

# Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

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# 1. Purpose

Polyglot Theatre is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and recognises their role as vital and active participants in the organisation. We involve children when making decisions; as collaborators, instigators and audience, and our work exists to give children the power to be in control. Polyglot encourages children to express their views on safety and harm, and in turn we listen and respect what they have to say, especially about matters that directly affect them. Polyglot recognises that all children have a right to feel safe, and upholds zero tolerance for child abuse.

Polyglot is committed to:

- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. We believe in the power of the arts to transform children's lives, fuelling imagination, ambition and creativity in a safe and supportive environment.
- Creating an organisational culture of child safety by ensuring robust practices and policies that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers in keeping children safe.
- Ensuring all safety concerns and allegations of suspected child abuse are treated seriously and are guided by our legal and moral obligations.
- Welcoming all children, their families and carers and ensuring they feel included, respected and empowered.

Polyglot will not hesitate to take action to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and cultural harm. We also support the rights and wellbeing of workers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all children involved in Polyglot's activities.

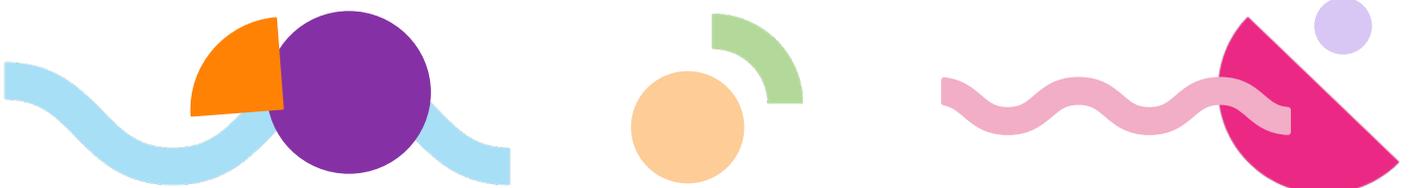
# 2. Who this policy applies to

All workers engaged in activities with Polyglot, as defined in Section 12, must comply with this policy; however, this policy is not incorporated as a term of any worker's contract and does not create any rights enforceable by a worker against Polyglot.

# 3. When this policy applies

This policy applies while the worker is at work. It also extends to work-related functions and to conduct outside of work where there is a sufficient connection to the workplace, including, but not limited to, the following circumstances:

- All aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, conditions and benefits, training and promotion, task allocation, shifts, hours, leave arrangements, workload, equipment and transport.
- On-site, off-site or after-hours work, work-related social functions (such as opening nights, after parties, award nights and industry events), rehearsals, tours, work-related travel, client functions, promotional activities, conferences, seminars or training sessions – wherever and whenever workers may be as a result of their Polyglot duties.
- Use of social media and other electronic communication (e.g. emails).



## 4. A Culture of Safety

Polyglot Theatre understands that for a child safe culture to flourish, it must be championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation, from the top down and the bottom up. It's this organisational culture that allows all children, parents and workers to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegation of child abuse or safety concerns.

To ensure and grow this culture, Polyglot:

- Follows child safe processes when recruiting workers. Our selection criteria and advertisements are developed specifically to demonstrate our commitment to child safety, including requirements of Working with Children Checks and, if necessary, a Police check, and all preemployment screening (i.e. referee and background checks) emphasise child safety and wellbeing.
- Trains all workers in child safety and wellbeing, and in how to identify, assess and minimise the risks of child abuse, and to detect potential signs of abuse.
- Employs dedicated Child Safety Officers who are responsible for communicating and maintaining knowledge of our Child Safety & Wellbeing policy and procedures within the organisation.
- Proactively maintains a thorough suite of child safety documents including a policy, procedure and Code of Conduct, which all workers are required to sign. These documents together outline appropriate behaviour, company processes and legislative responsibilities.
- Has a thorough, accessible and transparent complaints handling procedure that guides leadership in responding to child safe issues or concerns raised by children, workers or families.
- Maintains ongoing supervision and people management that is focused on child safety and wellbeing.
- Record keeping

The safety and wellbeing of children is Polyglot's primary concern. We are also fair and just to the organisation's workers. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action are always thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

## 5. Commitment to Safety of Diverse Children

Polyglot understands that all children are vulnerable, but that some children need special care and protection to ensure they are safe. Polyglot is committed to providing that, and has zero-tolerance of discrimination or conduct that jeopardises the physical, cultural or emotional safety and wellbeing of a child.

Through a strong foundation of policies, procedures and processes, as well as agile, bespoke strategies for engaging with specific communities in specific contexts, Polyglot embeds the safety of all children into the heart of the organisation, and has adopted measures to ensure any instance of racism or bigotry is identified, confronted and appropriately addressed.

By actively supporting all children to express their culture, and by facilitating the participation, inclusion and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, d/Deaf and disabled children, culturally and linguistically diverse children, and LGBTI and non-binary children, Polyglot works with communities to mitigate risk, identify harm and to meet the needs of the children and families it engages with.



More information about Polyglot’s approach to working safely with children can be found in the Child Safety & Wellbeing Procedure.

## 6. Connection, Community and Empowerment

Polyglot recognises that child safety is everyone’s responsibility, and strives to ensure that children and young people are informed of their rights to safety, information and participation. As a part of that, Polyglot understands that working with families and communities are pivotal to ensuring transparency, empowerment and engagement, and seeks the input and involvement of these communities to further entrench a culture of safety.

In doing this, Polyglot:

- Provides opportunities for children and young people to participate and is responsive to their contributions.
- Communicates effectively with children, their families and their communities to ensure a clear and transparent dialogue about safety, and ensure relevant information is always accessible.
- Takes into account the diversity of families and acts to reduce barriers to inclusion.
- Ensures families and communities participate in decisions affecting their children, have a say in the development and review of the organisations policies and practices, and are informed about the organisation’s operations and governance.
- Acknowledges the importance of friendships, and that support from peers helps children and young people feel safe and less isolated.

## 7. Digital and Physical Safety

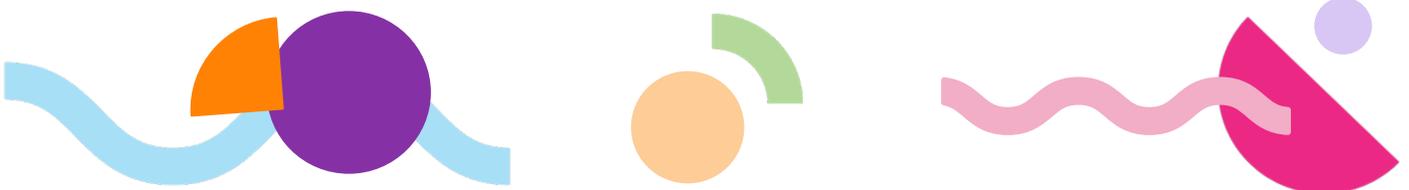
Physical and online environments provide unique challenges to child safety, and Polyglot understands that both require distinctive approaches to promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed. All of our workers are trained to identify and mitigate the risks in both online and physical environments without compromising a child’s right to privacy, access to information, social connections and creative expression.

More information about Polyglot’s approach to digital and physical safety can be found in the Child Safety & Wellbeing Procedure.

## 8. Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

Polyglot takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. We work to ensure all children, families and workers know what to do and who to tell if they observe or experience abuse or notice inappropriate or unsafe behaviour.

The best interests of the child is the primary consideration in all actions and decisions relating to children. If an adult has *reasonable belief* that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:



- A child states that they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it  
Observing suspicious behaviour.
- Polyglot has an accessible, child-focused complaints handling procedure which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership and other workers, the organisation’s approach to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report. Complaints are always taken seriously and responded to promptly, thoroughly and privately.

## 9. Legislative Responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** all adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police
- **Failure to protect:** people of authority in our organisation who know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power to reduce or remove the risk, have a responsibility to do so. Negligent failure to do so is an offence.

In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, Polyglot proactively takes steps to assess and minimise child abuse risks. Where possible, we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and Disabled people when reviewing this policy every two years.

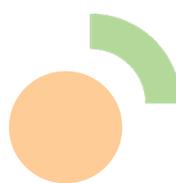
## 10. Related documents

Workers, especially managers and supervisors, are encouraged to read this policy in conjunction with other relevant policies, procedures, documents and agreements of Polyglot, including, but not limited to:

- Child Safety & Wellbeing Procedure
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Handling & Investigation Procedure
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Mission, vision and values statements
- Employment contract

## 11. External resources

- **Commission for Children and Young People**
  - Ph: 1300 78 29 78
  - <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au>
  - [childsaf@ccyp.vic.gov.au](mailto:childsaf@ccyp.vic.gov.au)



## 12. Definitions

Term	definition
Complaint	A formal allegation against a party.
Complaints Person	<b>Complaints Persons</b> are responsible for investigating all <b>complaints</b> of workplace <b>discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and bullying</b> , including by conducting interviews with <b>workers</b> and providing advice to the relevant leadership and management personnel on the outcome of the complaint and any disciplinary measures in response to a complaint.
Contact Person(s)	Contact Persons are workers who have been trained to provide confidential and impartial information and support to help workers make an informed decision about how to try to resolve an issue.
Criminal offence	Any criminal act committed against another person including physical assault, sexual assault, stalking, breach of an intervention order (or equivalent) or cybercrime, which is where a carriage service is used to menace, harass or cause offence. This can include conduct that occurs over the phone, in text messages or online.
Discrimination	Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by law, such as sex, age, race or disability. Protected personal characteristics under federal discrimination law include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A disability, disease or injury, including work-related injury</li> <li>• Parental status or status as a carer</li> <li>• Race, colour, descent, national origin or ethnic background</li> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Gender and gender identity</li> <li>• Sexual orientation</li> <li>• Industrial activity</li> <li>• Religion</li> <li>• Pregnancy and breastfeeding</li> <li>• Marital status</li> <li>• Political opinion</li> <li>• Social origin</li> <li>• Medical records; or</li> <li>• Associating with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics, such as being the parent of a child with a disability.</li> </ul>
Harassment	Harassment is unwelcome and unsolicited behaviour that a reasonable person would consider to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening. Harassment can be physical, spoken or written. It can include, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimidation, verbal abuse, repeated threats or ridicule.</li> <li>• Sending offensive messages by text, email or other means.</li> <li>• Derogatory comments.</li> <li>• Displaying offensive materials, pictures, comments or objects.</li> <li>• Ridiculing someone because of their accent or English-speaking ability.</li> <li>• Telling offensive jokes or making practical jokes based on a protected characteristic.</li> <li>• Belittling or teasing someone based on a protected characteristic.</li> <li>• Isolating, segregating or humiliating someone based on a protected characteristic.</li> </ul>
Incident report	An incident report is a record of essential information about the incident, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time, date, location of the alleged incident</li> <li>• Nature of the alleged incident</li> <li>• The people involved</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What action was taken to resolve the alleged incident</li> <li>• Why no further action was considered necessary; and</li> <li>• That the matter was not investigated and no findings were made in relation to the alleged conduct.</li> </ul>
Privacy	<p>Privacy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information privacy, which involves the establishment of rules governing the collection and handling of personal data such as credit information, and medical and government records. It is also known as 'data protection'.</li> <li>• Bodily privacy, which concerns the protection of people's physical selves against invasive procedures such as genetic tests, drug testing and cavity searches.</li> <li>• Privacy of communication, which covers the security and privacy of mail, telephones, e-mail and all other forms of communication.</li> <li>• Territorial privacy, which concerns the setting of limits on intrusion into the domestic and other environments such as the workplace or public space. This includes searches, video surveillance and ID checks.</li> </ul>
Support Person	<p>A support person's role is to provide emotional support; they should not act as an advocate or speak for the participant. A support person is required to keep all details of the complaint and investigation confidential. They can be another worker, a friend, family member or union representative.</p>
Victimisation	<p>Victimisation is subjecting or threatening to subject someone to a detriment because they have asserted their rights under equal opportunity law, made a complaint, helped someone else make a complaint, or refused to do something because it would be discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying. It is also victimisation to threaten someone (such as a witness) who may be involved in an investigation of a complaint.</p>
Vilification	<p>Vilification is behaviour that incites hatred, serious contempt for, or revulsion or severe ridicule of a person or group of people because of their race, religion, sexuality or gender.</p>
Workers	<p>Polyglot Theatre defines workers as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board members.</li> <li>• Leadership and management personnel e.g. producers, promoters, CEOs, executive directors, artistic directors, general managers, company managers, managers, supervisors, etc.</li> <li>• Production and venue personnel e.g. artists, actors, dancers, directors, choreographers, writers, stage management, chaperones, technical crew, front of house, etc.</li> <li>• Full-time, part-time, season and casual employees.</li> <li>• Job candidates, including people auditioning for roles.</li> <li>• student placements, apprentices, work experience students/interns</li> <li>• Contractors, sub-contractors and secondees.</li> <li>• Volunteers and anyone working in an unpaid capacity.</li> </ul>

## 13. Review details

This policy was last updated on 1 June 2022.

Next review: 1 June 2024.

