Child Players ACT

Child Safe Reporting and Complaint Handling Policy

Culture of Reporting

Child Players ACT fosters a culture of reporting. Staff, volunteers, participants and families are all asked to report any concerns they have about the behaviour of anyone involved with Child Players ACT, including staff, volunteers, parents/carers and other children. Reporting helps everyone be accountable and hold each other accountable, and it supports children to be in a safe and supportive environment. No incident is too small to report: reporting everything that concerns us reveals patterns of behaviour that might otherwise be missed.

If a child discloses anything concerning to their parent/carer, we ask that the adult makes a report. Reports should be made as soon as possible after an incident, so that small issues can be addressed before they escalate and other children are not harmed. Everyone is encouraged to 'Speak Up' without fear of repercussion. All reports and complaints are taken seriously, handled confidentially and acted on promptly, with the safety and wellbeing of the child always the first priority.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out how Child Players ACT receives, records, responds to and resolves reports and complaints about the safety and wellbeing of children. It explains **what** must be reported, **who** reports, **who to report to**, **how** to report, and **what happens** after a report or complaint is made, including when Child Players ACT will report to external authorities. It works alongside our Child Safe Code of Conduct, Participant's Safety and Respect Guidelines and Reporting Guide for Families and Participants.

Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to all Child Players ACT staff, volunteers (including those under 18 years of age), board directors and contractors, across all of our programs, classes, rehearsals, productions, activities and online communication. Participants and their families can also use the reporting and complaint processes in this policy. A family-friendly version is available in the Reporting Guide for Families and Participants.

Details of the Policy and Procedures

What must be reported?	**Staff and volunteers must report everything they see, hear about or suspect that may affect a child's safety, wellbeing or enjoyment of the program, no matter how 'small'. This includes:** • **Breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct by staff or volunteers.**

	• **Breaches of the Participant's Safety and Respect Guidelines (the participant behaviour agreement) by participants or families.** • **Unacceptable actions or words by staff, volunteers, participants or families (e.g. a child bullying another child, or a staff member saying something inappropriate).** • **Concerning behaviours involving children (e.g. a child who doesn't have food, or is 'tired' and constantly sits out).** • **All disclosures that a child or adult makes to them.** • **Any experienced, witnessed or suspected harm, abuse, ill-treatment, misconduct, grooming or bullying (see Definitions of Harm and Abuse below).**
What is a complaint?	A complaint is any concern or dissatisfaction about Child Players ACT's staff, volunteers or programs, or about the way a child safety concern has been handled. Anyone can make a complaint, including children, families, staff, volunteers and members of the community, and complaints can be made anonymously. All complaints relating to child safety are handled under this policy.
Who must report?	All staff and volunteers must report. Participants and families are strongly encouraged to report, including children telling a trusted adult, and parents/ carers reporting anything their child has disclosed to them.
Who to report to?	• **Child Safety Officer:** BJ • **Production Managers:** Ange and Mel • **Supervising Director** (for staff and volunteers during a program) If a report or complaint is about the Child Safety Officer, it can be made to a Production Manager, who will refer it to the Child Players ACT Board.
How to report?	**Staff and volunteers:** • **Talk face to face** with the Child Safety Officer (BJ) or a Production Manager. • Fill out the staff online reporting form. • Complete a paper Incident Report Form for all accidents and near misses. • **Call or text** the Child Players ACT phone on 0494 551 780. • Put a signed note in the **Tell BJ Box**. **Participants and families:** • Talk to BJ or a Production Manager, or (for children) tell any trusted adult. • **Email** contact@childplayersact.net • **Call or text** 0494 551 780. • Fill out the confidential online reporting form (a QR code is on the sign-in table).

	• Put a note in the **Tell BJ Box** (with a name, or anonymously if the child prefers).
When to report?	As soon as possible, and on the same day. If a child discloses something to you, write down what was said, using the child's own words, as soon as possible and tell the Child Safety Officer straight away. **If a child is in immediate danger, call 000 first.**
Responding to a disclosure	Staff and volunteers will follow the Child Disclosure procedures in the Staff and Volunteer Training Booklet: • Stay calm, listen closely and don't ask leading questions or investigate. • Tell the child you believe them, thank them for telling you and let them know it's not their fault. • Don't promise to keep it a secret; explain you will tell someone who can help. • Write down everything that was said as soon as possible and report it to the Child Safety Officer. • Don't talk to parents about it (BJ will do that) and don't confront the person involved.
Confidentiality	All reports and complaints are confidential and only people who need to know will be told. Staff and volunteers should only discuss a report with the Child Safety Officer, Supervising Director or Production Manager. A person who is reported will not be told who made the report.
What will happen after a report or complaint?	• **Safety first:** The child's immediate safety and wellbeing is secured. • **Acknowledge:** The Child Safety Officer acknowledges the report or complaint as soon as possible, usually within two working days. • **Record:** The details are recorded and stored securely. • **Assess:** The Child Safety Officer assesses how serious the matter is and whether an external report is needed. • **Respond:** Most matters are handled internally by the Child Safety Officer, who speaks with the people involved and contacts parents/carers where appropriate. • **Outcome:** The person who made the report or complaint is told the outcome where appropriate, while respecting everyone's privacy. • **Review:** Reports are reviewed for patterns of behaviour, and our policies and procedures are updated if needed.
External reporting	Child Players ACT requires all staff and volunteers to act as mandatory reporters. If there is a reasonable belief that a child has experienced, or is at risk of, abuse or significant harm, or that a crime may have occurred, Child Players ACT will report it to the relevant authorities. Staff and volunteers report internally to the Child Safety Officer, who will make the external report. Anyone who needs to

	speak with the authorities will be supported by Child Players ACT every step of the way. If a child is in immediate danger, or the Child Safety Officer cannot be reached, contact the authorities directly: • **Emergency:** 000 • **ACT Policing:** 131 444 • **Child and Youth Protection Services (Child Concern Report line):** 1300 556 729
Support and protection	Everyone involved, including the child, their family and the person who made the report, will be supported immediately and on an ongoing basis as needed. No one will be treated unfairly, punished or disadvantaged for making a report or complaint in good faith.
Outcomes of breaches	Breaches by staff and volunteers are managed under the Child Safe Code of Conduct and may result in additional training, increased supervision, suspension or termination. Anyone whose behaviour involves a criminal offence or a pattern of concerning behaviour that could be grooming will be removed immediately and reported to the authorities. Breaches by participants are managed under the Participant's Safety and Respect Guidelines.
Record keeping	All reports, complaints and outcomes are recorded and stored securely. Access is limited to the Child Safety Officer and the Production Manager.
Date of review	Our child safe policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and comply with legislation. This policy was last reviewed in November 2026 and will next be reviewed in November 2027. Feedback is welcome: talk to BJ or email contact@childplayersact.net.

Definitions of Harm and Abuse

Psychological abuse (also known as emotional abuse): This includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming, name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to family violence.

Physical abuse: This includes when a person intentionally or recklessly applies physical force against a child without lawful justification or excuse - such as hitting, striking, kicking, punching or dragging a child. It also involves threatening to physically harm a child through words and/or gestures.

Sexual abuse: This includes the sexual touching or sexual assault of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child-abuse material.

Neglect (or Lack of appropriate care): This includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.

Grooming: This is a process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child.

Misconduct: This is inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse but could indicate that abuse is occurring and is in breach of Child Players ACT's Child Safe Code of Conduct. This could include showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, or inappropriate conversations or touching.

Ill-Treatment: This is conduct towards a child that is unreasonable and seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel. Ill-treatment can include a range of conduct such as making excessive or degrading demands of a child; a pattern of hostile or degrading comments or behaviour towards a child; and using inappropriate forms of behaviour management towards a child.

Unacceptable Behaviours: This is any behaviour that is a breach of an organisation's child safety policies.

Concerning Behaviours: Behaviours that on their own may not constitute a breach of our Child Safe Code of Conduct but when viewed together are concerning and may indicate grooming behaviour.

Bullying (between peers). Child Players ACT '**zero tolerance for bullying policy'.**

- **Verbal bullying** which includes name calling or insulting someone verbally
- **Physical bullying** which includes physical contact, threatening physical contact, or damaging or stealing their belongings
- **Social bullying** which includes consistently excluding another person, threats, gaslighting or sharing information or images that will have a harmful effect on the other person.

- **Direct or overt bullying -** physical bullying behaviours are easy to see. This type of bullying can include physical violence such as hitting, or verbal bullying such as name calling. This type of bullying occurs directly between the people involved.
- **Covert and indirect bullying** - is hard for others to see. This type of bullying can include spreading rumours, stealing friends, breaking secrets, gossiping, criticising clothes and personalities, excluding a person, or encouraging others to exclude a person, restricting where a person can sit or talking about a person behind their back to others. Indirect covert bullying mostly inflicts harm by damaging another's social reputation, peer relationships, and self-esteem, through psychological harm.

Related Policy Documents

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Participant's Safety and Respect Guidelines
- Reporting Guide for Families and Participants
- Incident Report Form