



## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

### Introduction

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy has been prepared in collaboration with The Latrobe Valley Eisteddfod Traralgon Inc., Moe Dance Eisteddfod Inc., Morwell Festival of Dance Inc. and City of Sale Eisteddfod Inc. (the Eisteddfods) to ensure the safety of all children and young people who attend our Eisteddfods.

The Eisteddfods are committed to:

- Always promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children and young people at this event.
- Including families and communities in our organisations' efforts to keep children/young people safe.
- Having a greater focus on safety for Aboriginal children/young people.
- Governance, systems and processes, to keep children/young people safe.

The Eisteddfods are committed to always promoting and protecting the interest and safety of children at our events. We have zero tolerance towards child abuse.

Everyone working/ volunteering at the Eisteddfods is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

### Purpose

The Purpose of the Child Safety and Well Being Policy is to outline how the Eisteddfods prioritise the safety and well-being of children/young people including:

- To advocate for all children and their right to feel and be safe.
- To understand, accept and demonstrate the Eisteddfods social commitment and legal obligation in implementing National Child Safe Standards to ensure the wellbeing and safety of children and young people attending our Eisteddfods.
- To inform volunteers, Committee members, venue coordinators, contractors, competitors, dance teachers and participants, family members and carers, and audience members of their obligations to act ethically towards children, their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children.

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- To understand how to respond to any inappropriate behaviour or situation that may/has impacted any child/young person whilst attending our Eisteddfods.

## Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Committee members.
- Volunteers.
- Service providers and contractors.
- Dance school employees and volunteers.
- Competitors and family members/carers.
- Any other adult involved in child connected work not mentioned above.

## Policy

The Eisteddfods Child Safety and Well Being Policy is written to align with the 11 Child Safe Standards. The Eisteddfods Committees recognise that to comply with Child Safety Standards, we must, at the minimum, ensure the below. are committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children and young people involved in its program.

**Child Safe Standard 1: *Establish a culturally safe environment in which diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.***

The Eisteddfods acknowledge and actively support a child's and young person's right to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights. We appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance in the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.

The Eisteddfods aim to create a culturally safe and inclusive Eisteddfod, whereby children and young people can embrace and celebrate their culture. Racism, under any circumstance, will not be tolerated. Instances of racism will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

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**Child Safe Standard 2: *Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.***

The Eisteddfods commit to child safety and promote this commitment through means such as having our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy publicly available prior to the commencement of each Eisteddfod. The Eisteddfods have come together to develop policies to assist in identifying, preventing and mitigating risks to children and young people attending our Eisteddfods, including the keeping of records and handling of information. The Eisteddfods will dedicate time annually to reflect upon Child Safety Standards and will have the standards in mind when reviewing agenda items and planning for Eisteddfods. We require staff, volunteers and all those who attend our Eisteddfods to abide by our Code of Conduct that provides guidelines on expected behavioral standards and responsibilities when engaging with children and young people.

**Child Safe Standard 3: *Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.***

The Eisteddfods will seek to ensure children and young people are informed about their rights to safety, information and participation. The Eisteddfods Committee members have been supported to identify potential risks and signs of harm. We will follow up with raised concerns and where relevant, we will support children and young people to learn of and/or access appropriate services and/or related information about abuse/harm in an age-appropriate way.

The Eisteddfods will promote an inclusive, equitable and fun environment for children, young people and adults. We recognise the importance of friendships, peer support, and consideration will be given in the planning of our Eisteddfods to ensure that we provide a culture and environment that facilitates participation, is responsive to the input of children and young people and contributes to strengthening confidence and engagement.

**Child Safe Standard 4: *Families and communities are informed, and involved promoting child safety and wellbeing.***

The Eisteddfods will seek to ensure that families participate in discussions affecting their child including but not limited to having a say in the development and review of the Eisteddfods policies and practices, including our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Families and associated community members are informed about the Eisteddfods policies, operations and governance through means such as sharing this information on our respective websites. Feedback will be welcomed and taken seriously.

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**Child Safe Standard 5: *Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.***

The Eisteddfods will seek to ensure all Committee members and volunteers understand children and young people's diverse circumstances and will provide support and respond to those who are vulnerable. Children and young people will have access to information, support and complaint processes in a way that is culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand. Particular attention will be paid to the needs of children and young people with a disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those that are unable to live at home, people of diverse sexuality, genders and young people. The Eisteddfods are committed to provide an equitable and inclusive environment for all children and young people attending our events. The Eisteddfods will pay particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provide and promote a culturally safe environment for them.

**Child Safe Standard 6: *People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.***

All adults working directly with children at our Eisteddfods as paid employees or volunteers will have a current working with children check (or equivalent document), will be made aware of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, have an appropriate induction and know who to report/share any relevant information/concerns regarding, but not limited to children and young people including the need for record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations. In promoting or inviting people to volunteer or become an employee, the Eisteddfods will emphasise our child safety policies and throughout their engagement with the Eisteddfods will be supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

**Child Safe Standard 7: *Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.***

The Eisteddfods Child Safety Reporting Processes will be easily accessible, will clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of our Committees, volunteers and other adults and/or children associated with our Eisteddfods and will describe the approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies and the Code of Conduct and documents obligations to act and report. The policy and procedures in place address the reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement. This policy is age appropriate and culturally safe.

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**Child Safe Standard 8: *Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.***

Our Executive Committees will be trained with general Committee members and volunteers provided an induction so that all members of the Eisteddfods Committees and volunteers are supported to effectively implement our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. The training and induction will provide tools to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people, how to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing, how to support a person who discloses harm to a child and how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people. We will maintain a training and induction register and have materials available for the Eisteddfods Committee members and volunteers to access as needed.

**Child Safe Standard 9: *Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.***

The Eisteddfods will seek to identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments related to our operations/activities without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities. The online environment is used in accordance with the Eisteddfods Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and procedures. This will include having processes to prevent or reduce risks arising from use of facilities and contracted services from third parties. The Eisteddfods will maintain and annually review a risk management plan to document identified risks and how they will be managed

**Child Safe Standard 10: *Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.***

The Eisteddfods will review, evaluate and improve our child safe practices at least annually. Complaints, concerns, safety incidents and feedback are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement. We will report on the findings of relevant reviews to each Committee and where appropriate to other relevant people associated with our Eisteddfods.



**Child Safe Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.**

The Eisteddfods will seek to ensure that our policies and procedures address all of the Child Safe Standards, are documented, easy to understand and easily accessible to those that may require them and that all Committee members and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

## **Procedures**

### **Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of people directly interacting with children and young people at our Eisteddfods to be aware of their obligations as set out in the Eisteddfods policies and Code of Conduct.

**It is the responsibility of all members of each Committee to ensure:**

- They are familiar with and uphold all 11 Child Safe Standards and that they put the wellbeing of children and young people first.
- Appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place to mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing.
- All required policies and Codes of Conduct are current and incorporate the Child Safe Standards.
- Time-efficient action is taken when anyone raises concerns about children's safety and wellbeing.

**The Executive Committee of the Eisteddfods are responsible for:**

- Responding to reports of child abuse and liaising with appropriate organisations.
- Ensuring that Committee members, volunteers and adults associated with our Eisteddfods are aware of relevant policies, procedures and our Code of Conduct and are aware of their obligation to report suspected abuse of a child or young person.
- Ensuring that all executive committee members undertake a general induction and training in regard to child safety and our Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring that all general committee members and volunteers undertake a general induction in regard to child safety and our Code of Conduct.

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- Keeping a register of all Working with Children checks (or equivalent) and ensuring they are current at the time of each Eisteddfod (for committee members and volunteers in a child-facing role.)

#### **All adults associated with each Eisteddfod are responsible for:**

- Familiarising themselves and complying with the relevant laws, the Eisteddfods policy and procedures in relation to child safety and wellbeing, and Code of Conduct.
- Promote child safety and wellbeing at all times.
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety is at risk to an Executive Committee member or if they have formed a reasonable belief that physical or sexual abuse of a child or young person may have occurred (including outside of an Eisteddfod) they must report this belief directly to the police.
- All volunteers in a child-facing role must have and provide their current Working with Children Check (or equivalent) prior to volunteering, a copy of this will be kept on file.
- A volunteer roster will be created for each Eisteddfod (for Committee members and general volunteers), and this will be updated throughout each Eisteddfod as required and stored electronically after each event.

#### **Working with Children Checks in Changeroom areas:**

- A current Working with Children Check (or equivalent) is required for all people aged 18 years and older, accessing the changeroom areas (as per the rules and regulations of each the Eisteddfods). This includes but is not limited to competitors, dance teachers, studio owners and parents/carers.
- Cards will need to be presented at the check-in desk and/or front desk to obtain a changeroom pass. Random spot checks will be carried out to check the validity/currency of cards.

#### **During each Eisteddfod:**

- Where possible, we will limit the number of people accessing the change room areas and backstage.
- Anyone entering the change room area will have to 'sign in' providing their name (and other relevant information as requested by the committee, e.g. contact number). Performers in the current section, their dance teacher/studio owner, and/or rostered Committee members will not need to sign in as they have 'checked in' via other means.
- No photography or filming (including within apps) is to occur in changing rooms.

#### **Responding to and reporting to allegations of abusive activity:**

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- Any child safety concern including:
  - General concerns about the safety of children or young people at an Eisteddfod.
  - Any allegation of abuse, harm or neglect of a child or young person by any person.
  - Disclosures of abuse, harm or neglect made by a child/young person who attends an Eisteddfod.

Must be reported in accordance with the Eisteddfods Child Safety Complaint Handling Process.

- The handling of any complaint or allegations concerning abuse, harm of a child or young person at an Eisteddfod will be managed in accordance with the Eisteddfods Child Safety Complaint Handling Process.

#### **Responding to breaches of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and/or Code of Conduct:**

- Any breach of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and/or Code of Conduct will be followed up and may result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination of their participation in each Eisteddfod (including on the committee if relevant.) The findings of any investigation will be reported to any external body as required.

#### **Definitions**

**Changeroom areas** each Eisteddfod will define the area considered to be the changerroom; which may include all backstage areas.

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

**Child sexual assault** is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include: the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism,

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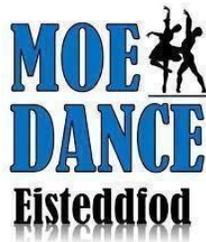
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and exposing the child to or involving child pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

**Reasonable grounds for belief** is 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 taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of 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 is in need of protection;
- the child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm as a result of physical injury”; and/or
- 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 it 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 the child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development lead 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 a child has been physically or sexually abused.

## Reviewing

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This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier as required.

## Related Documents

This Policy must be read in conjunction with:

- The Laws of the Commonwealth and the state of Victoria.
- The Code of Conduct.
- Child Safety Complaint Handling Process

*Next Due for Review: November 2026 (for 2027 Eisteddfods)*