




TCDA Pty Ltd
ACN 617 607 253
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Child Safe Child Friendly Policy

Version 2
15 June 2024

TCDA Director	Paul Singh
Responsible Child Protection Officer	Paul Singh
Signed	
Date	5 June 2024
Revision	2



TCDA'S STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO

Child Safety

Tamworth City Dance Academy (TCDA) values children and young people, and seeks to provide safe environments in which children are protected and their rights, needs and interests are met. Our policies and procedures are in line with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

- + *We value and listen to children and young people and actively seek out their voices.*
- + *We take all allegations of child harm seriously, providing a clear, fair, transparent and timely response.*
- + *We promote the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in our communities and empower them to reach their full potential. Where children have been harmed we seek avenues to facilitate their healing.*
- + *We recruit, educate and support our staff to understand their vital role in protecting children and young people. We support our staff to identify, prevent and report harms, abuses and violence.*
- + *We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and harms. We promote child rights and adhere to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.*
- + *We commit to a culture of openness and safety where children and young people are encouraged to talk freely when they feel unsafe or worried, to safe adults. We support children, young people and their families to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.*
- + *We affirm the diversity of all young people and their cultural identity; promoting equity and inclusion for children and young people with diverse needs*
- + *We act to continuously improve child safe principles and considerations within all levels of the organisation.*
- + *We maintain safe spaces and environments that minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.*

TCDA's Child Safety Policy can be found on our website

dance is the vehicle, life is the lesson

Introduction

Tamworth City Dance Academy (TCDA) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children and indeed our organisation exists to create positive experiences and encourage young people to develop into happy, healthy and successful adults. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and everyone working at TCDA is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information in the best interests of the child.

Purpose

This policy and procedures outline the legislative and policy and action requirements for TCDA in ensuring children who interact with TCDA are protected and their safety is prioritised in all activities.

The purpose of this policy is

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within TCDA.
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To prevent child abuse within TCDA.
4. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
5. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
6. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
7. To provide assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

Background

TCDA's Child Safety Policy, code of conduct and operational procedures have been developed with alignment to the Child Safety Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that complement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. By implementing the National Principles into our practices, policies and procedures, TCDA meets the Child Safe Standards required by the Office of the Children's Guardian for organisations that work with young people.

The Child Safety Standards And National Principles

- Standard 1: Child Safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
- Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- Standard 3: families and communities are informed and involved.
- Standard 4: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken into account.
- Standard 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported.
- Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused
- Standard 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through continual education and training.
- Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.
- Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
- Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

How Do We Address And Meet These National Principles At TCDA?

TCDA ensures the safety and well-being of children under our care by assessing risk and implementing risk reduction strategies through numerous means and continually monitoring our procedures in operation to ensure best practice. TCDA management, staff and volunteers share responsibilities in ensuring that the National Child Safety Principles are met and that our child safety measures are placed into practice and monitored. Each Principle is addressed below, detailing how TCDA meets the Standards.

Standard 1

CHILD SAFETY IS EMBEDDED IN ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE.

TCDA has published our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety on our website and display a hard copy of this Statement at our Studio Reception Desk, clearly visible to parents and carers. Our Statement is a true reflection of our intents with regards to Child Safety and is reflected in our policies, procedures, practices, and ethics.

We have developed this Child Safety Policy that sets out our approach to Child Safety and has been updated from our previous Child Safety Policy to reflect the ten National Standards and ensure compliance with current legislation.

TCDA's Code of Conduct is published on our website and is mandatory for all of our staff and volunteers to agree to and abide by. Our Code ensures that all staff, volunteers, students and visitors all work collectively to keep TCDA a safe space for Children.

Child Safety is also addressed across a range of internal TCDA Policies including, but not limited to our Risk Management Plans for both classes and events, our Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Privacy Policy and Complaint Handling Policy as well as our recruitment policy.

TCDA's Leaders ensure that child safety is considered when making decisions as a part of their duties. This applies across all areas of our enterprise and filters down through all levels of our organisation. Leaders ensure that all staff are aware of our expectations and this can be seen in operation in activities at a higher level such as the creation of safe spaces, effective policies and procedures and staff training, right through to the control of access to premises, roll marking and monitoring of movement within premises and appropriate choices and costumes and songs.

Standard 2

CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN DECISIONS AFFECTING THEM AND ARE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

TCDA supports the active participation of children in our organisation and we empower children by listening to their views, respect what they say and involve them when we make decisions, especially about matters that will directly affect them. Children are provided with a number of opportunities to be involved in decisions affecting them across a wide range of activities and roles that are available to them.

As students, teachers encourage dialogue and feedback from their pupils before, during and after class. Most classes have a junior teacher or teaching assistant who is closer in age to the students that has the benefit of making them perhaps more approachable to shy students and encourage them to contribute their ideas. Students have the opportunity to contribute to ideas for dance themes, costumes and so forth.

Teachers, Junior Teachers and Teaching Assistants are likewise asked to participate in the process of song selection, dance style, theme and costuming and are also asked to contribute their own ideas as choreographers and are constantly asked for feedback on the full gamut of concerns within TCDA. The availability of teaching assistant and junior teacher positions at TCDA further empowers young people as does our policy of raising teachers primarily from our own ranks means that young people know that their mentors were once students here and that advancement is achievable and will be rewarded.

Safe spaces at TCDA, such as our student lounge, are child only spaces where young people are given space, responsibility and independence. Separating parents and carers from students once they have graduated from Tinys also creates independence, self sufficiency and bonding with their peers rather than adults.

Opportunities such as TCDA's selective Performance Troupes provide children with additional opportunities in decision making with the appointment of captains and leaders within those groups. Each Performance Troupe communicates and works together to identify areas for improvement, additional "Captains Runs", social events and so on to take ownership of their Troupe with the aim of a successful competition season and personal growth.

Song choices, choreography and costuming is age appropriate, as is the language used by adults to communicate with children. Children at TCDA are encouraged to use age appropriate language when speaking to adults or to each other.

Standard 3

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES ARE INFORMED AND INVOLVED.

TCDA has the objective of giving children autonomy in the classroom where they learn from their teachers and peers, providing empowerment. We aim to build trust with parents and carers so that they can be confident that the best interests of their children are considered and prioritised and for them to see our excellent child safety procedures in practice in our studio and at TCDA events.

This is achieved through a number of strategies and practices, summarised below.

- Objectives and intended outcomes for students are clearly explained and repeated during classes, in newsletters, on social media, through our website and feedback is additionally provided verbally and via remarks at competitions and eisteddfods and during our annual examination period.
- Teachers, Management, staff and volunteers are available to parents and carers via a number of means to listen to their thoughts or comments.
- We ensure that our costuming, song choices and choreography is age appropriate. We discuss these issues with parents, carers and students and empower students to be involved in this process.
- We ask parents and carers to become involved and active participants in their child's dance journey and offer a number of avenues to facilitate this end.
- TCDA engages in a number of philanthropic endeavours each year and encourages our students and their parents to become involved.
- TCDA Policies and procedures are effectively communicated to parents, carers and to the wider community through our publications and actions.

Standard 4

EQUITY IS UPHELD, AND DIVERSE NEEDS ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

TCDA caters for and welcomes children with diverse needs and aims to create a culturally safe space. Whilst certain classes are graded or selective to ensure physical safety and support the growing body, children are never excluded for any other reason.

We have developed and published the TCDA Diversity and Inclusion Policy to ensure equity within our organisation and across our enterprise. We understand that Children may be particularly vulnerable if they are living with a disability, come from specific cultural or religious backgrounds, are very young, have been exposed to trauma, are addressing their gender identity or sexuality, come from diverse family backgrounds, live remotely or school in home, remote, distance or small school environments. We also understand that we do not assume to know what an individual may be dealing with in private and take this into consideration in our dealings.

Staff and teachers at TCDA understand that children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and children with a disability are over represented in high risk environments. TCDA's leaders have many years experience in communicating with young people from these groups and are aware of special considerations.

TCDA's teachers are required to successfully complete nationally accredited training modules in working with children with a disability to ensure that their specific needs are addressed when teaching dance. TCDA has a long-standing relationship as a provider of dance education to children with a disability, having worked for a number of years with the Bullimbal School in Tamworth and privately with individual students enrolled at TCDA.

Our procedures have been complemented by the design and construction of our premises to aid us in maintaining equity with unisex bathrooms, of which there are ambulant and accessible facilities available and structural building upgrades to ensure compliance with all current building regulations with regard to access and safety.

Standard 5

PEOPLE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SUITABLE AND SUPPORTED.

TCDA has a policy of recruiting from within. All of our teachers are former students, having come through our ranks and ingrained with our ethics. The teacher training program that we have developed empowers young people and provides pathways for their own personal and professional development with the enormous benefit to TCDA of creating teachers whose values are consistent with our own.

TCDA has never utilised external recruitment practices, however, if required we will maintain a rigorous and consistent screening and selection processes aiming to protect the safety of all children under the care of our organisation and prevent persons from working at TCDA if they pose a risk to children.

Staff will be assessed based upon technical proficiency as well as aptitude and other factors contributing to their suitability for the position utilising references, interviews, prohibited employment declarations and other evidence and provided with ample training to ensure that they are aware of all organisational policies and procedures.

All staff and volunteers over the age of 18 will be screened via the Working With Children Check (WWCC) in accordance with current regulations. TCDA maintains a register of our staff and volunteers WWCC verifications and monitor the validity of these documents. Staff and Volunteer WWCC details are available for parents and carers to verify if they so wish.

Our staff, volunteers and students are supported through a number of means.

- We promote respect, fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers and students.
- All staff, volunteers and students have a more senior person assigned to support and supervise their work. Staff, volunteers and students are made aware of the organisational structure of TCDA.
- All staff and volunteers are presented with an induction package with our code of conduct and complaints management strategy and return a signed agreement attesting to their understanding. Our code of conduct and Child Safe, Child Friendly Policy is displayed within our premises.

THE WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

Since June 2013 people seeking to work or volunteer with children under 18 years in NSW have been required to have a Working With Children Check (WWCC). The WWCC provides a unique number to a person who has been cleared to work with children. The WWCC application process involves a national police check and a review of findings of workplace misconduct. The result is a clearance to work with children for 5 years or a bar. Barred applicants cannot work or volunteer with children. All new applicants for paid child related work (direct face-to-face contact with children) must provide a WWCC number to their employers.

Who does NOT need a WWCC?

- The legislation in NSW allows parents and other close relatives such as a sibling, grandparent, step parent, uncle, etc) to volunteer in activities that involve their own children without needing a WWCC number. This includes volunteering with a class, program, or other activity in which their child usually participates.
- Individuals that do not have direct face to face contact with children do not need a WWCC number.
- Parents who volunteer at performances or rehearsals that include their own children (for example help with setting up, makeup, costumes, etc), or are spectators at events do not require a WWCC number.
- Persons who teach adult classes do not require a WWCC number as the participants are not children.

Standard 6

PROCESSES TO RESPOND TO COMPLAINTS OF CHILD ABUSE ARE CHILD FOCUSED

We strive to create an environment where children feel comfortable in speaking up and have access to a number of individuals that they trust and that they can talk to if required.

TCDA's Code of Conduct provides standards for our staff and volunteers to meet as our representatives and advises them of their requirements with regard to child safety. Complaints, concerns and reports pertaining to child safety are to be reported to the Principal and /or the Studio Manager. As most of our teachers are children or young adults we consider it best practice to escalate issues regarding child safety to a management level at the earliest opportunity in line with our Child Safe Reporting Policy.

Any reports or documentation that have been created or collected regarding individual child safety concerns will be maintained securely and confidentially in line with our Privacy Policy.

Standard 7

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ARE EQUIPPED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND AWARENESS TO KEEP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE THROUGH CONTINUAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

Our teacher induction package reflects our ideals and guidelines for the role, including additional considerations for working with children. Staff are provided with the opportunity to discuss their experiences with their mentors and supervisors toward gaining a greater understanding of how to work with children more effectively.

Staff are made aware of any particular medical conditions that a child have and any associated medication and action or administration plans for that particular child. Records of medical conditions are stored in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

Our objective is that staff and volunteers feel confident to identify child abuse and know how to respond to and report it.

TCDA's teachers are instructed to:

- Always work in an open environment
- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others except in essential one on one situations such as private classes.
- Encourage open communication with no secrets
- Treat all children equally and with respect and dignity
- Put the welfare of the child first
- Notify the Principal and / or Studio Manager of any concerns that you may have about the safety, wellbeing or welfare of children and young people in your classes
- Are aware that you have a mandatory obligation to report suspected risks of significant harm

Teachers are further more advised of their obligation to report to their supervisor / manager:

- If they accidentally hurt a child
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by their actions
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something they have done
- If a child is unusually distressed and they have any suspicions or concerns about potential abuse

Standard 8

PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS MINIMISE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ABUSE TO OCCUR.

Our studio has been designed to minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur and keep children safe. In designing our studio we have addressed numerous considerations, including

CCTV. Cameras record and securely store footage of entrances, exits, car parks and internal spaces. Students movements can be traced to anywhere in our building. CCTV is not recorded in private spaces such as bathrooms and change rooms, however, entry to these spaces can be monitored.

SINGLE MAIN ENTRY POINT. Our studio is accessed via the front door where a student may be marked as present on the electronic roll upon entry. Students are not permitted to leave without permission and movement is monitored at appropriate ages.

STUDIO ACCESS. Adults are asked to remain in the front waiting area where ample seating has been provided. This ensures that any area past our reception desk is child only. Only parents and carers and visitors with legitimate business are permitted to enter the premises.

TEACHING / DANCE SPACES. All four of our dance studio spaces are open fronted and feature windows, encouraging freedom of movement, improving lines of sight and discouraging hidden activities. Parents are discouraged from entering our studio areas beyond the reception area but can be confident that this dancer only policy has been put in place in the best interests of all children on our site.

STUDENT AREAS. Students from Tinys to Test grade are asked to remain in the front reception waiting area where adult supervision is available. Students from Bronze grades and above are free to use the student lounge which is a child only multi purpose space where young people can share ideas and experiences, help each other with homework, eat or just relax without micromanagement from adults..

CONTRACTORS AND MAINTENANCE. All efforts are made to ensure that any maintenance work, deliveries or work requiring attendance by non-TCDA staff and visitors is performed outside of class hours where children are not present.

TCDA encourages ethical behaviour from all of our students as well as their parents and carers. Our expectations are clearly outlined on the enrolment forms that each student must complete and be signed by their parents. Negative behaviour regarding bullying, racism or harassment of any kind is forbidden and may result in expulsion. These issues are addressed in greater depth in TCDA's Diversity and Inclusion Policy and our Complaint Handling Policy. If a resolution is unable to be reached in matters such as this, TCDA's Internal Grievance Procedure may be applied.

TCDA is active in encouraging its students to be thoughtful and inclusive when communicating online with each other and our Management leads by example through the way in which it conducts itself in online forums.

Standard 9

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS IS CONTINUOUSLY REVIEWED AND IMPROVED.

TCDA's child safe policies, procedures and practices are regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and to improve on areas which may require attention. Our leaders continually monitor and stay abreast of changes to our industry and other child related industries to ensure that best practice is adopted in our studio and take a proactive approach to developing and integrating child safe policies into practice at TCDA to eliminate or reduce risks and keep us a child safe establishment.

We understand that child safety policies are specific to industries, locations, clientele and individual organisations. This is why TCDA's Child Safety Policy has been developed from the ground up to meet our own unique needs and circumstances. This document is the culmination of intensive and ongoing research and a number of revisions since our initial Child Safety Policy in 2011, which included versions 1.0 to 1.12. Version 2 was completed in 2023, in order to align our Child safety Policy with the newly adopted National Standards for Child Safe Organisations.

Our policies and procedures will continue, as always to be reviewed and improved.

Standard 10

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES DOCUMENT HOW THE ORGANISATION IS SAFE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

The specific manner in which the previous nine standards are addressed in this policy ensures that TCDA as an organisation works effectively to provide children with a safe space, opportunities for growth and development and facilitate young people in reaching their potential.

Our public documents as well as internal policies address our specific risks and opportunities to create and maintain a safe environment for children. Our public policy documents such as this are available on our website and also in hard copy form at our Studio.

Our staff, volunteers, students and their carers are kept informed of our commitment to child safety and the procedures that we have in place to meet this end.

Our leaders ensure that our staff, volunteers, students and their carers adhere to our procedures to maintain a child safe enterprise and we rely on their active participation, cooperation and support toward this end.

TCDA aims to maintain our strong ethical ideology with regard to child safety and not compromise our standards with regard to the selection of age appropriate costuming, song choice and choreography.



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