



Encore Dance & Theatre School

Child Safe Reporting Policy

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Our Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing	<p>At Encore Dance we commit to the safety and wellbeing of every child in our care. Please read our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, which is available on our website and a physical copy is available at our front reception.</p> <p>Encore Dance ensures services and activities are inclusive of all children, including children with diverse needs and cultural backgrounds. We recognise and respect the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and young people.</p> <p>We are committed to aligning our policies and practices with Tasmanian child safety laws and the guidance of the Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania, making child safety a natural and essential part of everything we do.</p>
Purpose and Scope	<p>This policy outlines Encore Dance's approach to reporting concerns about child safety and handling complaints.</p> <p>Everyone at our studio must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand what to report, who to report to, and how to reportReport any concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing immediatelyEnsure the child's safety and wellbeing remains the priority when responding to disclosures or allegations

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Definitions of harm and abuse	<p>General Definitions</p> <p>Child, Young Person or Student Anyone under the age of 18 in our studio community.</p> <p>Psychological abuse (also known as emotional abuse) This includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.</p> <p>Physical abuse This includes physical punishment, such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.</p> <p>Sexual abuse This includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material.</p> <p>Grooming This is a process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child.</p> <p>Misconduct This is inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse but could indicate that abuse is occurring and would often be in breach of an organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct. This could include showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a child or an adult sitting with a child on their lap.</p> <p>Lack of appropriate care This includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care. Please refer to our Child Safe Code of Conduct for a full list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours at our organisation.</p> <p>Reportable Conduct Definitions As a relevant entity, our organisation must also report reportable conduct. Under <i>Tasmania's Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023</i>, reportable conduct includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual offences against a child • Sexual misconduct involving a child • Physical violence against a child • Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child • Significant neglect of a child

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Types of complaints	<p>All concerns about child safety must be reported, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal conduct involving children • Disclosures or reports of abuse • Risk of harm to a child • Reportable allegations (an allegation that a staff member, volunteer, or contractor has engaged in conduct that may be reportable conduct) • Unacceptable behaviour around children and young people that breaches our Child Safe Code of Conduct
Making a complaint	<p>Everyone in our organisation has the right to report a concern or make a genuine complaint and will not be punished or treated unfairly for doing so. This includes children and young people, parents and carers, staff, and volunteers.</p> <p>Reporting abuse or suspected abuse is both mandatory and encouraged. It must never be obstructed, discouraged, or prevented in any way.</p> <p>All reports are managed in line with the <i>Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas)</i></p>
Reporting obligations <i>-Internal</i>	<p>Reporting Options for Children, Families and Community</p> <p>Children, families, and members of the community can raise concerns or make complaints through the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct communication with the Studio Director • Phone contact during business hours • Written complaints submitted in person or by post <p>Internal Documentation</p> <p>All child safety concerns must be documented using the Complaint Recording Form. Completing this form is the required first step whenever a child safety concern is identified or raised.</p> <p>Once completed, the form must be provided to the Studio Director for review and follow-up action.</p>

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Reporting obligations <i>-External</i>	<p>Reporting Criminal Conduct</p> <p>If you suspect a criminal offence has occurred, contact Tasmania Police immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-emergency: 131 444 • Emergency: 000 <p>Criminal conduct includes sexual assault, physical assault, grooming offences, or producing, disseminating, or possessing child abuse material.</p>
	<p>Note: It is a criminal offence for adults not to report to police if <u>they know or believe that a child abuse offence has been committed</u>. In addition, people employed in child-related work may be subject to a criminal offence if <u>they fail to reduce or remove the risk of a child becoming a victim of child abuse</u>.</p>
	<p>Reporting Risk of Significant Harm</p> <p>If you have reasonable grounds to believe a child is at risk of significant harm, report to Strong Families Safe Kids Advice & Referral Line (ARL):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone: 1800 000 123 • Hours: 8:30am – 5:00pm, Monday to Friday • Online Reporting: Available via the Strong Families Safe Kids website
	<p>Reportable Conduct</p> <p>Under the <i>Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023</i>, any allegations of reportable conduct involving Encore personnel must be reported to the Office of the Independent Regulator (OIR).</p> <p>The Studio Director must notify the OIR within 3 business days, in writing and provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that a reportable conduct allegation has been made, or that a reportable conviction recorded against, a worker • the worker's name and, if known, date of birth • if the reportable allegation is suspected criminal behaviour, if Tasmania Police has been informed • the name, address, and telephone number of the organisation • the leader of the organisation's name. <p>Reporting Breaches of Child Safe Code of Conduct</p> <p>All complaints must be reported to the Studio Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name: Sharon Shirley • Phone: <u>6231 1622</u> or <u>0427 296 488</u> • In person: Available during studio hours

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Risk management strategies	<p>To ensure the immediate and ongoing safety of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the welfare and safety of the child and take steps to ensure the child is removed from the risk • Reassure them and remain calm • Listen carefully without interrupting • Don't ask leading questions or any additional questions once you've established there is a genuine concern (to not compromise future investigations by TAS Police, ARL or OIR) • Support them, reassuring the child that they have done the right thing, that you believe them and that the abuse is not their fault • Explain what will happen, including timeframes • Don't make promises you can't keep • Don't confront the alleged perpetrator • Seek guidance if you are unsure about what to do. <p>It is the Studio Director's role to conduct a risk assessment after receiving an allegation, to ensure the safety of all people involved and maintain the integrity of the investigation.</p>
Complaint Process	<p>When a concern or complaint is received, we follow these procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and address any immediate safety concerns • Record all information following our internal documentation procedure • Notify relevant authorities as required by law • The Studio Director will conduct appropriate investigation while maintaining communication with involved parties • Provide ongoing support to the child as needed • Evaluate incidents and update policies and procedures accordingly
Procedural fairness, including privacy and confidentiality	<p>Any allegation of abuse will be handled fairly, transparently, and in a timely manner. Individuals subject to an allegation will receive appropriate notification of the process.</p> <p>Additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All reporting forms for complaints and allegations are stored securely and only accessed by those in the organisation with responsibility for oversight of the investigation • Information may be shared with authorised agencies in accordance with the <i>Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas)</i> to support the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of children and young people. • Our studio maintains the privacy of those involved in accordance with our obligations under the <i>Personal Information Protection Act 2004 (Tas)</i>. <p>if an incident is found to be substantiated, likely outcomes or responses will be determined by the Studio Director or from advice given by relevant authorities (Police, ARL or OIR).</p>

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Legislation	<p>This policy aligns with the following legislation relevant to child safety, privacy, and reporting obligations in Tasmania:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023 (Tas)</i> • <i>Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas)</i> • <i>Criminal Code Act 1924 (Tas)</i> • <i>Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas)</i> • <i>Personal Information Protection Act 2004 (Tas)</i>
Communication and Training	<p>We are committed to helping all staff, students, and families understand their child safety responsibilities and know what to do if they have a concern.</p> <p>We build awareness and confidence by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displaying key reporting contacts and procedures throughout our facilities. • Providing staff training on complaint handling and child safety reporting. • Making our Child Safe Code of Conduct and Child Safe Reporting Policy easily accessible in the studio and on our website. <p>Training and communication materials are reviewed regularly and updated as needed to reflect current legislation and best practice.</p>
Policy Review	<p>This policy is reviewed annually by the Studio Director and following any significant incidents to ensure continued effectiveness and legislative compliance.</p> <p>Approved by: Sharon Shirley</p> <p>Next Review Date: January 2027</p>