

CHILD SAFETY CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS REPORTING PROCEDURE 2022-2023

All staff and volunteers in 3d Arts Company have a legal duty of care to take Child Safety seriously. Everyone is encouraged to speak out and act in a proactive manner, rather than waiting until it is too late to respond to concerns about Child Safety. Examples of Child Safety concerns include:

- Concerns about a physical environment that may pose a risk to children (including health and hygiene issues);
- Inappropriate or 'special' or grooming relationships developing between staff or volunteers and children;
- Inadequate staff-child supervision ratios;
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct;
- Feelings of discomfort about interactions between a staff member or volunteer and a child;
- Suspicions or beliefs that children are at risk of harm;
- Observations of concerning changes in behaviour;
- Disclosures of abuse or harm.

Physical or sexual abuse of children is a crime and must be reported to the police by calling 000 immediately.

Anyone may make a report to Child Protection if they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection. Child Protection is part of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services. It provides child-centred, family-focused services to protect children and young people from significant harm caused by abuse or neglect within the family. It also aims to ensure that children and young people receive services to deal with the impact of abuse and neglect on their wellbeing and development. It is the Child Protection practitioner's job to investigate significant harm. **To make a report of child abuse, contact your regional Child Protection office as soon as possible. You can also call 13 1278 for after-hours reporting.**

3d Arts Company will ensure that children know who they can talk to when they feel unsafe and will make sure they feel comfortable doing so. We will do this by engaging in age-appropriate discussions about safety and abuse and publically informing children and parents of our Child Safe Policy and complaints process. Parents, staff and volunteers will be encouraged to actively participate in the process of keeping all children safe and reporting any complaints or concerns about child safety to the Child Safety Officer.

Concerns and complaints will be recorded confidentially on the 3d Arts Company Incident Report Form (available on our website). Information will be confidentially collated, regularly notated with information about the progress of the case and actions taken, followed by review and follow up of all concerns.

When a complaint or concern is raised with the 3d Arts Company Child Safety Officer or any other member of the Board of Management or staff team, they will actively listen to the child's concern, taking them seriously and responding and acting on the disclosure by implementing our reporting procedure outlined below;

- Let the child talk about their concerns in their own time and in their own words;
- Give the child full attention, the time and a quiet space in which to do this;
- Be a supportive and reassuring listener. Comfort the child if they are distressed;
- Tell the child it is not their fault and that disclosing was the right thing to do;
- Act on this information in line with the professional responsibilities of the Child Safety Officer;
- Record the child's disclosure using the child's words by keeping a written record with as much information as possible;
- Complete an Incident Report Form available from the 3dArts Child Safety Officer;
- Alert relevant people in the organisation, the police or Child Protection, as documented in the organisation's policy;
- Contact the child's parents to let them know (other than if the disclosure related to abuse within the family);
- Act on the advice of Child Protection or police;
- Assist the child and their family to access appropriate support for the child, such as counselling;
- Let the child and their family know about steps the organisation is taking, such as an investigation, and any resulting action, such as changes to policy or procedures or staffing;
- Praise the child for helping the organisation become safer for children.
- Perform required and appropriate follow up by contacting the child and family with any additional information or outcomes that result.
- In the short to medium term, check back in with family and young person showing genuine care and concern for their safety and wellbeing, ensuring they feel the concern or complaint has been dealt with sufficiently and appropriately.

3d Arts COMPANY CHILD SAFETY & COMPLAINTS REPORTING PROCEDURE

Who can report?

Parent

Child

Staff member or volunteer

What to report?

Any child safety concerns, including:

- disclosure of abuse or harm
- allegation, suspicion or observation
- breach of Code of Conduct
- environmental safety issues.

Call 000 if a child is in immediate danger

How?

Face-to-face verbal report, letter, email, telephone call, meeting

Who to?

Child Safety Officer or any Child Safety Person or staff member

What happens next?

The Child Safety Officer will:

- offer support to the child, the parents, the person who reports and the accused staff member or volunteer
- initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process (if required)
- decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should/must be reported to the police or Child Protection and make report as soon as possible if required.

Outcome

Investigation; outcome decided; relevant staff, volunteers, parents and child notified of outcome of investigation; policies, procedures updated where necessary.