

Policy Summary

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Ensure an organisational culture of child safety that promotes and protects the interests and safety of all children.
2. Prevent child abuse within Queensland Ballet.
3. Ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
4. Provide guidance to employees as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of Queensland Ballet and provide a clear statement to employees forbidding any such abuse.
5. Provide assurance that all cases of suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

Queensland Ballet acknowledges that Ballet is a unique art form and commits to ensuring that any physical contact is at all times appropriate – please refer to Queensland Ballet’s **Guidelines for Physical Contact** for further information.

Queensland Ballet has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Application

All children working with or engaged by Queensland Ballet 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.

Queensland Ballet is strongly committed to the safety and well-being of all children that interact with our company as employees, audience members, education program participants or otherwise by creating and maintaining a child safe environment. The welfare of children entrusted under our care is our first priority and we have **zero tolerance for child abuse**.

Queensland Ballet 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; and/or
- Neglect: harming a child by failing to provide basic physical or emotional necessities.

Everyone working at Queensland Ballet is responsible for the care and protection of children, for preventing situations that may lead to child abuse and reporting information about child abuse.

Definitions

Child - means a person below the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.

Child protection - means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child Protection Officer means the Head of Human Resources or their delegate.

Child abuse - means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse/assault and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Dancers - include employees, students and volunteers that dance for Queensland Ballet, including children and young people.

Employee - refers to all full-time, part-time and casual staff, board members, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors, students and interns.

Reasonable grounds for belief - means a belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are considered and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- the child needs protection,
- the child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm as a result of physical injury,” or
- the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

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 if:

- A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- Professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Teachers - include any person engaged as an employee of Queensland Ballet to coach, teach, instruct, choreograph or rehearse with children or young people.

Your obligations

Queensland Ballet is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of all children involved in its programs. Guidelines for the application of your child protection obligations to the specific instance of teaching dance are provided within Queensland Ballet’s ***Guidelines for Physical Contact***.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Queensland Ballet has **zero tolerance for child abuse**. Everyone working at Queensland Ballet is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and for reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between Queensland Ballet; all employees, workers, contractors, associates, volunteers and members of the Queensland Ballet community.

Queensland Ballet will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

Queensland Ballet supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. Queensland Ballet is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

Procedures & Responsibilities

The Board of Queensland Ballet has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The Child Protection Officer of Queensland Ballet is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, Company policies and procedures, and the Queensland Ballet's Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the Queensland Ballet community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all employees are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety); and
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

All Directors and Heads of Department must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

All employees should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All employees share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Queensland Ballet's policy and procedures in relation to child safety, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters (or **where a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000**);
- report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to the Child Protection Officer (or, if Child Protection Officer is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the Company);
- avoid one-to-one situations with a child, or if there is no other option, immediately notify the Child Protection Officer of the details of the situation so it can be recorded; and
- provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Employment of New Personnel

Queensland Ballet undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers that aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the Company;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share Queensland Ballet's values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at Queensland Ballet if they pose a risk to children.

Queensland Ballet requires all employees/volunteers to pass the Company's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with Queensland Ballet.

Queensland Ballet may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at Queensland Ballet and during their time with Queensland Ballet at regular intervals.

Queensland Ballet will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure and ensure that all employees hold a valid Blue card.

Queensland Ballet will ensure supervisors, teachers 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.

Once engaged, employees/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy on an annual basis.

Supporting Children's Participation and Satisfaction

Queensland Ballet supports, enables and promotes the active participation of children by:

- Encouraging expression of and respecting the views of children and parents (including carers or legal guardians);
- Encouraging and empowering children and parents to raise any concerns or complaints
- Listening to and acting upon any concerns raised by children and parents, carers or legal guardians;
- Seeking the input of children when making decisions about matters that concern them;
- Ensuring children understand their rights and the appropriate behaviour expected of both adults and children;
- Teaching children what they can do and who they can turn to if they feel unsafe;

- Ensuring employees dealing with children are skilful in facilitating their participation; and
- Valuing diversity and not tolerating any discriminatory practices.

Queensland Ballet aims to create an environment where children gain satisfaction from their interaction with our company as employees, participants in a class/program/workshop, or other activity by:

- Supporting children to feel respected and in control of their behaviour/work;
- Ensuring children enjoy the overall experience of being engaged with a production or other organisational activity;
- Encouraging children to assist each other in fulfilling their employment obligations and developing a positive sense of pride in their work (e.g. discussing character development and stagecraft in groups and leading warmup activities);
- Offering opportunities for children to derive personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement throughout their experience and the relationships they make; and
- Encouraging children to develop self-discipline in balancing their commitment to their performance, their education and their social and family activities.

Valuing Diversity

Queensland Ballet values diversity and we do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

Our company is committed to protecting children engaged with our company from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse, as well as neglect and contempt, ridicule, hatred, or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture, religion, gender (including transgender status), sexual orientation or disability.

In our activities with children we will:

- Promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- Promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Promote the safety of children with a disability; and
- Promote the safety of LGBTIQ children and young people.

Risk Management

Queensland Ballet will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach. All Directors and Heads of Department will receive regular training in relation to child safety.

The Queensland Ballet Board meets regularly and is committed to the identification and mitigation of child safety risks at Queensland Ballet.

Support for employees

Queensland Ballet seeks to support employees by:

- Inducting new employees to our Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and other relevant policies and procedures;
- Encouraging relevant employees to attend periodical information sessions as they become available, to remain up-to-date with knowledge of child protection, nature and signs of child abuse, cultural competency, regulation updates and other matters that affect children;

- Appointing a Child Protection Officer to be the first point of contact to provide advice and support to employees on the safety and well-being of children engaged with the organisation;
- Ensuring employees feel encouraged and empowered to report any complaints, concerns or perceived risks to child safety to the Child Protection Officer or other relevant management position; and
- 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.

Reporting

We believe employees, parents (including carers or legal guardians), and children should feel enabled, empowered and supported to safely raise any concerns or complaints about any perceived risks to a child's safety or signs of abuse.

Any employee, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate Child Protection Officer, or **where a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000**.

The **Head of Academy Operations** and **Head of Human Resources** have been appointed as Child Protection Officer/s, responsible for being the first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents (including carers or legal guardians) and employees regarding the safety and well-being of children engaged with the organisation. 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.

In situations where the Child Protection Officer is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision, the child protection service or the police.

What type of concerns should be raised?

Any of the following should be reported to the appropriate contact promptly:

- Alleged, suspected or observed incidents of abuse or neglect (as a matter of urgency).
- Conduct not in keeping with our child safe policies and procedures; and
- Perceived risks in the organisation's environment (e.g. inadequate working conditions).

Abuse and neglect include:

- **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; and
- **Neglect:** harming a child by failing to provide basic physical or emotional necessities.

Employees will be provided with information on how to recognise signs of potential abuse.

Who should complaints be made to?

Complaints or concerns should be lodged with an appointed **Child Protection Officer/s** or other relevant management position using any method (verbally, email, call, etc.) that the employee, parent (including carers or legal guardians) or child feels comfortable with.

If an act of criminal activity has been alleged, such as physical or sexual abuse, the police will be informed urgently (**dial 000 immediately**) and the child will be kept safe from any immediate risks.

In Queensland the Child Protection Procedures Manual provides contact details for Child Safety services across Queensland and procedures for our **Child Protection Officer/s** to follow where child abuse is suspected.

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/childsafety/partners/government/child-protection-procedures-manual.pdf>

Please also refer to the Child Protection Guide (CPG) for further information on reporting. The CPG is a resource to help you decide about where and whom to report or refer a child and his/her family to ensure they receive the support and services they need in a timely manner.

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/partners/our-government-partners/queensland-child-protection-guide/online-child-protection-guide>

Investigating

How will complaints from children be handled by the first point of contact or Child Protection Officer?

Queensland Ballet will inform children of who to talk to if they need to raise an issue. Queensland Ballet employees that receive a complaint from a child will:

- Let the child talk about their concerns in their own time and words, as well as give the child the necessary attention, time and space to raise their issues;
- Be a supportive and reassuring listener;
- Tell the child that raising their concerns was the right thing to do and let them know in plain language the process by which their concerns will be addressed and acted upon;
- Record the nature of the complaint in the child's own words; and
- Contact the child's parents (including carers or legal guardians) if appropriate.

How will all complaints be handled by Queensland Ballet?

Queensland Ballet is committed to being responsive to concerns raised by employees, children and parents (including carers or legal guardians) and seek to resolve issues with the welfare of children as our first priority.

The appointed Child Protection Officer or relevant management will investigate the nature of the complaint raised in a timely fashion, allowing the person against whom the complaint has been made the opportunity to respond. If a complaint has been made in regard to the actions of another child, their parents (including carers or legal guardians) will be informed.

If appropriate and in the best interests of the child, the Child Protection Officer or relevant management will seek to resolve the complaint and rectify any issues raised to the satisfaction of all parties in the first instance.

Any complaints or concerns about perceived risks in the organisation's environment (e.g. inadequate working conditions, exposure to adult themes) will be addressed by Queensland Ballet and rectified promptly.

If Queensland Ballet becomes aware of, or has been alerted to, a risk of child abuse by someone involved with the organisation, we will act to reduce or remove the risk and protect the child as our first priority. We will promptly contact police when a child or adult alleges any criminal activity has occurred, such as physical or sexual abuse of a child.

The child and (if appropriate) parent/s, carer/s or legal guardian/s will be informed of the steps the company is taking to address the complaint.

Queensland Ballet may also provide support for the child by referring and assisting children and/or parents, carers or legal guardian to access other appropriate services.

What happens if unacceptable conduct towards a child has occurred?

In the event a complaint is proven to be accurate, the Child Protection Officer or relevant management will inform the Executive Director of the allegation and the outcomes of the investigation. The Child Protection Officer or relevant management may also recommend an appropriate course of action.

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to investigate a report, all employees must co-operate fully with the investigation.

The Child Protection Officer will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the Child Protection Officer may decide to conduct such an investigation. All employees, contractors and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The Child Protection Officer will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation The Child Protection Officer shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and/or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

Responding

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the Company's policies or its Code of Conduct, the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the Company's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the Company. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

Resolution - How will the complaint be resolved?

The Executive Director shall determine if:

- a person should be disciplined in accordance with the misconduct committed and within the organisation's means; or
- the matter should be referred to an appropriate authority for further investigation and action pursuant to the law.

For procedural fairness, any person involved in a complaint about unacceptable conduct towards a child is encouraged to seek support from their union or any other relevant person.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded with respect to the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Queensland Ballet will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

All complaints about unacceptable conduct shall be documented, including:

- record of action taken;
- any internal investigation conducted; and
- any reports made to statutory or external bodies.

In accordance with security and privacy requirements, these records will remain confidential unless otherwise requested to be released by law.

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

Reviewing

Every year and/or following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether Queensland Ballet's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the Company's care.

Reviews of this policy will incorporate feedback from children, parents (including carers and legal guardians), employees and any other relevant personnel.

Related Documents

- Code of Conduct
- Code of Conduct – Supervision of Children
- Guidelines for Physical Contact
- Policy on Using Images of Children
- Policy on Exposure to Adult Themes
- Policy on Auditions and Casting
- Risk Management Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Staff Induction Policy

- Termination of Employment Policy and Misconduct Procedures
- Whistleblower Policy

This policy must be read in conjunction with the law of the Commonwealth or of the relevant state or territory and Queensland Ballet's Code of Conduct.

Reference

Renewal	Annual or following a reported incident
Policy Owner	Head of Human Resources
Approval	Board of Directors
Current version	Approved 11 May 2020
Previous versions	22 August 2017, 18 February 2019