

Holiday Actors Incorporated: Child Safe Policy

Holiday Actors is committed to child safety and wellbeing as demonstrated through the implementation of this policy.

The *Child Safety and Wellbeing Act* requires all organisations providing health, education, welfare, sporting or recreational, religious or spiritual, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children to develop policies and procedures to create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people.

In this context, a child safe environment is an environment which is both child-safe and child-friendly, where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

A child is any person less than 18 years of age.

The child safety code of conduct should read in conjunction with the Holiday Actors Code of Conduct.

Child abuse

For the purposes of these standards, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving:

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles).

Sexual offences occurs when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately put the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation of pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

Serious neglect is continued failure to provide a child with basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

Scope:

This policy relates to all advisory committee members, production team, volunteers and young adult members of Holiday Actors.

Child Safety Commitment Statement

Holiday Actors is committed to promoting a safe, supportive and happy environment where we empower and respect all children.

Holiday Actors is committed to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.

Holiday Actors has a zero tolerance of child abuse and neglect.

Holiday Actors is committed to address all allegations and safety concerns consistent with Child Protection Reporting Obligations and Child Safe Policy, in a prompt manner.

Holiday Actors is committed to ensuring the safety of our most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children of culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.

Holiday Actors is committed to inducting all relevant personnel on the current policy and procedures.

Any official online communities are to have, during defined production dates, a designated moderator, to support a safe environment for all participants.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

This code of conduct has a specific focus on safe guarding children and young people who are members of Holiday Actors against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

At Holiday Actors, everyone is responsible for the promotion, implementation and support of our children's and young person's wellbeing and safety.

Note: In rehearsals it is expected that physical, emotional and intellectual interaction will occur peer to peer and directorial team/advisory committee/production team/volunteer to child/young person. It is the nature of theatre. However, the following is expected:

Acceptable Behaviour

- Adherence to the Child Safety Policy is actively promoted

- Upholding Holiday Actors' Statement of Commitment.
- Actively contributing to a culture that respects the dignity of its members.
- Proactively listening, responding and promptly reporting any young person's concern.
- Any serious complaints made by a child, their parent or guardian will be responded to with respect, discretion, and promptly.
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities. Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958.
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of every child
- Ensuring the safety of our most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and /or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.
- Ensuring that an adult is not alone with a child.
- Never discriminating against any child, including: age, religion, gender, race, cultural background, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Consent gained for use of images in marketing, documentation and promotion of art, of a child or young person.

Unacceptable Behaviour

- Ignore or disregard and fail to report any suspected or disclosed children at risk.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be interpreted as favouritism.
- Exhibit or initiate behaviours with children that may be construed as unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact.
- Engage in open discussion of a mature or adult nature, including inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- Express personal views on cultures, race, sexuality or diverse backgrounds in the presence of children.
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians.
- Consume alcohol or drugs at Holiday Actors or Holiday Actor events in the presence of children.

Reporting

Holiday Actors will not tolerate acts of child abuse.

- All members and volunteers are required to notify the Victorian Police 000 or After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services 131278 as soon as practicable if they have reasonable suspicion that a child is being, or has been, abused or neglected.
- Even when a report is made there may still be role in supporting the young person or child, and families to:

- Refer child, young person and/or families to appropriate services.
- Circulate information that may assist children and their families (ie. Kids Helpline 1800551800) in areas accessed by children and their families.

In addition to making a report, Holiday Actors president must be advised and a debriefing session facilitated, if reasonable suspicion is formed that a child has been, is being, abused or neglected. In particular, this is obligatory if the suspicion relates to an advisory committee member, production team member, volunteer or person associated with Holiday Actors.

Compliance, training and Education

- Holiday Actors will ensure that key leaders receive relevant, regular and updated training to maintain child safe environments.
- Holiday Actors will ensure that relevant policies are read, understood and implemented by the advisory committee, production team and volunteers.
- Holiday Actors will endeavour to update policies in line with new requirements of the Act as and when they fall due.

Working with Children Checks (WWCC)

Whilst we are aware that there are exceptions to those requiring a WWCC, Holiday Actors will actively use Working with Children Check as an effective screening tool: when welcoming new people to the organisation; and as a monitoring tool on an ongoing basis for relevant personnel. Thus, it is a requirement of the organisation, that the following volunteers will have a current WWCC: those working directly with children; within the same vicinity and, or backstage; and adult members of the cast.

- Holiday Actors will actively respect the Working with Children Check notice holders confidentiality and privacy.
- Holiday Actors will regularly check status of Working with Children Checks.
- Holiday Actors actively encourage Working with Children Check holders to keep contact details up to date.
- Holiday Actors will actively ensure all volunteers who are engaged in child related work, have listed the organisation.

Working with Children Check applications can be made online at:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/applications/>

Alternatively, you can visit the Warrnambool Lighthouse Theatre, who can assist you with this process.

Holiday Actors should be listed as the following:

HOLIDAY ACTORS INC.

Postal number and street PO BOX 1242

Suburb WARRNAMBOOL

State VIC

Postcode 3280

Phone 0421 942 299

Occupational Field: 42 Clubs, associations or movements of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature

Type: Volunteer

Note: There are some exemptions to having a Working with Children Check, please review online at the below URL. If you fall into the exempt category, please advise Holiday Actors Advisory Committee, providing reason for exemption.

Respectful Relationships:

Holiday Actors take responsibility for addressing reports and issues arising, promptly and respectfully of all parties involved.

Holiday Actors will engage cast members in determining above and below the line expectations for behaviour, annually at the first rehearsal. Holiday Actors will ensure these expectations remain on display for all rehearsals.

Any issues will be dealt with following a restorative practices framework.

I, _____ have received a copy of the Holiday Actors Child Safe Policy including code of conduct and commitment statement. I confirm that I have read, understood and comply with the Code of Conduct.

Signed:

Date: