

# ROBYN'S ROOM

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

### Rationale

The ROBYN'S ROOM Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our Room's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organization, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing [Ministerial Order 1359](#) (PDF, 363KB) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in children focused environments.

It informs our room's community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

### Scope

This policy:

- applies to all room staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students.
- applies in all physical and online studio environments used by students during or outside of school hours and those provided through third-party providers.

### Definitions

The following terms in this policy have [specific definitions](#):

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- room environment
- room staff
- student
- volunteer.

### Statement of commitment to child safety

ROBYN'S ROOM is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our Room environment.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our room environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our room, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our room has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

### Roles and responsibilities

**Room leadership team** - Our room leadership team (comprising the proprietor & primary staff ) are responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The proprietor and primary staff will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the room community.

- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

**Room staff and volunteers.** All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the studio's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct [https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/3476d824-9c32-44a0-ab6c-a2112f5832e2/downloads/RR\\_CodeOfConduct.pdf?ver=1657345206881](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/3476d824-9c32-44a0-ab6c-a2112f5832e2/downloads/RR_CodeOfConduct.pdf?ver=1657345206881)
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their time within the programs of the room.
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

### **Specific staff child safety responsibilities**

Robyn Monty is nominated Child Safety Officer to support and implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the child safety officer are outlined at [Guidance for child safety officer](#). In addition to these roles, our child safety officer is also responsible for:

The child safety officer is the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- Proprietor, Robyn Monty is responsible for monitoring the room's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our room community should approach Robyn Monty if they have any concerns about the Room's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Robyn Monty is responsible for informing the room community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

### **Child Safety Code of Conduct**

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the studio.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct [https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/3476d824-9c32-44a0-ab6c-a2112f5832e2/downloads/RR\\_CodeOfConduct.pdf?ver=1657345206881](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/3476d824-9c32-44a0-ab6c-a2112f5832e2/downloads/RR_CodeOfConduct.pdf?ver=1657345206881) also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

### **Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing**

At our room we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online room environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices.

### **Establishing a culturally safe environment**

At ROBYN'S ROOM we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe environment where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our room planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our room community:

- Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Plan outlines the measures we have in place to maintain an inclusive and culturally safe room for Aboriginal children and students

### **Student empowerment**

To support child safety and wellbeing at ROBYN'S ROOM we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the room to ensure a sense of belonging through implementing our whole approach to Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct, our room values.

We inform students of their rights through our whole room approach to Respectful Relationships and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time.

When the room is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

### **Family engagement**

Our families and the room community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at ROBYN'S ROOM we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our studio's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- through the studio website and other communications.
- all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents at <https://robynsroom.com.au/>
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the studio

### **Diversity and equity**

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

### **Suitable staff and volunteers**

At ROBYN'S ROOM, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

#### **Staff recruitment**

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
  - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
  - the person's history of working with children
  - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
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#### **Staff induction**

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that room leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

#### **Ongoing supervision and management of staff**

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by regular performance reviews.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our room and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

## Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

## Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our studio's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children.
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children.
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the room environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

## Complaints and reporting processes

ROBYN'S ROOM fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures.

Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the room.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant staff have been informed, we will ensure our room follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

## Communications

ROBYN'S ROOM is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the room community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure

## Privacy and information sharing

ROBYN'S ROOM collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws.

## Records management -

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records accordingly.

## Review of child safety practices

At ROBYN'S ROOM we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices. We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with room staff and our room community.

## Related policies and procedures. These include our:

- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures , Child Safety Code of Conduct

## Policy status and review

Robyn Monty is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the room community. Created : July 1, 2022. Review Date : July1, 2024.