

2024

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## Armadale Dance Studio believes that:

- The welfare of children is vital.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All valid suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff (paid/voluntary) working in dance have a responsibility to report concerns to the Armadale Dance Studio child protection officer:

## Armadale Dance Studio Policy Statement

Armadale Dance Studio has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in dance from harm. All children have a right to protection and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Armadale Dance Studio will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in dance through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines.

**A child is defined as under 18 in The Children's Act 1989.**

## Armadale Dance Studio Policy Aims

The aim of the Armadale Dance Studio Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children, young people and adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Armadale Dance Studio.
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

## Armadale Dance Studio Promoting Good Practice

Armadale Dance Studio will encourage the following:

- Always working in an open environment where appropriate (e.g., avoid private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment ie no secrets)
- Treating all young people/disabled people/adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with dancers (e.g., it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making dance fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the SFD.  
Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted, and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications, and insurance in dance.
- Involving parents/carers whenever possible (e.g., for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/teachers/coaches/officials work in pairs and have 'working with children' checks.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, a male and female member of staff should always accompany them.
- **Ensuring that at shows/festivals/residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.**
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developments/needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along the details of any treatment given.

## Practice to be Avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge at Armadale Dance Studio **or the child's parents**. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to collect a child at the end of a session: -

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.
- Students/parents and teachers will not communicate via instagram, facebook and personal phone numbers – the school phone number/email is the only point of contact.

## Practice Never to be Sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. Teachers / voluntary staff / parents / other students should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- **Share a room with a child unless organised by the child's parents/carer.**
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay at your home unsupervised.

## Guidelines for use of Photographic Filming at Dance Events

Videoring as a training aid: there is no intention to prevent teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, dancers and their parents/carers should be aware that this is part of the coaching program and care should be taken in the storage of such films.

## Photography and Filming

Armadale Dance Studio will adhere to the following Rules and Guidelines with regards to:

- Images of children posted online or in printed matter will be identified by their first name only and with no other personal details.
- To reduce the risk of inappropriate use of images, only images deemed suitable by the **school's** director will be used.
- Anyone with any complaints about images posted can speak to the Armadale Dance Studio Child Protection Officer and the images will be removed.
- Anyone concerned about inappropriate use of images can report the matter to the Armadale Dance Studio Child Protection Officer and procedures will be followed to report the matter to the appropriate authority.
- The expectations for parents or spectators who wish to take photographs or film at an event are to avoid inappropriate or intrusive photography. Any child or parent who has concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography must report these concerns to the Armadale Dance Studio Child Protection Officer who will act in the same manner as they would with any other child protection concern.
- It must be noted that No Photography or Filming within a concert auditorium – Federal Government law.

## Armadale Dance Studio Recruitment and selecting staff and volunteers

Armadale Dance Studio recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. When undertaking preselection checks the following should be included:

- **All volunteers/staff must have a current/valid "Working with Children Check" certificate**
- Evidence of Identity (passport or driving licence with photo)
- **Have completed and attained a "Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations" certificate via The State Government, Victoria.**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Armadale Dance Studios in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility or to decide whether child abuse has taken place. There is however, a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Armadale Dance Studio will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith, reports her or his concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a child.

When there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be 3 types of investigation:

1. A criminal investigation
2. A child protection investigation
3. A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation.

## Suspected Abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Child Protection Officer who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.



Armadale Dance Studio will take action to help the victim and prevent bullying in dance as it: -

- takes all signs of bullying very seriously.
- encourages all children to speak and share their concerns.
- will help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
- is committed to creating an open environment.
- will investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe.
- Will speak with the victim and the bully/ies separately
- Reassure the victim that we can be trusted and will help them, although confidentiality cannot be promised if the matter needs to be taken to a higher authority.
- Keep records of what was said/what happened, by whom when etc.
- Report any concerns to the Child Protection Officer

## Action toward Bullies

Armadale Dance Studio will follow a standard procedure:

- Discuss the situation with the bully/s with the intention of the bully/s understanding the consequences of their behaviour.
- Seek an apology to the victim/s.
- Inform the bully/s parents.
- Report the incident to the Child Protection Officer.
- Armadale Dance Studio will provide support for the teacher of the victim.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully/s to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all appropriate members of the action taken.
- Keep a written record of the action taken.

## For the Benefit and Safety of all.

**Parents, Volunteers, Visitors, other members of the Armadale Dance Studio community will:**

- behave in a manner that supports the school's values and treat people with respect and courtesy.
- behave in a professional manner; do not engage in conversations that undermine the school

If there are any ongoing major issues or concerns, or for confidential or sensitive conversations please make an appointment to speak with the director. Email discussions of such matters should be avoided. Staff should not be approached regarding an issue with other parents or students present.

## Parents, Visitors and Volunteer Helpers agree to the on the understanding that:

- teachers have the ultimate responsibility for students
- their conduct and manners should at all times be acceptable
- they have a current "Working with Children Check" before undertaking any volunteer assistance at the Armadale Dance Studio
- they report safety concerns, injuries, or emergencies to a member of staff.
- they are not to approach other parents' children, parents, or staff in a disrespectful manner.
- There is to be no shouting or swearing, either in person or on the telephone.
- no physical or verbal intimidation.
- no aggressive hand gestures.
- no writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments to/about a staff member (emails/social media);
- no conversations that undermine the school.
- no racist or sexist comments; and
- no damage or violation of possessions/property.

In the event that any of the above occur, Armadale Dance Studio will take steps and ask the Parent, Volunteer or Visitor to leave the Armadale Dance Studio event/school.

In all cases where there is an extreme act of violence that causes physical harm to a staff member, student, or other member of the school community (including damage to his or her property), the incident will be reported to the police for investigation.

Director, Armadale Dance Studio

I have read and understand the Armadale Dance Studio Child Protection Policy.

Student attending Armadale Dance Studio.....

Parent Signature: ..... Printed Name: .....

Date: .....