

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

BLOC Music Theater is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its members, performers, visitors, volunteers and especially children.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all office bearers, employees, volunteers and contractors within BLOC Music Theater or engaged by BLOC Music Theater.

AUTHORITY

This policy was adopted by the Committee of management of BLOC Music Theater.

The Committee of management of BLOC Music Theater is committed to implementing this Child Protection Policy and to training office bearers', employees, volunteers and contractors in its contents and application.

DEFINITIONS

Abuse can consist of one or more but is not restricted to the following

Physical Abuse, any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as:

Hitting, punching, kicking, shaking, burning, bighting, pulling out hair, alcohol and/or other drug administration.

Sexual Abuse, any assault or abuse of a sexual nature, sexual molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation.

Child, any person under the age of 18.

Leader, any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of members placed under their care whilst holding a formal position in BLOC Music Theater. A leader could include but is not limited to:

- Production Manager
- Director
- Choreographer
- Musical Director
- Choral Director
- Dressing Room Supervisor

Company Pianist
F O H Coordinator
Stage Manager
Make up crew members
Costume Coordinator
Costume Hire Manager
Office bearers and members of the Committee of Management.

Member, any person including children, who attend or participate in BLOC Music Theater's activities or productions.

Organisation, BLOC Music Theater Incorporated
Peel St Nth
Ballarat

Volunteer, any unpaid person over the age of 16 who is involved with or participates in BLOC Music Theater's activities or productions.

POLICY REVIEW

The **Child Protection Policy** will be reviewed at least annually by the Committee of Management.

OBLIGATIONS

Responsibility.

The core expectation of BLOC Music Theater is to treat all people with fairness and dignity and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

Legal.

All relevant organisations within Australia are bound by Federal and State Legislation and principles established through common law. **BLOC Music Theater Incorporated** is committed to adhering to all relevant legislation.

Ethical

Some actions may not be regarded as Abuse, but are unacceptable behavior for **BLOC Music Theater**. These include:

- Inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature.
- Coarse Language, especially that of a sexual nature.
- Suggestive gestures or remarks.
- Jokes of a sexual nature.
- Recording, filming or photographing with or without prior consent.
- Inappropriate touching,

SELECTION & SCREEENING

Employees, office bearers, contractors and production staff involved in BLOC Music Theater's activities and productions are subject to the company's **Fit and Proper Policy**.

Where an applicant or proposed appointee is identified as having committed a violent or sexually related offence they will under no circumstance be considered for employment or engagement with BLOC Music Theater.

TRAINING

All new Employees, office bearers, contractors and production staff involved in BLOC Music Theater's activities and productions will be issued with a copy of this policy and receive formal training in ;

The content and application of BLOC Music Theater's child protection policy and

Reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements.

All new members of BLOC Music Theater will be made aware of (and given a copy of, if requested) this Child Protection Policy.

Refresher training based on current "best practice" and changes to legislation will be provided on an annual basis.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Incidents of abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons working in pairs is the preferred method.

All personal counselling is to be carried out within sight of another person.

The leader of an activity has the right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at such activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

BLOC Music Theater actively encourages the reporting of all abuse including sexual abuse.

BLOC Music Theater is committed to building an environment where a victim or employee / volunteer feels able to report such abuse.

Employees and/or volunteers must report reasonable suspicions of abuse to the Committee of Management of BLOC Music Theater.

Reasonable suspicion means fair and practical reason to believe an incident of abuse has occurred based on either verbal communication, hearsay, rumor or observation of behavior.

An independent person will be appointed by BLOC Music Theater with the specific duty of dealing with any allegations of harm or abuse that may arise.

The details of those reporting abuse will be kept private and confidential.

A documented reporting process with escalating procedures has been established by BLOC Music Theater for handling allegations of abuse.

The escalating procedures will be as follows:

The automatic suspension from all activities and other duties within BLOC Music Theater of any person under investigation by BLOC Music Theater, or by the police for committing abuse.

The automatic termination of all activities and involvement with BLOC Music Theater if found guilty of committing abuse either by internal investigation or by a court.

If there is reasonable suspicion that a member has been or is suffering abuse the police and the organisation's insurer will be contacted immediately.

PHONE NUMBERS:

Police 000

Secretary BLOC Music Theater _____

The police will also be notified if a member also discloses an incident of abuse that has occurred somewhere other than BLOC Music Theatre's premises (eg an outing)

If a disclosure of abuse is made, the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate pastoral care to the one making the disclosure. This will include:

Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimize its impact on the alleged victim. The matter should not be swept under the carpet.

Not pushing the member to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation.

Assuring the member that they are understood; that their disclosure is being taken seriously; that what has happened is not their fault and that they are correct in disclosing the incident.

Reporting the abuse to the police and BLOC Music Theatre's insurer.

Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator. If the worker or volunteer is already providing counsel to the alleged perpetrator, it may be advisable for another person to assume this responsibility for the duration of any investigation.

If the alleged assault has taken place recently, clothing worn by the member should be, if reasonably practical, retained and handed to the police for forensic examination.

Maintaining confidentiality.

Any disclosures by a member, reports of suspected abuse and all details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly and the documents will be held in a secure location where a breach of privacy cannot occur.

ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Illegal or prohibited drugs are not to be consumed by Members, performers, production staff and volunteers while performing duties with BLOC Music Theatre. Alcohol may be consumed to the extent it does not affect the comfort, safety or performance of any Member, performer, production staff or volunteer nor harm the reputation of BLOC Music Theatre.

In the case of activities associated with a “Junior Production” no Alcohol is to be consumed by Members, performers, production staff and volunteers.

In the context of this provision, anyone exhibiting signs of being intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol, or an illegal or prohibited drug will be prevented from commencing, recommencing or continuing their activity.

APPENDIX 1

Further Information to assist with Child Protection

This list below provides assistance contact details in your State.

Every attempt has been made to ensure this information is accurate, however a review should be undertaken regularly to ensure the information remains correct and current.

Child Protection Information

Victoria

Working with children check

Under the Working with Children Act 2005 only people who engage in paid or voluntary child-related work need a WWC Check.

What is child related work?

Child-related work is paid or unpaid work involving regular direct and unsupervised contact with a child when working with or caring for children in any of the occupational categories listed in the Act.

You do not require a WWC Check if you:

- are involved in a private or domestic arrangement that exists between family and friends and where no payment is involved.
- Participate in an activity with a child on the same basis as the child for example in the same team.
- Supervise a student in practical training organised by their educational institution.

You need to apply for and pass the WWC Check if you meet all 1-4 criteria:

1. You are engaged in child-related work as:
 - An employee or
 - A self-employed person or an independent contractor or
 - A volunteer or
 - A supervisor of child employees or
 - Part of practical training through an educational or vocational course or
 - Unpaid community work under a court order or
 - A minister of religion or performing duties of a religious vocation or
 - An officer of a body corporate or
 - A member of a committee of management of an unincorporated body
Or
 - A member of a partnership
2. Your contact with a child is with any of the occupational categories listed in the Act. Occupational categories are not titles of people's jobs but broad descriptions of services or places where people work with or care for children.
3. Your work involves direct contact with a child, who is under 18 years of age.
 - (a) Regular contact is contact that is not incidental to but normally part of providing a service or activity of children.
 - (b) Direct contact with a child involves physical contact, talking face to face or within eyeshot when providing a service or activity for children.
4. Your work is not directly supervised. Direct supervision is:
 - Immediate and personal supervision;
 - Undertaken by a person whose role is to supervise your work;
 - Does not require constant physical presence, for example a supervisor may leave the room for a short while to take a phone call.

Who is exempt from the WWC Check?

There are several situations listed in the Working with Children Act 2005 (the Act) where people engaged in child-related work are exempt and do not need a Working with Children (WWC) Check.

The exemptions in the Act are described below.

Children

If you are under 18 years of age, you are exempt from the WWC Check. This exemption does not apply under the Child Employment Act 2003 to people who are under 18 years of age supervising children in employment.

Some student volunteers

If you are a student who is 18 or 19 years of age, you are exempt from the WWC Check for volunteer work organised by or held at the educational institution you attend.

Parents volunteering in an activity with their child

If you are a parent volunteering in an activity in which your child participates or normally participates, you are exempt from needing a WWC Check.

Family members and people who are closely related to the child

If you are closely related to each child in your child-related work you are exempt from the WWC Check. "Closely related" to a child means you are the:

- Parent
- Spouse or domestic partner
- Step-parent
- Mother-in-law or father-in-law
- Grandparent
- Uncle or aunt
- Brother or sister, including half siblings, step siblings, brother-in-law or sister-in-law

Teachers

If you are a teacher who is currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), you are exempt from the WWC Check. However, if your VIT registration is suspended or cancelled, you are no longer exempt. You must apply for the Check and within 7 days of your registration being suspended or cancelled notify in writing every organisation that engages you in child-related work that you are no longer exempt.

Police Officer

If you are a sworn Victoria Police officer or a sworn Australian Federal Police officer, you are exempt from the WWC Check.

However, if you are suspended or dismissed, you are no longer exempt. You must apply for the Check and within 7 days of being suspended or dismissed notify every organisation who engages you in child-related work that you are no longer exempt.

Visiting Worker

If you usually live or work in another state or territory and are visiting Victoria to engage in child-related work, you are exempt from the WWC Check.

Some accredited drivers

If you engage in child-related work that requires a current driver accreditation under the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983, you are exempt from the WWC Check for that child-related work, with some exceptions.

How long is the check valid?

The WWC check is valid for five years and is transferable between different employers or volunteer organisations (except if moving from a volunteer to an employee position)

Cost of the working for children check:

The check is free for volunteers and \$100.20 if you are applying for an Employee card. This fee is not refundable.

Mandatory Reporting:

The following people are legally required to report reasonable suspicions of abuse:

- Registered Medical Practitioners
- Registered Nurse
- Persons registered as teachers under the Education Training and Reform Act 2006 or teachers granted permission to teach under the Act,
- Principals of government or non-government schools
- Members of the Police Force

Reports should be made to:

Department of Human Services
Children Youth and Families
Child Protection & Family Services
9/50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne Vic, 3000
Phone: 1300 360 391
Phone Number: 131 278 – after hours emergency service
URL: www.cyf.vic.gov.au

Sources:

- Department of Justice
- <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/>
- www.careforkids.com.au
- National Child Protection Clearinghouse <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/index.html>
- Children & Young Persons Act 1989 s64
- Children Services Act 1996
- Children Services Regulations 1998 s27
- Working with Children Act 2005
- Working with Children Regulations 2006