



## **Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy**

This policy outlines our fundamental approach to the protection of children from abuse. It will be communicated directly to our staff at staff meetings, to all existing and prospective students via email upon enrolment and to the public via our website. All student families are required to acknowledge that they have read the policies and code of conduct rules on enrolment via Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance Online Student Enrolment Application. All Staff will undertake the appropriate training to educate them about our Child Protection and Safety Policies and Procedures. The following Child Protection and Safety Policy is in place to meet the guidelines set out in Standard 2 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

### **1. Introduction**

Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance is focussed on providing students with a safe and nurturing environment to learn and thrive. This Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy is an overarching policy that provides the key elements of our approach as a child safe organisation. It forms the foundation of the dance school's procedures, practices, decision-making processes and ultimately the school's culture with respect to child safety. Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy is to be read and understood in conjunction with, the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 1359 and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations published by the Australian Human Rights Commission (National Principles).

## **2. Purpose**

The Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance Safety and Wellbeing Policy outlines the key elements of our approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359, which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments as a child safe organisation. It informs the Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance community about everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards students and guides the policies, processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work, which are set out in the school's Child Safe Program.

This Policy provides the framework for:

- the implementation of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 1359 and the National Principles;
- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures, that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the school;
- the creation of a positive and robust child safe culture;
- the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the dance school;
- compliance with all laws, regulations, and standards relevant to child protection and child safety in Victoria.

## **3. Scope**

- This policy applies to all Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance teachers, staff and volunteers, paid and unpaid.
- This policy applies to all dance classes held at North Melbourne, all exams internally and externally, and all competitions where Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance students are competing.
- This policy relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and bullying and establishes work practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

## **4. Policy Statement**

### **4.1 Commitment to Child Safety**

Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The school regards its child safety

responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child safety laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers, these relationships are based on trust and respect.

Each member of the community has a responsibility to understand the important specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.

## **4.2 Child Safety Codes of Conduct**

Our Child Safety Codes of Conduct include a Child Safe Code of Conduct and a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy. Together, these Codes of Conduct set boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults in our community and students, including in physical, online and virtual environments.

We also have a Student Code of Behaviour which includes standards of behaviour for students relevant to child safety and wellbeing.

Our Child Safety Codes of Conduct include clear processes to report inappropriate behaviour. We publish our Child Safety Codes of Conduct on our public website so that everyone can easily find out what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable at Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance and how to report inappropriate behaviour. We also provide additional information to students and families about the Child Safety Codes of Conduct, to ensure that they know what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

### **4.2.1 Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy**

All staff will:

- ensure that students are given the opportunity to learn and train in a safe, secure, and nurturing environment
- use positive, respectful language when teaching and give constructive feedback to students
- instruct students regardless of talent or ability and encourage all students to extend themselves and continually improve their individual performance

- respect the rights and privacy of students and faculty members
- be punctual and prepared for their classes.

#### **4.2.2 Child Safe Code of Conduct**

- All children have the right to be safe and the welfare and best interests of the child are the priority at Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance
- The views of the child and the child’s privacy must be respected
- The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child-safe culture and child safety and protection is everyone’s responsibility
- Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our community
- Procedures are in place to screen all staff and third-party contractors and external education providers who have direct contact with children
- Child protection training is mandatory for all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers
- Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the school community.

#### **4.2.3 Student Code of Behaviour**

All students are required to:

- respect the rights and privacy of their fellow dancers and teachers
- respect Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance property
- respect fellow dancer’s and teacher’s property
- use appropriate, respectful language around fellow students and teachers whilst at the Studio
- clean up after themselves and maintain neat and clean studios and amenities

#### **4.3 Cultural Safety**

At Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe environment where the strengths of all cultures, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment and we recognise the link between culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for all cultures, their families and their communities.

#### **4.4 Student Empowerment and Participation**

Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance is a child safe and child-centred organisation. We ensure that our physical, virtual and online environments are friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek student voice in decisions that affect them. We recognise that students have unique perspectives on learning, teaching and schooling, and should have the opportunity to actively shape their own education and contribute to decision making processes and collectively influence outcomes by putting forward their view, concerns and ideas.

We ensure that students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We recognise the importance of friendships and support from peers. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our school and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

#### **4.5 Parents/Carers, Families and Community Involvement at Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance**

The school recognises that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children.

We ensure that families and relevant communities know about Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance operations and policies, including this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety Codes of Conduct and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to engage with families and relevant communities when making significant decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and classroom learning and assessment environments.

#### **4.6 Diversity and Equity**

Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander students and their families

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- support students with disability and/or additional learning needs and their families and act to promote their participation
- support students and families of diverse sexuality and/or gender identity and act to promote their participation
- seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commit to ensuring that our facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

#### **4.7 Child Safety Human Resources Management**

Recruitment and Screening: Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people.

Our practices include:

- a range of screening procedures to assess the suitability of all applications
- requiring all Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors to maintain a valid WWC (working with children) clearance, and sighting, verifying and recording this information
- ensuring that we provide Staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors who engage with students, with regular supervision by senior members of Staff
- ensuring that professional development programs for Staff include child safety education and training programs.

Training and Information about Child Safety: As a part of Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance induction process, all Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors, are required to complete induction training on our child safety policies, practices and procedures.

All Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors also receive refresher and ongoing child safety training at least annually including:

- this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- the Child Safety Codes of Conduct
- recognising child abuse and other harm and identifying key indicators
- our policies and procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns (including mandatory reporting, reporting to police and reportable conduct obligations)
- our policies and procedures for information sharing and record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns
- WWC clearances and other child safety and wellbeing human resources practices.

Supervision and Support: Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance provides Staff, Regular Volunteers and Regular Contractors with support and regular supervision by the school Principal to ensure that they are compliant with the approach to child safety and wellbeing.

#### **4.8 Complaints and Reporting Processes**

Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety and wellbeing. Our processes for raising complaints and concerns, and the procedures that all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors must follow whenever they witness, suspect or receive a complaint about a child safety incident or concern involving a student, a staff member, a Volunteer, a Contractor or the school, are set out in the procedures, below. The Studio will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all complaints, allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, when Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, students, parents/ carers or anyone else reports these to the Studio.

Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance response will include:

- externally reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds to Child Protection (Mandatory Reports), the Police (Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse), the CCYP (Reportable Conduct) depending on the issues raised and consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions;

- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency;
- protecting any student connected to the child safety incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected;
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, a student with disability, and other vulnerable students such as students who are unable to live at home or students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+);
- sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies as permitted or required under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and/or the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme;
- securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the school's response to it;
- taking broader actions to improve child safety at Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance (including systemic reviews and resulting improvements).

#### **4.9 Child Safety Risk Management**

Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and we use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

We identify, assess and manage child safety risks in all environments, based on a range of factors including the nature of our activities, physical, virtual and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

#### **4.10 Privacy and Information Sharing**

The Studio collects, uses and discloses information about students and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws and other relevant laws, including laws that permit the school to disclose information about child safety and wellbeing to external people and agencies.

#### **4.11 Child Safety Record Keeping**

Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance is committed to best practice record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns. The school records all internal and



external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by using the Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance Incident Report Form.

When keeping records of child safety incidents or concerns, Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and staff have been informed, we will ensure our studio follows the Four Critical Actions for complaints and concerns.

[https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions\\_ChildAbuse.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf)

#### **4.12 Child Safety Program and Practice Review**

Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safe Program. The Program is reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child safety related laws, regulations and standards.

When undertaking these reviews, Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance will:

- actively seek actions, and incorporate feedback from students, families and the staff
- analyse any complaints and child safety incidents that may have occurred
- communicate any learnings, adjustments or amendments to policy and practice widely throughout the dance school community.

### **5. Child Safety Procedures**

#### **5.1 Reporting of Concerns**

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, call Triple zero (000) and request urgent Police assistance.

Any person, including staff, volunteers, contractors, parents/carers and students, can at any time report concerns about the wellbeing of a child.

We recognise that some individuals, particularly children, face additional vulnerabilities to child abuse and other harm, as well as additional barriers to disclosing child safety incidents or concerns.

Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance encourages multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the dance school. They include formal and

informal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and through external child advocacy or child safety organisations. This can be via email, phone calls or face to face conversations. Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Anonymous Reporting/Suggestion Platform:

Staff, Students, Parents/Carers are welcome to raise anonymous concerns and make anonymous suggestions via the grey locked box on the wall outside the dressing room next to Studio 2. These concerns and suggestions will be addressed by the Child Protection Officer/s.

## **5.2 How to Report Child Safety Incidents or Concerns**

### **Students**

There are no limits on how or to whom students at Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance can disclose any child safety incident or concern or make a complaint about a staff member, volunteer or contractor. We have multiple, child-focused pathways, including a pathway for anonymous disclosure, to enable all students to raise child safety incidents or concerns.

### **Parents/carers, family members and other community members**

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safety concerns about a student at Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance are asked to follow the procedures set out in our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and to contact our Senior Child Protection Officer.

### **Staff, Volunteers and Contractors**

For the purposes of this procedure, all staff, volunteers and contractors are together referred to as Staff or staff members. Staff members must report any and all child safety incidents or concerns involving our students. They can do this by contacting one of the Studio's Child Protection Officers.

Staff members must also follow our procedures for responding to incidents or disclosures of child abuse or other harm, or suspected child abuse or other harm, including by making any required reports to external agencies.

These policies and procedures make clear that reporting internally to, or consulting with, a Child Protection Officer, does not change any obligation under legislation to report to an external authority.

### **5.3 Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance' Response to Internal Reports**

Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, that are reported internally to the school, including by:

- reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds externally to the Police
- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency
- protecting any student connected to the incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background or a student with a disability, and other vulnerable students (such as students who are unable to live at home or students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+))
- securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance' response to it.

### **5.4 Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection**

Although everyone has a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about child abuse or other harm, some professionals are legally required to make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection) if during the course of their professional work or carrying out their duties they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child (aged under 17) is in need of protection because:

- the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and
- the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from the harm.

## **6. Responsibilities**

Child safety is everyone's responsibility at Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance and everyone is expected to contribute to the safety and protection of children.

### **6.1 Child Protection Officers**

Our Child Protection Officers are the first point of contact for raising child safety

concerns within the Studio. They are also responsible for championing child safety within the Studio and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Our Child Protection Officers are:

- Director of Junior School (Senior Child Protection Officer)
- Managing Director

## **6.2 The Principal**

The Junior School Director is responsible for:

- taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is implemented effectively and followed
- ensuring that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the Studio, including by:
  - modelling the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and reinforcing high standards of child safe behaviours between adults and students and between students
  - facilitating the participation of students, families, Staff and other members of the community in promoting and improving child safety and wellbeing at the Studio
  - creating an environment where child safety incidents, concerns and complaints are readily raised with the Studio and where no one is discouraged from reporting child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.

## **6.3 Staff Members**

All Staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Child Codes of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the Studio's Child Protection Officers.

To meet these obligations, all Staff must:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and ongoing training provided by Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance
- always follow the Studio's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with the Child Safety Codes of Conduct
- identify and raise child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

- ensure students views are taken seriously and their voices are heard when making decisions that affect them
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

#### **6.4 Volunteers**

A Volunteer is someone who works without payment or financial reward for Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider or local dance community. All Volunteers at the Studio are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the Studio environment.

To meet these obligations:

- all Volunteers must comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safety Codes of Conduct
- Direct Contact Volunteers (and, if required by the Studio, other Volunteers such as Regular Volunteers who are engaged in “child-connected work”) must:
  - provide a current Working with Children Check
  - understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm
  - raise all child safety concerns with one of the Studio’s Child Protection Officers.

### **7. Implementation and Communication**

The Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is published on our public website. It is provided to new Staff and to Regular Volunteers and is part of the Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance’ Terms and Conditions upon enrolment.

#### **Document Details**

Title: Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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Policy Owner: Matthew Godbold

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Audience

All Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance Staff

Students

Parents/Guardians

Wider Community

Publication Location

Public Website

Enrolment Application Information