Child Players ACT

Child Safety Booklet for Families

Participants, Parents and Caregivers

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Our Child Safe Commitment

Child Players ACT is committed to the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of every child and young person who takes part in our programs. We have zero tolerance for child abuse, and we take every concern seriously.

Our vision is that every child feels safe to express themselves, and builds confidence, identity, agency and life skills through positive theatre. Child safety is part of everything we do, from the way we recruit and train our team to the way we run every class, rehearsal and production. We implement the ACT Child Safe Standards, based on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

We Will

- **Lead from the top:** our board and leadership embed child safety in our governance, culture and decisions.
- **Listen to children:** inform children of their rights, listen to them, believe them, and involve them in decisions that affect them.
- **Partner with families:** keep families informed and involved, and welcome their feedback.
- **Value every child:** provide inclusive, audition-free programs that respect diversity and equity, including the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
- **Build a safe team:** carefully screen, train and supervise all staff and volunteers.
- **Respond to concerns:** take every report and complaint seriously, respond promptly, and report to authorities when required.
- **Keep improving:** regularly review our policies, procedures and practices, and learn from feedback.

Read the signed Child Safe Commitment Statement.

Welcome to Child Players ACT

Thank you for choosing Child Players ACT! We know that when you leave your child with us, you are trusting us with the most important person in your world. This booklet explains how we keep children safe, what we ask of participants and families, and how you can speak up if anything ever worries you.

How to Use This Booklet

- Each section gives you a short, plain-English summary.
- Blue underlined text is a link: click it to open our full policy document.
- Please read the **What We Ask of Participants and Families** section together with your child, so they know what to expect.
- All of our child safety documents are listed in one place in the **Our Child Safety Documents** section at the end.

Our One Rule: Positive Environment

Everything we do comes back to one rule: **positive environment**. Staff, volunteers, participants and families all help to create a place where everyone is kind, respectful and supportive, so children feel safe to try new things without fear of judgement. We also ask everyone to **assume positive intent**: if something someone says or does seems negative, talk about it rather than assuming the worst.

Our Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

To provide a positive environment that supports inclusive, audition-free and welcoming performing arts programs that remove traditional barriers to entry for all young people.

Vision

A community where every child feels safe to express themselves, build lifelong confidence and empowerment, develop a sense of identity and agency, and gain life skills nurtured through positive theatre experiences.

Our Philosophy

We believe that **theatre belongs to everyone**. We focus on the creative process rather than just the final performance, so that every child's self-esteem and confidence can flourish. The skills children build with us (confidence, empathy, teamwork and problem-solving) carry over into the classroom, future workplaces and relationships.

Our Core Values

- **Positive environment:** a safe, supportive space where children feel confident to express themselves.
- **Inclusion and belonging:** a welcoming space where every child, whatever their abilities or background, is celebrated and valued.
- **Financial accessibility:** money should not be a barrier. We subsidise fees, offer scholarships and keep ticket prices affordable.
- **Empowerment:** we listen to children, value their opinions and include their creative ideas.
- **Life skills:** children build confidence, empathy, collaboration and emotional intelligence through theatre.
- **Quality:** high-quality productions and teaching that inspire the next generation of theatre makers and theatregoers.
- **Integrity, safety and accountability:** strong governance and child safe practices that protect every participant.

How We Keep Your Child Safe

Here is a summary of how we keep children safe. Click any link to read the full policy.

Our Team

- Every staff member and volunteer over 16 holds a current **Working with Vulnerable People** registration, and is screened, inducted and trained before working with children.
- All staff and volunteers follow our Child Safe Code of Conduct, which sets out exactly how they must (and must not) behave with children.
- Read more: Safe Recruitment, Screening and Induction Policy

Supervision

- Children are actively supervised at all times, including during breaks, toilet trips and backstage.
- Children leave the group with a **buddy** of a similar age and gender, and staff avoid ever being alone with a child out of sight of others.
- Children must be **signed in and out** every session and stay inside until they are picked up.
- Read more: Child Safe Supervision Policy

First Aid and Wellbeing

- A First Aid Officer is on site at every program, and we aim to have a Mental Health First Aid Officer at every class and rehearsal.
- Medication is only given with your consent and is always recorded.
- If we need to contact you, we call the emergency (ICE) numbers on your enrolment form, in order. **Please make sure these numbers can be reached during every class and rehearsal.** If the First Aid Officer thinks it necessary, an ambulance will be called, which may happen before we reach you.
- Read more: First Aid and Wellbeing Policy

Inclusion and Support

- We write up the daily routine each morning so children know what to expect.
- A low-sensory **quiet room** is available for any child who needs a break.
- We run free **orientation sessions** before programs for children who are new, neurodiverse or live with anxiety.
- Please tell us about any special requirements, medical conditions or support needs when you enrol, so we can support your child. This information is kept confidential.
- Read more: Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Photos, Filming and Online Safety

- Photos and videos of children are only used with your consent, which we ask for at enrolment.
- Staff only take photos on Child Players ACT devices (or as our official photographer). Backstage and dressing room photos are only ever taken of fully dressed actors.
- Staff never message children privately: you will be included in any message to your child, and staff do not friend or follow participants on personal social media.
- Read more: Photography, Filming and Online Safety Policy

Your Privacy

- We only collect the information we need, store it securely and share it only with people who need it to keep your child safe.
- Read more: Privacy and Record Keeping Policy

What We Ask of Participants and Families

Our Participant's Safety and Respect Guidelines explain, in child-friendly language, how we expect everyone to behave. **Please read them together with your child.** Here are the highlights:

- **Be kind and respectful:** treat others how you would like to be treated.
- **Use the buddy system:** always take a buddy when leaving the group.
- **Sign in and out:** every session. Tell us in writing if your child may sign themselves out or make their own way home.
- **Ask before touching:** everyone asks for consent before touching another person, even for a hug.
- **No physical violence or bullying:** we have zero tolerance for violence, 'play fighting' and bullying of any kind.
- **G-rated language and topics:** our programs include children from 7 to 18, so all language and conversations must suit all ages.
- **Phones stay in bags** during rehearsals, and are only used at breaks to contact a parent or caregiver. No photos of others without their consent.
- **Online:** participants under 16 may not post photos of other participants online. Any group chat during a program must include a staff member.
- **Romantic connections** wait until after the program, so everyone can feel comfortable on stage.

How Families Can Help

- Make sure your emergency (ICE) contact numbers are correct and can be reached during classes and rehearsals.
- Tell us about any medical conditions, special requirements or changes at home that might affect your child.
- Arrive on time for pick-up, and let us know if someone else is collecting your child.
- Help create a positive environment: be kind to all participants, families, staff and volunteers.
- Please don't post photos of other people's children online without their parents' consent.

Speaking Up: How to Raise a Concern

Child Players ACT fosters a **culture of reporting**. No concern is too small: reporting everything helps us notice patterns of behaviour and fix small problems before they grow. Everyone is encouraged to speak up without fear of repercussion, and every report is taken seriously.

What to Tell Us About

- Anything that makes your child feel unhappy, unsafe or uncomfortable at Child Players ACT.
- Bullying, unkind behaviour or anything that breaks the Participant's Safety and Respect Guidelines.
- Any behaviour by a staff member or volunteer that worries you, or that breaks our Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Anything your child tells you that concerns you.

How to Tell Us

- **Talk to us:** speak to BJ (our Child Safety Officer) or the Production Manager.
- **Email:** contact@childplayersact.net
- **Call or text:** the Child Players ACT phone on 0494 551 780.
- **Online:** fill out our confidential online reporting form (a QR code is on the sign-in table).
- **Tell BJ Box:** leave a note in the box on the sign-in table, with your name or anonymously.

Children can also tell any trusted adult, such as a parent, staff member or volunteer, or put a note in the Tell BJ Box.

What Happens Next

- Your child's safety comes first.
- We acknowledge your report as soon as possible, usually within two working days.
- Your report is kept confidential and only shared with people who need to know. A person who is reported will not be told who reported them.
- BJ looks into the concern, talks with the people involved and keeps you informed of the outcome where appropriate.
- If a child may be at risk of harm, or a crime may have occurred, we report it to the relevant authorities.

Read more: Reporting Guide for Families and Participants and Child Safe Reporting and Complaint Handling Policy.

In an Emergency

If a child is in immediate danger, call **000**. You can also contact ACT Policing on **131 444**, or the Child and Youth Protection Services Child Concern Report line on **1300 556 729**.

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If Your Child Tells You Something

Children often tell a parent or caregiver first, and sometimes it comes out as a passing comment. If your child tells you something that worries you:

- **Stay calm** and listen closely. Try to keep your face and voice relaxed.
- **Believe them** and thank them for telling you.
- **Let them know it's not their fault.**
- **Don't ask leading questions** or try to investigate; just let them tell you in their own words.
- **Don't promise to keep it a secret.** Explain that you will tell someone who can help.
- **Write down** what they said, using their words, as soon as you can.
- **Tell us** as soon as possible, using any of the ways listed in the previous section. If your child is in danger, call 000 first.

Our Child Safety Documents

Here are all of the child safety documents that are relevant to participants and families. Click a document name to open it.

Document	What it covers	Most useful for
Child Safe Commitment Statement	Our board-endorsed commitment to child safety.	Everyone
Participant's Safety and Respect Guidelines	Expected behaviours for participants and families, in child-friendly language.	Participants and families (read together)
Reporting Guide for Families and Participants	How to raise a concern or make a report.	Participants and families
Online Reporting Form	Confidential online form to report a concern.	Participants and families
Child Safe Reporting and Complaint Handling Policy	How we handle reports and complaints, and when we contact authorities.	Families
Child Safe Code of Conduct	How our staff and volunteers must behave with children.	Families
Child Safe Supervision Policy	How we supervise children, including toilets, breaks, drop-off and pick-up.	Families
First Aid and Wellbeing Policy	First aid, medication, mental wellbeing and contacting parents.	Families
Inclusion and Diversity Policy	How we include and support every child.	Families
Photography, Filming and Online Safety Policy	Photo consent, social media and online communication.	Families
Privacy and Record Keeping Policy	How we store and protect your family's information.	Families
Safe Recruitment, Screening and Induction Policy	How we choose, check and train our team.	Families

All of our child safety documents are also available in our Child Safety Policies folder.

Contact Us

We love hearing from families. If you have any questions, ideas or feedback about this booklet or any of our child safety policies, please get in touch. We review our policies every year and your feedback helps us improve.

- **Child Safety Officer:** BJ (Artistic Director)
- **Email:** contact@childplayersact.net
- **Phone or text:** 0494 551 780
- **Website:** www.childplayersact.net

Let's all work together to keep our children safe!

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