



## Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

**Masquerade Youth Productions Pty Ltd is herein this document known as MYP.**

At MYP we believe all children who participate in the wide range of programs we provide have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children participating in our activities is always our first priority and we have a zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun whilst learning.

MYP are committed to having a sound set of policies and procedures relating to child safety in place. These will be reviewed and evaluated regularly. We are committed to remaining up to date with current best practice and implementing this within our own organization

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, children and individuals involved in our organisation.

### **Children's rights to safety and participation**

At MYP we encourage children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

### **Valuing diversity**

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. We welcome all members of the community to participate in our programs. To achieve this, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of indigenous & Torres Strait islanders and their families
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome children with a disability and their families where resources allow and where practically possible whilst ensuring they are safe
- seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

### **Recruiting staff and volunteers**

MYP applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements.

In addition, we are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. All volunteers will be given a clear briefing and induction prior to assisting with performances.

All staff and volunteers must be familiar with our code of conduct and safety procedures.

## **Supporting staff and volunteers**

MYP seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision, so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code.

# **Child Safety Code of Conduct**

## **Staff and volunteer practices**

At MYP we aim to promote a culture for all staff, volunteers, parents/carers and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

There is zero tolerance for bad language, negative remarks or inappropriate behaviour. Staff, volunteers' parents, or children in breach of our policy will be instantly suspended.

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

All staff at MYP are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to MYP child safe policy at all times / upholding MYP commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Child Safety Persons (Committee Executives - Carmen Powell & Megan Glenwright) and ensure any allegation to reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Child Safety Persons
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important

All staff and volunteers are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children,

Reasonable interaction that is supervised by approved adults includes

- measurement of children
- supporting children in styling (including but not limited to adjusting clothing, props, fixing hair, applying lipstick, etc.)
- congratulating children appropriately (shaking hands, high fiving etc.)
- assisting children to pose
- making silly faces, interacting with props, using humour to make children smile
- engaging in conversations about talents and abilities to support children to relax.

To minimise the risks, we have identified guidelines that must be abided by to ensure that we keep all children safe.

### **Staff and volunteers**

- Must not give out personal telephone numbers to children or parents or request/accept friendships via social media. All communication must come through MYP via  
SMS / Phone 0459 788 346  
Email [applause@myp.com.au](mailto:applause@myp.com.au)  
Facebook closed group MYP Cast group
- There will be no images of children posted on social media, or online except for through MYP official mediums where permission has been granted.
- Must ensure that all activities are inclusive of all children, content is appropriate, and children are empowered as active participants.

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. However sitting on laps could be appropriate sometimes eg while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)  
put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example personal social activities.
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

### **Children**

- Must not give out or request/accept friendships via social media to staff or volunteers.
- Must not engage in direct communication outside of the MYP official contact mediums.

### **Parents**

- Must only correspond with staff or volunteers about MYP business via approved processes  
SMS / Phone 0459 788 346  
Email [applause@myp.com.au](mailto:applause@myp.com.au)  
Facebook closed group MYP Cast group
- Must not take or post images of any activities at MYP
- Must have a Working with Children Check if participating in tasks that require one.

### **Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

The Committee Executives, Carmen Powell and Megan Glenwright are the Child Safety Persons with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children.

### **Risk Management**

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

### **Privacy**

MYP the collection of personal information. All personal information recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. The personal information will be held securely and used solely by MYP.

### **Reviewing this policy**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers