

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

ANNETTE LANGHAM SCHOOL OF BALLET

3-6-24

1/ PURPOSE

To provide a safe, friendly environment where children are comfortable to learn and grow, thus enabling them to reach their full potential.

2/ COMMITMENT TO THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

All children should be safe from physical, mental and emotional abuse. They should be given encouragement at all times, balanced with constructive criticism delivered in a positive fashion without aggression or emotional blackmail. There should be no discrimination between talented students and those who purely attend for recreation. Every child should be given opportunities proportionate to their ability, motivation and commitment levels. All students are invited to participate in our annual performance.

The studio is checked regularly for physical hazards and maintenance work carried out. Parents are advised re safety tips when it comes to dance matters that they do not understand. We encourage reporting of all sickness and injury no matter how mild so we know how to work with that child and not push them beyond their limits. We have a close relationship with a couple of dance physiotherapists who guide us. We recommend them to parents whenever a problem occurs that is beyond the scope of our knowledge and we always ensure a slow careful rehabilitation. We also undertake pilates work as a preventative measure.

We have student contact details on hand and maintain close contact with parents over any issue pertaining to the well being of the child.

We have a zero tolerance policy for bullying and aim to teach courtesy and respect in every class.

No young child is allowed to leave the studio without a parent first being sighted.

We are very careful with social media. No names are used or anything which can identify the children. Parents sign a waiver to give us permission to use their image and if an individual is posted then an extra verbal permission will be sought. There is never anything offensive used.

3/ CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Young children are very creative. We use this to offer them freedom of expression and freedom to be who they wish during their improvisation. We are guided by their answers as to how the class proceeds. We run choreography sessions where they can participate with their own work. We also don't force the shy child or those who do not wish to partake. Senior students are consulted on how many classes they wish to attend and how to proceed as the pressure of school and other activities build. We try to accommodate their different agendas as much as possible. We always encourage

maximum numbers to participate in any performance or activity we offer as we fully understand that it is the participation that builds their motivation and ultimately self esteem.

We encourage open communication. Senior students are often asked to talk to us should they have a problem and parents are often encouraged via email to report issues. They can do this via phone, email or in person (by appointment for lengthy issues so we can give them the time and attention they deserve)

4/ CODE OF CONDUCT

We teach by example – all staff to be well groomed, friendly and courteous. No swearing, aggressive behaviour or emotional blackmail to be tolerated. We believe in being honest but fair.

Physical contact is limited to technical correction and must be accompanied by a clear explanation as to why it is necessary and what we are expecting from them.

Communication must be clear and concise and not over complicated especially for the the younger age groups. We attempt to use visual, auditory and tactile methods recognising that every child's learning style is different. It must be delivered in an encouraging tone with no sign of impatience. We also recognise that there is a vast difference in the rate and ability to learn among students.

Parents are responsible for drop off, collection and transportation of students but we would always take responsibility for any children left by making necessary phone calls or personally transporting them into the care of a responsible adult.

We avoid favouritism at all costs. Every child should be given opportunities proportionate to their ability, motivation and commitment levels. All students are invited to participate in our annual performance. There are clear rules in place as to what opportunities exist at certain grades and commitment levels. We will not discriminate unless it is unsafe for a child to proceed due to the risk of injury associated with faulty technique.

5/ RELEVANT HISTORY REQUIREMENTS

I hold a current DHS screening check and I am aware that it needs to be updated every 3 years. The same is true for any staff I employ.

6/ TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

I undertake to stay abreast of changes relating to child safety. I am aware of my responsibilities as a mandated notifier and have attended mandatory training sessions. We are often notified by governing bodies Cecchetti Ballet Australia and Ausdance of any new initiatives. I am aware of online resources such as

Child safe environments : guidelines for mandated notifiers and information for organisations

<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse/mandated-notifiers-and-their-role>

SMART (Strategies for managing abuse related trauma) training

<https://professionals.childhood.org.au/training-development/learn-online/>

7/ RISK MANAGEMENT

There is a risk to children of being involved in an accident in our carpark. We manage by not releasing children from the studio until a parent has collected them.

We always seek parental permission before taking photos or sharing on social media, website etc. No names are used and we take care that there is nothing that will lead to identification. Nothing offensive will ever be posted.

Children are supervised at all times whether by a DHS checked teacher or by their own parents whilst waiting in the foyer. Careful selection takes place for helpers used for backstage assistance at performances and we hold records of their DHS checks.

The physical environment is constantly checked and maintained where it poses any risk to the safety of children.

Physical contact is limited to technical correction and must be accompanied by a clear explanation as to why it is necessary and what we are expecting from them. The other instance maybe choreography that requires holding hands or body contact in the case of contemporary dance.

We respect people's privacy. I am the only person with access to an individual's financial status and any follow up will occur privately via phone or email. Any teacher will have access to contact details should an emergency occur or medical details if applicable but are forbidden to pass on any info. If students ask for another students details I seek permission to give theirs instead and let the other party contact them. All group emails have the addresses hidden.

8/ COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

If complaints are received they are recorded with time, date and details. If involving other students eg bullying a private discussion with the accused would be organised or their parents depending on age and type of complaint. From there an assessment would be made and a course of action decided upon. This may involve bringing the two parties together or handling separately or passing onto the authorities if the complaint was regarding serious neglect or possible serious harm to a child. Particularly if the care givers are implicated a report to CARL or SA police may be appropriate.

9/ COMMUNICATION

Our Child safe environments policy is available in a folder in our foyer and on our website.

10/ REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO SUSPICION THAT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON MAY BE AT RISK

We will take every reasonable precaution to ensure that every child who enters our doors is safe from harm and if not take action to correct these circumstances . I am aware that as Principal of a Ballet School I am a mandated notifier. If suspicion was aroused that a child may be at risk I would observe their behaviour very carefully and make some discreet enquiries if appropriate. I understand it can be very detrimental to a child to make wrong assumptions but also to ignore if they are in need of help. If in doubt I would report to the Child Abuse Report Line **13 1478** as soon as possible.

I would then be guided by CARL as to how to support the child. I may refer them to other professional services such as the kids helpline **1800 55 1800** or the Youth helpline **1300 13 17 19**. Confidentiality should be maintained whilst giving the child the opportunity to talk about the problem if desired and shield them from certain people within the constraints of the law if required. We would want the child to feel that the dance studio is a safe haven.

12/ EVALUATION AND REVIEW

I understand I am required to review this policy at least once every 5 years and submit a new one to the Dept. for Education should changes become necessary. This may occur if additional risks are identified. If an incident occurs we may want to tighten up our policy to prevent future occurrences. Similarly concerns raised by staff, students or parents would warrant attention.

APPENDIX 1 RECRUITMENT AND RELEVANT HISTORY PRACTICES

I employ one person who has been a student in my school since the age of 7yrs, whom I have trained in every aspect and observed her teaching skills over many years. I know her personality and deem she is a very suitable candidate to teach children. We have had a professional relationship spanning over 20 years so I do indeed know her history. She has been screened by DHS.

If I need to engage someone unknown on a regular basis they would most likely come on recommendation and with qualifications through Cecchetti Ballet Australia, Ausdance or other professional dance companies or organisations. They would be interviewed and observed on the job with a probationary period. I would require a DHS clearance before commencement.

We would in both circumstances comply with section 8B of the Children's protection Act 1993.