

Australian Dance Council - Ausdance (ACT) Inc
ACT Incorporated Association Number AO 1179
ABN 36 761 984 224
Registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission

Ausdance ACT Child Safety Policy 2025

The Purpose of this Policy

To provide a best practice framework for Ausdance ACT and all dance organisations in the ACT and regions who work with children, young people, and vulnerable people.

This policy should be applied in conjunction with the [ACT Child Safe Standards Scheme](#) and the [National Principles | Child Safe Organisations](#) which are mandatory for all organisations who are involved with children.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations set out a nationally consistent approach to promoting a culture of child safety and wellbeing within organisations. There are a number of available for your organisation.

Ausdance ACT has [Safe Dance® Guidelines](#) that outline protocols for best behaviour when working with children and young people (C&YP). The [Ausdance Child Safe Dance® Practices Factsheet](#) provides national, cross-jurisdictional guidance to help dance organisations, schools and studios meet their obligations and embed child safety into every aspect of their practice.

Keeping Our Kids Safe Resources

The [Keeping Our Kids Safe](#) resources are available to support organisations working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and communities to implement the National Principles in a culturally safe and relevant way.

The resources include an introductory video resource, Keeping Our Kids Safe: Understanding Cultural Safety in Child Safe Organisations, and a practical guide, Keeping Our Kids Safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

The National Office engaged SNAICC — National Voice for our Children (SNAICC), with support from Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), to develop these resources. SNAICC and VACCA consulted with a wide range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities, including talking to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, when developing the resources.

Table of Contents

This policy covers children, young people, and vulnerable people.

- 1. Scope**
- 2. Children's Participation**
- 3. Definitions**
- 4. Applicable Child Safety Legislation**
- 5. Quick Guide to Reporting**
- 6. Ausdance ACT Contacts**
- 7. Good Practice**
- 8. Still or Moving Images**
- 9. Harassment / Bullying**
- 10. Communication of this Policy**
- 11. Recruitment**
- 12. Training**
- 13. Allegations and Reports**
- 14. Informing Parents or Guardians**
- 15. Reporting Concerns about Poor Practice**
- 16. References**

1. Scope

1.1 Commitment to child safety

All children and young people (C&YP) who come to Ausdance ACT or participate in Ausdance ACT activities have a right to feel safe and secure. We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people, accessing our services and their welfare in our care will always be our first priority. We aim to create a safe, child friendly and child aware environment where all C&YP are valued and feel safe and secure.

1.2 Who in Ausdance ACT must know about and have read this policy and guidelines?

- Employees
- Contractors
- Volunteers
- Parents/Carers
- Board Members
- Others in or associated with Ausdance ACT coming into contact with children, young people, and other vulnerable people.

1.3 This policy provides:

- Guidance for staff and volunteers on good practices and what to avoid.
- Procedures for reporting suspected child abuse conducted by Ausdance ACT staff or board members.
- Procedures for reporting suspected child abuse occurring outside Ausdance ACT, for example, by family members of children attending Ausdance ACT events.
- Actions aimed at avoiding harm to C&YP by people not closely connected with Ausdance ACT (for example, volunteers) or not connected with Ausdance ACT at all (for example, someone accessing photographs on the website).

2. Children's Participation

2.1 How Ausdance ACT encourages the participation and involvement of children.

Ausdance ACT employees, contractors, members, and volunteers encourage C&YP to express their views, and make suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage C&YP, who use our services to 'have a say' about issues that are important to them. We value equity and diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

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3. Definitions

Child: A person under 12 years of age.

Young Person: A person who is 12 years old or older, but not yet an adult.

Children and Young People Act 2008

[Human Rights Commission Act 2005 | HTML view](#)

Vulnerable Person (not defined by age): Can include an aged person; a person with an intellectual or physical disability; a homeless person; Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people but may not include everyone with one or more of these characteristics.

Definitions of harm and abuse (what to report):

Child Abuse

Different types of maltreatment inflicted on a child or young person (C&YP) including non-accidental physical injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and grooming, neglect, emotional abuse including psychological harm and exposure to domestic violence.

Psychological Abuse

Includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming, and name calling, ignoring, and isolating a C&YP, and exposure to domestic and family violence.

Physical Abuse

Including physical punishment such as pushing, shoving, punching, pinching, biting, slapping, and kicking, any other action resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.

Sexual Abuse

Includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution, or possession of child abuse material (often known as photography).

Misconduct

Inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse, although could indicate that abuse is occurring, and may include showing a C&YP something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a C&YP or an adult sitting with a C&YP on their lap.

Grooming

The process where a person manipulates a C&YP or group of C&YP, and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers, and leaders.

Grooming behaviours are those that are designed to build trust and isolate a child or young person, in order to manipulate, exploit or abuse them. A common grooming tactic can be giving a child special attention, gifts, exclusive opportunities or engaging in favouritism. This differs from additional coaching or opportunities which may be provided to a dancer with high potential, due to the blurring of professional boundaries and the use of emotional control and isolation. Dance teachers, studio staff, dancers and parents/carers must recognise the signs of a child getting special attention that is not consistent with their dancer development needs.

Lack of appropriate care

Includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education, or medical care, if the failure has caused, or is causing, significant harm to the wellbeing or development of a C&YP.

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Note: As a relevant entity, Ausdance ACT must also report reportable conduct where there are concerns about the conduct of current ACT Government staff, volunteers, or contractors.

Types of complaints (what to report)

All complaints should be reported. This includes:

- criminal conduct
- disclosures of abuse
- unacceptable behaviour around children and young people
- suspicion of harm or abuse to a child or young person
- reportable conduct.

Making a complaint (who can report)

Everyone in our organisation has the right to make a genuine complaint and will not be punished if they do. This includes children and young people, staff members and volunteers. Reporting abuse is mandatory and encouraged – it is never obstructed or prevented.

Voluntary Reporter: Staff and board members of Ausdance ACT are voluntary reporters (mandatory reporters are, for example: doctors, teachers, childcare workers).

Staff: Employees (for example, people working in the Ausdance ACT office or conducting classes); contractors (for example, people providing ancillary services such as stage management, lighting, filming) and volunteers (can include board members who sometimes assist at events).

References to “**child**” and “**children**” also cover young people and vulnerable people.

4. Applicable Child Safety Legislation

[The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

[Children and Young People Act 2008](#)

[Human Rights Act 2004 \(ACT\)](#)

[Human Rights Commission Act 2005 \(ACT\)](#)

[Working with Vulnerable People \(Background Checking\) Act 2011](#)

5. Quick Guide to Reporting

A person who *believes* that a child or young person has experienced, or is experiencing, sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury or neglect by a family member or guardian **MUST** report this to the ACT Government

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child protection agency as required by ACT law - see below and guidelines for how to do this. National guidelines now recommend mandatory reporting to the police.

For more information please see www.act.gov.au/community/children-youth-and-families/reporting-child-abuse-the-law.

Report Suspected Child Abuse to both Ausdance ACT and the ACT Government as soon as possible after the suspicion arises.

If you are a dance teacher who is booked through Ausdance ACT to work in a school, you are a Voluntary not Mandatory reporter. You must also be aware of the Volunteers and Visitors in Schools Policy – [Volunteers and Visitors in Schools Policy - Education](#)

Abuse or neglect outside the family.

Police are responsible for investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect outside the family.

The Crimes Act 1900 states it is an offence if an adult fails to report a child sexual offence under section 66AA.

6. Ausdance ACT Contacts

We have several skilled, responsible people to deal with child safety issues and function as a first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents, employees, contractors and volunteers regarding the safety and well-being of children in our organisation.

Responsible Staff in the Ausdance ACT Office

Executive Director: Dr Cathy Adamek

Contact: 0418 809 430 email: director.act@ausdance.org.au

Responsible Board Member/President: Natalie Pearse

Contact: 0405 620 582 email: act@ausdance.org.au

**Reporting Child Abuse to the ACT Government
You have a right to make a complaint under the Human Rights Act.**



WHO TO CALL

Police by dialing 000

for urgent assistance if you believe a child or young person is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation or the victim of sexual abuse.

and/or concerns about abuse or neglect that may be happening in the home.

Care and Protection Services ACT Government

1300 556 729 (24 hours)

(voluntary reporters/general public)

Website – Care and Protection Services

www.act.gov.au/community/children-youth-and-families/report-risk-of-significant-harm-to-a-child

7. Good Practice

7.1 Children's Participation

Encouraging the participation and involvement of children:

Ausdance ACT employees, contractors, members, and volunteers encourage children to express their views, and make suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect children. We actively encourage children who use our services to 'have a say' about issues that are important to them. We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

- a) Ausdance ACT, the peak body for dance in the ACT. It is not a dance studio or a dance school. Ausdance ACT conducts events or classes led by a tutor or coach.
- b) Children participating in some Ausdance ACT events will be under the direct supervision of teachers. When that occurs, they will also be subject to their school's child protection policy, their State or Territory Government's applicable policies and the child protection and/or safety policies of associated organisations and venues.
- c) Ausdance ACT keeps membership and participation records about children.
- d) Abuse of children in dance includes anorexia, inappropriate sexualisation, inappropriate images, non-consensual or inappropriate touching, bullying and the actions of abusive parents as spectators.
- e) Staff and board members of Ausdance ACT are not trained to, nor are they expected to, deal directly with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred. When suspected cases are reported to Ausdance ACT, external assistance will be sought.

7.2 Actions to be avoided and precautions to be taken.

- When children need to be transported, ensure there is more than one child, and preferably, more than one adult, in the vehicle.
- In an emergency, for example an injured child needs to go to hospital, contact the Ausdance ACT office first or the child's parents.
- Keep up to date with qualifications and other requirements e.g., skill set, legal requirements and insurance.
- Allegations of child abuse must be made through established processes and reporting lines, if in doubt, report and/or seek advice.

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- Avoid being alone with a child, for example in dressing or first aid rooms, and when working one-on-one (e.g. When teaching a private session, make sure you either teach in a space with glass doors or windows, or leave the door open).
- Always work in an open environment where you can be observed; communicate openly with no secrets.
- Avoid forming a special relationship with a child that could be interpreted as favoritism, such as giving gifts or special treatment.
- If manual/physical support for body positioning is required, provide it openly and seek agreement from the child or young person first.

7.3 Practices Never Sanctioned

- Allowing or engaging in horseplay, physical or sexually provocative games
- Allowing or engaging in any type of inappropriate touching
- Making sexually suggestive comments, even in fun
- Reducing a C&YP to tears as a form of control.
- Doing things of a personal nature, such as changing clothes, that C&YP can do for themselves.
- Failing to act on and record any allegations made by a C&YP.

7.4 Incidents that **MUST** be reported/documentated.

- If you accidentally hurt a C&YP
- If a C&YP appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a C&YP misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
- If a C&YP is distressed and you have any suspicions or concerns about possible abuse.

[Here is the Incident Report Template](#)

7.5 Risk management strategies (how to report)

To ensure the immediate and ongoing safety of the C&YP:

- establish the welfare and safety of the C&YP and take steps to ensure the C&YP is removed from the risk.
- reassure them and remain calm.
- listen carefully without interrupting.
- do not ask leading questions or any additional questions once you have established there is a genuine concern (to not compromise future investigations by police).
- support them, reassuring the C&YP that they have done the right thing, that you believe them and that the abuse is not their fault.
- explain what will happen, including timeframes.
- do not make promises you cannot keep.

- do not confront the alleged perpetrator.
- seek guidance if you are unsure about what to do.

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It is an Ausdance ACT staff member's responsibility to conduct a risk assessment after receiving an allegation, to ensure the safety of all people involved and maintain the integrity of the investigation.

8. Still or Moving Images

- Images of solo performers will not be identified.
- Ausdance ACT will seek the written permission of parents or guardians for use of still and/or moving images.
- Only appropriate images (tasteful, unrevealing, non-exploitative) will be used in Ausdance ACT's hardcopy materials and/or on the internet.
- Anyone with complaints about images used by Ausdance ACT should raise their objections with the Executive Director.
- Parents and spectators taking photographs or recording at Ausdance ACT events are to avoid inappropriate and/or intrusive filming or posting images of children and young people where explicit approval has not been provided.
- Teachers should consider appropriate boundaries when engaging with students on social media and consider for example accepting friendship requests from C&YP that they teach.
- Images taken by our professional photographers and staff are securely stored, shared on our G drive and our Ausdance accounts and most photos taken during workshops are primarily used as social stories and are deleted after use.

Note: Tutors and coaches can use filming as a teaching aid.

9. Harassment / Bullying

Ausdance ACT opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination, and bullying. We take this issue seriously and encourage anyone who believes that they, or another person, have been harassed, discriminated against, or bullied to raise this issue management.

10. Communication of this Policy

Ausdance ACT will ensure that everyone to whom this policy applies is aware of and has had an opportunity to read the policy.

We also ask employees, contractors, volunteers, and parents (where appropriate) to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and will abide by our child-safe policy. We retain a copy of all signed statements.

11. Recruitment

Support for employees and volunteers

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Ausdance ACT seeks to attract and retain the best employees, contractors, and volunteers. We provide support and supervision, so people feel valued, respected, and fairly treated. We ensure that volunteers and employees who work with C&YP have ongoing supervision, support, and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

- All staff and board members will be vetted including police record checks. Evidence of identity must be provided and all those who come in contact with C&YP and vulnerable people must have a WWVP card. A record of this is kept in our database.
- All jobs/tasks will be assessed for child safety risk against the following ratings:

High risk – sole control over or responsibility for children and young people, for example may be the only adult in the room or may enter dressing rooms being used by C&YP.

Medium risk – may have a position of authority with access to C&YP, for example volunteer or board member.

Low risk – all other jobs/tasks

- Staff will discuss the risk attaching to jobs/tasks in Ausdance ACT at the time of engagement or commencement of an event or activity. Ausdance provides best practice guidelines outlining risks and mitigations to their sub-contractors who teach C&YP on their behalf and ensures all staff working with C&YP have private indemnity insurance prior to employment.
- Ausdance ACT will publish this policy and guidelines on its website and make them known to all staff; hardcopy will be provided if requested. Staff working with ACT and NSW teachers and/or working on school premises will also be referred to or provided with a copy of the State/Territory Education Department's Child Protection Policy.
- All staff working in the Ausdance ACT office, volunteers and board members will wear an identifying badge when attending Ausdance ACT events where C&YP are present.

You will find some newly released resources on risk management here:

[Child Safety Risk Management Resources | National Office for Child Safety
https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/child-safety-risk-management-resources](https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/child-safety-risk-management-resources)

WWVP Scheme Requirements

- Employees are obliged to notify Ausdance ACT of any changes to their registration status. Ausdance ACT Executive will report any misconduct concerns or any other relevant information about an existing or former employee to the WWVP Scheme which may affect their registration.

12. Training

- Ausdance ACT is required to make education and training available for staff.
- This will be discussed at the time of engagement or commencement.
- Those people wishing to be trained will be referred to courses and materials provided by the ACT Government or other reputable sources e.g., Australian Human Rights Commission here: <https://www.hrc.act.gov.au/childrenyoungpeople/act-child-safe-standards/resources-training-and-support>

13. Allegations and Reports

[Reporting child abuse: the law - ACT Government](https://www.act.gov.au/community/children-youth-and-families/reporting-child-abuse-the-law)

<https://www.act.gov.au/community/children-youth-and-families/reporting-child-abuse-the-law>

Ausdance ACT will not tolerate incidents of child abuse.

We ensure that employees, contractors, and volunteers are aware of how to make appropriate reports of abuse or neglect.

Employees and volunteers must first report as soon as practicable to the Project Manager or the Director to any reasonable suspicion that a C&YP has been, or is being, abused or neglected by a family member, employee, or volunteer.

- You should seek debriefing if involved in a child protection/abuse reporting matter.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that *confidentiality is maintained for all concerned*. Information should be managed and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only.

14. Informing Parents or Guardians

- It is important to consider whether telling a parent or carer about making a report will place the C&YP at further risk.
- Sometimes there are safety issues for the reporter and telling a parent or carer can increase the risk to a C&YP.
- Seek advice from Ausdance ACT Director and the ACT Government Child Protection Agency before taking any action.
- There may be three types of investigation: a criminal investigation; a child protection investigation or assessment; or an immediate internal investigation that could be a disciplinary or misconduct investigation conducted by the Executive Director and the Executive.

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Note: not all reports will result in the ACT Government child protection agency contacting the family. Where allegations are serious and of a criminal nature, contacting parents/carers may impede the police investigation or evidence gathering. It may also result in increased risk to a C&YP, such as pressure to recant if a disclosure has been made.

15. Reporting Concerns about Poor Practice

- Poor practices that reduce the safety of C&YP, even if not reportable incidents of child abuse, should be reported to staff in the Ausdance ACT office or the responsible board member.
- Reports about poor practice will be investigated by the Board Executive which will decide necessary action and remediation as soon as possible.
- All reports of child abuse involving Ausdance ACT staff will be considered by the Board Executive. The first meeting of the committee should take place within 24 hours to ensure that correct reporting procedures have been followed, and all relevant authorities have been informed.
- If a report is made against a staff member, board member or parent/guardian, the Executive will decide whether to temporarily suspend employment; membership; withdraw volunteer status as appropriate.
- If there is no criminal (police) investigation, the Executive will determine whether the allegation, on the balance of probability and all available evidence, is true and what action should be taken. Natural Justice will apply to all the parties involved.

16. References

[ACT Human Rights Commission
Child Safe Standards - HRC](#)

Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT) Amended (2025)

<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2008-19/>

Child Protection and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect in ACT Public Schools

[Keeping children safe - ACT Government](#)

[National Principles for Child Safety](#)

<https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/national-principles-child-safe-organisations>

[Child Safety Risk Management Resources | National Office for Child Safety](#)

[Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people | National Office for Child Safety](#)

NSW How to report:

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-08/T_CSS_SampleChildSafeReportingPolicy.docx

Ausdance Safe Dance resource

[Child safe dance Practices Ausdance | Dance Advocacy](#)

<https://www.ausdanceact.org.au/safe-dance-practice>

<https://ausdance.org.au/publications/details/safe-dance-factsheets>

LPA: Child Safety in the Live Performance Industry

<https://liveperformance.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/LPA-Guide-to-Child-Safety-Oct-2023-FINAL.pdf>