

VOLUNTEER BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Southern Dance Festival — Victorian Compliance Framework

Important Note: This document outlines the legal protections, behavioural standards, and operational management procedures required for all Committee Members and Volunteers. In Victoria, volunteers are protected by specific frameworks including the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Child Safe Standards). Compliance is mandatory.

1. Equal Opportunity

The Southern Dance Festival is committed to providing an inclusive environment free from bias. All committee members and volunteers must treat every participant, parent, spectator, and fellow worker with equal respect.

- **Legal Context:** In accordance with the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against anyone based on protected attributes.
- **Protected Attributes:** These include age, race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religious belief, marital status, or pregnancy.
- **Volunteer Obligation:** Ensure allocations, tasks, and interactions do not unfairly exclude, disadvantage, or stereotypic anyone based on these traits.

2. Anti-Sexual Harassment

There is strict zero-tolerance for any form of sexual harassment. This policy applies uniformly to backstage areas, dressing rooms, and public venue zones.

- **Definition:**

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature where a reasonable person would anticipate that the target would feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated. It is entirely irrelevant whether the behavior was intended to offend.

- **Prohibited Conduct Includes (but is not limited to):**

- Unwelcome physical touching, hugging, or kissing.
- Suggestive, sexualised, or crude comments, jokes, or gestures.
- Intrusive or inappropriate questioning regarding a person's private life.
- Displaying or sharing sexually explicit images, texts, or digital media backstage.

- **Mandatory Victorian Standard:**

Under Victorian civil laws, a positive duty requires organizations to take proactive, preventative steps to eliminate sexual harassment from their operating environments before it occurs.

3. Discrimination, Bullying, and Victimisation

Every volunteer and committee member has the right to a safe work environment. Behaviours that degrade, threaten, or isolate others will be dealt with immediately.

- **Direct vs. Indirect Discrimination:**

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of a protected trait. Indirect discrimination happens when an unreasonable rule or requirement applies to everyone but disadvantages a specific group.

- **Bullying Definition:**

Repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person or a group that creates a risk to health and safety (e.g., verbal abuse, deliberate social isolation, or targeted practical jokes). Single incidents of cruelty are also actionable under our general code of conduct.

- **Victimisation:**

It is unlawful to punish, retaliate against, or disadvantage any person because they have made a complaint or assisted in an ongoing investigation regarding bullying or discrimination.

4. Performance Management

To safeguard the integrity of the competition and the safety of the children, operational roles must be executed reliably. Performance management ensures clarity and support.

- **Initial Briefing:**

All volunteers must complete an initial briefing regarding their exact shift times, station boundaries, and specific safety tasks.

- **Feedback Process:**

If a volunteer or committee member is not performing their allocated duties safely or effectively (e.g., neglecting venue entry control, failing to monitor designated areas), a designated Committee Leader will issue a direct, private verbal request for correction.

- **Re-assignment:**

If performance issues persist due to capacity or misunderstanding, the Committee reserves the right to immediately re-assign the volunteer to an alternate, lower-responsibility role.

5. Complaints and Dispute Resolution

Complaints are treated seriously, confidentially, and with absolute urgency to protect the event's operating safety.

- **Reporting Line:**

Any volunteer who witnesses or experiences discrimination, bullying, harassment, or a breach of safety should report it immediately to the Event Coordinator or an active Committee Member.

- **Immediate Interim Action:**

Upon receiving a report, the Event Coordinator will separate the parties involved to guarantee immediate safety while facts are reviewed.

- **Investigation Framework:**

The Committee will conduct a discrete, neutral review. Both sides will be given an equal, fair opportunity to state their perspective. If a conflict of interest exists involving a committee member, that member must recuse themselves entirely.

6. Termination of Volunteer Status

The Committee holds a duty of care to ensure the environment remains safe, compliant, and supportive for everyone.

- **General Termination:**

Volunteer arrangements may be ended if performance issues cannot be resolved or if a structural breach of the event schedule occurs.

- **Summary Dismissal (Instant Termination):**

A volunteer's position will be cancelled immediately, and they will be escorted from the venue if they engage in serious misconduct. Serious misconduct includes:

- Any form of physical violence, verbal abuse, or aggressive intimidation.
- Any breach of Child Safe Standards or suspicious/unauthorised contact with a child.
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol during operational hours.
- Severe, willful breaches of venue fire safety or emergency access protocols.