

Child Safe Environments Policy SAYarts Theatre Company 2019

Overarching Statement (for website)

SAYarts Theatre Company - For children, with children, about children, by children.

SAYarts believes that child safety is a whole of community responsibility and is everyone's business. SAYarts recognizes that all children have a right to feel safe and upholds zero tolerance for child abuse. We are committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children, and preventing and responding to child abuse, is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of all SAYarts staff, contractors, and volunteers.

SAYarts exists for children - their safety and enjoyment is core to what we do. At SAYarts we work with children to skill them with empathy, resilience, confidence, and theatre-craft. Our purpose is to transform their lives through involvement in the making and experiencing of the arts. SAYarts is committed to the safety and well-being of children in all of the activities they participate in: as audience members, workshop participants, creative development contributors, actors. We involve children when making decisions: as makers, devisers, collaborators, directors, instigators, and as audience.

We empower children and emerging adults through interaction, decision-making, experience, and learning. We encourage children to give voice to their opinions and express their views - including on safety and harm. We listen to children and respect what they have to say and what they are feeling.

SAYarts is committed to:

- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- Giving voice to children through the transformative power of the arts, sparking imagination, feeding curiosity, and developing creativity in a safe and supportive environment
- Creating an organisational culture of child safety by ensuring robust practices and policies that support our team of staff, contractors, interns, 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.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and we provide a safe and secure environment for children with disabilities.
- SAYarts acknowledges that we may not always be the right environment due to our limited resources for some families and children but will endeavour to work with families to be welcoming and accessible.
- SAYarts upholds the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

SAYarts will not hesitate to take action to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and cultural harm. We also support the rights and well-being of staff, contractors and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all children involved in our activities.

SAYarts has:

- ✓ A Child Safe Environments Policy
- ✓ A Child Safe Code of Conduct for all employees, contractors, and volunteers

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- ✓ A Child Safe Risk Management Protocol with processes for responding to and reporting child abuse
- ✓ Screening (Working with Children Check) of all staff /contractors/ volunteers who have significant face-to-face interactions with children
- ✓ A mandated notifier who has relevant training in child safe environments and acts as the Child Safety Officer (first point of contact for advice, support)
- ✓ Work Health and Safety policies, including risk assessments and hazard identification for all workshops, productions, and interactives

Our policy is lead and implemented by our Managing Director and members of the leadership team. All employees are inducted into our Code of Conduct and Child Safe policy, including any touring or production parties.

The Policies and Procedures are reviewed periodically by the MD and the leadership team, and are available via our website.

Child Safe Environments Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Child Safe Environments Policy is to:

- Demonstrate SAYarts' commitment to promoting child safety in accordance with the guidelines of the LPA and relevant state and federal legislation
- Set the parameters for establishing and maintaining a child-safe and child-friendly environment across SAYarts' activities
- Take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of children whilst they are under the care or guidance of SAYarts staff or in a SAYarts environment

Scope

This policy applies to any adult person (over the age of 18) engaged by SAYarts Theatre that may work or interact with children at any time including:

- Employees
- Leadership and management roles
- Administration
- Teachings artists, education instructors and workshop facilitators
- Performers and creative
- Production and venue personnel (actors, stage management, chaperones, technical crew, front of house etc)
- Volunteers, including members of committees
- Contractors and sub-contractors
- Work experience students/interns/secondments
- Any other individual in the organisation that may deal with children

The term "employee" covers all of the above for the purposes of this policy.

A child includes children and young people up to the age of 18.

Commitment to Child Safety

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You can access our Child Safe Environments Policy here

You can read our Child Safe Code of Conduct here

POLICY

1. Supporting Children's Participation and Satisfaction

- 1.1 SAYarts supports, enables and promotes the active participation of children by:
- encouraging expression of and respecting the views of children and parents/ carers/ legal guardians
 - encouraging and empowering children and parents/ carers / legal guardians to raise any concerns or complaints
 - listening to and acting upon any concerns raised by children and parents, carers or legal guardians
 - seeking the input of children when making decisions about matters that concern them
 - ensuring children understand their rights and the appropriate behaviour expected of both adults and children
 - teaching children what they can do and who they can turn to if they feel unsafe
 - ensuring employees dealing with children are skilful in facilitating their participation
 - valuing diversity and not tolerating any discriminatory practices.
- 1.2 SAYarts aims to create an environment where children gain satisfaction from their interaction with our organisation as audience members, participants in a class/program/workshop/ creative development, or other activity by:
- a) supporting children to feel respected and in control of their behaviour/work/experience
 - b) ensuring children enjoy the overall experience of being engaged with a production or other organisational activity
 - c) encouraging children to assist each other in fulfilling their participation obligations and developing a positive sense of pride in their work/activity/engagement (e.g. discussing character development and stagecraft in groups and leading warmup activities)
 - d) offering opportunities for children to derive personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement throughout their experience and the relationships they make
 - e) encouraging children to develop self-discipline in balancing their commitment to their performance, their education and their social and family activities.

2 Valuing Diversity

- 2.1 SAYarts values diversity and we do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.
- 2.2 Our organisation is committed to protecting children engaged with our organisation from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse, as well as neglect and contempt, ridicule, hatred, or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture, religion, gender (including transgender status), sexual orientation or disability.
- 2.3 In our activities with children we will:
- a) promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
 - b) promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds

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- c) promote the safety of children with a disability
- d) promote the safety of LGBTI children and young people

3. Recruitment Practices and working with children checks

3.1 SAYarts takes all reasonable steps to ensure we engage the most suitable and appropriate people for child-related work, whether paid or in a voluntary capacity.

3.2 SAYarts has human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

3.3 SAYarts maintains a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening, and training process which includes:

- a) interview and conduct thorough referee checks on all employees
- b) develop clear duty statements and job descriptions for roles that involve work with children that state clearly our commitment to providing safe environments for children
- c) attain and keep a record of Working with Children (DCSI) or criminal history/police checks for anyone with direct and unsupervised contact with children, such as employees designated to supervise children, teaching artists etc
- d) ensure supervisors, teaching artists, and chaperones recruited are suitably experienced and qualified to care for the safety and well-being of children in accordance with their age and needs.

3.4 **Working with Children Checks**

3.4.1 At SAYarts, Working with Children Checks (child employment related screening checks) have been determined as compulsory for the following employees:

- The Artistic Director
- The Managing Director (Child Safety Officer/Mandated Notifier)
- The Marketing and Development personnel
- All stage managers and tour managers
- All teaching artists, directors, and performers
- All documentarians such as photographers and videographers (must also sign separate material use & storage agreement)
- Technical crew
- Front of House personnel
- Any employee who will be in face-to-face contact with children at any stage of working on a SAYarts Theatre production.

3.4.2 The SAYarts MD or Producer or equivalent is required to sight satisfactory and current documentation of a Working With Children Check prior to the appointment of employees and contractors and prior to renewal.

3.4.3 People convicted of any sexual offence against adults or children will not be engaged in paid or voluntary roles with SAYarts regardless of the time that has elapsed since the offence. A criminal history offence (*not* related to sexual or other child-related offences - such as neglect or abuse) will not necessarily preclude a person from paid or

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unpaid employment with SAYarts, however, a person who refuses to undergo or provide documentation of a Working With Children Check will not be considered for a position with the organisation

3.4.4 The cost of undertaking a Working With Children Check will be approved borne by the relevant employee unless agreed otherwise by the MD.

3.4.5 Working with Children Checks will be treated as private and confidential and stored in confidential HR files however, copies must be retained on file by the Company as parents, venues, and guardians of children are able to request in writing to sight a copy of a Working With Children Check for SAYarts Theatre team members engaged in face-to-face activities with children. Staff must have their check with them when they attend schools and other child-focussed work spaces offsite.

3.4.6 SAYarts will make available to employees/potential employees and contractors the procedure for undertaking a Working With Children Check

4. Support for Employees

4.1 SAYarts seeks to support employees by:

- a) inducting new employees to our Child Safe Environments Policy, Code of Conduct and other relevant policies and procedures
- b) encouraging relevant employees to attend periodical information sessions to remain up-to-date with knowledge of child protection, nature and signs of child abuse, cultural competency, regulation updates and other matters that affect children
- c) appointing a Child Safety Officer to be the first point of contact to provide advice and support to SAYarts employees on the safety and well-being of children engaged with the organisation
- d) ensuring employees feel encouraged and empowered to report any complaints, concerns or perceived risks to child safety to the Child Safety Officer or other delegated position
- e) ensuring designated teaching artists, supervisors and chaperones of children that are new to the role work with experienced supervisors sufficiently before working on productions or programs requiring single supervisors.

5. Child Safety Code of Conduct

5.1 SAYarts has developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our employees on expected behaviours when in direct contact with or working around children.

5.2 All employees must abide by the Code of Conduct.

5.3 We ask relevant employees to sign a written statement confirming they have read, understood and will comply with the Child Safety Code of Conduct. We retain a copy of all signed statements.

6. Policy on Using Images of Children

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These protocols are for the taking and publishing of (in print or online) photos of children and young people up to 18 years of age. **This includes interns, school secondment students**

6.1 SAYarts aims to protect the safety and privacy of child participants (audience members, workshop participants, etc) by:

- a) obtaining informed consent from a parent (including carers or legal guardians) and child (if 15 years of age or older) for the use of images of child participants and audience members.
 - a. Consent will be sought prior to taking or publishing images for special projects such as Artist in Residence programs. Signed consent forms will be sought from parents/carers/legal guardians and we will provide details on how and where the images will be published, and if images will contain identifying or personal information about the child (e.g. school uniform, name, hobbies). Images containing identifying or personal information will be avoided where possible.
 - b. All regular term workshop and masterclass students/guardians are required to give permission at the time of enrolment or to inform the MD of any reason why they cannot give permission for reasonable use of images for promotional and documentation purposes
- a) placement of a notice in a prominent position at the venue to make ticket holders aware that professional photographers may be engaged for official and marketing use
- b) making parents, carers or legal guardians of education program participants aware that professional photographers may be engaged for official and marketing use
- c) only publishing images that do not contain identifying information about children (e.g. school uniform, name) unless consent from parents/carers/legal guardians has been obtained
- d) making sure professional photographers/videographers and teaching artists are aware that any images taken will remain the property of SAYarts and cannot be used or sold for other purposes. Any digital files must also be destroyed or handed over to SAYarts
- e) making sure photographers are not left unsupervised with children or have individual access to children
- f) all documentarians or photographers must have a relevant Working with Children Check
- g) providing details to parents, carers and legal guardians about who to contact if they have concerns or complaints regarding the use of inappropriate images or inappropriate behaviour in taking or publishing images.

7. Communication

7.1 SAYarts is committed to being responsive to concerns raised by team members, children, and parents/legal guardians, and teachers, and seeking to resolve issues to the satisfaction of all parties.

7.2 SAYarts keeps employees, parents (including carers or legal guardians) and children informed of our organisation's child safe policies and procedures by:

- a) ensuring that employees have read, understood, and are aware of their obligation under the Child Safe Environments Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, and any other relevant policies and procedures
- b) making relevant documents easily accessible by displaying child safe materials in areas of common traffic, uploading relevant documents to our website, distributing documents to all relevant individuals, and having copies available upon request
- c) providing children and parents (including carers and legal guardians) with relevant Plain English child safe materials.
- d) This includes giving parents/guardians access to the Parent Expectations and Student Code of Conduct documents which also work to keep children safe in class.

8. Complaints and Reporting Procedure

8.1 We believe employees, parents (including carers or legal guardians), and children should feel enabled, empowered and supported to safely raise any concerns or complaints about any perceived risks to a child's safety or signs of abuse.

8.2 SAYarts has clear guidelines about expected behaviours in class from SAYarts staff and SAYarts students.

8.3 SAYarts has developed a procedure to respond to any complaint of abuse or conduct not in keeping with this Policy and Code of Conduct, including means to take disciplinary action or rectify issues when necessary.

9. Risk Management

SAYarts takes a preventative and proactive approach to minimising the risk of harm to children. As part of our organisation's WH&S risk management process we periodically conduct reviews to identify potential risks and vulnerabilities to the safety and well-being of children.

10. Children visiting SAYarts performances or activities, or working with SAYarts as part of an Artist-in-Residency, School Excursion or Supervised Activity

SAYarts does not have its own space where children visit. SAYarts activities take place in third-party environments such as community centres, church halls, theatres and schools and other types of venues which will be subject to their own Risk Assessments, and Child Safe Environment Policies and guidelines. Most venues require that children less than 15 years of age be under the supervision of a responsible adult at all times.

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When schools are visiting SAYarts performances in these venues it is assumed that they have planned their excursion in line with the relevant Department for Education guidelines and ratios.

10.1 Performances events & activities

On occasion SAYarts will run face-to-face activities such as backstage tours, tactile tours, education workshops and other interactive events before or after a performance, or as part of community engagement.

- For school / institution visits, it is expected that children participating in these activities will be under the strict supervision of their teacher or other responsible adult. The obligations of this supervision cannot and must not be passed on to a SAYarts team member
- Children visiting as members of the general public and therefore under the control of their parent/legal guardian, and their parents/ guardians, will be subject to the Terms and Conditions of Entry to the venue in question. The obligations of this supervision cannot and must not be passed on to a SAYarts team member
- During these activities SAYarts will ensure that WHS procedures, Child Safe Environment Procedures, and Safe Work procedures are adhered to by SAYarts team members and participants.

10.2 SAYarts Community Engagement and Outreach activities in schools and institutions

From time to time, SAYarts sends teaching artists and other members of The Company into schools and institutions to run workshops and creative developments, or to show early developments of work in order to gain feedback. At all times SAYarts members will defer to the authority of the school's representative for matters of child safety and general work safety whilst on site.

- SAYarts will ensure that the supervising teacher is consulted with regard to the planned activities and the suitability of the space. SAYarts will work to Risk Assessment protocols
- For school / institution visits, it is expected that children participating in these activities will be under the strict supervision of their teacher or other responsible adult. The obligations of this supervision cannot and must not be passed on to a SAYarts team member conducting a workshop or activity.
- During these activities SAYarts will ensure that WHS procedures, Child Safe Environment Procedures, and Safe Work procedures are adhered to by SAYarts team members and participants.
- SAYarts will negotiate learning outcomes and expectations with the supervising teacher

10.3 Students involved in Work Experience Programs with SAYarts Theatre

SAYarts does not offer any work experience or internships for children.

11. Implementation and Review Process

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11.1 The SAYarts Managing Director has been appointed as Child Safety Officer/s, responsible for being the first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents (including carers or legal guardians) and employees regarding the safety and well-being of children engaged with the organisation. This includes being the first point of contact for dealing with any complaint of abuse or conduct not in keeping with this Policy and Code of Conduct.

11.2 Our Child Safe Environments Policy will be reviewed every 2 (two) years and we will undertake to incorporate feedback from children, parents (including carers and legal guardians), employees and any other relevant personnel.

End of Policy