disclosures
- iii. reporting obligations
- iv. maintaining child safe environments
- v. cultural safety and inclusion

14. Standard 9 – Safe physical and online environments

- a. We reduce risk through:
 - i. constant supervision of children
 - ii. no unsupervised one on one situations
 - iii. CCTV monitored spaces
 - iv. open door and viewing window policy
 - v. controlled online communication
 - vi. risk management planning for events and activities

15. Standard 10 – Review and continuous improvement

- a. This policy and our practices are reviewed regularly and after any incident.
- b. Children, families and staff are invited to contribute to reviews.

16. Standard 11 – Documentation and supporting policies

- a. This policy operates alongside:
 - i. Child Safe Code of Conduct
 - ii. Complaint Handling Policies
 - iii. Recruitment processes
 - iv. Risk Management Plans

17. Reporting concerns

- a. Concerns should be reported to the Child Safety Officer.
- b. If a child is at immediate risk, call 000.

18. Policy access and review

- a. This policy is available on our website and at the studio.
- b. Approved by: Management of Evolve Performing Arts
- c. Review cycle: Every 1 year or following an incident.