



Ground Floor, 1 West Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

Child Safety @ ProgressDNA

Contents

Page 2:

- I. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- II. Child Safe Policy

Page 4:

- I. Code of Conduct
- II. Injury and Illness Policy

Page 8:

- I. Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure



Ground Floor, 1 West Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Progress Dance and Arts is an inclusive, encouraging dance and performing arts school. We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming, nurturing, stable and secure environment for all children. ProgressDNA fosters practices to support children's health, developmental needs, self-respect, and dignity. We will take all reasonable steps to protect children from neglect, physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional abuse whilst in our care.

ProgressDNA will not tolerate child abuse of any kind and will deal with any and all allegations of child abuse quickly, consistently, and appropriately. It is the responsibility of all Workplace Participants to ensure children are protected and treated with respect. Any Workplace Participants who work directly with children and young people, or have responsibility over programs for children and young people, must provide a valid Working with Children's Check. No individual may be employed to work with children, by law, who does not hold a Working with Children Check.

Child Safe Policy

Our policy guides workers (paid and volunteer) on how to behave when interacting and engaging with children in our organisation. The policy focuses on building and maintaining ProgressDNA as a child safe environment which is inclusive, welcoming, transparent and promotes children's confident participation.

Children's Participation:

ProgressDNA supports the active participation of children in our Dance and Performing Arts programs.

We approach in welcoming and patient ways to ensure a child always feels safe and confident when participating.

We encourage and provide both direct, indirect, and anonymous channels for children to provide feedback and raise concerns. We commit to listening to their views, respecting their experiences and opinions, and involving them when decisions are made especially about matters directly affecting them.

Recruitment:

At ProgressDNA, we pride ourselves on our professional, committed, and engaged staff. We have high level, rigorous screening, and selection processes.

All staff that apply must immediately provide experience, training, and references information as well as a Working with Children Check. Once we can verify their information, they are invited to interview. Two management staff interview the potential staff member to

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Ground Floor, 1 West Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

ensure they are a good fit and will fit with the studio's values of safety, encouragement, and inclusion.

Once interviewed, staff are invited to complete a trial day of teaching under the supervision of a member of management. Following this, children are always welcomed and encouraged to provide feedback on whether they felt welcomed, comfortable, and supported.

If staff are successful, they are provided with training on all studio policies and processes and begin teaching, usually alongside one of our assistants.

Complaints Management and Reporting:

ProgressDNA is committed to the safety of our students and therefore takes any, and all complaints very seriously. ProgressDNA has a full Complaints Management Policy below. Please review our complaints management and handling commitments.

Our person of contact in the studio is our director Olivia Bowers – 0452 289 211

Training, support, and supervision of workers:

- ProgressDNA promotes respect, fairness, and consideration for all workers
- All workers have a more senior worker assigned to support and supervise their work.
- All new workers will receive a copy of all child safe policies and procedures and a more senior worker will set up a meeting to discuss the policies and allow the new worker to ask questions and clarify their understanding
- Child safe is a standing agenda item at meetings and workers are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to the continuous improvement of child safe policies, procedures, and practices in the workplace

Legislation, Industry Standards and Internal Policies:

- Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Codes of Conduct
- Vision, Values and Aims Statement
- Complaints and allegations policy
- On-going Training Support and Supervision
- Recruitment standards of prior professional training and experience

Communication:

- We have an open-door policy to discuss safety policies with students, staff, families and volunteers
- Our policy will be discussed during induction sessions for all new staff, volunteers and students
- All members of our community have constant access to the Child Safety Policies and Procedures

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Ground Floor, 1 West Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

Code of Conduct

All ProgressDNA classes and events are approached with professionalism and integrity. We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and nurturing environment that seeks not only to instil a love of the arts in our students, but to develop important life skills as well – confidence, respect, commitment, kindness, and teamwork included.

To ensure a happy and positive experience for all involved, it is important that students, parents (including carers or legal guardians), extended friends and family members and staff understand and comply with the below.

Student etiquette

- Demonstrate respect for teachers, parents, staff, and other students at all times.
- Arrive at least five minutes prior to your scheduled class. Latecomers may be refused entry, due to the risk of injury.
- Present to class in a tidy and well-groomed manner with hair tied back neatly off the face. Ballet buns are required for all ballet classes.
- Dance uniforms and dance shoes must be worn for classes, where specified. School uniform is not appropriate dance attire and therefore not permitted. Teachers may refuse entry to dancers not groomed appropriately for safety reasons.
- Bring a clearly named bottle of water to every class.
- Attend class regularly unless ill or injured, or in the event of a family emergency and ensure the studio is notified of absences.
- Honour prior commitments made to the studio by attending classes, rehearsals, and performances.
- Serve as a role model to younger dancers at all times, including appropriate language and behaviour.
- We discourage unnecessary electronic devices and other toys at the studio. Mobile phones should be switched off or on silent mode and are not to be used during class.
- Put rubbish in the bins provided and clean up after yourself.
- Show respect and care for studio equipment and facilities.
- Ask for help if you need it – we are here for you!

Parent (including carers or legal guardians) etiquette

- Demonstrate respect for teachers, students, staff, and other parents at all times.
- Acknowledge that it is their responsibility to have read the agreed to Terms and Conditions. Enrolment assumes agreement to T&Cs.
- Take responsibility to read email updates and keep up-to-date with current activities and important information.
- Ensure siblings are supervised at all times, equipment is treated with care and the waiting areas are left tidy.
- Refrain from entering either dance studio unless invited by a teacher. This includes studios not in use and extends to siblings. Please do not send children into studios early and/or until collected by a teacher.



Ground Floor, 1 West Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

- Understand and support the ProgressDNA approach by encouraging children to show commitment and positivity while working to the best of their own ability, encourage teamwork and support of peers, and support your dancer to safely practice, strengthen and stretch at home.
- Refrain from taking photographs or video without permission for child safety purposes.
- Respect our approach to establishing and maintaining professional relationships with our students and parents by
 - (1) ensuring all contact is made via the office in person, by phone (0452 289 211) or email (info@progressdna.com.au) and
 - (2) refraining from direct communication with staff via personal email, text, phone or social media unless on platforms managed directly by ProgressDNA (e.g. the company Facebook or Instagram page) or deemed necessary (e.g. rescheduling a private lesson).
- Raise any concerns with a teacher or staff member by making an appointment, calling or emailing as staff are usually running to their next classes and are unavailable for lengthy discussions between classes.

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- smoke on premises, or possess or use any inappropriate or illicit substances on premises including but not limited to tobacco, alcohol, or drugs
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children or play inappropriate music
- take personal video or photos of children except for remembering choreography/exercises or for studio promotional use
- post any video or photos of children on any personal social media platform unless granted prior permission
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity, disability or other
- have intentional contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without ProgressDNA's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting without studio consent or awareness). Accidental contact (such as seeing people in the street) is appropriate
- have any online contact with a child or their family (unless consented to by ProgressDNA for the necessary and studio appropriate purposes)
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- fail to report any incidents in which a child was physically injured or emotionally distressed while at the studio or in the care of its staff.



Ground Floor, 1 West Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

Staff must

- Provide safe and level appropriate activities in class, as well as optional progressions to cater for all abilities
- Provide ONLY age-appropriate content and materials in class
- Create and maintain an encouraging, welcoming, and safe space for ALL students
- Request a students consent prior to providing necessary and appropriate hands-on corrections and obey their requests
- Disclose any information that may prevent them from performing to their highest standard during classes at any time

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, for example is being threatened or assaulted at or near the ProgressDNA studios, phone 000 and alert necessary personal immediately.

Disciplinary actions

- Inappropriate, disrespectful, or aggressive behaviour by students, parents (including carers or legal guardians), extended friends and family, staff or volunteers, will not be tolerated and may result in immediate cancellation of enrolment with no refund or further discussion or immediate termination of employment or contract. Any aggressive, violence, or discriminatory behaviour or threats either verbal or physical will be reported to police immediately.
- A breach of the Code of Conduct will result in one written warning. Further breaches may result in immediate cancellation of enrolment with no refund or further discussion or immediate termination of employment or contract.
- ProgressDNA is a Child Safe environment committed to understanding and abiding by the NSW Government Child Safe Standards. Information on these standards is available on the Office of the Children's Guardian website.

Injury and Illness Policy:

- Our current Covid-19 policies are in line with the NSW Government requirements. Please keep our community safe by maintaining personal health and staying home if presenting with any symptoms
- Any student presenting with symptoms possibly related to Covid, or the Flu will be isolated, and parents will be called for immediate collection (cough, running nose, sore throat, fevers etc)
- In terms 1-3, make up classes are offered for illness. Whilst we can't offer this in Term 4, we encourage students to look after themselves when unwell.
- Any prior medical conditions (disability, injury, illness, allergy etc) must be disclosed to staff or director prior to participation in any class
- ProgressDNA has a full first-aid kit on hand as well as first aid training and knowledge to handle any unexpected scenarios
- Please ensure the director or front desk staff have any necessary contact details and medicine etc in case of emergency eg: inhalers, epipens, antihistamines



Ground Floor, 1 West Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

- ProgressDNA will not provide or administer any medication not provided by the parent or without a parents' written consent
- Dance is a physical activity, and injuries and accidents do happen. Teachers are all trained in Safe Dance Practice and injury prevention. All incidents are to be reported to the director and an incident report will be completed for parents. Parents are expected to take children to the doctor or relevant physician where necessary. Injured dancers who present with any pain will not be permitted to participate in class until cleared by a physician via medical certificate. We are not liable for personal injuries on site
- The physical and mental wellbeing of all students is our upmost priority.
- Uniform is integral to maintaining students' safety from injuries. Please ensure your student is always in the appropriate class attire with the correct footwear and hair tied back.

After School Care/ Walking Bus:

- Safety is our upmost priority during our walking/bus after school care program
- All children are picked up by a uniformed member of ProgressDNA staff from the allocated location at their school
- The member of staff will be safety cleared upon employment and have a WWCC
- Members of staff are identifiable by their ProgressDNA tshirt/jacket/jumper
- Walking buses will take a planned route chosen for safety purposes that takes all appropriate precautions when crossing roads
- Children must be able to carry their own belongings
- Children are asked to be responsible and obey all instructions during the walk, any continued poor behaviour during walking bus will result in contact with parents and the withdrawal of the child in the walking bus/after school care program
- Upon return to the studio, children change into ProgressDNA uniform. They must bring all uniform and shoes and any required items for the appropriate hair styles
- Staff will offer private and semi-private changing arrangements
- Staff will supervise from outside changerooms unless in case of emergency or assistance
- No child will be assisted by staff when changing or using the toilets unless otherwise requested or required by the child
- All children will be accompanied by a staff member or peer to the bathroom area
- Children are to pack afternoon snacks and be seated while eating for safety precautions. No snacks are to be shared in case of allergies
- Children will be supervised at all times by the appropriate number of staff to the number of children

For the benefit of all ProgressDNA families, your cooperation is appreciated.



Ground Floor, 1 West Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure

Everyone in the ProgressDNA community should be confident that complaints will be dealt with honestly and fairly.

Everyone in our community should be confident in reporting inappropriate behaviour around kids.

Everyone in our community should report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person immediately.

Reporting Obligations:

NSW Reporting obligations

Department of Family and Community Services

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm may report to Department of Family and Community Services. Phone 132 111 to report child abuse or neglect (24-hour service).

Some people must report if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm. They are legally 'mandatory reporters' and must report concerns about risk of significant harm to children, to the Department of Family and Community Services. (FACS)
<https://reporter.childstrong.nsw.gov.au>

A person who is paid to provide the following services and a person (paid or unpaid) who is in a management position in these services are mandatory reporters:

- Health care (e.g. doctors, nurses etc.)
- Education (e.g. teachers)
- Children's services (e.g. child care centres)
- Residential services (e.g. refuges)
- Law enforcement (e.g. police)

NSW Ombudsman

The NSW Ombudsman supervises the complaints process of all state and local government agencies as well as schools, child care centres and agencies providing Out-of-home care. People using these services can complain to the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman can check that the service has handled the complaint properly. Complaints Management Policy Sample The

NSW Ombudsman's 'Complaint Handling Tool Kit' and 'Child Protection for the Workplace' Guidelines are available at: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au



Ground Floor, 1 West Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

Office of the Children's Guardian

Reporting bodies have a legal obligation to report findings of sexual misconduct and serious physical assault involving children by a child-related worker to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

Under Schedule 1 of the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* the conduct that must be reported is:

1. sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child, including grooming of a child
2. any serious physical assault of a child.

Under the legislation, reporting bodies must investigate allegations of such conduct to make an informed finding as to whether or not the conduct occurred.

To determine whether or not the conduct meets the criteria, reporting bodies must consider the nature of the conduct itself and the context in which it occurred.

If the investigation results in a finding that sexual misconduct or serious physical assault occurred, the reporting body must report this finding to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

Under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* only findings of sexual misconduct and serious physical assault must be reported, although the Ombudsman may report other misconduct to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

Types of Complaints:

All complaints should be reported, this includes:

- Disclosure of abuse
- Inappropriate behaviour around kids
- Suspicion of abuse or harm to a kid
- General behaviour that makes any child feel unwelcome, or unsafe
- Any discriminatory behaviour against any member of the community

Who to talk to:

All complaints must be reported to the Child Safety Contact Officers.

Please contact Olivia Bowers (Director) on 0452 289 211



Ground Floor, 1 West Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

Who can report a complaint/concern and how:

A child or young person, or any staff member/ volunteer/ student, or any parent/caregiver can make a complaint or raise a concern by:

- Face to face meeting
- Phone call (0452289211)
- Email (info@progressdna.com.au)
- Letter (GF, 267 Pacific Highway, North Sydney 2060)
- Anonymous suggestions box on the front desk

Complaint Process:

- Conduct an open discussion and listen to the concerns of the complainant and make a record of the complaint using the 'Complaint Record Form' and discuss what further actions are expected and required of the situation.
- If deemed relevant, make a report to the Department of Family and Community Services in the case of an allegation of child abuse. Inform everyone involved in the complaint of the requirement to make this report.
- If the complaint involves inappropriate behaviour and a breach of the Code of Conduct, the manager/ leader will take action in accordance with the internal discipline procedure.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

ProgressDNA ensures we are following obligations defined under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

- All complaints are stored in a specialised folder, only accessible by key management staff.
- Once the situation is discussed with the person placing complaint/reporting a situation, formal plans will be made for the appropriate action. The resolution of the issue will be commenced within a week of report.
- Privacy will be maintained as requested by the complainant. No information will be shared outside of management staff unless otherwise necessary and permitted. Personal information will only be provided of those involved in accordance with obligations under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

Communication and Support:



Ground Floor, 1 West Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

ProgressDNA ensures that all members of our community (including staff, families, and children) know how to make a complaint and/or raise a concern. This can be achieved by:

- Providing easy access to all child safety policies and procedures in place (including the complaints and allegations policy and how it applies to families, workers and Children)
- Training in the complaints and allegations processes for workers
- Age-appropriate programs and discussions for children explaining what to do if they feel upset or concerned
- Encouraging regular, clear, open, and safe discussions between staff, management, families, and children.