

3d ARTS COMPANY Ltd. CHILD SAFE POLICY (2022-2023)

This Child Safe policy was approved by the board of management on 15th February 2022 and endorsed by members at the annual general meeting. It is due to be reviewed in February 2023.

This policy demonstrates 3d Arts Company's strong commitment to Child Safety. It provides an outline of the policies and practices we have developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse of any kind. It applies to all personnel within our organisation, including staff, volunteers and parents as well as teaching assistants who are under the age of 18.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

All children who are a part of 3d Arts Company have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance of child abuse. We are committed to creating a culture of safety that puts children first. 3d Arts Company will ensure the physical, social, emotional and psychological safety of every child by enforcing a code of conduct which all personnel are required to comply with. We are a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun.

This policy was developed in collaboration with our staff, volunteers and the children who are a part of the 3d Arts community. It applies to all staff, volunteers, children and individuals involved in our organisation.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TO SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION

3d Arts Company staff and volunteers encourage children to express their own views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children to voice their opinions about things that are important to them by regularly engaging in discussions about safety and promoting a culture of openness and transparency.

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe by clearly communicating who to talk to if they have concerns. We listen to and act on any concerns children or their parents raise with us by responding to matters in a timely, supportive, attentive and reassuring manner.

VALUING DIVERSITY

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices by;

- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families;
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- Welcoming children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation by adapting our programs and activities appropriately;
- Welcoming *all* children regardless of economic or social background;
- Supporting the needs of children at risk, including children in out-of-home care;
- Seeking appropriate staff and volunteers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

RECRUITING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

3d Arts Company applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We actively check references and require Working With Children Checks for all relevant positions. All position descriptions require staff and volunteers to abide by our commitment to Child Safety and Code of Conduct. Our commitment to Child Safety is publically available in print and electronic format.

SUPPORTING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

3d Arts Company believes in providing the best staff and volunteers. We offer support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a CODE OF CONDUCT to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the code of conduct at training workshops, yearly team leaders retreats and general meetings.

REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

3d Arts Company promotes a culture where child safety comes first. It is the responsibility of every person within 3d Arts to speak up if there are any concerns regarding the safety and protection of children. The current Board of Directors have been appointed as Child Safety Persons within 3d Arts Company with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents, individuals or children. Our complaints processes are outlined in the CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCEDURE.

The current Child Safety Officer for 3d Arts Company is Cale MacLaren.

3d Arts Company is legally and morally mandated to report any reportable conduct to the Child Safety Commission and to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Reportable conduct includes:

- sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm
- significant neglect.

RISK MANAGEMENT

3d Arts Company actively works to detect and reduce risks to children by implementing risk management plans and health and safety procedures. We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage the risk of abuse to our children.

REVIEWING THIS POLICY

We encourage and undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers at any time. This policy will be reviewed annually.

3d Arts Company will provide evidence of how the organisation is meeting the standards of child safety annually.

3d ARTS COMPANY STAFF & VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by staff, volunteers and parents towards children.

The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. All staff and volunteers are required to comply.

The Board of Directors of 3d Arts Company will;

1. Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
2. Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers;
3. Nominate a Child Safety Officer to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters.

At 3d Arts Company ALL staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children by;

- Adhering to our Child Safe Policy and Risk Management procedures;
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from physical, sexual, psychological or emotional harm and abuse;
- Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing others' ideas and opinions;
- Welcoming all children and their families and carers and being inclusive;
- Respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way;
- Modelling appropriate adult behaviour at all times;
- Listening to children and responding to them appropriately;
- Teaching children what they can do if they feel unsafe by implementing our Child Safety Reporting Procedure;
- Working towards the achievement of the aims, values and charitable purposes of the organisation;
- Being responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their own area of teaching or leading (if applicable);
- Maintaining a duty of care towards others involved in the programs and activities of the organisation, ensuring "in-sight" supervision of all children;
- Establishing and maintaining a child safe environment in the course of their work;
- Complying with guidelines on physical contact with children. No staff member, volunteer, parent or classroom assistant may make any physical contact with a child of an intimate, personal or sexual nature, or make contact with any part of the body in an inappropriate way;
- Choreographing, directing, performing, assisting and/or teaching in such a way as to avoid unnecessary or unreasonable physical contact with children. If required, physical contact should only be for the purpose of improving technique or for practical demonstration;
- Working with children in an open, visible and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work that is taking place with children;

- Identifying and reporting predatory or grooming behaviours, in person or online, towards a child or a parent/carer;
- Respecting the privacy of children and their families and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know;
- Showing fairness, consideration and honesty towards others;
- Maintaining a professional and personal standard of conduct as a role model for children;
- Seeking a high level of personal, moral and spiritual integrity and personal character;
- Reporting and acting on any breaches of this Code of Conduct, complaints or concerns;
- Contacting the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 000).

3d Arts Company staff, volunteers, parents and teaching assistants will not:

- Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults;
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse, neglect or harm;
- Use prejudiced, oppressive or offensive behaviour or language with children;
- Engage in rough physical games or engage in any activity with a child that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality;
- Ever be alone with a child unnecessarily, making every effort to interact with children in public, visible spaces;
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- Engage in inappropriate personal contact, including online contact, with children or young people;
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
- Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
- Travel in a private vehicle alone with a young person or child, without express parental consent.

In the case of a breach of this Code of Conduct, the 3d Arts staff member or volunteer will face disciplinary action. This may include termination of employment or cessation of engagement with the organisation.

Statement of Agreement

I have read this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it at all times.

NAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Working With Children Check Card Number:

Expiry Date:

Signature of Parent/Carer (Under 18 Only):

<i>Office Use Only</i>	
<i>Received by:</i>	<i>Date:</i>

CHILD SAFETY CONCERNS REPORTING PROCEDURE

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.

When a complaint or concern is raised with the 3d Arts Company Child Safety Officer 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;
- Praise the child for helping the organisation become safer for children.

Flowchart: CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCESS



RESOURCES

The 3d Arts Company Child Safe Policy was developed in line with the Commission for Children & Young People Safety Standards.

More information on the Child Safe Standards can be found at <http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/> or see [A GUIDE FOR CREATING A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION](#)

[Centre of Excellence in Child and Family Welfare](#)

[Department of Health and Human Services Website](#)

[Information on Working With Children Checks](#)

Other age-appropriate definitions and fact-sheets can be found at the [Victorian State Government Department of Education and Training](#)

Criminal Law Reform

3d Arts Company acknowledges recent reforms to criminal law. The Victorian Government has introduced three new criminal offences to further protect children from abuse. The three new offences are:

- a [grooming offence](#) which targets communication, including online communication, with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse
- a [failure to disclose offence](#) that requires adults to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child (unless they have a reasonable excuse for not doing so)
- a [failure to protect offence](#) that applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

More information on new criminal offences can be found on the [Department of Justice website](#).

Glossary

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts).

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a person involves a child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.

Grooming

Grooming describes the predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer. Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity. Sometimes it is hard to see when someone is being groomed until after they have been sexually abused, because some grooming behaviour can look like "normal" caring behaviour. Examples of grooming behaviours' may include:

- giving gifts or special attention to a child or their parent or carer (this can make a child feel special or indebted to an adult)
- Grooming can include testing boundaries, such as undressing in front of a child, "accidental" intimate touching, inappropriate personal communication in person or on line intended to break down a child's inhibitions and defences.

Child Wise have produced a children's animation video that provides an example of grooming behaviours' that can lead to child sexual abuse.

<https://www.childwise.org.au/news/62/childrens-animation>

Serious neglect

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised.

Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.