



MELISSA'S DANCE STUDIO CHILD SAFE POLICY

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Cross References:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Family Law Amendment (Child Protection Convention) Act 2002 (Commonwealth)

Policy

Melissa's Dance Studio (MDS) is committed to the safety and welfare of children and their right to live free of abuse and neglect. MDS will uphold this goal in all its child-related activities. The primary consideration in planning any activity for children will be the overriding importance of ensuring that it contributes to their well-being and does not expose them to harm, including the risk of injury, sexual, physical, or emotional abuse.

Scope

Melissa's Dance Studio staff and students may work with children in situations where another organisation and its staff have primary responsibility for the children involved. Examples include when MDS students undertake placements in other schools/studios, or industry and when children visit other institutions with their teachers to use theatre facilities or to attend other events.

This policy does not apply in such situations where MDS staff and students are required to act in accordance with the relevant agency's or host organisation's child protection protocols. However, there will be instances where MDS students and staff undertaking research with children, or supervising children on other grounds or in camps or other activities not on MDS property, will be in loco parentis' and will have primary responsibility for the welfare of the children involved. This responsibility extends to any

informal continuation of an activity or any related activity, which may be construed by the public as a Melissa's Dance Studio activity.

This policy is intended primarily to provide a child protection framework for such situations. While all MDS activities will be conducted in accordance with the intent of this policy and the related procedures, the policy is not applicable in the following situations:

- Where children are involved as students of another establishment.
- Where a staff member, student or member of the community brings a child under their care onto an MDS venue other than for an activity which will involve another student or staff member of MDS accepting responsibility for the welfare of the child.
- Where staff or students are involved in a practicum, field placement or similar activity and the child protection protocols of the host organisation or relevant agency are in effect.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy:

- 'abuse' refers to sexual, physical, or emotional abuse.
- 'child/children' refers to a person or persons under 18 years of age.
- 'parent' refers to a parent or legal guardian.
- 'in loco parentis' - Latin for "in place of a parent". A person or institution that assumes parental rights and duties for a minor.
- 'supervisor' refers to any staff member or student of MDS who has responsibility for the welfare of children during an activity which the staff member or student oversees or is participating in.
- 'student' refers to a person enrolled in a program or class at MDS.

Procedures

Where the Principal, teacher or relevant manager believes the requirements of this policy are not being met, the activity should be terminated, or any children involved in the activity should be withdrawn from that activity.

All Melissa's Dance Studio staff and volunteers that are engaged in activities to which this policy applies will have a current national criminal history clearance which has been confirmed by the relevant body authorised to make this judgement to be free of any record of offences which would be of concern in relation to working with children.

The MDS will have completed mandatory reporting training. (Advice on this can be sought from the Principal or Administrator).

MDS staff or students responsible for any activity involving children must ensure that they meet their obligations under the Children's Protection Act, and any other relevant legislation (advice on this can be sought from the Principal or Administrator).

All MDS staff and student supervisors must always observe protocols for child protection, and in particular:

- Must not be alone with a child where other MDS staff or students, or parents of the children involved or other responsible adults, cannot observe their interaction with children, with the exception of private lessons in which CCTV will be used.
- Must not transport children to and from places other than as detailed in a consent note.
- Must avoid any situation, which might give rise to suspicion or complaint, such as the unnecessary touching of children, showing favouritism or contacting children involved in MDS activity outside of that activity where this would not occur naturally as part of community life.
- Must not make or use audio, photographic, or visual representations of children not directly related to the purpose of the activity, or which may encourage prurient interest.

All proposed activities involving children must be approved by the Director.

Approval is also necessary for any informal continuation of an MDS activity or any related activity which may be construed by the public as an MDS activity, and which falls within the scope of this policy.

In approving such an activity, the Principal or registered teacher should have regard to this policy and in particular to the level of training of staff or students in a supervisory role that is necessary for the activity to be conducted safely.

All activities covered by this policy should be clearly described to all participants as an MDS activity. In order for a child to be involved in an MDS activity that falls within the scope of this policy, before the event MDS must provide the child's parent(s) or guardian with an information sheet describing the nature of the activity, the measures to be taken to

ensure children' s safety and well-being, contact details for the staff or students responsible for the child in the course of the activity and information on whom to contact if they have any concerns.

While parents of children involved in events may also participate, they must not be placed in a supervisory role in relation to other children unless they meet all the requirements for staff or student supervisors specified in this policy or are in turn under supervision.

The ratio of adults to children in any MDS activity must be adequate to always ensure the proper supervision of children and to be in accord with State, Federal and Territory Licensing regulations, requirements and in keeping with normal early childhood practice.

In any activity, that may involve children using a toilet, washing, or sleeping, supervision is to be provided in accord with State, Federal and Territory Licensing regulations and requirements and in keeping with normal early childhood practice.

In all MDS activities involving children the staff member or student supervisor must be always mindful of the safety of the children and must not conduct any activity for which they do not have the appropriate training.

One or more MDS supervisors must have appropriate first aid training or ready access to a First Aid Officer. An appropriate First Aid Kit should be readily accessible.

MDS staff and students involved in activities with children must comply with mandatory reporting legislation which requires that suspicions of child abuse be reported directly to the Child Abuse Report line (Tel 13 14 78). Concerns about the behaviour or intent of any person involved in the activity must be reported to the supervisor of the activity or to the Director of MDS.

Any complaint about an MDS activity involving children should be directed to the Principal identified in the information sheet provided to parents, who must seek advice from the Director: Department of Families and Community Child Safe Environment or their nominee in dealing with the complaint.

Young children must be accompanied to class by an authorised parent or guardian and will remain with the staff of MDS until collected by an

authorised parent or guardian. Students are not permitted to wait outside the studio in the carpark.

MDS staff must be notified if the collecting adult is other than the usual parent or guardian. e.g., Grandparent, other relative or family friend. Should there be special circumstances where there is a delay in collecting a child, the child will stay with MDS staff until alternative arrangements are made.

Prepared – October 2023

Director's name - Melissa Brown