

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Patrick School of the Arts (PSA) is committed to providing a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children and young people are safe, feel safe, and are supported to participate and thrive.

We have **zero tolerance for child abuse** and are committed to acting in the best interests of children and young people at all times. PSA takes all reasonable steps to prevent child abuse and harm and to respond appropriately to any concerns, allegations, or disclosures.

This policy aligns with the **Victorian Child Safe Standards** and relevant Victorian legislation, including the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* and the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All children and young people under 18 years of age who engage with PSA
- All staff, contractors, volunteers, parents, carers, and any other adults involved with PSA activities

Responsibilities

The responsibility for implementing this policy and ensuring child safety lies with all members of PSA, from leadership to staff, subcontractors and volunteers.

Child safety persons are introduced to children so they know and understand who the appointed officers are, and how and when they may contact them. If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to a child safety person, they may report their concern to the Studio Manager or Schools Director.

Child Safety Officers:

Arts High and Elite Program Safety Officers:

- **Amanda Stone** – Director of High School Academy & Professional Development Programs
- **Nicole MacCorquodale** – High School Academy Supervisor

Tertiary Child Safety Officers:

- **David Wiskin** – Musical Theatre Stream
- **Jan Di Pietro** – Musical Theatre Stream
- **Anna Burgess** – Performing Arts Stream
- **Merryn Tierney** – Dance Stream

Victorian Child Safe Standards Alignment

Standard 1

Culturally safe environments

PSA is committed to establishing and maintaining a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

We:

- PSA is committed to ensuring all children always feel welcome at our studios and places of performance
- Promote respect for Aboriginal cultures and perspectives
- Seek consultation and guidance to ensure practices are meaningful and not tokenistic
- Actively challenge racism and discrimination

Standard 2

Child safety and wellbeing embedded in leadership, governance and culture

PSA leadership promotes a culture of child safety and wellbeing across all areas of the organisation.

We:

- Are committed to ensuring all staff and the internal culture is focused on the health and wellbeing of every dancer at the studio.
- Embed child safety in governance, decision-making, and daily practice
- Ensure leaders model child-safe behaviours
- Maintain a Code of Conduct outlining expected standards for staff and volunteers
- Ensure accountability, transparency, and fairness in all actions

Standard 3

Children and young people are empowered

PSA actively empowers children and young people by:

- Informing them of their rights, including the right to be safe
- Encouraging participation in decisions that affect them
- Providing child-friendly ways to raise concerns
- Supporting peer connection and positive relationships
- Giving dancers the opportunity to be a leader, be creative, make decisions, develop improvisational skills and confidence through many guided activities each term.

Children's views are respected and taken seriously.

Standard 4

Families and communities are informed and involved

PSA engages families and communities in promoting child safety and wellbeing by:

- Providing clear and accessible information about child safety policies
- Encouraging feedback and involvement in policy development and review
- Maintaining open communication regarding expectations, behaviour, and safety

Families are supported to make informed decisions regarding their child's participation.

Standard 5

Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected

PSA ensures equity and inclusion by:

- Recognising and responding to diverse needs and vulnerabilities
- Providing accessible, culturally safe information and complaint processes
- Supporting children with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQ+ children, and children unable to live at home

All children are treated fairly, respectfully, and without discrimination.

Standard 6

People working with children are suitable and supported

PSA ensures staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children through:

- Rigorous recruitment and screening processes
- Mandatory Working With Children Checks
- Reference checks and interviews
- Clear expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct

Staff receive induction, supervision, and ongoing support focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Standard 7

Complaints and concerns are child-focused

PSA has a clear, accessible, and child-focused complaint handling process.

We:

- Encourage reporting of concerns or complaints
- Respond promptly, fairly, and thoroughly
- Support children throughout the process
- Meet all reporting obligations to external authorities
- Cooperate with police and child protection agencies

Standard 8

Staff are trained and supported

PSA ensures staff and volunteers:

- Receive training on child safety, recognising harm, and responding to disclosures
- Understand legal obligations, including Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect
- Are supported to raise concerns without fear of reprisal

Training is ongoing and reviewed regularly.

Standard 9

Safe physical and online environments

PSA actively manages risks to child safety by:

- Maintaining safe physical and online environments
- Monitoring behaviour and interactions
- Ensuring third-party venues and providers meet child safety expectations

Children's privacy, dignity, and participation rights are respected.

Standard 10

Continuous review and improvement

PSA regularly reviews and improves child safety practices by:

- Analysing incidents, complaints, and near misses

- Updating policies and procedures as required
- Communicating changes to staff and families
- Using feedback to drive continuous improvement

Standard 11

Policies and procedures document child safety

PSA maintains clear, accessible, and up-to-date child safety policies and procedures that:

- Align with the Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Are available on the PSA website and at reception
- Are provided to staff upon induction
- Are reviewed annually

Compliance with these policies is a condition of employment or engagement.

Reporting Obligations

PSA complies with all mandatory reporting requirements.

All staff and volunteers are expected to act immediately if they believe a child is at risk.

Non-Compliance

Breaches of this policy or the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including restriction of duties, suspension, or termination.

Policy Review

Approved by: **Todd Patrick and Helen Haines**

Review cycle: **Annual**

Reviewed: **January 2026**

For a copy of our full policy please contact info@patrickstudiaustralia.com.au