



COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFE POLICY

As an organisation that works with children and young people, Richardson Dance Studio has an obligation and responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of its young community members.

In July 2022, the Victorian Government announced Australia's first mandatory guidelines for child safety standards for all organisations that supervise children. There are 11 Standards every organisation are required to meet - these are outlined in this document, as well as our policy and procedures and codes of conduct.

The RDS leadership team have undergone training with Keep Kids Safe in Dance and our teachers are equipped with the tools and knowledge to ensure students feel safe, included and valued. They are educated on how to identify risks within the studio environment and when, where and how to report any incidents or concerns.

All of our teachers hold Working with Children Checks or VIT registration as well as First Aid and CPR Certificates.

Our studio is also an accredited member of the Dance Arts Alliance association and AUS Dance.

The wellbeing of our dancers has always been a priority and an inclusive, safe, warm and welcoming culture has always been at the forefront of Richardson Dance Studio. We are genuinely invested in the happiness, self-esteem and general well-being of our students and we aim to uphold a high standard of teaching to continue to ensure the safety and development of our young people.

It is mandatory that all child-based organisations comply with the Victorian State Government's child safety policy, and adhere to the 11 standards of practice. Here's how RDS implement the 11 standards into our everyday running of the studio.

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.

We welcome all Aboriginal and Indigenous families into our community and we welcome conversations on how we can improve our cultural awareness.

Studio Director Kaiti has completed Community Understanding and Safety Training (CUST).

RDS includes an acknowledgement of country at the commencement of all events.

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

Our dance studio is committed to ensuring students feel safe and comfortable within our organisation. This includes during class time, choreography and music choices, costuming and events such as concerts, competitions, festivals and school holiday activities. We treat our dancers with kindness and care.

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

Our teaching team take the time to check in with each of our students to make sure they are comfortable with all aspects of our classes. We always consider their age, identity, culture, religion, maturity and physical ability when making choices for our classes. Any concerns from our students and/or teachers are flagged and reported to the leadership team. We encourage our students and parents/carers to read through this document and to have a conversation about child safety, so our young people are aware of their rights within the dance studio.

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

For transparency, our Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct is always readily available on our website for our families to access. All members of our community are encouraged to speak to Kaiti with any concerns they may have where our policies are not being met by either staff, others students, parents or guardians.



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

Inclusivity is one of our core values and we always aim to provide an environment that is welcoming to a diverse community of students. We encourage everyone from diverse cultural backgrounds and/or religious beliefs, all sexual orientations and gender identities, individuals that are neurodivergent or with a disability & persons from different socioeconomic backgrounds. We do what we can to help each student reach their full potential. We encourage all students to be their best, not the best and promote the dance activity as a team sport.

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

Our teachers are well-versed and educated in safe-dance practices and hold the relevant qualifications and experience levels to be teaching dance to children. We each hold either a WWCC or VIT Registration and at least one teacher in each class has their First Aid Certificate. Our directors are committed to ensuring all teachers feel supported and are up to date with all policies and procedures regarding child safety, managing any discussions on this topic and encouraging further professional development when necessary.

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

Any concerns brought forward are child-focused and the well-being of this child or young person is at the forefront of any discussion or action that may need to be taken.

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.

All Richardson Dance Studio teachers must be aware of and adhere to our Child Safe Policy and our Staff Code of Conduct.

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

Our policies and procedures are outlined below. These are agreed to by all staff and parents/carers/ students upon enrollment. These policies include our no-tolerance stance on conduct from staff, students & parents concerning racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, bullying or physical or verbal abuse. Our presence online is mindful of young student's safety, we ensure all posts are tasteful, and age-appropriate and include no identifying factors (eg.names, class times, etc.).

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

We are consistently checking our policies and procedures to make sure they are up to date with the State government's standards. All staff must re-sign the child safety policy at the start of each year (or upon any updates) and any new staff must also sign off upon commencement of their teaching with us.

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

This Child Safety policy is available for viewing at our website or emailed upon request. All WWCC are kept on file and this policy is signed off by all staff, fill-in teachers, guest teachers and volunteers. Our full Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct is available to read on the next page.



COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFE POLICY

- Richardson Dance Studio is committed to child safety.
- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our teachers, student teachers and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Richardson Dance Studio is a "Keep Kids Safe in Dance" and a "YPAD" school.
- Richardson Dance Studio is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- Richardson Dance Studio has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Teachers at RDS have a range of experiences and qualifications including Bachelors of Education or Certificate 4 in Dance Teaching and Management.
- A minimum of 1 teacher per class at Richardson Dance Studio has a first aid qualification.
- Richardson Dance Studio is committed to regularly talking about and training and educating our teachers and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We support and respect all children, as well as our teachers and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, teachers and volunteers to achieve these commitments.
- We are aware of the inherent risks associated with dance schools and we continue to evaluate these risks and implement solutions to keep our young people safe
- We are committed to providing an environment where all young people feel valued and can learn in a supportive atmosphere regardless of their skill level
- We are committed to employing teachers that uphold these values and we will stop classes and remove a teacher should we feel their behaviour is inappropriate
- We lead on child safety from the top. Studio owners and teachers all uphold and practice child safety and are on hand to support others in the organisation.
- Whilst we believe that discipline is important in the dance training industry, this does not involve yelling in a demeaning manner or isolating, threatening, bullying or victimising students.
- Each teacher will have very clear expectations for behaviour in class and this will be communicated directly to students, whilst all students are expected to comply with these expectations, we must all agree that they are fair and just.
- Parents are an important part of our dance community and should always feel their children are safe. We expect all parents and carers to uphold the child safe standards and code of conduct.
- Our policies are well communicated to all teachers, volunteers, children, families and members of the community.
- We are committed to the holistic development of the children in our care and endeavour to incorporate discussions, workshops, displays and good teaching practice on health and wellbeing. This includes physical, mental and emotional health
- We have zero tolerance of bullying and regularly work with our teachers and students to ensure this is embedded in our culture.
- We have stringent anti bullying policies in place to support our commitment to child safety.
- We are committed to continually improving our facilities to ensure the safety of our children and young people and to remove all risks of child abuse
- If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.



COSTUMES AND DANCE WEAR POLICY

One area that is proven to exploit children in dance is the choice of costumes and dance attire particularly when it is mixed with hypersexualised movements, adult content including music and over exaggerated or 'flirty' expressions such as winks or kisses. Costumes and dance attire also contribute to body shaming in young people which as we know can lead to serious health problems including eating disorders and mental health conditions.

- Private parts of a child's body are covered at all times
- Tights are used for all dancers (school aged) in the recitals where needed
- Support clothing is offered and encouraged to young people such as a bra under a costume which offers support, underwear and body stockings
- See Through fabric is not used
- Skin coloured fabric is used for example on V neck costume
- No fabrics, styles or accessories that project adult sexuality
- Students always have an opportunity to rehearse in their costumes and are able to provide feedback that will be considered and fixed
- Hypersexualised movements are never choreographed in a routine
- Any leg tilts, split actions or other open positions are performed away from the audience
- Children are not asked or encouraged to use adult gestures or facial expressions such as winks, kisses, finger licks, crotch grabbing, open crotch drops or positions etc.

FIRST AID POLICY (STAFF AND TEACHERS)

- One teaching member of each class must hold a current first aid certificate.
- Staff and teachers will administer appropriate First Aid to injured or sick children and will call 000 in an emergency.
- Parents and Guardians will be called immediately (after appropriate emergency procedures have been followed).

INJURY POLICY

- First Aid kits including ice packs are available at all times
- All staff and teachers should be first aid trained
- Never force a child to dance on an injury
- Maintain communication with parents about a students injury
- Maintain communication with students about their injury
- If a student is injured on site (consider the degree of injury and respond appropriately):
 - Attend to the student immediately
 - Follow First Aid Procedures DRSABCD (including calling an ambulance if appropriate)
 - Remove other students from the area
 - Call a parent or guardian immediately
 - Complete an incident report form
 - Stay with the student
 - Follow up with parent or guardian
 - Ask for a report from a healthcare professional in order to fully understand how to support them ongoing



MUSIC POLICY

Young people are heavily influenced by the music they hear. Not only do they listen to the words but they will go home and watch the corresponding music video. Just as a teacher in a school can not show students inappropriate films rated over G, teachers in dance schools must not play music in class with obscene language, adult themes, inappropriate messages or corresponding videos displaying these themes.

- All music played in any class at RDS must not contain any explicit language.
- All teachers are expected to consider the age appropriateness of all music for class and performance work. Any teachers playing music deemed inappropriate will be asked to cease the sound immediately and repeated issues will carry disciplinary action.
- Any complaints or feedback in regards to an Instructor's choice of music or routine must be presented to the Director of Dance Dynamics, so that correction can be made.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PHOTOGRAPHING/VIDEOING POLICY

- Written consent must be given by parents or guardians to photograph their children. (This is done online when students enroll)
- Children give verbal consent for their photo to be taken before you take a photo or video
- At Open Days parents are permitted to attend class and take images of their children. To respect the privacy of all children, parents must only take photos of their own child. Parents, guardians, students, family members or friends must not post pictures of other children publicly via social media or any other means. RDS takes no responsibility or liability in relation to the use of images by parents.
- Parents/carers/audience members must not take photos or videos at our recitals
- Students' mobile phones must be in their bags during class time (prevents photography and filming on student devices and then potential sharing to social media platforms).
- Teachers may film students in class for teaching purposes however these images may not be posted without the express consent of the studio owner and parents or guardians of the children.
- Under no circumstances is there to be photography or filming of any kind in the toilets/change rooms.
- RDS uses social media platforms for marketing and member resource purposes. Photos and videos may occur of or during classes, and then published on social media platforms.
- RDS will not distribute, modify or misuse any image of a child or young person against their wishes or without their knowledge.
- RDS will not tag or name children in photos or videos on social media platforms. RDS recognises the right that children have to safety both in their physical and online environments, and actively promotes the wellbeing of all children.
- RDS encourages active and responsible participation by parents on its social media platforms (e.g. Facebook). All posts and comments must be respectful, polite, inoffensive and appropriate. RDS does not always monitor its platforms, so if you see that something inappropriate or offensive has been posted, please contact Kaiti immediately.
- Students are not to post routines, choreography or upload content to their socials without permission from their teacher or the principal.



PICK UP/ DROP OFF POLICY

- Parents/carers understand that Primary School students must be walked to and from the studio on drop off and pick up.
- On arrival students wait in the foyer for their class to begin
- Ensure all children are aware that once they arrive at the studio they must not under any circumstances, leave without parental or guardians permission. Once they are at the studio, they are in the care, of RDS teachers. WE are responsible for them.
- A teacher or student teacher should always be in the foyer 10 minutes before a class starts to greet students and parents warmly and supervise students waiting for class.
- A teacher or student teacher should wait in the foyer with students after a class and cite them being collected by a parent/carer. Students should never be left to wait in the foyer by themselves whilst waiting for a parent. If the teacher/student teacher needs to start the next class the child/ren who have not been collected are to sit in the main studio at the door with the glass door open
- Primary School students must never leave the studio/foyer without a parent/carer with them.

PRIVATE LESSON POLICY

Private lessons are a high risk part of the dance training industry. This code of conduct has been developed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students and teachers.

- All private lessons must be conducted with the double glass doors open.
- Parents or carers must have an option of sitting in on the class and these classes will be regularly visited by Kaiti.
- We understand that filming students is an excellent teaching tool and we encourage teachers to do this in lessons where suitable. However, teachers may not film children in a private lesson without the express consent of the parent or guardian
- Any approved filming must be sighted by the parent or guardian and must be deleted from a teachers personal device if requested by the parent, guardian or child.
- Filming or photography must not be presented online in any format or on any platform without the express consent of the parent or guardian
- As in all classes teachers are expected to use appropriate language at all times in a private lesson.
- When choosing music consideration must be given to age appropriateness including language, message, corresponding music video, adult themes and violence. Kaiti must approve of all solo, duo and trio private lesson music
- If choosing/designing costumes for your solo's please see our policy on costumes and dancewear

TOILET/CHANGE ROOM POLICY

- Children preferably go to the toilet with a student teacher (waiting at the door not going in with the student)
- When a student teacher is unavailable children go to the toilet in 2's or 3's
- Change rooms should not be a 'hang out' area for students. They should be used for changing/toileting only



PHYSICAL CONTACT POLICY

Physical contact with children is often necessary when teaching dance and we encourage you to use physical contact within the following guidelines:

- Teachers must first ask a student before they touch them and students must agree to this contact and feel safe
- No touching ever in private areas of a child's body
- No touching in a sexual manner
- When guiding or correcting students, never push them past their physical limits
- If a student is visibly uncomfortable or asks you to stop you must do so immediately
- Ensure students feel comfortable and safe before any partner work including contact improvisation. Students must be taught safe and correct lifting and weight taking techniques

DISCIPLINE POLICY

In order to maintain a happy, healthy, professional environment, students are taught the importance of being a part of the group. We encourage students to have respect for other students, the teachers and staff, and studio property, and we foster the development of good habits and compliance with rules of conduct.

- Our staff and faculty are trained to use constructive techniques of discipline to maintain class control and handle individual misbehaviour.
- Children who exhibit unacceptable behaviour will be given a warning and explicitly told what the unacceptable behaviour they are doing is and then directed to a positive alternative approach or behaviour.
- Children who are disruptive will be respectfully asked to stop the behaviour. If the behaviour is repeated, they will be reminded of it and told how it affects others. If the disruption continues, the children involved will be asked to sit down for a short period of time (usually three to five minutes) before re-joining the class.
- If a child's misbehaviour continues to disrupt the class, the parent or guardian will be asked to collect the child.

BEHAVIOUR / CONDUCT POLICY

RDS does not tolerate swearing, indecent or disrespectful language, defamatory comments, or indecent or disrespectful conduct from students, parents/guardians, family members, or visitors. Any individual who demonstrates any of the above will be asked to withdraw from RDS immediately. This behaviour includes at the studio or outside of the studio, social media or on the internet. Negative communications between parents and/or students will not be tolerated by RDS. Where negative communications take place, the parents and students involved will be asked to withdraw from RDS immediately. This includes at the studio or outside of the studio social media, or on the internet. Any person who does not comply with RDS Terms and Conditions will forfeit their position at RDS and, to the extent permitted by law, will not be entitled to refund.

BULLYING POLICY

All students and parents/carers are to treat their teachers and fellow peers with the utmost respect. Misbehaviour towards anyone will not be tolerated and your classes will be cancelled immediately.

The following will not be tolerated in person, via email, via text messaging or via the internet;

- Verbal abuse or shouting,
- Physical Abuse,
- Excluding or isolating a person,
- Psychological harassment,
- Humiliating a person through sarcasm, criticism or insults,
- Ignoring or belittling a person's contribution or opinion.

Where any persons feel that they are the victim of bullying, they should contact Kaiti for assistance in resolving the matter.