



CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

Background

The Mount Players (**TMP**) has established the 'Youth Theatre' which is a learning program that supports children and young people to develop theatrical skills which include acting, script writing, costumes, make-up, set design, backstage etiquette and technical skills.

TMP is committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment for all children who participate in the program and any other TMP activities, and we have a zero tolerance for child abuse or any behaviour that impacts the safety and well-being of the participants.

Purpose

This Policy sets out how TMP prioritises the safety and well-being of children and how we have implemented practices that support and reflect the Child Safe Standards developed by the Commission for Children and Young People.

Scope

This Policy applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers, committee members, children, and any other individuals who interact with TMP across all activities run by TMP.

Definitions

Management Committee means the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and general committee members who provide strategic direction and oversight of the programs, activities and social interactions conducted by TMP and held at the Mountview Theatre or other venues arranged by TMP.

Child Abuse means:

- a sexual offence committed against a child;
- an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act (Vic);
- physical violence against a child;
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child; and
- serious neglect of a child.

Harm is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child, including as a 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 as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

Child/Children means someone under the age of 18 years.

Child Safe Standards

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.

TMP creates an environment where aboriginal culture is celebrated and aboriginal children, families and community members are welcomed.

Acknowledgment of Country forms part of the welcome given at the start of every TMP performance and at formal meetings or events.

Acknowledgement of Country appears at the bottom of each page of TMP's website.

Aboriginal children who participate in TMP activities are given the opportunity to share their cultural identity and express their culture through performances and activities undertaken by Youth Theatre.

Staff, volunteers and members of the management committee undertake training on the importance of the safety and well-being of Aboriginal children.

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

TMP's Management Committee has developed and approved the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and undertakes regular reviews to ensure it is current and fit for purpose. The Policy is made available on TMP's website and the requirements are communicated to all staff, contractors and volunteers who interact with children at TMP.

In addition, a Code of Conduct and Complaint Handling Policy have been developed to support this Policy and to provide guidance on the expected behaviours of staff, contractors and volunteers who interact with children.

The Management Committee champions and role models a child safe culture and reports any child safety concerns as soon as they are identified.

The Management Committee undertakes child safety training as required, and monitors and reviews the effectiveness of child safe practices to ensure the requirements in this Policy are understood and are being met.

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

TMP is committed to ensuring that children participating in Youth Theatre or other TMP activities have fun, feel empowered to share their views and ideas, and understand how to be supportive of each other.

TMP does not tolerate any abusive or anti-social behaviour and will take action if any inappropriate behaviour is identified.

Children are made aware of what they can do if they feel unsafe and are encouraged to speak up about any concerns. Any concerns raised are addressed in a timely manner and outcomes are communicated back to the children who raised the concern.

4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Parents, families and carers are welcome to provide feedback via our Contact Us page on the website and are encouraged to raise any questions or concerns they may have.

This Policy is published on TMP's website along with other relevant policies that support safety, wellbeing and ethical practices.

Information on the Youth Theatre program is available on TMP's website, and further information can be made available on request.

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

TMP values diversity and we welcome and support participation of all children, including those with disabilities, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those unable to live at home, LGBTIQ+ children and Aboriginal children and their families.

TMP has zero tolerance for racism and other forms of discrimination and we take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified.

We endeavour to deliver a program that reflects and supports the diversity of our students, including their interests and their cultures. We seek their feedback on any needs they may have to participate in the program.

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

Staff, contractors and volunteers who are engaged by TMP to participate in activities that involve children are screened as part of the recruitment process to ensure they are suitable to engage with children.

TMP requires Working with Children Checks and reference and qualification checks to be undertaken for all staff, contractors and volunteers who interact with children.

In addition, all members of the Management Committee as well as any actors and technical/support crew that participate in TMP productions are required to provide a clear Working With Children Check before commencing rehearsals.

Staff, contractors and volunteers who are engaged by TMP to participate in activities that involve children undertake an induction which provides guidance on the requirements in TMP's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Code of Conduct and other relevant policies, and the requirement to abide by the Policies at all times.

7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

All reports relating to child abuse or child safety, whether reported by an adult or a child about an adult or a child, are taken seriously and are actioned promptly.

Complaints, including those involving an allegation of child abuse or harm, are handled in line with TMP's Complaint Handling Policy which outlines how complaints can be raised and how they are to be actioned.

TMP has appointed a Child Safety Officer who is responsible for co-ordinating a response to any child safety related complaints or concerns.

Where a complaint involves potential criminal activity, it must be reported to Victoria Police. If the complaint relates to the actions of TMP staff, contractors or volunteers, they will be stood down during any investigation.

Records of all complaints are securely maintained for a minimum period of 7 years.

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

TMP ensures that all staff, contractors and volunteers receive training to help them understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety. Training is to be undertaken on recruitment and at least annually.

The Management Committee as well as the Child Safety Officer are also required to undertake annual training on child safety.

Records of child safety training are maintained in TMP's training register.

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

TMP promotes safety and wellbeing through policies published on its website and as part of any interactions with activities involving children.

TMP will seek consent before any personal information, including photos, is published on its website as part of promotional activities.

Any personal information collected about children is kept secure and is not shared with third parties.

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

TMP policies and any associated procedures are reviewed every two years or more frequently if required.

All relevant stakeholders are engaged as part of the review process and any feedback and data relating to complaints, incidents, breaches or near misses is considered when updating the policy.

The updated policy is approved by the Management Committee and is communicated to all stakeholders and uploaded to TMP's website.

11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

TMP has developed this Policy as well as a Code of Conduct and a Complaint Handling Policy, which set out the expected behaviours for staff, contractors, volunteers and the Management Committee, to ensure that TMP provides a safe and inclusive environment for all participants.

The requirements in the policies are communicated to all participants and the policies are available on TMP's website.

TMP has established a review cycle for all policies to ensure that they remain current and fit for purpose.

Non-compliance with this Policy

Potential breaches of this Policy or the Code of Conduct will be investigated and may result in cancellation of membership, removal from management committee or leadership positions, removal from TMP productions or activities, or referral to relevant authorities for action.

Supporting legislation

[Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)

[Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)

[Crimes Act 1958 \(Vic\)](#)

[Wrongs Act 1958 \(Vic\)](#)

[Child Safe Standards](#)