

# Child Safe - Safeguarding Policy



## 1.1 Introduction

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Canberra Youth Theatre is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children and young people, and acting in accordance with the principles of child protection as a fundamental responsibility. Everyone involved with Canberra Youth Theatre is responsible for the care and protection of young people, and maintaining a child-safe environment. Young people are the core of our business, and take part in our productions and training programs with the assurance that their safety and protection is our highest priority when engaging with our programs and staff / volunteers.

The Child Safe Policy relates to all Canberra Youth Theatre staff, volunteers and contractors; including management, administration staff, workshop artists, technical crew, creatives, and Board members who are all required to implement this policy.

## 1.2 Purpose

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The purpose of this policy is:

1. have an organisational culture of child safety;
2. proactively prevent child abuse within Canberra Youth Theatre;
3. ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs;
4. provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation;
5. provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse; and
6. provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported to the relevant authorities including, but not limited to ACT Policing, and Child and Youth Protection Services, as covered by the Children and Young People Act 2008 and where the activity is undertaken in New South Wales the relevant authorities in that state.

## 1.3 Commitment

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Canberra Youth Theatre is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all people who come into contact with our organisation and our programs, especially young people and vulnerable adults. Canberra Youth Theatre is committed to promoting and protecting the safety of young people involved in its programs and activities at all times, through the implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (detailed description of NPCSO). (Canberra specific documentation is available here).

Canberra Youth Theatre is committed to the rights and protection of all people regardless of their age, gender, nationality, religion or political beliefs. Canberra Youth Theatre supports the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and young people with a disability, and children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Canberra Youth Theatre acknowledges the extra barriers that are faced by children and young people who may be from these backgrounds. We provide an environment that is a culturally safe place for all children and young people. We actively seek children and young people's views on what we do and act upon any concerns raised.

We are committed to demonstrating ongoing and effective leadership, communication, and to providing ongoing training and guidance to all persons within the scope of this Policy in the promotion and implementation of this Policy.

Canberra Youth Theatre is committed to creating an open and aware environment where concerns for the safety of young people and vulnerable adults can be raised and managed in a fair and just manner to protect the rights of all.

## 1.4 Values - Guiding Principles

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This Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Zero tolerance for exploitation, abuse and harassment.
- Zero tolerance of inaction - every report or allegation is acted upon.
- Strong leadership to promote Safeguarding. Staff are expected to model positive behaviours, set clear expectations and report unacceptable behaviour.
- Promote gender equity, child rights and minimise power imbalances.
- Robust risk management. Whilst it is not possible to eliminate all risks, we are committed to identifying, mitigating and managing risks in all activities.
- Recognise that safeguarding is a shared responsibility of all staff and others engaged with Canberra Youth Theatre.
- The dignity of persons involved in situations where abuse is suspected or disclosed should be respected; they should be treated with fairness, sensitivity, dignity and respect. In the interests of justice, appropriate confidentiality must be maintained, with information that relates to suspected or disclosed abuse being provided only to those who have a right or a need to be informed.

## 1.5 Mandatory and Voluntary Reporting

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Canberra Youth Theatre will not tolerate incidents of child abuse. A Canberra Youth Theatre staff member, volunteer or contractor must report if they have reasonable grounds to believe or suspect a child or young person has experienced or is at risk of certain kinds of significant harm, becomes aware of any form of child abuse, or has reason to believe a child has been or is being abused or neglected.

While Canberra Youth Theatre does not have Mandatory Reporting obligations, we are committed to be a Voluntary Reporter if we form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has experienced abuse or neglect, as described in the ACT's Reportable Conduct Schemes. Where Reportable Conduct is involved, an independent investigator may be engaged. Where we have concerns, a Child Concern Report may be filed with Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS). In

September 2019, the ACT Government introduced a new law that requires all adults to report to police if they have reason to believe a sexual offence has been committed against a child (section 66AA of the Crimes Act 1900). This law is separate and additional to Mandatory Reporting.

Where Canberra Youth Theatre is contracted by a designated entity such as a School or Out of School Hours Care, and offers a program such as Workshops by Design, Holiday Workshop or weekly workshop, (i.e. not as a hirer at a school), Canberra Youth Theatre is considered an employee of the designated entity. In this instance, the designated entity is a mandatory reporter and would need to report allegations about Canberra Youth Theatre staff, if they were to arise. This will be forwarded directly to ACT Policing and / or to Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS).

Where required, Canberra Youth Theatre will also make a report directly to the Police.

## 1.6 Responsibilities

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The Board of Canberra Youth Theatre has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place.

The Artistic Director & CEO of Canberra Youth Theatre is responsible for:

- dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
- ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- ensuring that all adults within the Canberra Youth Theatre community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities; and
- ensure compliance with the ACT and NSW Working with Vulnerable People registration compliance.

All Staff (administrative, production and Workshop Artists) must ensure that they:

- promote child safety at all times;
- assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate/minimise any risk to the extent possible; and
- report inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Everyone shares in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Canberra Youth Theatre's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities. In the ACT, if you suspect a child is at risk of abuse or neglect by a family member or guardian, you can use the [online Child Concern Report](#) form to report your concerns. If your concerns relate to abuse outside of a family context, contact ACT Policing on 131 444 to make your report. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, contact the Police now by calling 000. In the ACT, anyone over 18 years old who reasonably believes a sexual offence has been

committed against a child must make a report to Police. It is an offence to have reasonable belief and not make a report.

- report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to the Workshops Manager, or Artistic Director & CEO (or if they are involved in the suspicion, to a member of the Board); and
- provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

## 1.7 Our Approach

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Canberra Youth Theatre is committed to promoting and protecting the interests of children and young people and acting to ensure a safe environment is provided for in all activities undertaken.

Canberra Youth Theatre recognises that an essential part of promoting and protecting young people is the recruitment, ongoing training of staff and compliance (working with vulnerable people registration and risk management) requirements.

## 1.8 Employment of New Personnel

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The recruitment and screening process at Canberra Youth Theatre aims to engage staff and volunteers to ensure the safest and most suitable people who share Canberra Youth Theatre's commitment to protect children and young people. This recruitment process prompts and protects the safety of all children and young people under the care of the organisation, by preventing a person from working for Canberra Youth Theatre if they pose a risk to children or young people.

All staff and volunteers at Canberra Youth Theatre must hold a valid ACT Working with Vulnerable People card, or equivalent from other jurisdictions. In the unlikely event that a volunteer does not meet this requirement, there will be a member of staff present at all times during their interaction with young people, in line with the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (the WWVP Act). A copy of the Working With Vulnerable People card is kept on file for every employee.

All staff and volunteers are subject to reference checks prior to engagement at Canberra Youth Theatre. Reference checks include specific questions to ascertain the individual's suitability for working with children.

## 1.9 Training and Professional Development

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All staff and volunteers engaged by Canberra Youth Theatre will be given specific child safety training as part of their induction. This training module will be reviewed yearly, and additional training will be provided to all staff where necessary.

The child safety training will ensure that all Canberra Youth Theatre staff will have a full understanding of the compliance requirements and the skillset to:

- be aware of the warning signs and be open to noticing them;
- understand the organisational protocols and procedures, know them and use them;
- provide mutual support between staff members; and
- report any suspected abuse or neglect to the nominated contact person.

## 1.10 Risk Management

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Canberra Youth Theatre will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach for all activities involving young people.

Canberra Youth Theatre's core staff are committed to identifying and managing risks at Canberra Youth Theatre. Core staff will ensure that all staff receive regular and up to date training in relation to child safety.

High risk situations such as one-on-one rehearsals or overnight stays will be individually assessed by the Core Staff member ahead of being undertaken. Protocols will be documented and agreed with participants and their families ahead of time.

## 1.11 Young People's Participation in Canberra Youth Theatre Activities

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As a producer of theatre with, by and for young people, Canberra Youth Theatre regularly engages young people in diverse roles including, but not limited to, performers, spokespeople and advisory group members. Where a young person is engaged by Canberra Youth Theatre to participate in a performance, marketing or fundraising event or any other Canberra Youth Theatre activity, Canberra Youth Theatre must obtain permission from appropriate parents/guardians in the form of a release form.

Each performer in a Canberra Youth Theatre production receives a formal agreement which sets out the rights and responsibilities of both the performer and Canberra Youth Theatre with relation to important dates, attendance, recording and media activity, insurance and indemnity.

## 1.12 Recording, Marketing and Social Media

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Canberra Youth Theatre is committed to protecting the privacy of children involved in our activities. Canberra Youth Theatre does not record, share or publish images, video or any other media depicting children engaged in Canberra Youth Theatre activities on any platform without written consent from appropriate parents/guardians through a release form. This ensures that images are not recorded of children who may be involved in child protection, family court or criminal proceedings. Where Canberra Youth Theatre does share or publish media depicting children involved in Canberra Youth Theatre activities, it is solely for the promotion of Canberra Youth Theatre, its productions, its workshops or related activities.

## 1.13 Working With Children and Vulnerable People (WWVP)

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Canberra Youth Theatre maintains compliance with vulnerable persons and working with children registration schemes. This ensures that workers and volunteers are appropriately vetted by an external agency prior to engagement.

The following roles within Canberra Youth Theatre are child-related roles and require a WWVP Check under the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011, as part of their engagement with Canberra Youth Theatre. They must hold a current ACT WWVP registration (when working in the ACT) or a NSW Working with Children (when working in NSW) and carry the card/s with them at all times :

- all full-time and part-time staff;
- Workshop Artists, assistant Workshop Artists, and mentors of young artists under 18 years of age;
- artists over 18 years of age involved in Canberra Youth Theatre productions which include children in the cast;
- all creative and technical crew contracted to work on Canberra Youth Theatre productions; and
- others as required under the relevant state / territories jurisdiction.

The following roles are not child-related roles, or fall under an exemption, and do not require a WWVP /WWC Check:

- Board and advisory group members;
- casual Front of House and Technical staff;
- production crew (those who have no contact with vulnerable people);
- volunteers, (those who have no contact with vulnerable people); and
- cleaning and other maintenance contractors.

A copy of the Working With Vulnerable People card (ACT) / Working with Children registration number (NSW) is kept on file for every employee, contractor and volunteer for a duration of 7 years.

Where a staff member in a child-related role is responsible for a child or a group of children, their behaviour is governed by this policy to ensure children are treated with care and respect and that all reasonable action is taken to protect them against harm.

## 1.14 Reportable Conduct

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Canberra Youth Theatre will report any allegations or convictions involving workers for certain Reportable Conduct. This report must be made whether it is related to work or not. The ACT law requires reporting on any worker that engaged in reportable conduct must be reported, including employees, contractors, volunteers or other people engaged in the services to children.

### 1.14.1 Reportable Conduct Investigating

Canberra Youth Theatre will not tolerate incidents of child abuse. If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct, the person concerned may be stood down, while an investigation is conducted.

If the police, Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) or an independent investigator engaged by Canberra Youth Theatre for an internal investigation conduct an investigation of this reported Reportable Conduct, all employees, contractors and volunteers must cooperate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted in a fair and reasonable manner. Management will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation. The privacy of the individuals involved in any investigation or incident will be respected unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

After an initial review and a determination that the Reportable Conduct warrants additional investigation, management will coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and/or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

In certain circumstances, Canberra Youth Theatre may act on the advice of CYPS, and direct children and young people to non-judicial support services such as CYPS, [OneLink](#), or [Canberra's Child and Family Centres](#).

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisations policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body where required.

### **1.14.2 Reviewing**

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation's care.

### **1.14.3 Nominated Contact People**

These key contact people are responsible for referring reports of child abuse made by staff to Child and Youth Protection Services and will be contacted in the event a staff member becomes barred from child-related employment.

Luke Rogers - Artistic Director & CEO  
[luke@canberrayouththeatre.com.au](mailto:luke@canberrayouththeatre.com.au)

Helen Wojtas - Administrator  
[helen@canberrayouththeatre.com.au](mailto:helen@canberrayouththeatre.com.au)