

# Policy: Child Protection

<b>Approved by:</b>	Management Board	<b>Date approved:</b>	21/09/2021	<b>Next review:</b>	19/06/2025
<b>Document No:</b>	2POL02	<b>Version No:</b>	3.0		
<b>Supporting documents</b>	LPA Guide to Child Safety in the Live Performance Industry Ombudsman New South Wales – Child Protection Fact Sheet				
<b>References &amp; Legislation:</b>	<i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Act 2018 No 14</i> <i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013</i> <i>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</i>				

## 1. Purpose

Arcadians Theatre Group is committed to child safety and wellbeing and providing a child-friendly environment where children and young people feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

In the interest of protecting the welfare of children and young people involved in the activities of the Arcadians Theatre Group, the Management Board has adopted the following policy in relation to working with children.

## 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all activities of the Arcadians Theatre Group including but not limited to auditions, rehearsals, on stage and backstage, social events organised by **the Group** or any of its entities.

The Policy also extends to Members, Associate Members and Non-Members that may come in contact with children in the normal activities of **the Group**.

## 3. Definitions

**The Group** refers to the Arcadians Theatre Group and its various sub-branches including but not limited to Arcadians Children's Theatre, Adult Group, Minstrels, Lamplighters and Next Gen.

The **Management Board (the Board)** is defined as the Board of Directors as described in the Corporations Act 2001 and consists of the President, Secretary, Treasurer and other members elected from year to year at the Annual General Meeting to represent **the Group** and to make decisions on its behalf.

**Parent** is defined as the person having, in relation to the child enrolled in ACT, all the duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which, by law, parents have in relation to their children. This definition includes appointed carers and legal guardians.

**Close relative** is defined as:

- A child, step-child, sibling, step-sibling, parent, step-parent, grandparent, step-grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew of the child enrolled in ACT.

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- In the case of an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander, a person who is part of the extended family or kin of the person according to the indigenous kinship system of the person's culture.

A **Member** is defined as a person who has applied for and been granted membership of the Arcadians Theatre Group in any of its entities and includes the various member categories such as Ordinary Member, Associate Member and Life Member and other types of Membership as defined from time to time by the Board.

**Other persons** is defined as any volunteer, contractor or sub-contractor, work experience students and any other individual in the organisation that may deal with children.

A **Child** includes children and young people up to the age 18.

A **Child Safety Officer** is appointed by the **Board** to be responsible for being the first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents and members regarding the safety and well-being of children engaged with the **Group**. This includes being the first point of contact for dealing with any complaint of abuse or conduct not in keeping with this Policy and Code of Conduct.

The **ACT Committee** is the group of members appointed to manage the activities of the Arcadians Children's Theatre.

## 4. Policy

There are a number of aspects to the Child Protection Policy listed in detail as follows:

### Child Safe and Policy and Commitment to Child Safety

All children working with or engaged by **the Group** have a right to feel and be safe, respected, valued and protected from harm. Children should be made aware of and feel confident in their rights and responsibilities.

**The Arcadians Theatre Group** is strongly committed to the safety and well-being of all children that interact with our organisation as members, audience members, or otherwise by creating and maintaining a child safe environment. The welfare of children entrusted under our care and in our facilities is our first priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse.

**The Group** will take all necessary steps to prevent and protect children from abuse and neglect including:

- *Physical abuse*: purposefully injuring or threatening to injure a child
- *Emotional abuse*: an attack on a child's self-esteem e.g., through bullying, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child
- *Sexual abuse*: any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child
- *Neglect*: harming a child by failing to provide basic physical or emotional necessities.

**The Group** supports, enables and promotes the **active participation** of children by:

- encouraging expression of and respecting the views of children and parents
- encouraging children and parents to raise any concerns or complaints

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- acting upon any concerns raised by children and parents,
- ensuring children understand their rights and the appropriate behaviour expected of both adults and children
- advising children what they can do and who they can turn to if they feel unsafe
- ensuring **members and other persons** dealing with children are skilful in facilitating their participation
- valuing diversity and not tolerating any discriminatory practices.
- ensuring children enjoy the overall experience of being engaged with a production or other organisational activity
- encouraging children to assist each other and developing a positive sense of pride in their involvement with **the Group**
- encouraging children to develop self-discipline.

**The Arcadians Theatre Group** will take all reasonable steps to ensure we engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children.

It is **the Group's** policy to:

- obtain and keep a record of Working with Children Checks or criminal history/police checks for anyone with direct and unsupervised contact with children, such as those providing regular tuition and training, those volunteering in production team roles and general supervision of activities, performers in casts where children are involved with adults, and those designated to supervise or chaperone the children;
- ensure supervisors and chaperones recruited are suitably experienced and qualified to care for the safety and well-being of children in accordance with their age and needs.

**The Arcadians Theatre Group** seeks to support members by:

- inducting new members to our Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and other relevant policies and procedures.
- encouraging relevant members to attend periodical information sessions as they become available.
- appointing a Child Safety Officer to be the first point of contact to provide advice and support to members.
- ensuring members feel encouraged to report any complaints, concerns or perceived risks to children to the Child Safety Officer or a member of **the Board**.
- ensuring designated supervisors and chaperones of children that are new to the role work with experienced supervisors sufficiently before working on productions or programs requiring single supervisors.

**The Arcadians Theatre Group** has a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our members on expected behaviours when in direct contact with or working around children.

All members must abide by the Code of Conduct.

Relevant members sign a written statement confirming they have read, understood and will comply with the Code of Conduct. We retain a copy of all signed statements.

**The Group** has developed a procedure to respond to any complaint of abuse or conduct not in keeping with this Policy and Code of Conduct, including means to take disciplinary action or rectify issues when necessary.

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## 5. Implementation

Our **Child Protection Policy** will be reviewed every 2 years.

### *Auditions and Casting*

**The Arcadians Theatre Group** aims to ensure the **casting and audition process** for child performers (under 16 years) is a safe and positive experience by:

- informing parents in the audition notice of relevant production details and how any concerning issues will be managed including details regarding choreography, content, involvement of potentially frightening or confusing elements, with a statement that encourages **parents** to discuss issues with their children and express any concerns they may have with the **Child Safety Officer**;
- conducting auditions using appropriately experienced and screened members.
- allowing children and parents adequate time to discuss and raise any concerns they may have.
- notifying children of success or otherwise as soon as possible and providing constructive feedback where possible.

### *Code of Conduct – Supervision of Children*

This Code of Conduct outlines expected standards of behaviour by designated supervisors or chaperones in directly caring for children involved with the **Group** (e.g. child performers, work experience students, etc.).

Supervision must comply with all relevant state regulations on working with children.

Supervisors should be with children (under 16 years) at all times whilst they are in our care.

No member, other than designated supervisors, should be alone with children (under 16 years) at any time. If by chance any children are found unsupervised, members should direct and accompany children to their supervisor or relevant management immediately.

A supervisor's only responsibility should be the safety and well-being of the children they have been assigned to supervise (e.g. a member of stage management that is appropriately credited and temporarily supervising children should not be undertaking any other duties while supervising).

Supervisors are expected to build a mutually respectful, professional relationship with all children in their care.

The well-being of children should be checked periodically by supervisors. If any of the children become distressed, withdrawn or overwhelmed for whatever reason the child should be given the opportunity to watch proceedings or compose themselves in private. Any concerns regarding the welfare of children are to be conveyed to the **Child Safety Officer** without delay.

Supervisors should appropriately guide children towards positive and responsible behaviour. Children should be made clearly aware of the guidelines and rules established on

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appropriate behaviour in order for them to act accordingly, and supervisors should monitor adherence and appropriately reinforce limit setting.

Supervisors should report inappropriate behaviour by any child to the Child Safety Officer if the child does not respond to appropriate requests to improve behaviour.

## ***Code of Conduct – Members and other persons***

This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults, **Members** and **other persons**, toward children. We aim to protect children and reduce any possibility that abuse or harm could occur.

All **Members** and **other persons** are required to comply with this Code of Conduct.

### **Members and other persons** must:

- adhere to our child protection policies and procedures
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from the risk of abuse and neglect
- treat all children with dignity, equality and respect
- be professional in your actions through your use of language, presentation and manner
- respect the privacy of children and parents
- if by chance any children are found unsupervised, direct and accompany children to their supervisor or relevant management immediately
- report any breaches of these standards of behaviour to the Child Safety Officer or relevant management promptly.

### **Members and other persons MUST NOT:**

- engage in any activity with a child that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them
- take photos or video of children or share on social media without the explicit permission of the child (if 15 years of age or older) and their parent, carer or legal guardian, and relevant management
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs
- enter children's dressing rooms (unless they are a designated supervisor, or approved to do so by a supervisor or relevant management)
- have unauthorised contact with children online or by phone.

All complaints or reports of conduct not keeping with this Code will be pursued in accordance with the **Arcadians Theatre Group's** "Procedure Responding and Reporting Form (2POL02)", including means to take disciplinary action if necessary.

## ***Using Images of Children***

This Policy outlines protocols for taking and publishing (in print or online) photos of children and young people up to 18 years of age.

We protect the safety and privacy of **child performers** by:

- obtaining informed consent from a **parent** for the use of images of child performers. Consent will be sought prior to taking or publishing images. Signed consent forms will be sought from **parents**. Images containing identifying or personal information will be avoided where possible.

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- informing **parents** if the **Group** wants to film or take photos of children for analysis to improve performance
- making sure professional photographers are aware that any images taken will remain the property of **the Arcadians Theatre Group** and cannot be used or sold for other purposes. Any digital files must also be destroyed or handed over to **the Arcadians Theatre Group**
- avoiding the use of images of children in minimal clothing (e.g. revealing costumes)
- providing details to **parents** on how to contact the **Child Safety Officer** if they have concerns or complaints around the use of inappropriate images or inappropriate behaviour in taking or publishing images.

## *Exposure to Adult Themes*

Child performers (under 16 years) will **not** be placed in a situation that exposes them to **inappropriate behaviour or language** for their age level. This includes:

- nudity
- obscenities, 'adult' talk, smoking of any substance or drinking of alcohol without first having a conversation with the child about the use of adult language, substances or alcohol for dramatic purpose
- aggressive, threatening or uncontrolled behaviour.

If, due to the dramatic context of the production, children are required to participate in scenes containing potentially distressing, controversial or negatively influential material, the **Arcadians Theatre Group** will discuss this with the child's parents at the beginning of the rehearsal process and seek their consent.

## *Complaints and Reporting Procedure*

The Arcadians Theatre Group will comply with Child Protection responding and reporting requirements outlined in the "Procedure Responding and Reporting document (2POL02)".

With due consideration of confidentiality and fairness in regards to any person whom a complaint is made against, the risk of harm to children is our primary concern.

## *Working With Children Check*

The following people are required to complete a Volunteer Working With Children Check with the Office of the Children's Guardian and must provide their full name, date of birth and Working With Children Check clearance number or application number to the ACT Producer by the last day of February each year.

1. Any volunteer working with ACT aged 18 years or older who is not a parent or close relative of a child enrolled in ACT.
2. Parents or close relatives of a child enrolled in ACT, aged 18 years or older, and volunteering in any of the following capacities with ACT:
  - Director
  - Producer
  - Musical Director
  - Choreographer, choreographer's assistant or dance captain

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- Costumes
- Orchestra member
- Lighting, sound or another audio-visual designer or operator
- Stage manager or stage crew
- Backstage manager, backstage helpers, hair and make-up coordinators
- Props manager/coordinator
- Canteen helper

## How to Apply for a Check

The first step is to submit your Working with Children Check application online by going to <https://wwccheck.cyp.nsw.gov.au/Applicants/Application>

Once your application form has been completed online, you will be given an application (APP) number.

To complete the application, you must take your application number along with proof of identity to a NSW Motor Registry, RMS Agency, or Service NSW office (not your local Council). Find a location at [www.service.nsw.gov.au/service-centre](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au/service-centre).

For Volunteers, the Check is free. The Check will be valid for five years and you can use your Check for any other volunteer child-related work that you do with any organisation. If you already have an Employment Working With Children Check because you work with children in a paid role for another organisation, you do not need to get a separate Volunteer Check, you can provide us with your Employment Check Number.

If you need assistance in completing the application form or do not have access to the internet or a computer, please call (02) 9286 7219 for assistance.

Further information about the Working with Children Check can be found on the Office of the Children's Guardian.

The designated officer within Arcadians Theatre Group will verify your Working with Children Check clearance with the Office of the Children's Guardian, and will keep a register which includes your name, date of birth, clearance number, verification result and expiry date. Your personal information will be managed in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988 (as amended)*.

## 6. Responsibilities

The **Management Board** is responsible for the scheduled review and acceptance of any variations occurring as a result of such review. It is also responsible for the oversight of all complaints received and the appropriate handling and resolution of such.

The **ACT Committee** is responsible for reviewing its own policy and practices in line with this policy. However, the Child Protection (Working with Children) Policy takes precedence over ACT Policy.

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