



Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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Status: Interim policy for consultation

1 Commitment to child safety

Box Hill Ballet Association is a not-for-profit dance school welcoming dancers of all ages, backgrounds and experience levels. We are a volunteer-run organisation that's been part of the Box Hill community for over 70 years.

All children who come to Box Hill Ballet Association Incorporated (Box Hill Ballet) have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority, and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm. We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun while enjoying learning to dance.

Victorian organisations that provide services or facilities for children are required by law to implement the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Standards) to protect children from harm. The Standards require organisations that provide services for children to have strategies embedded in their school community which promote and support an organisational culture of child safety, including effective leadership arrangements, the involvement of families and community and risk management strategies. The Standards also align with associated child protection laws.

2 Purpose

This Policy outlines how Box Hill Ballet prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Committee members, children and other individuals involved in our organisation. This policy applies to all activities – classes, private lessons, rehearsals and performances – conducted by Box Hill Ballet.

4 Definitions

Committee means the elected President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Ordinary Committee Members of the Box Hill Ballet Association Inc (BHBA).

Staff means employees or independent contractors of Box Hill Ballet Association who provide a service for payment.

Volunteers are members of the Association, students, parents or carers of students or members of the community who give their time for the good of the Association without financial gain.

Child abuse means:

- a sexual offence committed against a child
- an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
- physical violence against a child
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

Harm is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, because of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising because of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

Child/Children means a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Concerns and complaints

A concern refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with Box Hill Ballet related to one or more of the following:

- our services or dealings with individuals
- allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, a volunteer or another individual associated with Box Hill Ballet
- disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
- the conduct of a child or young person at Box Hill Ballet
- the inadequate handling of a prior concern
- general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.

5 Role of the Box Hill Ballet Association Committee

The Committee has the role of making sure Box Hill Ballet prioritises children's safety and that action is taken when anyone raises concerns about children's safety.

The Committee will champion and model a child safe culture at Box Hill Ballet. We encourage anyone involved with the organisation to report a child safety concern. The Committee will work to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns.

Everyone at Box Hill Ballet has a role in identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm. The Committee will make sure that staff and volunteers are taking action to manage risks in accordance with this policy. They will also ensure that appropriate child safety training for staff and volunteers is identified and completed.

6 Children's empowerment and participation

Box Hill Ballet includes children's views and ideas in our planning and delivery of services including rehearsals and performances.

We want children to develop new friends through Box Hill Ballet and encourage children to be supportive of each other. We do not tolerate bullying or abusive behaviour between children and take action if this occurs.

We respect the rights of children and provide them with information about their rights including the right to be safe at Box Hill Ballet.

7 Families and communities

Box Hill Ballet recognises the important role of families and involves parents and carers when making significant decisions about their child. Parents, families and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time through our contact email address and are encouraged to raise any concerns they have with us.

At the annual general meeting each year, we elect the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and several ordinary members on the Committee. Students, parents and members of the Association are invited to share their thoughts on the direction of Box Hill Ballet for the next year.

Box Hill Ballet provides information to families and community about our child safe policies and practices including through:

- publishing this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct on our website
- including information about our child safety approach, our operations and Committee and management structure, in the Box Hill Ballet Handbook
- including articles and information on child safety and wellbeing, and reminders about our policies and procedures, in our newsletter.

8 Creating culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children and their families

Box Hill Ballet is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal children, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal children include:

- an Acknowledgement of Country at annual performances
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are interested in Box Hill Ballet dance training.

9 Valuing diversity

We value diversity and equity for all children. To achieve this, we:

- undertake risk assessments to support the needs of children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ children
- offer students and families through our enrolment forms the opportunity to provide information about themselves, including any specific needs to participate fully in our programs
- have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified
- have a physical and online environment that actively celebrates diversity.

10 Code of Conduct

Box Hill Ballet has a Child Safe Code of Conduct. Staff, volunteers, contractors and the Committee must comply with the Code of Conduct at all times. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organisation.

11 Recruiting staff and volunteers

Box Hill Ballet puts child safety and wellbeing at the centre of recruitment and screening processes for teachers, contractors and volunteers as outlined in the recruitment and screening policy. We only recruit staff and volunteers who are appropriate to engage with children. Members of the Committee must also be screened.

We require a Working with Children Check for all staff and volunteers who have a role with children or have access to children's personal information. We require staff to have appropriate qualifications for their roles and check to make sure these qualifications are valid. Members of the Committee must hold a valid Working with Children Check.

12 Supporting staff and volunteers

Box Hill Ballet is committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety and to support their engagement with children. Box Hill Ballet assists its staff and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decisions and to promote a safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

All Box Hill Ballet Committee members, teachers, contractors and volunteers are required to complete child safety training. Training will be recorded in the Child Safety Training Action Plan.

Issues or concerns about behaviour with children will be raised immediately and addressed in line with our Code of Conduct, complaint handling policy and disciplinary policy.

13 Complaints and reporting

All reports of child abuse and child safety concerns will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child and whether they are about the conduct of an adult or a child. All complaints and child safety concerns will be responded to promptly and thoroughly.

Box Hill Ballet has a complaint handling policy that includes information for staff and volunteers about how a complaint or child safety concern will be responded to.

If a complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, then staff and volunteers at Box Hill Ballet must report it in accordance with the complaint handling policy. Box Hill Ballet staff and volunteers are required to prioritise children's safety in any response and to report all potentially criminal conduct to Victoria Police. Under the complaint handling and disciplinary policies, staff and volunteers may be subject to actions to support child safety including:

- being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation
- having their duties altered so they do not engage with children at Box Hill Ballet
- not allowing unsupervised contact with children at Box Hill Ballet
- removing their access to the Box Hill Ballet IT system and facilities.
- Complaints can be emailed to info@boxhillballet.com.au or you can speak with the Principal or the President.
- If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child, immediately call 000.

14 Record keeping

Box Hill Ballet is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns.

All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

15 Information sharing

Box Hill Ballet may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests. Box Hill Ballet will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety. We may also need to share information about incidents or

complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety. More information is available in our complaint handling policy.

16 Risk management

We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse in the physical and online environments operated by Box Hill Ballet.

We have a risk management plan to address the risk of child abuse and harm at Box Hill Ballet. We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the benefits of participating at Box Hill Ballet. The Committee is responsible for approving the risk management plan.

17 Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct

Box Hill Ballet will enforce this policy, the Code of Conduct and any other child safety and wellbeing policies (see list below). Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action. More information can be found in our disciplinary policy.

18 Review

Box Hill Ballet will review all child safe practices and policies at least every three years. We will also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Findings from reviews will be reported to the people involved in our organisation and also inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices. Reviews are overseen by the Committee and will be informed by consultation with families and staff.

19 Supporting documents – Box Hill Ballet child safety and wellbeing system

The following policies and procedures work together to support child safety and wellbeing across all of our operations:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaint handling policy
- Recruitment and screening policy
- Disciplinary policy
- Risk management plan
- Child safe training plan.