



The Ballarat Centre of Music and the Arts

# **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures**

**June 2023**

# IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD TO BE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OR A LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY ON 000

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## BACKGROUND

The BCMA is a performing arts, tuition and performance centre and talent management agency based in Ballarat, Victoria.

The BCMA acknowledges that its students, families, teachers, volunteers, staff and management, and all who visit the premises or events have the right to feel safe, accepted and welcome at all times and strives to achieve this to the highest degree.

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## COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

All children who come to the BCMA have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care is, and will always be, our priority. 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 accepted and have fun while enjoying being involved in the performing arts.

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## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures document sets out to demonstrate the strong commitment of management, contractors, staff and volunteers to child safety and wellbeing, and how our company keeps children safe from harm, including from child abuse, and supports their cultural and individual rights and beliefs.

This Policy and Procedure document outlines what and how the BCMA prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we take to do this. It is to be used in conjunction with the BCMA Code of Conduct.

*This document, and other associated Child Safety documents, has been reviewed and endorsed by Laurenza Buglisi, Managing Director of Juno's Circle: Counselling, Training and Consulting*

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## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The BCMA child safety and wellbeing system - the following policies and procedures work together to support child safety and wellbeing across all our operations:

- **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures incorporating:**
- Complaint handling policy (Also as Appendix 7 to this document)
- **Recruitment and screening policy**
- Risk assessment & management plan
- Confidentiality Agreement (Also as Appendix 2 to this document)
- Code of Conduct
- Volunteer Agreement
- Independent Contract Agreement
- Training Register
- Instructions for completing the Incident Report Form
- Incident Report Form
- Incident Report Register

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## DEFINITIONS

The **BCMA** stands for the Ballarat Centre of Music and the Arts and is the trading name of the company OSTOHAJI Pty Ltd ITF the Heenan Waters Family Trust.

**Management** refers to:

- The Company Director – Paula Heenan
- The Business and Marketing Manager – Emma Sbardella
- The Office Administration Manager – Clare Trengove

**Contractors** refers to all teachers, costume people, gardeners and others who contract services to the Company.

**Staff** refers to office administrators, cleaners and others who are employed by the Company.

**Volunteers includes** ASC's (Artistic Support Coordinators [parent and other adult helpers]) and any others who may volunteer their services over time.

**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, including the result 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 from a series of acts or events.

**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 to the BCMA related to one or more of the following:

- our services or dealings with individuals
- disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
- the conduct of a child or young person at the BCMA towards any other
- the inadequate handling of a prior concern
- general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity

The BCMA Complaint Handling Procedure is attached as *Appendix 7* and as a separate document.

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**NON-COMPLIANCE**

The BCMA enforces this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures document together with the Code of Conduct, Volunteer agreement and any other child safety and wellbeing policies that may be developed. 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.

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**COMPLIANCE INDICATORS**

The BCMA ensures they comply as they produce and update all documents and undertake these actions in a way that supports the BCMA to achieve all standards.

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**SAFETY AND WELL-BEING STANDARDS**

*Below is a summary of the Standards as set out by the Commission for Children and Young People under the Victoria State Government. These consist of 11 updated Standards and apply from 1 July 2022.*

*In this document, each standard is defined along with detailing the BCMA Policy and Procedure, Key Points and Documents referring directly to the standard.*

**Standard 1:** Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

**Standard 2:** Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

**Standard 3:** Children and young people are empowered by their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

**Standard 4:** Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and well-being.

**Standard 5:** Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

**Standard 6:** People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

**Standard 7:** Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

**Standard 8:** Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

**Standard 9:** Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

**Standard 10:** Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

**Standard 11:** Policies and procedures documents demonstrate how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

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**STANDARD 1: Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 1, the BCMA, at a minimum, ensures that:

- 1.1 Every child at the BCMA is encouraged and actively supported to express their Aboriginal or other culture and to enjoy and be proud of their cultural rights and beliefs.
- 1.2 Strategies are in place within the BCMA to encourage and enable all members to learn about, acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal and other cultures, and to understand their importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and other nationalities of children and young people including the recommended completion of the *Cultural Diversity course offered by the SBS Inclusion Program, and/or another similar course by the contractors, volunteers and staff of the BCMA.* <https://inclusion-program.com.au/>
- 1.3 Staff, volunteers and contractors are advised, educated, and encouraged to ensure that racism within the BCMA is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences by the management. This may begin with all relevant parties being spoken with in a manner that is informative and instructional. If the situation is not rectified, it may lead to stronger action including dismissal.
- 1.4 The BCMA actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion by Aboriginal children, other cultures, young people and their families. Opportunities to view and to present artistic works that reflect first nations and other cultures are encouraged.
- 1.5 BCMA's "Code of Conduct" together with its policies, procedures, systems and processes create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children and their families.

**BCMA POLICY**

At the BCMA we recognise the Wadawurrung and the Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on, and we acknowledge the hard work and relationships we have built over many years with the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The BCMA also acknowledges that many of our students and families may originate from other peoples and places, and so welcome them and the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

At the BCMA, we strive to provide a safe cultural space for our children and families, to embrace and be proud of their ancestry and provide a place where there is a shared respect, safety, understanding and connection. We work together with dignity and celebrate the diversity of others, accepting that we each bring valuable experiences and contributions that better us all.

The BCMA strives to create and maintain inclusive and welcoming physical and online environments for Aboriginal children and their families by acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal peoples, communities, cultures and values. Understanding that making a child's family feel welcome and included at the BCMA contributes to their safety. Family is the cornerstone of Aboriginal culture, spirituality and identity. Family is often more broadly defined within Aboriginal cultures than some other cultures and we strive to ensure that this is understood by all who attend and run our classes.

**RACISM DEFINITION** (ref [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au))

Racism is the process by which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people based on race. Racism is more than just prejudice in thought or action. It occurs when this prejudice – whether individual or institutional – is accompanied by the power to discriminate against, oppress or limit the rights of others.

**IDENTIFYING RACISM**

Racism is any behaviour, words or thoughts that divide people into "us" and "them", based on where we come from or the colour of our skin.

Racism happens in many ways and so identifying it can be difficult. Therefore, awareness and vigilance are supported at the BCMA. Any behaviour, words or thoughts that may be considered racist or that make ANYONE feel uncomfortable should be treated as though they are, until proven otherwise and should be reported as such. These may include:

- racist names or verbal abuse
- bullying, hassling or intimidating others because of their race
- offensive comments online or in person

- exclusion from groups because they are “different” or “don’t belong”
- any physical abuse based on race

## BCMA PROCEDURE

The BCMA is committed to creating an environment and community where Aboriginal and other cultures are celebrated and children, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for these children include:

- An Acknowledgement of / Welcome to Country at all performances
- Consulting with families and members of the Aboriginal and other cultural communities to identify opportunities to promote their cultures, beliefs and practices in the BCMA studios and programs
- Providing opportunities for children to share their cultural identity and express their culture, including through performance and during BCMA community activities
- Supporting children who wish to explore their culture, including consulting with their family and relevant organisation if required
- Providing information to staff and volunteers on the strengths of Aboriginal and other cultures and their importance to the wellbeing and safety of all children
- Being open to feedback from children, families and communities on their experience at the BCMA, particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity and culture

Information is evident in relevant posters and documents displayed at the BCMA about cultural rights and understanding.

See Appendix 1

<C:\Users\paula\OneDrive\OneDrive - Ballarat Centre of Music and the Arts\BCMA Sharepoint\4. Child Safety and Wellbeing\BCMA Aboriginal Policy statement poster.png>

The BCMA strives to empower all children, including those who are indigenous, and provide them with opportunities, such as including appropriate dance moves into choreography, to enable participation in a way that is culturally safe for Aboriginal children and always strives to understand and respect the beliefs held. Including indigenous material in our curriculum across all disciplines (dance, drama, and music) also offers the opportunity to educate other students in the cultural beliefs.

The BCMA provides contractors, volunteers, and staff with:

- Information on cultural rights, the strengths of Aboriginal cultures and the importance of culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children e.g. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples>
- Information on the connection between cultural safety and the prevention of child abuse and harm for Aboriginal children e.g. <https://aifs.gov.au/resources/policy-and-practice-papers/child-protection-and-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander>
- Opportunities to learn and express appreciation of Aboriginal cultures and histories e.g. <https://www.vacca.org/page/services/external-training/cultural-awareness>
- Recognition and acknowledgment of culturally important dates in our BCMA Calendar of events

*Teachers and staff are requested to complete Aboriginal cultural training with an organisation such as VACCA (Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency) or similar Workshops in Cultural Awareness and to express their understanding of the content in carrying out their roles at the BCMA.*

<https://www.vacca.org/page/services/external-training/cultural-awareness>

## REPORTING RACISM

If racism is witnessed or experienced, this needs to be brought immediately to the attention of management (where appropriate i.e., if not involving management directly.), who will then follow up with the appropriate reporting entities. These include a range of services depending on the nature of the incident. Some forms of racism are unlawful, and if they occur should be brought to the attention of the

- Police.

If anybody may be threatened or in danger, call the police on 000. You can also report behaviour that you think might be a criminal offense after an incident by phoning the police on 131 444.

- Australian Human Rights Commission

Federal anti-discrimination law says that people can make complaints to the Australian Human Rights Commission about unlawful race discrimination. There is no cost in making a complaint. The Commission is an independent agency and its role is to help those involved to resolve complaints. The Commission is not a court and does not have the power to decide if a complaint is unlawful discrimination. However, in some cases, the complaint may proceed to court which would then decide if the complaint constituted unlawful discrimination.

Complaints about racism or discrimination may be made via:

- email at [complaintsinfo@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:complaintsinfo@humanrights.gov.au) or
- via an online form or
- phone the Commission for advice on 1300 656 419 or 02 9284 9888

More information about the complaints process can be found at <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/complaint-information-service/complaints-under-racial-discrimination-act-0>

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## **STANDARD 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in BCMA leadership, governance and culture.**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 2, the BCMA, at a minimum, ensures that:

- 2.1 The BCMA makes a public commitment to child safety and **has zero tolerance to any child abuse or harm**. This is expressed in promotions, enrolment documents, Code of Conduct documentation, recruitment advertising and all other relevant documents. Posters in the lounge and studios reinforce the welcoming and safe environment provided, as well as who to go to in times of need in a manner accessible to children.
- 2.2 A child safe culture is demonstrated and modelled at all levels of the BCMA. Students are reminded to be respectful to everyone at all times. Assistants, teachers, volunteers and staff also model this behaviour. All are encouraged to report any disrespectful behaviour to management.
- 2.3 Implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures is governed at all levels and child safety is part of the everyday behaviour and actions of teachers, staff, volunteers, members and children at the BCMA.
- 2.4 The BCMA Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- 2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- 2.6 Contractors are made aware of their obligations on information sharing and record keeping in clause 3 of their Independent Contractor Agreements. See Appendix 2.
- 2.7 Volunteers are made aware of their obligations on information sharing and record keeping in the Volunteer Agreement

### **BCMA POLICY**

The BCMA Code of Conduct is a document that outlines specifically the ways in which BCMA staff and contractors are expected to conduct themselves in order to ensure child safety and wellbeing. This is updated and signed by each relevant person on appointment and annually thereafter (January), unless updates are required within the 12-month period.

### **BCMA PROCEDURES**

#### **Role of the Management**

- Management ensures that anyone involved with the BCMA prioritises children's safety and that action is taken when anyone raises concerns about children's safety.
- Management sets out to model and support a child safe culture at the BCMA. We encourage and support anyone involved with the organisation to report any child safety concerns. Management works to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable raising concerns.
- Whilst everyone at the BCMA has a role in identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm, Management ensures that staff, contractors and volunteers are conducting risk assessments and taking action to manage risks in accordance with this policy. They also ensure that appropriate child safety training for staff and volunteers is identified and completed at the commencement of each year and more often if necessary. At a minimum, information on managing risks, identifying and responding to harm is provided.
- Management conducts an annual review of how effectively the BCMA is delivering child safety and wellbeing. The input of people involved with The BCMA will be sought as part of this review. This takes place in January of each year.

#### **Child Safety Persons**

- The BCMA has two allocated child safety persons, Paula Heenan and Emma Sbardella, with responsibility for responding to any child safety related complaints or concerns, in addition to having all management, staff, contractors and volunteers also available to express concerns or complaints.
- Photos and names of the child safety persons are displayed in the office and lounge areas. They also make themselves known to class members at the beginning of each term.
- If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to a child safety person, they may report their concern to any management, staff, contractor or volunteer.



Several resources are made available to teachers and staff to support this Code of Conduct including:

- Identifying possible Child abuse  
<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/child-abuse>
- Tip-sheet -cultural-safety-aboriginal-children doc  
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:80862079-23ba-3d89-9a27-d0d899613a33>
- Tipsheet-safety-children-cult-ling-  
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:e2c17b69-af69-380e-b33a-25d35edab575>
- Tipsheet-safety-children-disability  
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:cb1a7feb-fcfc-3fca-b111-18e25ad6f146>

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**STANDARD 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 3, the BCMA, at a minimum, ensures that:

- 3.1 Children and young people are informed of their rights, including to safety, information, inclusion and participation. These messages are displayed on posters in the lounge area and studios and expressed regularly by teachers in classes.
- 3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged and over-seen to help children and young people feel safe and included. In supporting this, it is made clear that bullying is NEVER ok and will be treated seriously and immediately.
- 3.3 Where relevant and appropriate to the setting or context, children and young people are offered support to access sexual abuse prevention programs and relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.

However, the BCMA staff, contractors and volunteers are not trained to provide advice, counselling or education in any way and so must refer to those organisations, services and/or people who are.

- 3.4 Staff, contractors and volunteers are assisted to be attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns. This assistance will be provided in the form of training at the commencement of each year and more often if necessary. At a minimum, links to information will be provided and discussion will be undertaken by adults working with students. Such information and/or suspicion is treated with confidentiality and referred to the appropriate services.

Information regarding signs to watch for that may indicate cases of sexual abuse is provided in *Appendix 8* to this document. IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF ABUSE IN CHILDREN

However, the BCMA staff, contractors and volunteers are not trained to provide advice, counselling or education in any way and so must refer to those organisations, services and/or people who are.

- 3.5 The BCMA has strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people. These strategies include open conversations, exploring feeling safe and allowing self-expression through participating in the arts.
- 3.6 The BCMA provides opportunities for children and young people to participate and is responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement. Children are encouraged to contribute to ideas of productions, dance moves, songs to sing, choreography and through learning to improvise and create in all disciplines. They are encouraged to express themselves and feel confident in doing so. Respect for each other's contributions is paramount and anything less is not tolerated. This provides a safe environment, building a secure foundation for sharing issues, fears and concerns.
- 3.7 The BCMA 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.

## **BCMA POLICY**

The BCMA management, contractors and staff believe that children have a right to express their views and participate in decisions that impact them. What is heard and learnt from children influences how the BCMA works.

### **Children's empowerment and participation**

The BCMA is a child-centred organisation. We actively seek to include children's views and ideas in our organisational planning, delivery of services including classes, rehearsals and performances and management of facilities.

We want children to develop and maintain friendships through the BCMA 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. Generally, this is in the form of appointments being made to carry out conversations seeking to remedy the situation. This may be with the families or with only the students concerned with the parents/carer's permission.

We respect the rights of children and provide them with information about their rights including the right to feel and to be safe at the BCMA. We actively seek to understand what makes children feel safe in our organisation. We communicate with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe via conversation, posters and supporting material.

- Empowering children about their rights means all people in the BCMA:
  - uphold and respect children's rights at all times
  - take a proactive role in educating children about their rights
  - support children to exercise their rights

## **BCMA PROCEDURES**

The BCMA values the voices of children and acts on safety concerns raised by children and/or their families. The BCMA supports children's participation in the following ways:

- Child-friendly posters encouraging children to speak out and to be proud of their contributions are hung in the lounge and studios.
- Providing information to children and families about the BCMA operations, staffing and programs that are made suitable for different age groups and diversity of the children, families and communities.
- Ensuring the students know that their direct teachers and assistants are available as a first point of call for making suggestions and wanting to be involved in decision making, as these are people that they have an established relationship with and are generally comfortable speaking to. Teachers will frequently invite contributions in class in addition to listening to suggestions as offered. These are also the first point of call for raising concerns or making complaints for children as outlined in the Complaint Handling Policy.

See *Appendix 7* and as a separate document.

- Ensuring that the BCMA Child Safety 'go to' people, Paula Heenan and Emma Sbardella, are also approachable and will create opportunities for children to contribute and to feel empowered by their ideas and collaborations. Both Emma and Paula are constantly familiar faces in and around the BCMA and visit each class to introduce themselves at the beginning of each term to ensure that students are aware of who they are and that they can approach them with any concerns or ideas.

Staff, contractors, volunteers and management observe and supervise behaviour to ensure that all feel supported in this area taking the following steps if inappropriate behaviour is identified. Appendix 2.1

### **Peer group management procedures including steps to combat and deal with bullying:**

- Bring the matter to the attention of Management
- Encourage inclusion and suggest behavioural / situational changes
- Alert teachers to observe and supervise class groups concerned
- Hold discussions directly with children concerned after seeking parent/carer permission if appropriate
- Hold discussions with families if appropriate
- Hold discussions with class groups where appropriate
- Take action to prevent behaviour reoccurring such as positive reinforcement, reminders of appropriate behaviour, revisit discussions if necessary
- Identify that the issue has been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved
- Posters throughout the venue encourage students to talk to teachers who will support them and treat them seriously E.g., C:\Users\paula\Downloads\Black and Red Modern Child Anti Bullying Poster (1).png and *Appendix 3*
- Management, contractors, staff and volunteers in the BCMA engage with children to help them to:
  - understand their rights, including to safety, information and participation
  - know how adults in the BCMA should behave
  - understand how to raise safety concerns for themselves, their friends or peers
  - source support services aimed at children
- Practices in the BCMA that disempower children are identified and action is taken to change them

- Staff and volunteers are supported to develop knowledge and skills to help children participate, express their views and raise their concerns
- The BCMA supports children to develop social connections and friendships with their peers, build skills in children to support their peers and challenge bullying or isolating behaviour between children

## KEY POINTS

- Children are more likely to raise concerns or complaints in an organisation that empowers and listens to them. The BCMA understands the importance of such empowerment and of creating and maintaining such an environment.
- The BCMA management understands that policies and practices that are shaped by children's views can better prevent harm to children and utilises processes to include these views including open discussion and listening directly to each child.
- The BCMA recognises that empowerment means building up children and strengthening their confidence in themselves and in the BCMA. It involves equipping children with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions and enables them to increase control of their lives.
- The BCMA recognises that, just like adults, all children have rights. Rights are basic entitlements that belong to each person, regardless of any differences. BCMA teachers and staff are constantly monitoring behaviour in and around the studios to ensure that everybody's rights are being respected.
- The BCMA recognises that children have a right to participate in the decisions that affect them. Participation is about giving children opportunities to have their say and inform decision-making. This requires BCMA adults to listen, hear and make appropriate changes based on what children say.
- The BCMA recognises that children benefit from strong friendships. They may see their friends as their main source of support, information and advice, and go to them for help. Children are enabled to meet and enjoy time together and the BCMA supports their social connections and friendships and challenges bullying or isolating behaviour.
- The BCMA recognises that people at all levels at the BCMA have a role to play in child safety, empowerment and in respecting children's rights. Staff, teachers and volunteers are encouraged to be aware of, and know how to respond to, the signs of child abuse and harm, and how to empower and encourage participation of children. Staff and volunteers are offered support, information and/or training to do this.
- The BCMA recognises that children are not always used to being asked about their experiences or what they want. The BCMA aims to support them to feel comfortable with speaking up and provides opportunities to do so. Participation activities are age-appropriate, inclusive and accessible, tailored to individual needs and abilities.

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**STANDARD 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.****In complying with Child Safe Standard 4, the BCMA, at a minimum, ensures that:**

- 4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child.
- 4.2 The BCMA engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.
- 4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the BCMA's policies and practices and are invited to contribute when this document is sent to them on enrolment.
- 4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the BCMA's operations and governance through transparency and communication of documents.

**In particular:**

- ASC's (Artistic Support Coordinators) is a group of family and carer representatives. They function as the core communications and caring adults engaged to supervise and assist in a wide range of elements involved in running the BCMA, including the productions and other events.
- Each member of this group has a current WWCC and/or VIT. They are also provided with a Volunteer Agreement and Position Description regarding looking after students and are governed by clear instructions about suitable care and supervision.
- Some members of this group have been, and will continue to be, instrumental in drawing up these child safety documents and up to date information is shared.
- Direct communications with all families of the BCMA is always paramount and information regarding child safety is sent via email to all enrolled at the beginning of each year and available on request at any time.
- The process of Complaints Handling is made available in *Appendix 7*. It is also available as a separate document to all families and members of the BCMA community.

**BCMA POLICY**

- The BCMA recognises that families may be made up of a wide variety of relationships, including those who are related by blood, marriage, adoption, kinship structures or other extended family structures. Families may include people who share in the daily tasks of living or share a very close, personal relationship.
- Communities are a group of people who share common interests, experiences, social background, nationality, culture, beliefs or identity. The families and children of BCMA may have communities that they closely associate with or frequently engage with. Just like families, communities are diverse.
- Parents, carers and families are made to feel welcome at the BCMA. Building and maintaining an inclusive culture, which is respectful of different kinds of families, supports children to feel safe and to be safe.
- Empowering families and communities to play a part in the BCMA's child safety and wellbeing commitment is beneficial for children. It means that:
  - parents, carers and the community learn what helps make the BCMA child safe and how they can help keep children safe
  - The BCMA can better support individual children with the benefit of insights from families, who know their children best
  - parents, carers and the community feel empowered and know what to do if they are concerned about the safety or wellbeing of a child or children
  - the BCMA's child safe approach continues to improve with reviews and education

- Having families participate in decisions means they are asked for their opinion before a decision is made and this opinion is considered as part of the decision-making process. The BCMA provides families the chance to have a say about decisions that may impact the safety and wellbeing of their child.
- Families, carers and the community are informed about the operations and governance of the BCMA so they can meaningfully participate. Families understand what the BCMA does and how it is structured. They also know how to contact the right people in the BCMA if they have a child safety or wellbeing concern.

## **BCMA PROCEDURES**

- The BCMA supports families and communities to take an active role in promoting and maintaining child safety and wellbeing by communicating about their role in child safety and wellbeing within the BCMA by:
  - Providing accessible information about the BCMA's child safety and wellbeing policies and practices
  - Providing information about the BCMA's governance and operations, how complaints are handled and how the BCMA manages disciplinary actions and child safety risks
  - Inviting contributions to ideas for promotions, events, programs etc
  - Inviting families to join the BCMA as ASC volunteers
  - Inviting students and families to make their own decision regarding participation in examinations, competitions, performances etc
- Families have an opportunity to participate in decisions made by the BCMA that impact the safety and wellbeing of their child. Communication with families supports the full diversity of families and community members to participate.
- Opportunities are created for families and community members to provide feedback on the BCMA's policies, procedures and practices including the BCMA's approach to child safety and wellbeing. This may be through meeting (online or in person), emails or other communications.
- The BCMA takes the feedback and involvement of families and communities seriously and takes their views into account.
- Complaint Handling Procedures for families and community members are made available to all members of the BCMA community.

See *Appendix 7* and as separate document.

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**STANDARD 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.****In complying with Child Safe Standard 5, the BCMA, at a minimum, ensures that:**

- 5.1 The BCMA, including staff, contractors and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- 5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- 5.3 The BCMA pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children; all young people regardless of sex, religion, or race.
- 5.4 The BCMA pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

**BCMA POLICY**

- At the BCMA, we understand and firmly believe that every child has the right to participate fully in our classes and the positive outcomes that may be achieved through this participation.
- We endeavour to do all that we can to make this possible through our communications, support and delivery of sessions.
- We acknowledge that relying on written communications may not be suitable for all students and families and so phone calls, online communications and other methods of communication are offered as an alternative.
- Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand. This is communicated via posters, spoken word and through example. Teachers reinforce that safety and communication are important to them and that students are able to approach them when needed but may also be directed to the Child Safety officers. This information is reiterated in communications to families.
- All children, regardless of ability/disability, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people have the same options of communications, respect and due process.

**BCMA PROCEDURES**

- The BCMA takes steps to understand the diverse circumstances and needs of children whom it engages or may engage, with it.
- Staff, contractors and volunteers:
  - Are provided with information and guidance about children's diverse circumstances, how to identify factors that can increase a child's vulnerability to harm and how to promote equity and safety for all children
  - Are guided to take action to support and respond to children who are experiencing vulnerability, including making inquiries and responding where there are signs of increased vulnerability
  - Take action to uphold equity for all children, promote children's safety and prevent child abuse and harm
- Management sets clear expectations around achieving equity and respect for diversity.
- The BCMA ensures all children are reasonably supported to participate in any sessions that they desire.
- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures document describes:
  - the BCMA's commitment to equity and inclusion
  - how the BCMA recognises and respects the diverse needs of all children
  - how the BCMA provides avenues for children or their families to identify their individual needs

- how the BCMA provides children with access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand
- how the BCMA supports equity and makes ongoing reasonable changes to support participation by all children and respond to all children’s needs
- how the BCMA upholds equity for all children and prevents child abuse and harm resulting from discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation

## KEY POINTS

- Children have unique abilities, characteristics, skills and life experiences. Differences in backgrounds, personality and beliefs shape how a child experiences the world and what they need.
  - The BCMA and associated communities are stronger when diversity is valued and respected because children can access opportunities to fulfil their potential.
  - Negative experiences like exclusion and discrimination can be harmful, increase the risk of harm and abuse to a child and decrease the likelihood of a child speaking up if they have a concern.
  - Equity is a state of fairness in which all children can participate freely and equally in all areas of life, regardless of their background, characteristics or beliefs. In a child safe BCMA, this means that a child’s safety is not dependent on their circumstances including their social or economic position, their cultural background or their abilities.
  - A child safe BCMA recognises and respects diversity and understands that some children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. It has policies and practices that ensure children have access to the relationships, skills, knowledge and resources they need to be as safe as their peers.
  - Providing information, including information about available supports and complaints processes, that is accessible, culturally safe and easy to understand involves understanding how children’s communication needs differ based on their individual capabilities and stage of development.
  - A child’s access to the BCMA’s complaints process is not restricted because of their background, characteristics or life experience. It is important that all children can make a complaint or raise a concern.
  - The BCMA understands the diverse circumstances of children, as well as their right to fair treatment. This includes paying attention to the needs of:
    - Children with disability – a child safe BCMA empowers children with disability. It does not stereotype or make assumptions about a child’s abilities but rather recognises that each child is different and experiences disability and the world differently.
    - Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds – a child safe BCMA takes steps to understand language and cultural needs and takes diverse family structures and norms into account.
    - Those unable to live at home – there are many reasons why children may not be able to live at home. Their living arrangements can be varied, including formally or informally living with relatives or friends (kinship care), foster care or residential care. We may not be aware of a child’s living arrangements but it is important that we maintain the BCMA as safe and welcoming for all children regardless of their circumstances.
    - Any sexual persuasion including, but not limited to, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, gender diverse and non-binary children and young people – children and young people can experience and express their sex, sexuality and gender in different ways. For LGBTIQ children and young people to feel safe and to be safe at the BCMA, we actively demonstrate that we welcome and value them and make it clear that we take steps to protect them from abuse and harm.
    - Aboriginal children – BCMA upholds the rights of children to enjoy and feel connected to their culture and community, to be safe from harm arising from racism and to have access to culturally safe services.
    - Children of any religious or spiritual belief or background. The BCMA respects any adherence of significant days, restrictions to participation or any other behaviours that are important to the child and their families.



- Valuing Diversity - we value diversity and equity for all children. To achieve this, we:
  - provide training at the commencement of each year and more often, if necessary, together with information for all management, staff, contractors and volunteers on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety
  - offer students and families, through our enrolment forms, the opportunity to provide information about themselves, including any specific requirements they might have 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
  - deliver programming that reflects the diversity of our students, their interests and cultures
  - strive to reflect the diversity of our community through representation in our management, staff, contractors and volunteers
  - acknowledge and celebrate important cultural dates in our calendars
  - have a physical and online environment that actively celebrates diversity and commit to ensuring our facilities and online activities promote inclusion of children of all abilities

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**STANDARD 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.**

**In complying with Child Safe Standard 6, the BCMA, at a minimum, ensures that:**

- 6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.
- 6.2 All staff, contractors and volunteers have current WWCC (Working With Children Check) or equivalent background checks. Whilst the BCMA is not an organisation directed legally to obtain National Police Check from staff, contractors and volunteers, we strongly encourage our workers to have these in place and to supply us with the details.
- 6.3 All staff, contractors and volunteers receive appropriate information and are made aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- 6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

**BCMA POLICY**

**Recruiting management, staff, contractors, and volunteers.**

- The BCMA puts child safety and wellbeing at the centre of recruitment and screening processes for management, staff, contractors and volunteers as outlined in the recruitment and screening policy. We only recruit those who are appropriate to engage with children.
- We require a Working with Children Check, and/or VIT for everyone who has a role with children or who has access to children's personal information. We require all to have appropriate qualifications for their roles and check to make sure these qualifications are valid.
- The BCMA complies with this standard by producing and recording these documents and undertaking these actions in a way that supports the BCMA to achieve this Standard.

**BCMA PROCEDURES**

- The child safety and wellbeing requirements of each role are assessed before recruitment of new staff, contractors and volunteers. These include:
  - qualifications, experience and attributes required
  - duties and responsibilities with children
  - measures required to manage any child abuse or harm risks including screening, training and supervision requirements
- Management (the only parties responsible for recruiting), prioritises child safety in the recruitment process, including how to identify and manage any child safety concerns raised through the application, interview and screening process.
- Recruitment processes include:
  - a range of values-based interview questions to establish suitability to work with children
  - pre-employment screening practices including referee checks, Working with Children Check and other registration or background checking
  - verification that all required qualifications, registrations and Working with Children Check are valid and up to date
  - keeping records of the recruitment process
- Supervision and people management includes regular reviews to check whether staff are following Codes of Conduct and other child safe policies.
- Guidance is provided for people managers on steps to take when managing staff or volunteers whose behaviour raises child safety concerns.

- Qualifications, Working with Children Check and other registration or ongoing screening checks are regularly reviewed for changes and that they are still valid. Action is taken to manage the risks to children when a person's qualifications, Working with Children Check or other registration or ongoing screening check are no longer valid.
- Staff, contractors and volunteers receive information on requirements, duties, risks and responsibilities in relation to child safety and wellbeing through this document. The information covers the BCMA's child safety practices and complaints process as well as reporting, record keeping and information sharing obligations.
- Job advertisements clearly state the BCMA's commitment to child safety and wellbeing.
- The Working with Children Check aims to prevent people from working or volunteering with children if an assessment of their records indicates they may pose an unjustifiable risk to children. Some people are required by law to hold a valid check. The BCMA requires people to hold a valid check as part of their screening process, even if not required by law.
- A Working with Children Check is a useful tool for keeping children safe at the BCMA. However, it does not assess a person's suitability to work with or care for children in a particular role. The BCMA endeavours to do more complete background checks and personality assessments before securing people for positions.
- Whilst the BCMA is not an organisation directed legally to obtain National Police Check from staff, contractors and volunteers, we strongly encourage our workers to have these in place and to supply the details.
- Failing to properly check references can compromise child safety. Checking references allows the BCMA to confirm the applicant's information and explore any concerns we might have about their responses in an interview.
- Staff and volunteers are appropriately inducted into their roles at the BCMA, so they understand their responsibilities to children and how to create a safe environment for them. This includes providing an overview of the BCMA's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures document and Code of Conduct.
- Inductions also include information about the BCMA's complaint handling policy, reporting, record keeping and information sharing obligations. Staff and volunteers receive clear information on what to do if they have a child safety or wellbeing concern.
- Supervision of staff and volunteers promotes child safety and wellbeing, with clear performance standards and regular meetings between managers and individual staff and volunteers to discuss issues and raise concerns. Regular supervision enables managers to give feedback and address any unsafe or concerning conduct by staff and volunteers before harm to children occurs.

## KEY POINTS

Good recruitment practices and robust screening processes play a vital role in preventing harm to children. Recruitment starts with the BCMA being clear about the role and responsibilities of each teacher, staff and volunteer position and the type of contact they have with children. This helps the BCMA identify the qualifications, experience and attributes applicants must have.

## DOCUMENTS

Employment advertising includes the BCMA's commitment to child safety and wellbeing.

- Position descriptions set clear expectations about the role's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing.
- BCMA recruitment, human resources and volunteering policies describe:
  - recruitment practices that support the BCMA to appoint people who are suitable to work with children
  - pre-employment screening practices including interviewing, referee checks, Working with Children Check and other registration or background checking
  - requirements for an induction about the BCMA's child safety practices

- how supervision and people management practices support ongoing assessment of a person’s suitability to work with children
- Induction documents for staff and volunteers include:
  - the Code of Conduct
  - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures document
  - information about the BCMA’s child safety practices and complaints process as well as reporting, record keeping and information sharing obligations.
- The Confidentiality Agreement

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## STANDARD 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

### In complying with Child Safe Standard 7, the BCMA, at a minimum, ensures that:

- 7.1 The BCMA has an accessible, child-focused complaint handling policy (outlined in the BCMA PROCEDURES below), which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of management, contractors, staff and volunteers in dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.
- 7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people through posters in the venue and through conversation, education and modelling by staff, contractors and volunteers. Child Safety Heroes are introduced to the children in person and their pictures are on posters throughout the venue. Children are also advised that they can speak with their teachers at any time.
- Effective complaint handling processes are understood by families, teachers, staff and volunteers, through provision of this Child Safety and Well-Being Policy document.
- 7.3 Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

### BCMA POLICY

All reports of child abuse and child safety concerns are 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 are responded to promptly and thoroughly.

In acknowledging that complaints are taken seriously, the BCMA consistently:

- identifies and manages any risks to children
- responds to complaints promptly and thoroughly
- prioritises the safety of children and meets privacy and employment law obligations
- supports everyone involved in the complaints process
- reports complaints of alleged abuse or harm of children and concerns about child safety to the authorities and cooperates with law enforcement

If a complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, then staff and volunteers at the BCMA are requested to consider reporting this to police or other suitable authorities. The management, staff, contractors and volunteers are required to prioritise children's safety in any response and to report all potentially criminal conduct to Victoria Police, SOCIT or other suitable organisations.

### BCMA PROCEDURES

**If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child, immediately call 000.**

The complaint process is different for adults and children.

The BCMA Complaint Handling Policy is covered in full in *Appendix 7* and as a separate document.

Complaint handling procedures for children begin as follows where appropriate:

- Speak directly to their own or an appropriate teacher.
- OR
- Speak directly to a Child Safety Hero – Paula Heenan or Emma Sbardella or any staff member at the front office.

Complaint handling procedures for staff, contractors, volunteers, students, families and community members begin as follows where appropriate:

- Phone 03 5331 3086 or 0422247660 to speak with Management or to make an appointment to do so.

OR

- Email [paula@bcma.com.au](mailto:paula@bcma.com.au) to communicate with Management or to request an appointment.

N.B. It is not appropriate to approach Management without a prior appointment unless the matter is urgent. This is so that due attention may be awarded to the seriousness of the situation at a place and time that facilitates privacy.

Under the complaint handling and disciplinary policies, management, staff, contractors 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 the BCMA
- not being allowed to have unsupervised contact with children at the BCMA
- having their access to the BCMA IT system and facilities removed

- Records are kept of complaints made to the BCMA, including concerns raised about the safety of children and disclosures about alleged abuse or harm of children and actions taken to respond.

An 'Incident Report' register is maintained in the BCMA Office. This register covers medical, physical, mental and emotional incidents in addition to reports of abuse in any form.

- All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses are recorded in more depth in the [Child Safety Incident Report Form](#), submitted, and filed under C:\Users\paula\OneDrive\OneDrive - Ballarat Centre of Music and the Arts\BCMA Sharepoint\4. Child Safety and Wellbeing\Incident Reports. A brief outline of these is attached as Appendix 7.2
- The BCMA reviews complaint handling policies and procedures in January of each year.
- A child-focused complaint handling process requires the BCMA to have a positive complaints culture. Therefore, the BCMA encourages and welcomes the reporting of concerns, responds to complaints promptly, thoroughly, and fairly, and takes immediate action to protect children at risk.
- Children will be supported, informed and cared for by Management and/or other appropriate adults throughout the process until a satisfactory resolution is in place. Any ongoing support will be advised and/or provided. This support may include:
  - Providing safe space from any alleged perpetrators
  - Sourcing alternate accommodation were recommended by authorities
  - Sourcing counselling support
  - Listening and caring, but not providing advice or counselling outside of our expertise
- Children raising complaints and safety concerns or disclosing abuse are treated with sensitivity and provided with support by Management and any relevant adults.
- Taking action to prioritise children's safety is the BCMA's focus once a complaint or safety concern has been raised. We assess any immediate risks so that these can guide the next steps that the BCMA takes.
- The BCMA can support investigations of complaints with the support of relevant authorities. Having relevant incident reports and other records of events in place aids this process.
- The BCMA cooperates with Victoria Police, Child Protection, the Commission and other authorities that have a role in responding to complaints and concerns so that children's safety is prioritised. If investigation is necessary, these agencies will benefit from the BCMA's support and assistance to identify and contact witnesses and gather or retain evidence.
- An important part of resolving a complaint or safety concern is having a clear outcome. This means the BCMA decides about what to do after having properly considered the issue and consulting with authorities, and where appropriate, tells relevant people about this decision and then takes appropriate action such as dismissal.
- Confidentiality is important for complaints processes. People can have concerns about confidentiality and privacy when they want to make a complaint. They may wish to remain anonymous or may not want information shared

with authorities such as police. Sometimes confidentiality cannot be maintained, either for the protection of children or so that the subject of a complaint can be treated fairly. The BCMA's Complaint Handling Policy acknowledges that confidentiality is to be managed according to advice from external sources when a complaint is made.

- Personal information that identifies a child or another individual associated with a complaint should only be disclosed by the BCMA as permitted under the relevant laws.
- The BCMA's Complaint Handling Policy and processes align with any employment law obligations that apply to our contractors, staff and volunteers.

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**STANDARD 8: Management, contractors, staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.****In complying with Child Safe Standard 8, the BCMA, at a minimum, ensures that:**

8.1 Training is provided at the commencement of each year (January) and more often if necessary and information is provided to staff, contractors and volunteers that supports their ability to:

- Understand and support Aboriginal culture
- identify signs of child abuse and harm
- respond to issues of child safety including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers and managing risks to children
- support a person disclosing child harm
- create culturally safe environments in the BCMA
- understand all elements of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures.
- understand risks, methods to minimise or eliminate possible risks, and procedures to manage and respond to risks
- How to support anyone making a disclosure about harm to a child

8.2 Training and guidance on child safety is:

- appropriate to the BCMA's engagement with children and the needs of children in the BCMA
- offered on a regular basis to enable staff and volunteers to keep their skills and knowledge up to date
- reviewed and offered in January of each year and updated when necessary to remain effective

**BCMA POLICY**

- When BCMA's management, contractors, staff and volunteers are properly informed, trained and supported, they are more likely to uphold the BCMA's child safe values and more likely to report concerns.
- Having a Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures document alone does not protect children from abuse and harm. BCMA needs to equip their management, contractors, staff and volunteers with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe. This means providing ongoing education and training to staff, contractors and volunteers so they can apply it when performing their roles.
- A child safe BCMA supports its staff and volunteers to identify signs where a child may be experiencing abuse or harm. Sometimes a child may tell someone if they are being harmed, but at other times contractors, staff and volunteers need to look out for changes in behaviour, emotions or physical appearance.
- A child safe BCMA also provides training and information to its staff and volunteers so they can respond effectively to child wellbeing and safety issues, including supporting children and responding to any disclosures they make. This also includes recognising that as management, contractors, staff and volunteers of a performing arts centre, we are not qualified to provide advice or counselling, but more so to provide referrals to organisations and persons who are.
- Receiving disclosures of harm to a child can be both distressing and stressful. This means it is useful for staff and volunteers to know who they can get guidance and support from, and how to support their colleagues.
- Staff and volunteers need guidance on taking active steps to make sure that Aboriginal people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds feel that their culture and identity is respected, that racism is not tolerated and that they feel safe to be themselves.
- Training and information for staff, contractors and volunteers on child safety issues, including indicators of harm, may be confronting, especially for survivors of child abuse. A trauma-informed approach involves understanding the effects of trauma and stress on a person and being sensitive to the nature of information being provided and how it is provided. This seeks to safeguard individuals from further harm.
- Training will occur in January of each year and more often if necessary.

**BCMA PROCEDURES**

- Management, contractors, staff and volunteers are provided with, and directed to effectively implement, the BCMA's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures document.
- A two-hour training session is provided in-person, online and recorded for later use to all staff, contractors and volunteers in January each year and more often as required. Newly appointed adults are provided with the same opportunity at whatever time of year they are engaged.



- Volunteers who are engaged to supervise children for BCMA productions and events are provided with a one-hour training session and with the CSWPP document prior to these events taking place.
- Management, contractors, staff and volunteers are provided with, and supported to, understand information that may assist to recognise indicators of child harm, including harm caused by other children and young people. See *Appendix 8 - IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF ABUSE IN CHILDREN*.
- Management, contractors, staff and volunteers are provided with and supported to understand information on how to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm, including where to refer potential victims for further assistance. See *Appendix 8.1 – Reporting Obligations*
- Management, contractors, staff and volunteers are directed to and offered opportunities to gain and maintain first aid qualifications.
- Management, contractors, staff and volunteers are strongly encouraged and offered opportunities to investigate learning in Aboriginal and other culturally significant topics and therefore are supported in how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.
- Contractors, staff and volunteers are directed and encouraged to bring all matters of concern in the areas of child safety and wellbeing to the attention of management and/or to the services who will undertake further action as required.
- A Register of Training completed is maintained and recorded in the Child Safety folder:

Where appropriate, Management, contractors, staff and volunteers are advised and supported to make contact with the services listed below to seek advice and follow up with those in management qualified to provide direction.

- Ballarat CASA
- 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday
- Cnr Vale and Edwards Sts, Sebastopol
- 03 5320 3933
- SACL (Sexual Assault Crisis Line)
- 24hours/7 days
- 1800 806 292

For counselling support:

- 1800 RESPECT
- 1800 737 732
- Lifeline 13 11 14

To report a sexual assault:

- Police SOCIT (Sexual Offences and Child Investigation Team)

03 5372 9095

- A record of completion of training by management, contractors, staff and volunteers is maintained.
- Training is provided at the commencement of each year and more often if necessary.

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**STANDARD 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.****In complying with Child Safe Standard 9, the BCMA, at a minimum, ensures that:**

- 9.1 The physical environment at the BCMA venue is assessed and maintained for health and safety according to Victorian Government regulations and Worksafe Victoria guidelines.
- 9.2 Management, staff, contractors and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- 9.3 The physical and online environments are used in accordance with the BCMA's Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures document.

**BCMA POLICY**

- Identifying and managing risk at the BCMA is a fundamental step in keeping children safe from harm. By adopting a preventative risk management approach, the BCMA can actively reduce the likelihood of children suffering harm or abuse.
- For the purpose of the Child Safe Standards, 'risk' means the chance for harm or abuse of a child to occur in connection with activities undertaken at the BCMA. This includes risks to children from the BCMA or people involved with it, risks that arise due to the activities undertaken by the BCMA and those that arise in its physical and online environments.
- The BCMA understands the potential risks to the children they engage with and works to minimise these risks. Consideration is given to possible risks as part of the BCMA structure and culture, activities and the physical and online environments, as well as addressing new risks as they arise.
- When identifying and managing risk, the BCMA understands that it is important to balance the need to manage the risk of harm and abuse against the benefits to children of a particular activity or approach.
- Online technologies are constantly changing, and children are often more adept than parents, carers and BCMA staff in adapting to these changes. Behaviour online is covered in the BCMA's Code of Conduct, and child safety and wellbeing policies and practices also address the online environment.

**BCMA PROCEDURES**

- A health and safety risk assessment identifying risks of child abuse and harm in both physical and online environments connected with the BCMA is carried out in January of each year and more regularly if required. Management also continually observes changes that may impact the safety of all in these areas.
- Risk assessment and management plans are informed by, and responsive to, the views and concerns of management, staff, volunteers and children. The BCMA has balanced the need to manage the risk of harm and abuse against children's rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- The BCMA provides a safe physical environment where all rooms are viewable at any time via large windows and glass panels in doors.
- Staff, contractors and volunteers are not able to attend the venue or any associated venue with a child alone. There must always be another teacher or parent present.
- When taking young children to the toilet, adults must remain outside the door and in view. If younger children need assistance with toileting, parents are often on premises and able to assist. If not, the adult must alert another adult that they are assisting so that there is a level of awareness of the situation.
- Students, carers and families provide permission or not, to have photos taken and/or to have them shared on social media. Staff, Contractors and volunteers are advised of this permission via the instructors' charts and are advised to adhere to not photographing children without t specific permission.
- When third-party contractors are engaged, action is taken by the BCMA to assess whether, and the extent to which, the engagement of third-party contractors poses risks of child abuse and harm. Including:
  - a) having third-party contractors attend only when children are not on site
  - b) monitoring compliance by third-party contractors with the Child Safe Standards and/or the BCMA's policies and procedures
  - c) working with third-party contractors to identify, prevent and reduce risks of child abuse and harm
  - d) where the BCMA is unable to adequately manage risks of child abuse and harm posed by third-party contractors, consider terminating the contract or take other appropriate action to protect children

N.B As stated in the Independent Contractor Agreements, third party contracting is governed by the following:

- 2.8 Assignment of Service performance

The Contractor may assign and/or subcontract any part of the Services with the prior consent of the Company. Any subsequent contractor assigned would need to adhere to a standard and to prior checks, including (but not exclusive to) WWCC and Child Safety policies observance.

Any consent given by the Company permitting the Contractor to subcontract or assign any portion of the Services does not relieve the Contractor of its obligations and liabilities under this Agreement.

- Where appropriate, management, staff, contractors, volunteers, parents, carers and children are provided with information about online safety and risks in the online environment, such as online grooming, cyber bullying and sexting. Support is given to reporting negative experiences or concerns.
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- Risk assessment and management tools have been adopted and developed to help BCMA to complete their child safety risk assessments and management plan. These include, but are not limited to:
  - Chemical register
  - Manual handling guide

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**STANDARD 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.****In complying with Child Safe Standard 10, the BCMA, at a minimum, ensures that:**

- 10.1 The BCMA regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices through reviewing and updating Policy and Procedures, Code of Conduct, Risk Assessments and any associated documents. These are set to be reviewed and updated in January each year and more often if required.
- 10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- 10.3 The BCMA reports on the findings of relevant reviews to management, and if appropriate to staff, contractors, volunteers, community and families, children and external services where required.

**BCMA POLICY**

- Recognising that obtaining the status of being a child safe organisation cannot be achieved as a one-off exercise, but requires ongoing effort, the BCMA therefore has an open and transparent culture, learning from mistakes and putting the interests of children first.
- Regular reviews ensure that our policies, procedures and practices are adequate, up-to-date and effective, and that they are being fully implemented and followed by everyone.

**BCMA PROCEDURES**

- The BCMA reviews all child safe practices and policies at least each January and more often if changes are required. We also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Findings from reviews will inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices. Reviews are overseen by the Management.
- Reviews include looking at any complaints, concerns and safety incidents that may have occurred. These are critical to a review, providing information on the effectiveness of the BCMA's child safe systems and practices and will help identify areas where changes are needed to prevent further abuse or harm.
- The BCMA's analysis of complaints, concerns and safety incidents will consider:
  - a) the underlying causes or issues behind each matter
  - b) any indications of gaps or failures in our policies, procedures or practices
  - c) patterns in behaviours, practices, incidents or near misses
  - d) any indications that people in the BCMA may not understand how to follow our child safe policies
  - e) what needs to change to address the issues identified
- When reporting on review findings the BCMA will:
  - a) share findings to management in a timely way so they remain current and meaningful
  - b) communicate findings to interested parties via email (unless unsuitable, and then in person, by phone or in writing), in clear and appropriate ways and ensure they are easy to access and understand
  - c) share learnings from reviews and outline any plans to change or update child safe practices or systems and when changes will happen, and/or further reviews
  - d) remember to protect people's privacy and maintain confidentiality as required by law or where you have committed to do so
  - e) consider how publicly reporting on a review may impact on parties involved in any incidents referenced – especially consider the need to warn any victim-survivors that the report will be published

**Record keeping related to reviewing and improving child safety and wellbeing.**

- The BCMA is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related incidents, complaints, or safety concerns.
- Incidents and near misses are recorded in brief the incident reporting folder which is kept on the front office desk.
- All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses are recorded in more depth in the [Child Safety Incident Report Form - BCMA.docx](#), submitted and filed confidentially on the manager's computer.
- These reports will contain the following basic details:
  - 1. Date of conversation/incident/concern and any immediate action taken
  - 2. Date case note was written
  - 3. Details regarding what was noted, who was consulted for advice, who was notified, what recommendations were made and what action was taken following this. This includes findings made, the outcome of any investigations and any reasons for decisions and actions taken.

- 4. Any agreement made needs to be signed by those involved and a copy kept.
  - 5. All records are kept in a secure location where others do not have access to them.
- Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern are identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records are kept (as above) even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.
  - Records are stored securely and kept by the BCMA for at least 45 years.

**Information sharing related to reviewing and improving child safety and wellbeing.**

- The BCMA may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests.
- The BCMA keeps 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.

## **INCIDENT RECORD KEEPING**

1. Date of conversation/action taken
2. Date case note was written.
3. Details regarding what was noted, who was consulted for advice, what recommendations were made and what action was taken following this.
4. Any agreement made needs to be signed by those involved and a copy kept.
5. All notes need to be kept in a secure location where others do not have access to them.

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**STANDARD 11: Policies and procedures document how the BCMA is safe for children and young people.****In complying with Child Safe Standard 11, the BCMA, at a minimum, ensures that:**

- 11.1 This document is designed to address all Child Safe Standards.
- 11.2 Policies and procedures relating to these standards are clear and easy to understand.
- 11.3 Best practice models and professional consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- 11.4 Management demonstrate and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- 11.5 Staff, contractors and volunteers are provided with material (this and accompanying documents to be signed) to enable them to understand and implement policies and procedures.
- 11.6 This document is reviewed and updated yearly in January and at any additional time that updates may be required.

**BCMA POLICY**

- The BCMA demonstrates compliance with this Standard as we produce and maintain this and other associated documents.

**BCMA PROCEDURES**

- Documenting policies and procedures to implement all the Standards sends a message to everyone involved with the BCMA that child safety is important. It is not enough to have preferred practices in mind or believe that everyone in the BCMA is already doing the right thing. Rules and expectations are written down and formalised in policy so they can be shared and used to embed child safety consistently throughout the BCMA.
- Policies and Procedures guide people within the BCMA by describing how the BCMA promotes safety and wellbeing and prevents and responds to child safety issues. 'Policies' are the documented rules, expectations and positions of the BCMA. 'Procedures' are the documented actions and processes that put the BCMA's policies into operation.
- Some child safety issues can be complex to respond to, but we write the BCMA's policies as simply as possible. Policies are written with the audience in mind, taking care to use language that is accessible to everyone who needs to understand it.
- Matters arising that are above our expertise within the BCMA are referred to professional services such as SOCIT, Local police and similar organisations.
- Most child safety matters are not unique and have been considered before by other organisations, peak bodies, experts and academics. Utilising insights provided by others' experience, and by available research and written guidance, is recognised by the BCMA as a means of producing the best results for children.
- Championing and modelling compliance means that our BCMA leaders take a proactive, outspoken approach on the importance of child safety and wellbeing. Management responds promptly and thoroughly and provides staff and volunteers with the time and resources needed to embed child safe practices throughout the BCMA.

**DOCUMENTS**

- The BCMA Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures Manual sets out the expectations, practices and approach in relation to each of the Child Safe Standards.
- The BCMA Code of Conduct sets out the expectations for behaviour and responsibilities of management, contractors, staff and volunteers.
- The BCMA Complaint handling policy and processes documents addresses how the organisation will respond and all internal and external reporting obligations. *Appendix 7* and separate document.
- The BCMA recruitment, human resources and volunteering policies have a clear child safety focus.
- Documents created regarding Child Safety and Wellbeing are reviewed and endorsed by Laurenza Buglisi - Childhood Sexual Assault Specialist. Founder and Managing Director of Juno's Circle.

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# BCMA Indigenous Statement

At the BCMA we recognise the Wadawurrung and the Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land we live, work & perform on.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, we strive to provide a safe cultural space for our children and families to embrace and be proud of their ancestry and provide a place where there is a shared respect, safety, understanding and connection.



## Appendix 2

### BCMA CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AGREEMENT

All staff, contractors and volunteers must ensure that all Confidential Information is:

- (a) maintained as confidential
- (b) not disclosed to or used by any third party without the Company's written consent
- (c) only used for the purpose of the Company's business and the performance of the Services
- (d) not appropriated, copied, memorised, reproduced or reverse engineered for all persons's or any other person's use and
- (e) not removed from the Company's place of business without the Company's written consent.

All Confidential Information remains the exclusive property of the Company and no rights in respect of Confidential Information are granted or conveyed to all persons. In the event that any persons is legally required to disclose any Confidential Information, such persons must immediately notify the Company of that fact.

All persons acknowledges that any Intellectual Property created during the course, and for the purpose of this Agreement, is the property of the Company. All persons must disclose to the Company all Intellectual Property created by it during the course of this Agreement.

All persons consent to any acts or omissions (both past and future) by the Company which, apart from this clause, would infringe on their moral rights (as defined in the Copyright Amendment (Moral Rights) Act 2000 (Cth)) in any works made or to be made by them in the course of this Agreement.

All persons must, both during and after the term of this Agreement, do all necessary acts and things and sign all necessary documents as the Company reasonably requires to secure the Company's Intellectual Property created during the course of this Agreement.

All persons acknowledges that if they breach this clause, then the Company may seek injunctive relief at the concerned persons cost in respect of the breach.

All persons irrevocably appoints the Company to be its attorney for the purpose of executing any Agreement and doing anything necessary to give effect to this clause.

## Appendix 2.1

**BULLYING DEFINITION** (ref <https://www.ncab.org.au/bullying-advice/bullying-for-parents/definition-of-bullying/> )

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying in any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

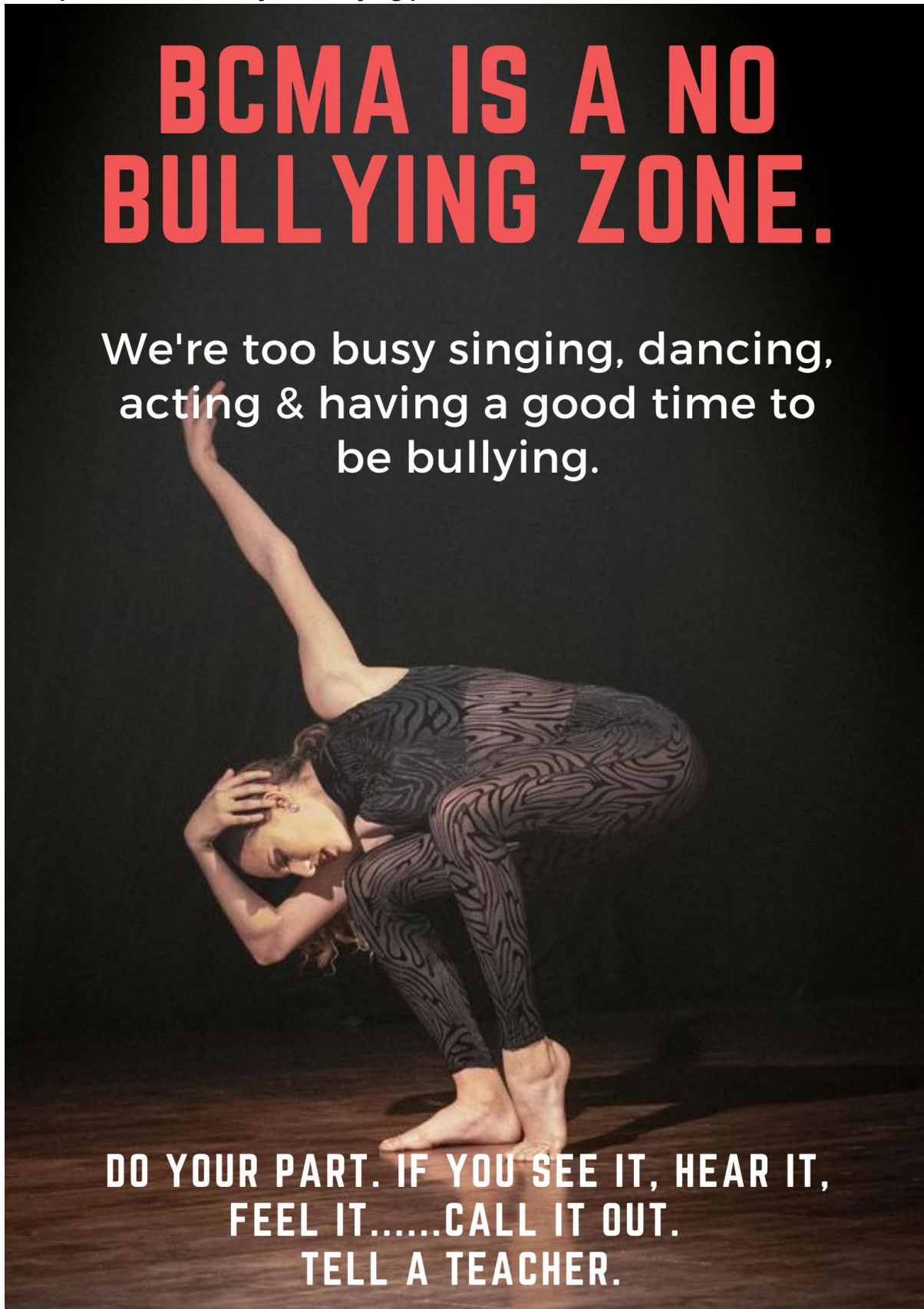
Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

### IDENTIFYING BULLYING

What effect can bullying have?

Bullying can be very hurtful and cause lots of pain. Victims may:

- Have trouble sleeping
- Lose their appetite
- Have trouble concentrating
- Feel down about themselves
- Find it hard to cope
- Have thoughts of hurting themselves
- Feel suicidal
- Have trouble with schoolwork
- Feel physically sick
- Feel hopeless or powerless
- Feel alone, sad, angry or confused
- Feel unsafe or afraid
- Have a change in 'personality'



## Appendix 7

### Complaint Handling Policy

Complaint handling procedures for children begin as follows where appropriate:

- Speak directly to their own or an appropriate teacher.
- OR
- Speak directly to a Child Safety Hero – Paula Heenan or Emma Sbardella or any staff member at the front office.

Complaint handling procedures for staff, contractors, volunteers, students, families and community members begin as follows where appropriate:

- Phone 03 5331 3086 or 0422247660 to speak with Management or to make an appointment to do so.
- OR
- Email [paula@bcma.com.au](mailto:paula@bcma.com.au) to communicate with Management or to request an appointment.

N.B. It is not appropriate to approach Management without a prior appointment unless the matter is urgent. This is so that due attention may be awarded to the seriousness of the situation at a place and time that facilitates privacy.

Under the complaint handling and disciplinary policies, management, staff, contractors 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 the BCMA
- not being allowed to have unsupervised contact with children at the BCMA
- their access to the BCMA IT system and facilities removed

### COMPLAINTS PROCESS

**Once a complaint has been received by any of the above means, the BCMA will follow the below procedure:**

- The BCMA Management will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing to the complainant within 36 hours of receipt, outlining the processes of investigation and applying appropriate action to them.
- The BCMA will inform any other parties involved in the matter where relevant and appropriate within 48 hours of receipt of the complaint. N.B. those being informed (including families) will be decided on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration privacy of staff, contractors, volunteers, students and any safety concerns related to all persons involved. In some cases, if families are informed, it might simply be that they are advised that a complaint has been made but that it is being investigated (without any further detail necessarily being provided).
- Management will be responsible for undertaking investigations and follow up unless not appropriate. i.e., the complaint is directed at or about Management. If this occurs, an external person or service will be appointed, such as SOCIT, the police or advisory service.
- Details of the matter will be recorded with all facts, comments, actions and reactions relating to the complaint being recorded by the complaint lead (Management) in a **Complaint Investigation Report Register**.
- Investigations may include, but not be exclusive to:
  - Discussions with parties involved
  - Observations of behaviour
  - Reading phone/written/emailed messages
  - Observing any video or recorded material
- Ideally the complaint will be resolved through discussion with all parties involved and through setting guidelines of behaviours to be altered and ceased.
- A written summary of the outcome of the complaint investigation will be provided to the relevant parties involved.

## Appendix 7.2

### Completing the BCMA Child Safe Incident Report Form (In brief)

**Details** Name of Person Completing this Form and Full Name/s of any persons who witnessed or is aware of the incident.

#### **Name of staff/volunteer/contractor implicated in Reportable Conduct**

Complete if a child was harmed by an employee, contractor or volunteer. If the incident did not involve the conduct of an employee, contractor, volunteer or Councillor with a child then please tick the N/A box.

#### **Incident Details**

Complete the date, time and location the incident occurred or if a disclosure of abuse or harm include details of the incident being reported.

#### **Details of the Incident**

Please include a summary of the incident and who was involved, what happened and what did you see or observe. Your full case notes are not required here however please provide enough information to describe the incident/report clearly. You may provide the information on the incident/report in dot points rather than narrative.

#### **Has the incident been reported?**

Record details here of who the incident has been reported to, either Child safety services, the Police or another agency.

If completing '**Other**' please specify the name of any Regulatory Body you are required to inform of the incident/report (example DHHS, CIMS, DWES).

#### **Submitting this form**

Please e-mail the form to [paula@bcma.com.au](mailto:paula@bcma.com.au)

## Appendix 8

### Recognising signs of possible Child Abuse

Taken from: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/child-abuse>

**If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation call 000. If you wish to report a child protection matter, contact the department responsible for child protection in your state or territory.**

Child abuse is any physical or emotional ill treatment by someone in a position of responsibility, trust or power that harms or could harm a child's health, survival, development or dignity.

There are different types of child abuse, and many children experience more than one type.

- Physical abuse: using physical force to deliberately hurt a child
- Emotional abuse: using inappropriate words or symbolic acts to hurt a child over time
- Neglect: failing to provide the child with conditions needed for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing
- Sexual abuse: using a child for sexual gratification
- Exposure to family violence: when a child hears or sees a parent or sibling being subjected to any type of abuse, or can see the damage caused to a person or property by a family member's violent behaviour
- Exploitation: when a child is used for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child

Children are most often abused or neglected by their parents or carers of either sex. Sexual abuse is usually by a person known to the child — a family member, a friend or a member of the school or church community.

Child abuse can affect a child's physical, psychological, emotional, behavioural and social development through to adulthood.

Recognising the signs of child abuse is important. There may be physical, emotional or behavioural signs such as:

- broken bones or unexplained bruising, burns or welts
- not wanting to go home
- creating stories, poems or artwork about abuse

- being hungry and begging, stealing or hoarding food

Read more about how to [recognise the signs of child abuse](#).

You should [report suspected child abuse to the relevant authority](#) in your state or territory, even if you are not certain it's happening. This is called a notification.

Child protection systems vary depending on which state and territory you live in. This includes definitions of when a child requires protection and when authorities will intervene.

Some occupations are legally required to report suspected cases of child abuse to government authorities. The laws are different between states and territories but the most common occupations are teachers, doctors, nurses and police.

## Getting help

If you have hurt a child, or feel like you might hurt them, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

If you are a child, teen or young adult who needs help and support, call the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.

If you are an adult who experienced abuse as a child, call Blue Knot Helpline on 1300 657 380 or visit the website at [blueknot.org.au/Helpline](http://blueknot.org.au/Helpline).

For more information on child abuse visit the [Australian Institute of Family Studies](#) website.

## Appendix 8.1

### REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

(Taken from <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-report-child-protection>)

#### *When to make a report*

Child Protection receive reports about children when there are concerns the child is in need of protection. A child in need of protection is a child who has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect, and their parent has not protected or is unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type.

To make a report to Child Protection, a person needs to have formed a reasonable belief that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect, and that their parent has not protected or is unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type.

Information provided to Child Protection when a report is made needs to be sufficiently detailed for Child Protection to identify the child at risk of harm. Where concerns relate to an alleged perpetrator of abuse, who may pose a risk more generally to all children, the concerns should be reported to Police.

A report to Child Protection should be made when the child's parent has not protected or is unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type in any of the following circumstances:

- **Physical abuse of, or non-accidental or unexplained injury to, a child** (mandatory reporters must report)
- **A disclosure of sexual abuse by a child or witness**, or a combination of factors suggesting the likelihood of sexual abuse – the child exhibiting concerning behaviours e.g., after the child's mother takes on a new partner or where a known or suspected perpetrator has unsupervised contact with the child (mandatory reporters must make a report to child protection)
- **Emotional abuse and ill treatment of a child** – impacting on the child's stability and healthy development.
- **Significant neglect, poor care, or lack of appropriate supervision** – where there is a likelihood of significant harm to the child, or the child's stability and development.
- **Significant family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness, or intellectual disability** – where there is a likelihood of significant harm to the child, or the child's stability and development.
- **Where a child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm** and the parents are unwilling, or unable to protect the child.
- **Where a child appears to have been abandoned, or where the child's parents are dead or incapacitated** and no other person is caring properly for the child.

Many cases will not fit neatly into these categories, so the following questions may help you decide on the best course of action.



*Other factors to consider:*

- What specifically has happened to the child that has caused your concerns and what is the impact on their safety, stability, health, wellbeing, and development?
- How vulnerable is the child?
- Is there a history or pattern of significant concerns with this child or other children in the family?
- Are the parents aware of the concerns, capable and willing to take action to ensure the child's safety and stability, and promote the child's health, wellbeing, and development?

*If you are worried about a child's wellbeing, but don't believe the child is in need of protection:*

If you have significant concern for the wellbeing of a child, but do not believe they are at risk of significant harm, and where the immediate safety of the child will not be compromised, a referral to Child FIRST or The Orange Door may be appropriate.

Child FIRST, as the access point for family services, is progressively transitioning to The Orange Door. The Orange Door is the new access point for families who need assistance with the care and wellbeing of children, including those experiencing family violence, to contact the services they need to be safe and supported.

Referring to Child FIRST or The Orange Door would be appropriate where families:

- Are experiencing significant parenting problems that may be affecting the child's development.
- Are experiencing family conflict, including family breakdown.
- Are under pressure due to a family member's physical or mental illness, substance abuse, disability, or bereavement.
- Are young, isolated, or unsupported.
- Are experiencing significant social or economic disadvantage that may adversely impact on a child's care or development.

Contact numbers to make a referral in each local government area are listed on the Services website.

*How to make a report*

In Victoria, reports to Child Protection must be made to a protective intervener, or other appropriately delegated officer. Reports cannot be made via the department's social media, website, or email, as staff who monitor the department's website are not delegated officers. Almost all reports are made to Child Protection by phone.

To make a report, you should contact the child protection intake service covering the local government area (LGA) where the child normally resides.

Telephone numbers to make a report during business hours (8.45am -5.00pm), Monday to Friday, are listed below.

- **West Division intake - rural and regional: 1800 075 599**

If you are not sure which number to call, see [Child protection contacts](#) on the Services website for details on the LGAs covered by each intake service.

To report concerns that are life threatening, call Victoria Police 000.

To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child outside of normal business hours, you should contact the After-Hours Child Protection Emergency Service on 13 12 78.

*What happens once a report is made?*

Child Protection will decide when follow up is required and how to classify the report.

This may mean providing advice to the reporter, progressing the matter to an investigation, or referring the family to support services in the community, or taking no further action.

Child Protection may have access to other information that influences how they respond to a report about a child. They will consider information provided by the reporter, may make further enquiries and review information held by Child Protection (for example previous reports) to inform their assessment and determine how to respond to each family.

*Failure to disclose child sexual abuse offence.*

A new offence for failure to disclose child sexual abuse came into effect on 27 October 2014. The offence requires that any adult who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child (aged under 16) disclose that information to police. The offence applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children, unless they have a reasonable excuse.

**VARIATION**

This document is read, agreed to and signed without alteration, deletion or erasure. By signing this document acknowledges that no verbal variations have been or will be made to this and any variation must be made in writing and signed by both parties to this Agreement.

**SIGNED BY AN AUTHORISED OFFICER OF THE COMPANY**



.....  
Authorised Officer  
Ms Paula Heenan – Company Director...  
Title of Authorised Officer



.....  
Witness  
Emma Sbardella – Business Manager  
Name of Witness (printed)

.....  
Dated

**SIGNED BY THE CONTRACTOR, STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER**

.....  
Contractor

.....  
Witness

.....  
Dated

.....  
Name of Witness (printed)

I have read and agree to abide by all standards as set out in the BCMA Child Safety Policy and Procedures