

Williamstown Little Theatre

Child Safe Policy

Our Commitment To Child Safety

1. Our organisation is committed to child safety.
2. We support and respect all children as well as our cast and production team members, volunteers and committee members.
3. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered as vital and active participants in the relevant production. We involve them when making decisions about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.
4. Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
5. We have zero tolerance of child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
6. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities, which we follow rigorously, when we are worried about a child's safety.
7. Our organisations is committed to training our cast and production team members, volunteers and committee members on child abuse risks for any production or activity involving children.
8. We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome.
9. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
10. All of our cast and production team members, volunteers and committee members must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.
11. It is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. The Child Safe Code of Conduct will be included in the Production Booklet for any production involving children and clearly articulated to all involved.
12. All adults involved in a production in with children are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Audition notices for any production involving children will include the following statement: *It is a requirement that everyone involved with this production must have a current Working With Children Check. If you are cast, you must apply for one if you don't have one. It is free and can be done online. Our organisation is committed to child safety. We have zero tolerance of child abuse.*
13. The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to cast and production team members, volunteers and committee members. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

Privacy

14. All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it.

Legislative Responsibilities

15. Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously including:
 - **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
 - **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
 - Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

16. Our organisational culture aims for all cast and production team members, volunteers and committee members in addition to parents/carers and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.
17. We work to ensure all children, families, cast and production team members, volunteers and committee members know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse, are a victim, or notice inappropriate behaviour.
18. Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and will investigate any thoroughly and quickly.
19. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.
20. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.
21. We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place.
22. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:
 - A child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves).
 - Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed.
 - Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it.
 - Observing suspicious behaviour.
23. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form including investigation updates. All records will be securely stored.

Review

24. This policy will be reviewed every five years and following significant incidents if any occur.