

Child Safe Environments Policies and Procedures

1. Purpose

This policy will provide a clear set of guidelines and procedures to ensure:

- All children attending Starlets SA are provided with a safe environment
- All reasonable steps are taken by the Starlets SA and staff to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children attending Starlets SA

2. Commitment to the safety of children and young people

With accordance of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, Starlets SA has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that all children are safe in our care, and will provide training, resources, information, and guidance to support this.

3. Children's participation

Staff, volunteers, and those who provide Services with Starlets SA must at all times:

- Treat children and young people with respect, equality, and dignity.
- Ensure children and young people are protected from any form of harm, risk of harm or discrimination.

- Ensure the environment is safe for children and young people – that includes protection from violence, bullying, teasing, threatening and sexist or racist remarks.
- Ask permission from all students before using any form of physical contact to correct and support students dance/acro technique (physical contact is at times required in order to follow safe dance/acro practice and keep all students from risk of injury)
- Role model positive behaviours, for example:
 - Encourage children and young people to participate in decision making processes;
 - Give constructive feedback to children
 - Ensure children and young people are aware of their rights, including their rights to respect, fairness and safety and their responsibilities to treat others in the same fashion.

Students are encouraged to share their ideas and suggestions with their teacher on what they would like to learn in class, what they wish to gain from their time in class and what concepts they would like to use for their routines/performances.

Staff and volunteers must be aware of their mandatory notification responsibilities and ensure that appropriate reports of children or young people at risk of harm are made to Child Abuse Report Line.

4. Code of conduct

Starlets SA provides a Staff Guide to all staff members prior to a new teaching year commencing. This Staff Guide is reviewed yearly and updated where necessary. Included in this guide is our code of conduct which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Employees and volunteers must:

- Provide a safe and protected environment free from harm, bullying, discrimination and physical dangers (adhering to our Child Safe Policies and Procedures)
- Unconditionally support the health and safety of all children at the studio
- Positively impact the lives of all children at the studio
- Treat everyone with respect and honesty (including but not limited to; staff, volunteers, students, children, young people and parents)
- Be alert to children and young people who are, or may be at risk of harm, and reporting this quickly to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78)
- Respond quickly, fairly and transparently to any serious complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian
- Encourage children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them
- Remember you are a role model for our students and must conduct yourself as such when at the studio, wearing your uniform in public or on social media (if you have allowed parents/students access to this)

- Setting clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between yourself and the children and young people in your organisation – boundaries help everyone to carry out their roles well
- Listen and respond appropriately to students and parents alike. If you are unsure how to respond, politely excuse yourself and seek advice from Julie-anne
- Provide positive feedback to both children and parents/guardians (any feedback given should only be positive, constructive or useful)
- Commit to providing quality teaching in every class
- Ensure that students are involved in a positive environment where skill-learning and enjoyment are the priority regardless of age or ability
- Ensure that any physical contact is professional and appropriate
- Make safety your priority and ensure your students are aware of why this is the case and how it will be enforced (e.g. going through the rules at the start of class such as “no running or swinging on the ballet barre; if you need to go out the room you must ask the teacher first”, etc.)
- Information on medical conditions/injuries is understood and strictly adhered to whilst being kept confidential
- Respect a student's right to privacy, keeping matters concerning the student, their dancing and other matters as requested by the student confidential
- Demonstrate the respect expected of your students when communicating with other staff members, parents, students and members of the community
- Take pride in your appearance; maintain professionalism, hygiene and cleanliness. Do not smoke or abuse alcohol or other drugs in the presence of students or parents

- Demonstrate professional attitudes including punctuality and reliability.
You must arrive to classes MINIMUM 10 minutes prior to class starting and ensure that everything is set up/ready before students enter the room.
- Continue to advance your skills in order to provide the best classes you can (i.e. participating in PD courses and studies, taking classes, researching, etc.).
- Use a good tone, language, volume and content when addressing children
- Use only age appropriate content (including but not limited to choreography, music, visual aids and costumes)
- Ensure the emotional, physical and psychological needs of the students are met at all times
- Ensure there is proper inclusion of children with disabilities or varied cultural backgrounds
- Ensure positive and appropriate multicultural references are used in class
- Ensure there is no expectation that students conform to a particular body type and that there is no pressure around this issue. All children and young people are to be celebrated for who they are.
- Ensure that there are opportunities for those students wanting to further develop their skills without comparing them to other students who are happy and comfortable where they are.
- Communicate all discussions with students/parents/caregivers where needed and where appropriate with the studio owner
- Discuss any concerns privately and calmly with the studio owner as soon as they arise



- Be a positive member of the studios community
- Adhere to ALL of the studio policies

Employees and volunteers must not:

- Engage in favouritism or special treatment of a particular student or family or develop 'special' relationships with specific children (including but not limited to the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention). EVERY student deserves your assistance and attention when required
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Take it upon themselves to divulge information of a confidential nature to parents, students or community members (whether it be in reference to Starlets SA or one of our students). If information is not/has not been made public by Starlets SA, it is not to be shared.
- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality (including but not limited to the use of hurtful/discriminatory/offensive behaviour or language)
- Negatively discuss Starlets SA with parents, students or other teachers (this includes after you no longer are a staff member at Starlets SA). Concerns, queries, qualms and ideas can be taken to Julie-anne where an appropriate way forward will be discussed.
- Condone or participate in behaviour with children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures or child abuse
- Exaggerate or trivialise child harm issues
- Exchange personal contact details (such as phone numbers, social networking details or email addresses) with children
- Have unauthorised contact with children and young people online, on social media or by phone
- Use any computer, mobile phone, or video or digital camera to exploit or harass children and young people
- Force a child to dance injured or sick
- Post pictures of children/young people publicly via social media or any other platforms without the express consent from a parent/guardian (you may only share content directly from the Starlets SA socials such as Facebook and Instagram)
- Threaten staff, volunteers, students, parents or other teachers in ANY way
- Leave a child unattended at any time
- Engage in private discussions with students on and off the work premises
- Force extreme stretches or teach beyond a student's skill level
- Use inappropriate or sexually suggestive imagery, explanations or instruction

All breaches of this code of conduct will result in investigation and may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with Starlets SA's discipline and grievance policy.

5. Relevant history requirements

Starlets SA is aware of their obligations as a sole trader under Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017. Starlets SA requires staff and volunteers to have a minimum of a 'not prohibited' Working with Children Check issued by the DHS Screening Unit. This is also required for any Starlets SA's staff and volunteers visiting schools.

6. Training & Development

All staff and new members are given a hard copy of the Child Safe Environments: guidelines for mandated notifiers and information for organisations booklet. Starlets SA's Manager/Owner works through the booklet with staff and encourages staff to keep the booklet in their folders at work.

All staff attend a training at the start of each year to go through our policies and procedures in detail and ensure that they all understand their responsibilities. Staff are also encouraged to undertake regular personal development training.

All staff are required to undertake the Safe Environments – Through Their Eyes training and update where needed. We recommend to all staff that they take a refresher training every 3 years.

7. Risk Management

Starlets SA conducts Risk Management plans for high-risk activities. This is completed by the Manager/Owner of Starlets SA with involvement by staff and volunteers.

Identified Risks (The following includes, but are not limited to, examples of child safety-based risks from the Child Safe Environments – Risk Management Guide):

- **Children/young people are physically touched by staff/volunteers to correct technique (dance, gymnastics, other sport)** – All staff follow safe dance/acro practice, including physical contact (where permission from the student is given) to ensure correct technique. Physical contact is only to be used where necessary to support the physical safety of students, and only to be used by staff where verbal permission has been given by a student.
- **Allowing a person to work with children or young people while the WWCC is being processed** – the Director and Assistant Director of Starlets SA have a document with all staff members checks/qualifications listed, as well as the date obtained and expiry date. Staff members are given adequate notice when these are nearing the time for updating. This includes, but is not limited to, obtaining a “not prohibited” WWCC, First Aid/CPR, Child Safe Environments – Through Their Eyes and RHHAN-EC. Any staff without a current/valid ‘not prohibited’ WWCC have their employment suspended.
- **Children/young people do not feel included** – Students are encouraged to share their ideas and suggestions with their teacher on what they



would like to learn in class, what they wish to gain from their time in class and what concepts they would like to use for their routines/performances. Staff are always aware of any students not feeling included within class (in terms of working with their peers) and make effort to create friendships and encourage students to work together as a team.

- **Supervision of children and young people** – students are supervised at all times by staff and volunteers (this includes during classes, rehearsals, shows and workshops/holiday programs).

8. Concerns and complaints

All complaints are referred to the Manager/Owner of Starlets SA. All complaints will be taken seriously and documented on the Starlets SA complaint form. The complaint form will be filled in regardless of where the complaint has come from (staff, parents, or children). This document will determine if there is immediate action/further action, or no action taken.

For non-harm related complaints, please refer to section 10 of this policy.

Outcomes are discussed with all involved and all staff if deemed necessary.

Managing complaints and concerns will take into consideration legal obligations for reporting and responding to child safety. This is outlined in more detail in Section 10.

9. Communication

When new customers are welcomed to Starlets SA, they receive an introduction pack with the Child Safety Policies and Procedures. A copy of these Policies and Procedure are also found on our website www.starletssa.com.

10. Reporting and responding to a suspicion that a child or young person may be at risk

All Employees/volunteers of Starlets SA have a legal obligation, as mandated notifiers under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, to report all concerns of child harm and risk of harm to the Department of Child Protection. Staff are provided with the South Australian mandatory reporting guide and the organisation undertakes group Safe Environments training. Staff and volunteers are aware that as mandated notifiers they are required to independently report child safety concerns. After reporting, they are also encouraged to discuss concerns with the Manager/Owner of Starlets SA if appropriate.

Employees/volunteers are provided with the Mandated Notifiers Checklist to enable them to appropriately prepare for a report with the CARL (Child Abuse Report Line) on 13 14 78 or SA Police on 000 if child/young person is at immediate risk.

Starlets SA will be guided by the relevant authority (Department for Child Protection/SA Police). Where appropriate, support is offered to the family and the child that is at risk of harm, to the best of Starlets SA trained abilities. All other support that is needed that is above the knowledge and skills will be referred to



other lines of support i.e., Communities of Children, Anglicare, Police, Medical Professionals etc.

11. Evaluation and review

The minimum term for reviewing the policies and procedures required by the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 is 5 years, however at Starlets SA these policies are reviewed yearly, or earlier for reasonable cause. This is our current Child Safe Environments Policies and Procedures, updated in August 2022. This will be updated and lodged, along with a new compliance statement lodgement, to the Department of Human Services in August 2027, or earlier if any changes have been made.