



Stepnout Performing Arts
MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY
July 2024

CONTENTS PAGE

POLICY

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of Our Policy
3. Who Our Policy Applies To
4. Extent of Our Policy
5. Studio Responsibilities
6. Individual Responsibilities
7. Protection of Children
 - 7.1 Child Protection
 - 7.2 Supervision
 - 7.3 Transportation
 - 7.4 Taking Images of Children & Media Policy
8. Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying
 - 8.1 Discrimination
 - 8.2 Harassment
 - 8.3 Bullying
9. Inclusive Practices
 - 9.1 People with a Disability
 - 9.2 People from Diverse Cultures
 - 9.3 Sexual & Gender Identity
 - 9.4 Pregnancy
10. Responding to Complaints
 - 10.1 Complaints
 - 10.2 Complaint Handling Process
 - 10.3 Disciplinary Measures
 - 10.4 Appeals

Attachment 1: Working With Children Check Requirements

- 1.1. Member Protection Declaration
- 1.2. Working with Children Check Requirements

Attachment 2: Codes of Behaviour

Attachment 3: Reporting Requirements and Documents

MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

Our Mission:

- o To provide quality dance and performing arts classes for the community to enhance personal development and confidence
- o To be apart of something bigger
- o Dance is the universal language
- o To make people smile using nothing else but themselves
- o Negative words have negative effects

Our Core Values:

- o Enrich the community
- o Encourage healthy lifestyles and facilitate the social development and coordination of children and adults through dance
- o Trust
- o Creativity
- o No negativity
- o Family – creating everlasting relationships
- o Creating confidence
- o Inspiration – not just dance wise (life lessons, respect, attitude and behavior)
- o Sharing experiences
- o Passion
- o Discipline
- o Nurturing
- o Teaching people to have goals
- o Fun environment
- o Helping people to love themselves

Our Principles:

Over the years we've realised that the best way to make our dance studio a great place to be is to create an environment that's respectful, inclusive and warm. To manage this we ask all our students and families to follow our studio guidelines.

2. Purpose of Our Policy

The main objective of our Member Protection Policy is to maintain responsible behaviour and the making of informed decisions by staff, students and other participants in this studio. It outlines our commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to be safe and protected from discrimination, harassment and abuse. Our policy informs everyone involved in our studio of his or her legal and ethical rights and responsibilities and the standards of behaviour that are expected of them. It also covers the care and protection of children participating in our studio's activities.

3. Who Our Policy Applies To

This policy applies to everyone involved in the activities of our studio whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity and including:

- staff, administration and teachers;
- student and trainee teachers, guest teachers and other personnel participating in events and activities, including comps and training sessions;
- support personnel, including managers, physiotherapists, psychologists, masseurs, sport trainers and others;
- students;
- parents;
- spectators/audience members

4. Extent of Our Policy

Our policy covers all matters directly and indirectly related to the studio and its activities. In particular, the policy governs unfair selection decisions and actions, breaches of our code of behaviour and behaviour that occurs at dance sessions, in the waiting areas, at social events organised or sanctioned by the studio, and on away and overnight trips. It also covers private behaviour where that behaviour brings our studio into disrepute or there is suspicion of harm towards a child or young person.

5. Studio Responsibilities

We will:

- adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
- ensure that this policy is enforceable;
- publish, distribute and promote this policy and the consequences of any breaches of this policy;
- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- deal with any complaints made under this policy in an appropriate manner;
- deal with any breaches of this policy in an appropriate manner;
- recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under this policy;
- ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to all people and organisations to whom this policy applies;
- review this policy every 12-18 months; and
- seek advice from and refer serious issues to the relevant authorities.

Serious issues include unlawful behaviour that involves or could lead to significant harm and includes criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault, child abuse) and any other issues that our state or national bodies request to be referred to them.

6. Individual Responsibilities

Everyone associated with our studio must:

- make themselves aware of the contents of this policy;
- comply with all relevant provisions of this policy, including the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy;

- consent to the screening requirements set out in this policy, and any state or territory Working with Children checks if the person holds or applies for a role that involves regular unsupervised contact with a child or young person under the age of 18, or where otherwise required by law;
- treat other people with respect;
- always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- be responsible and accountable for their behaviour; and
- follow the guidelines outlined in this policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible child abuse, discrimination, harassment, bullying or other inappropriate behaviour; and
- comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed under this policy.

7. Protection of Children

7.1 Child Protection

The studio is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who participate in our studio's activities or use our services. We support the rights of the child and will act at all times to ensure that a child safe environment is maintained.. We also support the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure and safe environment for all participants.

Stepnout acknowledges the valuable contribution made by our staff, members and volunteers and we encourage their active participation in providing a safe, fair and inclusive environment for all participants.

7.1.1: Identifying and Analysing Risks of Harm

Stepnout will develop and implement a risk management strategy, which includes a review of our existing child protection practices, to determine how child-safe our organisation is and to identify any additional steps we can take to minimise and prevent the risk of harm to children because of the action of an employee, volunteer or another person.

7.1.2: Developing Codes of Conduct for Adults and Children

We will develop and promote a code of conduct that specifies standards of conduct and care we expect of adults when they deal and interact with children, particularly those in the our care. We will also implement a code of conduct to promote appropriate behaviour between children.

The codes will clearly describe professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behaviour. (See Attachment 2)

7.1.3: Choosing Suitable Employees and Volunteers

Stepnout will ensure that the organisation takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children, especially those in positions that involve regular unsupervised contact with children. This may be achieved using a range of screening measures. Such measures will aim to minimise the likelihood of engaging (or retaining) people who are unsuitable to work with children.

Stepnout will ensure that Working with Children Checks are conducted for employees and volunteers working with children, where an assessment is required by law.

7.1.4: Support, Train, Supervise and Enhance Performance

Stepnout will ensure that all our employees and volunteers who work with children have ongoing supervision; support and training. Our goal is to develop their skills and capacity and to enhance their performance so we can maintain a child-safe environment in our club.

7.1.5: Empower and Promote the Participation of Children In Decision-Making And Service Development

Stepnout will promote the involvement and participation of children and young people in developing and maintaining a child-safe environment in our studio..

7.1.6: Report and Respond Appropriately to Suspected Abuse and Neglect

Stepnout will ensure that employees and volunteers are able to identify and respond appropriately to children at risk of harm and that they are aware of their responsibilities under state laws to make a report if they suspect on reasonable ground that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected (See Attachment 4).

In addition to any legal obligations, if any person believes that another person or organisation bound by this policy is acting inappropriately towards a child or is in breach of this policy they may make an internal complaint.

Please refer to our complaints procedure in Item section 10 of this policy.

Any person who believes a child is in immediate danger or in a life threatening situation, should contact the police immediately.

7.2 Supervision

Children under the age of [18] must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult. Stepnout assumes responsibility once our students are in their appropriate classes, concerts and rehearsals. We endeavour to provide an appropriate level of supervision at all times. If a member finds a child under the age of [18] is unsupervised, they should assume responsibility for the child's safety until the child's parent/guardian or staff member/supervisor is located.

For reasons of courtesy and safety, parents must collect their children on time. If it appears a member will be left alone with just one child at the end of any studio activity, they will ask another member to stay until the child is collected.

7.3 Transportation

Parents and or guardians are responsible for organising the transportation of their children to and from studio activities (e.g. classes/competitions/concerts). Where we make arrangements for the transportation of children (e.g. competition overnight trips), we will conduct a risk assessment that includes ensuring vehicles are adequately insured, the driver has a current and appropriate licence for the vehicle being used and the appropriate safety measures are in place (e.g. fitted working seatbelts).

7.4 Taking Images of Children

Images of children can be used inappropriately or illegally. We require that members, wherever possible, obtain permission from a child's parent or guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own. We will also make sure that the parent or guardian understands how the image will be used.

To respect people's privacy, we do not allow camera phones, videos and cameras to be used inside changing areas, showers and toilets which we control or are used in connection with our studio..

When using a photo of a child, we will not name or identify the child or publish personal information, such as residential address, email address or telephone number, without the consent of the child's parent or guardian. We will not provide information about a child's hobbies, interests, school or the like, as this can be used by paedophiles or other persons to "groom" a child.

We will only use images of children that are relevant to our studio's activities and we will ensure that they are suitably clothed in a manner that promotes our studio.. We will seek permission from a child's parent or guardian before using their images.

Please refer to our Media Consent form [Media Consent Form](#) click link or see below statement.

Stepnout Performing Arts ('Stepnout') shares news, information, and reminders about classes, competition performances and concerts. We publish them in publications and digitally.

- Only images of children that are relevant to dancing will be taken
- Only first names will be used (if any - unless approval is gained otherwise)
- Photos will be kept for 10 years and kept on a safe hard drive. After this they will be destroyed

The studio has:

- CCT video footage for parents to view children in each studio
- Camera in waiting room to view play area and carpark in case of incidents

Note: This footage is only used at the studio and not for public viewing outside those areas. Video's of footage taken in the studio are not public, are needed if an incident occurs, and kept for legal reasons.

- We will inform parents if Stepnout wants to film children or the group for analysis purposes and to improve performances.
- Professional photographers are aware that any images taken will remain Stepnout's property and cannot be used or sold for other purposes. Any negatives must also be destroyed or handed over to Stepnout.
- Photographers will not be unsupervised or with individual access to children. There will be no identifying personal information accompanying photographs, such as the child's name, address or telephone number.

8. Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

Our studio is committed to providing an environment in which people are treated fairly and equitably and that is, as far as practicable, free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

We recognise that people may not be able to enjoy themselves or perform at their best if they are treated unfairly, discriminated against, harassed or bullied.

8.1 Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination involves the less favourable treatment of a person on the basis of one or more of the personal characteristics protected by State or Federal anti-discrimination laws.

Discrimination includes both direct and indirect discrimination:

- **Direct discrimination** occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with a protected personal characteristic unfavourably because of that personal characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** occurs if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a requirement, condition or practice that will disadvantage a person with a protected personal characteristic and that requirement, condition or practice is not reasonable.

For the purpose of determining discrimination, the offender's awareness and motive are irrelevant.

8.2 Harassment

Harassment is any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, that intimidates, offends or humiliates another person and which happens because a person has a certain personal characteristic protected by State or Federal anti-discrimination legislation.

The offensive behaviour does not have to take place a number of times, a single incident can constitute harassment.

Sexual harassment is one type of harassment. Sexual harassment involves unwelcome conduct, remarks or innuendo of a sexual nature. It covers a wide range of behaviours and can be verbal, written, visual or physical. Sexual harassment is not limited to members of the opposite sex.

Every person is covered by the anti-discrimination laws that apply in their State as well as the Federal anti-discrimination laws.

The following is a list of all the personal characteristics that apply throughout Australia:

- gender;
- race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, nationality, ethno-religious origin, immigration;
- national extraction or social origin;
- marital status, relationship status, identity of spouse or domestic partner;
- pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding;
- family or carer responsibilities, status as a parent or carer;
- age;
- religion, religious beliefs or activities;
- political beliefs or activities;
- lawful sexual activity;
- sexual orientation and gender identity;
- profession, trade, occupation or calling;
- irrelevant criminal record, ??? convictions;
- irrelevant medical record;
- member of association or organisation of employees or employers, industrial activity, trade union activity;
- physical features;
- disability, mental or physical impairment;
- defence service; and
- personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, any of these personal characteristics.

Legislation also prohibits:

- racial, religious, homosexual, transgender and HIV/AIDS vilification; and
- victimisation resulting from a complaint.

8.3 Bullying

Stepnout is committed to providing an environment that is free from bullying. We understand that bullying has the potential to result in significant negative consequences for an individual's health and wellbeing, and we regard bullying in all forms as unacceptable at our studio..

Bullying is characterised by repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a person, or group of persons, that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying behaviour is that which a reasonable person in the circumstances would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine, threaten, degrade, offend or intimidate a person. Bullying behaviour can include actions of an individual or group.

Whilst generally characterised by repeated behaviours, one off instances can amount to bullying.

The following types of behaviour, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, would be considered bullying:

- verbal abuse including shouting, swearing, teasing, making belittling remarks or persistent unjustified criticism;
- excluding or isolating a group or person;
- spreading malicious rumours; or
- psychological harassment such as intimidation.

Bullying includes cyber-bullying which occurs through the use of technology. New technologies and communication tools, such as smart phones and social networking websites, have greatly increased the potential for people to be bullied through unwanted and inappropriate comments. We will not tolerate abusive, discriminatory, intimidating or offensive statements being made online.

If any person believes they are being, or have been, bullied by another person or organisation bound by this policy, he or she may make a complaint. (Refer to Item 10 of this policy.)

9. **Inclusive practices**

Our studio is welcoming and we will seek to include members from all areas of our community.

The following are examples of some of our inclusive practices.

9.1 **People with a disability**

Stepnout will not discriminate against any person because they have a disability. Where it is necessary, we will try our best to find an appropriate class that will enhance the students learning and enable participation.

9.2 **People from diverse cultures**

We will support, respect and encourage people from diverse cultures and religions to participate in our studio.

9.3 **Sexual & Gender Identity**

All people, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity, are welcome at our studio. We strive to provide a safe environment for participation and will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment because of a person's sexuality or gender identity.

9.4 **Pregnancy**

Stepnout is committed to treating pregnant women fairly and to removing any unreasonable barriers to their full participation in our studio activities. We will not tolerate any discrimination or harassment against pregnant women.

We will take reasonable care to ensure the continuing safety, health and wellbeing of pregnant women. We will advise pregnant women that there may be risks involved with their continuing participation in sport, and we will encourage them to obtain medical advice about those risks. Pregnant women should be aware that their own health and wellbeing, and that of their unborn child, is of utmost importance in their decision-making about the extent they choose to participate at our studio

We encourage all pregnant women to talk with their medical advisers, make themselves aware of the facts about pregnancy in sport and ensure that they make informed decisions about their participation in our sport. Pregnant women should make these decisions themselves, in consultation with their medical advisers and in discussion with the studio and their teacher. We will only require pregnant women to sign a disclaimer in relation to their participation in our sport whilst they are pregnant if all other participants are required to sign one in similar circumstances. We will not require women to undertake a pregnancy test.

If a pregnant woman believes she is being, or has been, harassed or discriminated against by another person bound by this policy, she may make a complaint (see item Item section 10).

10. Responding to Complaints

10.1 Complaints

Our studio takes all complaints about behaviour at the studio and outside the studio seriously. Our studio will handle complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness and ensure:

- all complaints are taken seriously;
- irrelevant matters will not be taken into account;
- decisions will be unbiased; and
- any penalties imposed will be reasonable.

If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then our studio will need to report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority.

10.2 Complaint Handling Process

When a complaint is received by our club, the person receiving the complaint (e.g. Director, Office Manager, Staff member) will:

- listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the concern;
- ask the complainant how they would like their concern to be resolved and if they need any support;
- explain the different options available to help resolve the complainant's concern;
- inform the relevant government authorities and/or police, if required by law to do so; and
- where possible and appropriate, maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity.

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the studio will assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process. This may involve:

- supporting the person complaining to talk to the person being complained about;
- bringing all the people involved in the complaint together to talk objectively through the problem (this could include external mediation);
- gathering more information (e.g. from other people that may have seen the behaviour);
- seeking advice from an external agency (e.g. State Department of Sport or anti-discrimination agency);
- referring the complaint to our Director; and/or
- referring the complainant to an external agency such as a community mediation centre, police or anti-discrimination agency.

In situations where a complaint is referred to an outside association and an investigation is conducted, the studio will:

- co-operate fully with the investigation;
- where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the respondent(s); and
- act on recommendations.

At any stage of the process, a person can seek advice from an anti-discrimination commission or other external agency and, if the matter is within their jurisdiction, may lodge a complaint with the anti-discrimination commission or other external agency.

10.3 Disciplinary Sanctions

Our studio may take disciplinary action against anyone found to have breached our policy or made false and malicious allegations. Any disciplinary measure imposed under our policy must:

- be applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements;
- be fair and reasonable;
- be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach; and

Possible sanctions that may be taken include:

- a direction that the individual make verbal and/or written apology;
- counselling of the individual to address behaviour;
- withdrawal of any awards, placings, records, achievements bestowed in any activities or events held by our studio;
- suspension or termination of membership, participation or engagement in a role or activity;
- de-registration of accreditation for a period of time or permanently;
- a fine; or
- any other form of discipline that our studio considers reasonable and appropriate.

10.4 Appeals

The complainant or respondent may be entitled to lodge an appeal against a decision made in relation to a complaint (including a decision where disciplinary sanctions are imposed by our studio) to the Director. Appeals must be based on any right of appeal provided for in the relevant constituent documents, rules, regulations or by laws.

Attachment 1.1: MEMBER PROTECTION DECLARATION

Stepnout has a duty of care to all those associated with our studio and to the individuals and organisations to whom this policy applies. As a requirement of our Member Protection Policy, we must enquire into the background of those who undertake any work, coaching or regular unsupervised contact with people under the age of 18 years.

I (name) of

..... (address) born/...../.....

sincerely declare:

1. I do not have any criminal charge pending before the courts.
2. I do not have any criminal convictions or findings of guilt for sexual offences, offences related to children or acts of violence or narcotics.
3. I have not had any disciplinary proceedings brought against me by an employer, sporting organisation or similar body involving child abuse, sexual misconduct or harassment, other forms of harassment or acts of violence or narcotics.
4. To my knowledge there is no other matter that the studio may consider to constitute a risk to its members, employees, volunteers, students or reputation by engaging me.
5. I will notify the Director immediately upon becoming aware that any of the matters set out in clauses 1 to 4 above has changed.

Declared in the *State/Territory of*

on/...../.....(date) Signature

Parent/Guardian Consent (in respect of a person under the age of 18 years)

I have read and understood the declaration provided by my child. I confirm and warrant that the contents of the declaration provided by my child are true and correct in every particular.

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:

Attachment 1.2: WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK REQUIREMENTS

Working with Children Checks aim to create a child-safe environment and to protect children and young people involved in our sport from physical and sexual harm.

They assess the suitability of people to work with children and young people and can involve:

- criminal history checks;
- signed declarations;
- referee checks; and
- other relevant background checks to assess a person's suitability to work with children and young people.

Victoria

Contact the Department of Justice

Website: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 652 879

Travelling to other states or territories

It is important to remember that when travelling to other states or territories, representatives of sporting organisations must comply with the legislative requirements of that particular state or territory.

In certain jurisdictions, temporary, time limited exemptions from working with children checks may be available for interstate visitors with a Working with Children Check in their home state.

The laws providing interstate exemptions are not consistent across Australia.

If an employee or volunteer for your club is travelling interstate to do work that would normally require a working for children check, you will need to check the relevant requirements of that state or territory.

Attachment 2: CODES OF BEHAVIOUR

- Act within the rules and spirit of our studio
- Promote fair play over winning at any cost
- Encourage and support opportunities for people to learn appropriate behaviours and skills
- Support opportunities for participation in all aspects of our studio.
- Treat each person as an individual
- Show respect and courtesy to all involved with our studio.
- Respect the rights and worth of every person, regardless of their age, race, gender, ability, cultural background, sexuality or religion
- Respect the decisions of Teaching and Administrative Staff
- Wherever practical, avoid unaccompanied and unobserved one-on-one activity (when in a supervisory capacity or where a power imbalance exists) with people under the age of 18
- Display appropriate and responsible behaviour in all interactions
- Display responsible behaviour in relation to alcohol and other drugs
- Act with integrity and objectivity, and accept responsibility for your decisions and actions
- Ensure your decisions and actions contribute to a safe environment
- Ensure your decisions and actions contribute to a harassment-free environment
- Do not tolerate abusive, bullying or threatening behaviour

Students

- Give your best at all times
- Participate for your own enjoyment and benefit
- Work with the studio rules and show respect for other students, teachers and staff
- Please be respectful at all times to your fellow classmates and parents
- Please do not run in the studio or hallways
- Please do not swing on the dance barres
- Please do not eat inside the dance studio
- Please do not remove equipment from the studio
- Please do not use any equipment unless instructed by the teachers
- Please do not enter the staff room or office

Teachers and administrators

- Place the safety and welfare of the students above all else.
- Help each person (student, official, etc.) to reach their potential. Respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each person and encourage them with positive and constructive feedback.
- Obtain appropriate qualifications and keep up-to-date with the latest teaching practices and the principles of growth and development of young students.
- Ensure that any physical contact with another person is appropriate to the situation and necessary for the person's skill development.
- Ensure all players are included and can participate, regardless of their race, gender, ability, cultural background, sexuality or religion.
- Be consistent, impartial and objective when making decisions.
- Address unsporting behaviour and promote respect for other students, teachers and staff
- Ensure quality supervision and instruction for students.
- Support teachers and parents to improve their skills and competencies.
- Act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of the sport as a whole.
- Ensure that any information acquired or advantage gained from the position is not used improperly.
- Conduct studio responsibilities with due care, competence and diligence.

Parents

- Encourage your child to participate, do their best and have fun
- Focus on your child's effort and performance, rather than winning or losing
- Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing a competition
- Help out the teachers and staff if required, where possible
- Model appropriate behaviour, including respect for other students and parents
- Please do not talk to any child other than your own
- Please ensure your child has gone to the toilet before class begins
- Please do not eat inside the dance studios
- Please do not allow your children into the studio unless a teacher is present
- Please do not allow siblings into any class unless directly supervised by you
- Please be mindful in the car park and watch for children
- All children must escorted in and out of the building and won't be allowed to leave without a parent

Audience

- Respect the effort and performances of students
- Reject the use of harassment, bullying or violence in any form, whether by other audience members, teachers, staff and students

Other rules and guidelines

- Arrive early: Please be at class at least 10 minutes before start time. This enables you or your child to catch up with other students, stretch, prepare and be ready to fully focus on your class
- Water: Students should bring water bottles to class
- Fees: All fees are to be paid by due date unless a payment plan has been agreed on. Invoices are emailed at the start of each term
- Uniform: We believe that if a student looks like a dancer, they'll feel like a dancer and that's why we require students wear the correct uniform for all classes. Check the shop for uniform information

Attachment 4: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND DOCUMENTS

RECORD OF COMPLAINT

Name of person receiving complaint		Date: / /
Complainant's Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 18 • Under 18 	
Complainant's contact details	Phone: Email: Parent's Name if under 18	
Complainant's role/status in studio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee (paid) • Student • Teacher • Employee (unpaid) • Parent • Audience • Volunteer • Other 	
Name of person complained about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 18 • Under 18 	
Person complained about role/status in Studio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee (paid) • Student • Teacher • Employee (unpaid) • Parent • Audience • Volunteer • Other 	
Location/event of alleged issue		
Description of alleged issue		
Nature of complaint (category/basis/grounds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment or • Sexual/sexist • Sexuality • Race • Religion • Pregnancy • Other • Discrimination • Selection dispute • Personality clash • Bullying • Disability • Child Abuse • Coaching methods • Verbal abuse • Physical abuse • Victimisation • Unfair decision 	
Can circle more than one item		
What they want to happen to fix issue		
Information provided to them		
Resolution and/or action taken		
Follow-up action		

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation, contact the Police immediately on 000.

We will treat any allegation of child abuse or neglect promptly, seriously and with a high degree of sensitivity.

All people working with Stepnout in a paid or unpaid capacity have a duty to report any concerns to the appropriate authorities, following the steps outlined below.

Step 1: Receive the allegation

If a child or young person raises with you an allegation of child abuse or neglect that relates to them or to another child, it is important that you listen, stay calm and be supportive.

Do	Don't
Make sure you are clear about what the child has told you	Do not challenge or undermine the child
Reassure the child that what has occurred is not his or her fault	Do not seek detailed information, ask leading questions or offer an opinion.
Explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening.	Do not discuss the details with any person other than those detailed in these procedures.
Promptly and accurately record the discussion in writing.	Do not contact the alleged offender.

Step 2: Report the allegation

- Immediately report any allegation of child abuse or neglect, or any situation involving a child at risk of harm, to the police and/or the relevant child protection agency. You may need to make a report to both.
- Contact the relevant child protection agency or police for advice if there is **any** doubt about whether the allegation should be reported.
- If the allegation involves a person to whom this policy applies, then also report the allegation to the Director of Stepnout so that he or she can manage the situation.

Step 3: Protect the child and manage the situation

- The Director will assess the immediate risks to the child and take interim steps to ensure the child's safety and the safety of any other children. This may include redeploying the alleged offender to a position where there is no unsupervised contact with children, supervising the alleged offender or removing/suspending him or her until any investigations have been concluded. Legal advice should be sought before any interim steps are made if the person is an employee of Stepnout.
- The Director will consider what services may be most appropriate to support the child and his or her parent/s.
- The Director will consider what support services may be appropriate for the alleged offender.
- The Director will seek to put in place measures to protect the child and the alleged offender from possible victimisation and gossip.

Step 4: Take internal action

- At least three different investigations could be undertaken to examine allegations that are made against a person to whom this policy applies, including:
 - a criminal investigation (conducted by the police)
 - a child protection investigation (conducted by the relevant child protection agency)
 - a disciplinary or misconduct inquiry/investigation (conducted by Stepnout).
- Stepnout will assess the allegations and determine what action should be taken in the circumstances. Depending on the situation, action may include considering whether the alleged offender should return to his or her position, be dismissed, banned or suspended or face other disciplinary action.
- If disciplinary action is undertaken, we will follow the procedures set out in our Member Protection Policy.
- Where required we will provide the relevant government agency with a report of any disciplinary action we take.
- **Contact details for advice or to report an allegation of child abuse**

Victoria Police Non-urgent police assistance Ph: (03) 9247 6666 www.police.vic.gov.au	Department of Human Services www.dhs.vic.gov.au Ph: 131 278
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CONFIDENTIAL RECORD OF CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATION

Before completing, ensure the procedures outlined in *Procedure for Handling Allegations of Child Abuse* have been followed and advice has been sought from the relevant government agency and/or police.

Complainant's Name (if other than the child)		Date Formal Complaint Received: / /
Role at studio		
Child's name		Age:
Child's address		
Person's reason for suspecting abuse (e.g. observation, injury, disclosure)		
Name of person complained about		
Role at studio (Please circle)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee (paid) • Parent • Student • Volunteer • Teacher • Audience • Employee (unpaid) • Other _____ 	
Witnesses (if more than 3 witnesses, attach details to this form)	Name (1): Name (2): Name (3):	Contact details: Contact details: Contact details:
Interim action (if any) taken (to ensure child's safety and/or to support needs of person complained about)		
Police contacted	Who: When: Advice provided:	
Government agency contacted	Who: When: Advice provided:	
President and/or MPIO contacted	Who: When:	
Police and/or government agency investigation	Finding:	
Internal investigation (if any)	Finding:	
Action taken		
Completed by	Name: Position: Signature:	/ /
Signed by	Complainant (if not a child)	

Stepnout Protection Policy July 2024

This record and any notes must be kept in a confidential and safe place and provided to the relevant authorities (police and government) should they require them.