



# **Rockit Performing Arts**

## **CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

This service is committed to the protection of children and young people and community members toward maintaining child safe environments.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Rockit Performing Arts (RPA) utilises dance, drama and singing as tools to help improve the health and wellbeing of our local community.

### **PRINCIPLES**

Rockit Performing Arts (RPA) is committed to the prevention of abuse and to the well-being of children, young people and their families. RPA will take reasonable steps to protect children from neglect, physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse whilst in our care.

RPA does not tolerate child abuse and will deal with any allegations of child abuse consistently and appropriately. Child Protection Policy Violations may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination and reporting to the appropriate government or legal authorities.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide RPA staff guidelines by which to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect, and to understand their role in keeping children and young people safe. It reflects RPA's policy including values and ethics as well as the code of conduct for staff, carers, parents/guardians, children, young people, volunteers and the community.

It has been developed to minimise the risk to children and young people involved in programs at RPA.

This Policy will be reviewed annually and updated regularly in the light of operational experience and in line with changes in legislation and associated policies.

RPA recognises that all staff have a full and active part to play in protecting students from harm.

Overall responsibility, implementation and review of this policy rests with the Director of RPA.

The relevant body to approve and accept national police check, DCSI and working with children checks is the Director, Noni Vassos. The relevant body to lodge official complaints with is the Director, Noni Vassos.

### **SCOPE**

This policy covers all staff of RPA who have direct or indirect contact with children. This includes those staff, paid or voluntary, employed directly by RPA, as well as those professionals contracted or invited to provide services to children in the care of RPA.

This policy also covers all students plus their families/carers, or community members who access RPA events, classes and performances.

## DEFINITIONS

- RPA – Rockit Performing Arts
- For the purpose of this policy “Child” means a boy or girl under the age of 14 years, “Young person” means a boy or girl over the age of 14 years but under 17 years; but does not include any person which is or has been married in a civil union (Children, Young Person and their Families Act 1989, Section 2).
- “Adult” is any person 18 years and over.
- For the purpose of this Policy “staff” means all those employed by RPA, whether paid or voluntary, full time or part time.
- “Student” refers to a person enrolled into programs, activities, events at RPA.
- “Parent”, “Guardian” refers to the child’s legal parent or guardian.
- “Abuse” refers to sexual, physical, psychological or emotional neglect.
- “Child Protection” the provision of care and protection of, and the provision of services to, children and young people (Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998).
- “Professionals Contracted” refers to contractors brought onto premise to support or lead activities or events. Such examples are guest teachers, guest choreographers, guest speakers, lighting designers, set designers, costume designers, photographers and film operators.

## RPA RESPONSIBILITIES

We will:

- adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
- ensure that this policy is enforceable;
- publish, distribute and promote this policy and the consequences of any breaches of this policy;
- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- deal with any complaints made under this policy in an appropriate manner;
- deal with any breaches of this policy in an appropriate manner;
- recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under this policy;
- ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to all people and organisations to whom this policy applies.
- Ensure staff who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training. Our goal is to develop their skills and capacity and to enhance their performance so we can maintain a child-safe environment.
- Report and respond appropriately to suspected abuse and neglect (refer to Procedures for Reporting Harm or Child Abuse)
- The ratio of adults to children in any RPA activity will be conducted in accordance with the State, Federal and Territory Licensing regulations, requirements and in keeping with Early Childhood Good Practice [www.decd.sa.gov.au](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au)
- review this policy every 12-18 months; and
- seek advice from and refer serious issues to the appropriate state and national bodies,

Serious issues include unlawful behaviour that involves or could lead to significant harm and includes criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault, child abuse) and any other issues that our state or national bodies request to be referred to them.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

### TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION

- RPA staff must have appropriate first aid training and have access to a First Aid Kit at all times.
- All staff and volunteers must have current state or national police checks and may also have DCSI plus working with children checks. From July 2019, all staff must have DCSI checks.
- All staff must be qualified for the events/classes they are running.
- Staff should be aware of the Child and Member Protection Policy.
- Staff should be aware of the ways to report Child Abuse.

### SUPERVISION

- Children under the age of [18] must be supervised at all times by a staff member during scheduled classes, events and performances. We endeavour to provide an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Staff are not responsible for transporting students to and from class or other RPA events.
- Students are not permitted into staff transportation unless there is written consent from the parent.

### COMMUNITY CARE

- Staff need to ensure children and young people feel safe coming forward with any concerns.
- It is the responsibility of all staff members to ensure children are protected and treated with respect.
- Staff must provide a caring environment where students feel welcomed.
- Staff are to ensure props and acrobatic equipment is used correctly.
- Staff are not engage in a sexual relationship with a person they supervise or have influence, power or authority over,
- Staff are not to verbally or physically assault another person,
- Staff must report a complaint that is untrue or malicious.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- A parent/carer/guardian can be asked to leave the studio if they request preferential treatment of their child/young person over other students in the studio.
- Any child aged 13 or under cannot be left in an RPA foyer/waiting area unsupervised by their parent/carer/guardian.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/carer/guardian to bring their child/young person to class each week. The benefits of RPA classes and the guidance offered by our teachers has the greatest affect when students attend weekly. Staff are not able to provide the care required if students have a higher than average absentee rate.
- Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied to class by an authorised parent or guardian and must remain with the child until class commences. All students must be collected by an authorised parent or guardian when class finishes. Children are not to be left unsupervised in an RPA premises if they are not actively participating in class.
- For reasons of courtesy and safety, parents must collect their children on time. If it appears a teacher will be left alone with just one child at the end of any RPA activity, they will be seated in a prominent position such as the studio foyer until the students parents arrive. Staff have the right to ask a fellow student and family to wait with them until the late parent arrives.

### PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING

- Parents, guardians, family, friends and visitors are not permitted to film or photograph students during performances, events or class work.
- Due to Australian music licensing laws parent/carers/guardians and other audience members are NOT permitted to film or record any RPA performances. This is a breach of the Australian music and copyright laws RPA must follow.
- RPA requires parents/families/carers/students or other RPA members, wherever possible to obtain permission from a child's parent or guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own.

#### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- If your child/young person has a disability or behavioural concerns, this must be reported to administration upon enrolment. It will not affect their enrolment into the studio, but it will allow our staff to best guide you into the most appropriate class or allow management to prepare staff to ensure our classes can cater for their needs. For reasons of duty of care and behaviour management, staff have the right to guide families into the best classes. The Directors decision in this process is final.

#### FEE PAYMENT

- Students cannot participate in any events, classes, performances or programs unless fees have been paid and all contact information has been supplied to RPA. Students cannot step into the studio or a public event unless this has been completed successfully.
- If a parent/carer/guardian enrolls a child or young person into a class that RPA staff believe is not the correct fit, they will be informed by the Director. At this point, the Director will move the child/young person to a more suitable class. This is in reference to student safety, duty of care and wellbeing.

### STUDENT DUTY OF CARE

#### BEHAVIOUR AND RESPONSIBILITY

- Students are not permitted to bully, harass or intimidate other students or families. This is not of the Rockit community ethos. If staff discover this behaviour, they will investigate then present students with an initial warning. If the behaviour continues the students parent/carer/guardian will be informed and the student will receive a second warning. If the behaviour continues, the student can be expelled. The Directors decision is final.
- All students are responsible for their behaviour whilst in class or at an RPA event. Our focus in the studio is on respect. Respect of our teachers, respect of fellow students, respect of the premises and respect of oneself.
- Students should take care of their belongings ensuring they take home all their items after class.
- Students aged 13 and under must not wait unsupervised in any RPA foyer. A parent/guardian must be present whilst students are not in class.
- Students are required to wear the correct Rockit uniform to each class. Crop tops and booty shorts are not permitted (no bare midriffs).

#### SAFETY

- For safety reasons, students should not be practising or attempting acrobatic or other physical skills that are not being taught to them in their weekly classes. Do not attempt skills higher than your current training level. This can result in injuries.
- Students should not wear jewellery into the classroom.
- Students must bring a bottle of water to each class.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING

- Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones during class to take photographs or video footage.
- Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones, take photographs or video footage within any change room area whilst at an RPA event, be it on the RPA premises or other.

#### PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CASES OF HARM OR CHILD ABUSE

- Staff will be made aware of the procedure for reporting child harm via their RPA staff contracts and the induction procedure.
- RPA complies with mandatory reporting legislation which requires the suspicions of child abuse be reported directly to a person who holds a management position in the relevant organisation. Their duties include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of the provision of information to the Department for Child Protection via the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78) or other appropriate external agencies.
- RPA members and students can approach RPA staff to be made aware of how to report their own or fellow class mates cases of harm or abuse.

#### PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING COMPLAINTS

- Staff will be made aware of the procedure for handling complaints against a staff, parent, guardian, carer, student, volunteer or visitor.
- RPA members and students are welcome to lodge a complaint in writing to the Director, Noni Vassos at [noni.vassos@rockitperformingarts.com.au](mailto:noni.vassos@rockitperformingarts.com.au)
- All complaints will be received confidentially and will be actioned within appropriate time frames.
- Please do not ask staff to step outside of a class they are teaching to discuss a complaint. Staff are responsible for the care of students inside the classroom/event. Please place all complaints in writing to the Director.
- RPA has provided a simple procedure for complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness. Any person can report a complaint about a person or the organisation of RPA. All complaints should be reported to the Director or Studio Manager.
- A complaint can be dealt with formally or informally. The complainant can decide this unless the Director or Studio Manager considers the complaint falls outside of the policy and would be better dealt with by law, which requires the complaint to be reported to an appropriate authority.
- All complaints will be dealt with confidentially. Complaints may be resolved by agreement between the people involved with no need for disciplinary action. Mediation may be required allowing those involved to discuss the issues or incident in question and to come up with mutually agreed solutions. Mediation may occur before or after the investigation of a complaint.
  - o **Step 1:** Contact the Studio Director or Studio Manager if you feel you have experienced or seen a situation that breaches the Member Protection Policy. Contact should be made in writing via email to [noni.vassos@rockitperformingarts.com.au](mailto:noni.vassos@rockitperformingarts.com.au).
  - o **Step 2:** The Director or Studio Manager will take confidential notes about your complaint. They will try to find out the facts of the problem and determine how to resolve the issue.
  - o **Step 3:** If relevant government authorities and/or police need to be notified, this will be completed in writing by the Director.

- **Step 4:** The Director will respond with the appropriate disciplinary actions that will take place.

#### STAFF RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

- All staff are personally interviewed by RPA Director, Noni Vassos.
- All staff must have a national or state police clearance or a DCSI check. They may also have a 'working with children' check. From June 2019, all staff must have a DCSI check.
- All staff must have a current First Aid Certificate.
- All staff must have appropriate training and experience in the creation and delivery of programs and activities.
- All staff must adhere to the Roles and Responsibilities of staff,
- All staff go through an initial three month review period where the Director assesses their ability in the classroom. There is an additional three month review (totalling 6 months) ensuring staff are following the RPA values.

#### TRAINING OF STAFF

- Staff undergo training sessions annually where we identify best classroom practices, how to deal with difficult behaviours, how to manage disability in the classroom, how to identify signs of abuse and report it and how to use equipment safely.

#### SAFE WORK PRACTICES

- Staff are to ensure all acrobatic equipment, props and other teaching aids are in working condition before use for activities.

#### DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

If an individual breaches this policy disciplinary measures will take place. The measures must follow:

- Contractual/employment rules and requirements,
- Fair and reasonable outcomes,
- Correct factual evidence,
- Be determined in accordance with state laws.

#### DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS FOR AN INDIVIDUAL

If an individual has breached this policy, one or more of the following forms of discipline may be imposed;

- They may be required to present a written or verbal apology,
- They may receive a written warning,
- They may be directed toward attending counselling to address their behaviour,
- A suspension of the individual's engagement of employment,
- Any other discipline the Director considers appropriate.

## DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS FOR THE ORGANISATION

If it is discovered RPA has breached its own Member Protection Policy, one or more of the following disciplinary actions will take place;

- Any activities involved in or around the incident be suspended until an investigation is completed,
- Any other form of discipline that the Director sees reasonable and appropriate.

## FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED

Any form of discipline to be imposed on an individual or the organisation will depend on factors such as:

- The seriousness and nature of the breach,
- Did the person know or should have known their behaviour was a breach of the policy,
- What affect the proposed discipline will have on the individual/organisation both emotionally, professionally and financially.
- If there have been any relevant prior warnings or disciplinary actions,
- Ability to enforce the discipline.

*Publication Date – January 2019*

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*Applies to – All RPA Staff, Contractors, Students, Parents, Carers, Guardians and Volunteers*

*Approved by – Noni Vassos, Director/Dance Whisperer, Rokit Performing Arts*