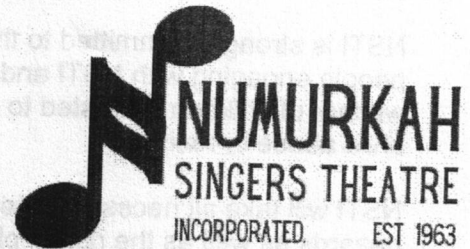


CHILD SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Purpose

The purpose of this child safe policy is to:

- Ensure Numurkah Singers Theatre Inc. (NSTI) complies with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, creating a safe environment for all children and young people involved in its activities.
- Dedicate to ensuring that all members display appropriate standard of behaviour towards children, ensuring that their rights are respected, they feel safe and protected and that their concerns are taken seriously.
- To empower children who engage with, participate in programs and activities conducted by NSTI. To involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them, and listen to their views and respect what they have to say. We promote diversity and acceptance, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcomed.
- Demonstrate NSTI's commitment to the protection, health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people by setting the parameters for determining, establishing and maintaining a child-safe and child-friendly environment for children who visit or engage with NSTI in accordance with our obligations and requirements, including the Eleven Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Outline NSTI's approach to implementing, monitoring and improving its child safe commitments, for example through its policy position on the use of images of children in NSTI's marketing material.
- To ensure that all members are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse or harm and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
- To provide guidance to members on the actions that should be taken when they suspect any abuse within NSTI.
- To provide assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

Scope

This Policy forms part of NSTI's strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective governance, leadership and operational arrangements.

This policy applies to all members at NSTI (18 years of age or older) whether or not they work directly with children or young people (up to the age of 19 (unless otherwise specified)) and is to be used as a guide on how to behave with children.

All members must agree to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Commitment to Child Safety

At NSTI we are committed to creating a culture of child safety. We want children and young people who engage with NSTI to feel and be safe, happy, respected, valued, empowered and protected from harm. Children should be made aware of and feel confident in their rights and responsibilities. We support and respect all children and support our members in their respectful work and engagement with children.

NSTI is strongly committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people engaging with NSTI and to creating and maintaining a child safe environment. The welfare of children entrusted to our care is a top priority and NSTI has zero tolerance for child abuse or racism.

NSTI will take all necessary steps to prevent and protect children in our care from safety hazards as well as the risk of physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and cultural abuse and neglect.

In line with the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, NSTI is committed to upholding the Victorian Child Safe Standards, to the best of our abilities and resources. In our commitment to Child Safe Standards, we:

- Are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children
- Have a zero tolerance of child abuse, and all safety concerns and allegations will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- Are committed to regular training and education on the Child Safe Standards, Reportable Conduct Scheme, and child abuse risks.
- Are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to provide a safe environment for children with a disability.
- Uphold the rights of all children who come in contact with NSTI so that they feel heard on matters relevant to their safety
- Recognise that protecting children and young people and preventing and responding to child abuse or harm is an organisation wide responsibility.

Principles

- Children's safety and wellbeing are paramount
- All children have a right to feel safe and be heard
- Diversity is respected and valued
- Cultural safety for Aboriginal children and other backgrounds is actively promoted
- Allegations and safety concerns are taken seriously and responded to quickly

Key Activities and Responsibilities

All members of NSTI are responsible for the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children who engage with NSTI.

All members are expected to act in accordance with relevant Victorian legislations, our Code of Conduct, policies and procedures

All members have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if they have reasonable belief that an incident has taken place.

Child Safety Standards

1. Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of First Nation children and young people are respected and valued.

- 1.1 At NSTI First Nation children and young people are encouraged and supported to have the ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights while participating in NSTI programs, and activities.
- 1.2 NSTI has adopted a fair and inclusive approach and are committed to acknowledging and appreciating the strengths of First Nation culture and promoting the wellbeing and safety of First Nation children and young people.
- 1.3 NSTI has zero tolerance for racism, and are committed to promoting and protecting all children and young people involved in productions including (without limitation):

- 1.3.1 First Nations children and young people
- 1.3.2 children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 1.3.3 children and young people with a disability
- 1.3.4 children or young people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or otherwise sexually or gender diverse
- 1.4 NSTI actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion of First Nation children and young people who engage with NSTI, including through their productions, programs, and activities.
- 1.5 NSTI works hard to implement respectful and appropriate practices that are embedded with culturally safe and inclusive approaches within our policies and procedures and strive meet the needs of not only First Nations children, young people, and their families but also those from other diverse and linguistic backgrounds.

2. Child safety and wellbeing are embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.

- 2.1 NSTI's Child Safety Policy and corresponding policies and procedures are clearly published on its website as well as being readily available at rehearsals, events, programs and information nights to testify to its commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- 2.2 NSTI Committee has utmost responsibility for overseeing and promoting a culture of child safety by providing leadership for a culture of accountability for child safety and wellbeing including the detection and prevention of, and response to child abuse. All NSTI members are required to acknowledge that they have read, understood and will comply with NSTI's Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct
- 2.3 A Child Safety Officer is appointed to lead implementation of the child safety policy and acts as the contact point for all NSTI members and families to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to child safety.
- 2.4 NSTI has developed a Child Safe Code of Conduct which provides guidelines for NSTI members on the expected behavioural standards and responsibilities whilst participating at NSTI. Members must sign and agree to abide to the Code of Conduct before being accepted to participate in the production. NSTI has developed a Supervision of Children Code of Conduct for their appointed Child Safety Supervisors to read, agree to abide and sign prior to commencing their role as a NSTI supervisor.
- 2.5 Risk assessments are completed before any production, event, activity or program at NSTI. When completing these NSTI enforce a strong focus on preventing, identifying, and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- 2.6 NSTI's Privacy Policy outlines the company's obligations regarding information sharing and recordkeeping.

3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

- 3.1 At NSTI when a child or young person seeks to be involved in a NSTI production, activity or program, active steps are taken to inform the child/ren, young people and their families about their rights, the steps NSTI takes as a company to provide safety to the child/ren and young people (e.g. Child Safety Policy, Codes of Conduct and various consent forms), and provide all related information for the production, activity or program. This is to allow them to make an informed decision on their participation at NSTI.
- 3.2 NSTI strives to make their productions feel safe, fun, inclusive and family friendly and promotes age and context appropriate peer-to-peer engagement and friendship within their members so no member feels isolated.

- 3.3 When children and young people are in a production with exposure to adult themes, NSTI will obtain consent from Parent/Guardians before discussing relevant related information in an age-appropriate way to the children and young people and provide a safe environment for debriefing and information to external programs to families when required.
- 3.4 NSTI's Reporting Procedure informs members of signs children and young people may display of harm.
- 3.5 NSTI provides opportunities for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns during productions, events, activities and events.
- 3.6 By providing these opportunities NSTI seeks to:
 - 3.6.1 Encourage and empower children to express their views, raise concerns or complaints and involve them when making decisions that relate to them in the production
 - 3.6.2 Listen respectfully to their views, concerns, complaints and decisions
 - 3.6.3 Ensure children know their rights and the expected behaviour of adults, children and young people
 - 3.6.4 Ensure NSTI members dealing with children and young people are skilful in encouraging their participation
 - 3.6.5 Provide clarity, transparency, consistence to families and members about NSTI's child safe approach and to provide relevant information to all
 - 3.6.6 Explain and make clear what children and young people can do and who they can go to if they feel unsafe
 - 3.6.7 Value diversity and not tolerating any discriminatory practices

4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

- 4.1 NSTI require Parent/Guardians to participate in decisions affecting their children by signing consent forms (e.g. media & photography, Exposure to Adult themes and Supervision) and ensuring that they understand NSTI's obligations in regard to their child's safety and wellbeing through NSTI's policies and code of conducts.
- 4.2 NSTI aims to provide clarity, transparency, consistence to families and members about NSTI's child safe approach and to provide relevant information to all members, families and the wider community
- 4.3 NSTI encourages members, families and the community to provide feedback when reviewing NSTI's policies and procedures through both informal and established feedback and reporting procedures.
- 4.4 NSTI provides families, children, and its members information on the expected role, activities, responsibilities and behaviour during a production, timely rehearsal schedules, the rights of parent/guardians, children and young people regarding supervision and requirements as determined by Victorian regulations, and information about NSTI's commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people, including the child safety complaints and reporting procedure and who they can approach if they have concerns or feel unsafe.

5. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.

- 5.1 NSTI acknowledges the diverse circumstances of children and young people and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- 5.2 At NSTI children and young people are informed in a culturally safe, accessible, and clear way of how and/or who to access for information and support if they have a complaint and how the complaint will be managed.
- 5.3 All children and young people, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights and are respected at NSTI.

5.4 NSTI provides and promotes a culturally safe environment for all First Nation children and young people.

6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

6.1 NSTI has a recruitment policy, duty statements and job descriptions that indorses child safety and wellbeing as a primary consideration in all decisions regarding the recruitment and engagement of positions within the running of the company.

6.2 At NSTI all members are required to have a current working with children check or equivalent to be involved in any of NSTI's productions, events, activities and programs.

6.3 All NSTI committee of management and production team members must complete an induction which includes child safety training, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations, reading and signing the codes of conduct so all know their responsibilities to children and young people.

6.4 NSTI is committed to child safety and wellbeing, including the requirements of NSTI's Child Safety Policy and maintains a high focus when providing induction and training for supervision and NSTI's management and members.

7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

7.1 NSTI has an accessible, child-focused Reporting Procedure that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of all NSTI members. It explains NSTI's approach to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct, and what NSTI and its members obligations are with regard to reporting these complaints, breaches and reports.

7.2 NSTI's policies and procedures relating to concerns, conflicts, incidents, complaints and child safety are all published on our website for children and young people, families, members, and the wider community to easily access at any stage and reporting procedure information is provided during induction and training programs.

7.3 NSTI take all complaints seriously especially with regards to the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people and respond to them promptly and thoroughly.

7.4 NSTI's policies and procedures relating to concerns, conflicts, incidents, complaints and child safety clearly address NSTI's obligations to reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities (e.g. Police, CCYP), when by law the complaint requires reporting, and NSTI commitment to cooperating fully with law enforcement when required.

7.5 The NSTI Child Safety Officer ensures that when a complaint, concern or allegation is received that all requirements relating to the internal and external reporting, privacy, and confidentiality law obligations are met.

8. Volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

8.1 NSTI seeks to ensure that all NSTI Committee of Management and Production Team members and designated Child Safety Supervisors participate in an induction with regard to training and support to implement NSTI's child safety and wellbeing policy at beginning of every production, activity, event or program.

8.2 During the induction NSTI members will receive training and information to identify and recognise indicators of child harm, including harm caused by other children and young people.

8.3 Key NSTI members including but not limited to NSTI Child Safety Officer, Child Safety Supervisors and Production Manager, receive training and information to

respond effectively to child safety and wellbeing issues and support NSTI members who disclose harm.

8.4 NSTI Committee and Production Team Members and Supervisors receive training and information on the expected and respectful communication and interactions with all children and young people, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background.

9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

9.1 NSTI complete risk assessments in conjunction with their Work Health and Safety Policy and Social Media and Communication Policy to identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

9.2 NSTI's Social Media and Communication Policy clearly articulates the standards, expectations and requirements relating to the safe and appropriate use of the online environment in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct, this Child Safety Policy and applicable laws relating to online safety.

9.3 NSTI's Work Health and Safety Policy articulates NSTI's approach, responsibilities and risk management when identifying hazards and risks on NSTI premises, at rehearsals or before a production begins.

9.4 Where NSTI enters a membership, or a hirer's agreement with other parties, we ensure that those parties have appropriate policies and procedures in place ensuring the safety and privacy of children and young people.

10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

10.1 This Child Safety Policy will be reviewed once a year or sooner in the event of regulatory change or amendments to standards or following significant incidents if they occur. The review will include the feedback from children, parent/guardians and NSTI members.

10.2 All complaints, concerns, and safety incidents are taken seriously and investigated according. Following the reporting procedure NSTI committee will analyse and identify any risks, causes or systemic failures to ensure continuous improvement.

10.3 NSTI is committed to being consistent, show clarity and be transparent with its members, families and the wider community. As such we are committed to communicating the improvements and reviews of our policies via processes such as our online services (e.g. website), newsletters and email correspondence.

11. Policies and procedures document how NSTI is safe for children and young people.

11.1 NSTI's Child Safety Policy, Code of Conducts, and Reporting Procedure are the first points of communication for NSTI's commitment to Child Safety and our obligations to children and young people.

11.2 All of NSTI's policies and procedures are available on our website or copies can be accessed via email numurkahsingersinc@gmail.com. All are clearly documented, easy to understand and reviewed regularly.

11.3 NSTI's committee of management maintains a constant review and research on legislative bodies for development and changes of policies and procedures to ensure our approach to providing to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people are effective and relevant.

11.4 NSTI's committee of management promote and model compliance with policies and procedures as their highest priority within the company.

- 11.5 Through training and information, NSTI ensures that all members understand and demonstrate their obligations and behaviours to NSTI's policies and procedures.

Guidance on specific child health, safety and wellbeing issues

This section of the policy provides guidance on specific child health, safety and wellbeing issues relevant to NSTI as a live performance company, and a producer of productions, programs, events and experiences that children may engage in or may be cast in as child performers.

Exposure to Adult Themes

NSTI will discuss potentially distressing, controversial or negatively influential material or themes with parents/guardians as part of obtaining written parental consent for the auditioning and casting of child performers.

Potentially distressing or adult content will be clearly explained to child performer(s) as part of the rehearsal process, and all efforts will be made to minimise a child's exposure to potentially upsetting material.

Regular briefing, debriefing and ongoing monitoring of those involved will occur during the entire rehearsal and performance period.

Child performers will not ever be placed in a role or situation that is inappropriate to the child, having regard to the child's age, culture, religion, maturity, emotional or psychological development, lived experience and sensitivity.

Content Warnings and Advice

Parent or guardian discretion must be exercised to ensure that children attending performances or other activities at NSTI are not exposed to content which may be unsuitable for them having regard to the child's age, culture, religion, maturity, emotional or psychological development, lived experience and sensitivity.

Based on the information available to NSTI about the content of productions, NSTI will support the exercise of parent or guardian discretion by:

- Providing guidance around the suitable age for performances on the media and marketing material, NSTI website and social media and ticketing website
- Placing content warning signage in the foyer

Auditions and Casting

NSTI aims to ensure that any casting and audition process it conducts for child performers is a safe and positive experience by:

- Informing parent/guardians in the production information pack of relevant production details and how issues are managed including:
 - Details regarding choreography, content, and involvement of potentially frightening or confusing elements
 - Details on how the potential hazards, risks or negative effects of identified issues are mitigated
 - A statement that parent/guardians are encouraged to discuss issues with children and express any concerns they may have with the relevant point of contact (Producer, Director, Child Safety Officer, President)
- Allowing children to meet supervisors and audition panel members in a friendly and unthreatening environment
- Having auditions conducted by appropriately experienced members

- Allowing children and parent/guardians adequate time to discuss and raise any concerns they may have
- Avoiding casting a child where NSTI audition panel members have reasonable belief the child might have been pushed past their limits by a member of family
- Notifying children of success or otherwise as soon as possible
- Providing a positive audition experience for children that will build their confidence
- Ensuring castings are transparent, procedurally fair, and merit based. 'Special' or 'favourable' treatment of children during casting is not permitted.

Using Images of Children

NSTI aims to protect the safety and privacy of child performers by:

- Obtaining informed written consent, prior to taking or publishing images, from a parent/guardian (if the child is not old enough to provide consent) and the child (if old enough to provide consent) for the use of images of child performers, and providing parent/guardians with details on how and where the images will be published, and if images will contain identifying or personal information about the child (e.g. name). Where a child is subject to any form of Protection Order, consent must also be gained from the appropriate party.
- Informing parent/guardians if NSTI wants to film or take photos of children for rehearsal purposes
- Making sure photographers are aware that any images taken will remain the property of NSTI and cannot be used for other purposes
- Making sure photographers are not left unsupervised with children and do not have individual access to children
- Avoiding the use of images of children in minimal clothing (e.g. revealing costumes) or sexualised poses
- Providing parent/guardians with details of who to contact if they have concerns or complaints around the use of inappropriate images or inappropriate behaviour in the taking or publishing images

NSTI aims to protect the safety and privacy of other children who engage with NSTI including child audience members, workshop participants and child visitors by:

- Only publishing images that do not contain identifying information about children (e.g. school uniform, name)
- Making sure photographers are aware that any images taken will remain the property of NSTI and cannot be used for other purposes
- Making sure photographers are not left unsupervised with children or have individual access to children
- Providing parent/guardians with details of who to contact if they have concerns or complaints around the use of inappropriate images or inappropriate behaviour in the taking or publishing images

Any use of images is also subject to the requirements set out in NSTI's Privacy Policy

Supervision of Children

At NSTI it is a requirement that children 15 years of age and under are to always be under the supervision of a responsible adult (20 years and over) known as Child Safety Supervisors. For children aged 16 to 19 years old, parental discretion should be exercised and written consent given regarding whether they can attend NSTI, including performances, without supervision.

All children will be expected to be signed in on the sign in sheet upon arrival at NSTI premises by a parent/guardian (children over the age of 16 may sign themselves in). This is for safety reasons and allows the Child Safety Supervisors an accurate account of who is

present in the event of an emergency. Children will also be required to be signed out at the end of a rehearsal or performance.

During rehearsals when children are required for a specific purpose (e.g. costume fittings, blocking of a scene on stage) the Child Safety Officers will maintain a constant line of sight to that specific child until they return to the group.

NSTI must have Working with Children (WWCC) Checks or equivalent (e.g. VIT) paperwork for all members over the age of 18 (cast, crew and production teams) and all supervising team members involved in all programs, performances and activities.

Children should not be present in side stage areas during performances unless they are under direct supervision of a Child Safety Supervisor and are waiting to walk onto stage. A safe space in the Green Room will be maintained with restricted access to authorised personnel only for the duration of the performance.

Working with Children Checks

All NSTI members over the age of 18 regardless of whether they will be working directly with children or not **MUST** have a Working with Children Check (WWCC) Victoria. Anyone who has obtained an equivalent WWCC in an Australian State other than Victoria are only able to engage in child-related work in Victoria for a maximum of 30 days in a calendar year. As most of NSTI's productions run for longer than this, these members will still require a Victorian WWCC.

All members who are engaged in child-related work (as defined in the *Worker Screening Act 2020*) and who are not exempt (e.g. registered teachers and police officers) are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this check.

The purpose of a WWCC is to access and monitor on an ongoing basis a person's suitability to work with children by examining offences recorded by a national criminal history and, where appropriate, disciplinary findings of professional bodies. WWCC cards are valid for five years unless revoked.

Any VIT registered teacher who undertakes any child-related work (this includes voluntary work) that is not teaching in a school or an early childhood service is required to notify WWCC of the organisation (Numurkah Singers Theatre Inc.) by whom they are engaged for that child-related work.

In the event that a NSTI members WWCC or VIT registration is suspended or cancelled that member must notify either the Child Safety Officer or President immediately. Like wise if at any time a complaint is made against them in relation to children at their workplace or another child-related organisation they must communicate this with either the Child Safety Officer or President. NSTI reserves the right to terminate a membership without notice.

It is an offence to engage in child related work without a WWCC. NSTI members must register Numurkah Singer Theatre Inc. as an entity on their WWCC profile.

Children on Stage

Children often participate in productions and programs at NSTI. Most frequently they perform in school holiday programs and TeePee Kids Theatre program. However, they may also be part of NSTI's main musical production all of which rehearse at the 'Singers Shed' and perform on the stage at the Numurkah Town Hall.

NSTI requires that where children will be on stage they should not be present in side stage areas during performances unless they are under direct supervision of a Child Safety

Supervisor and are waiting to walk onto stage. This is to reduce the physical risk associated with the set or other risks of abuse or harm.

Children Attending NSTI Under the Control of a Parent/Legal Guardian

Where children are attending NSTI as members of the public (e.g. as members of an audience), both the child and its parent/guardians are subject to the Terms and Conditions of Entry.

NSTI Members at Other Premises

NSTI members who engage/rehearse with children and young people at other locations besides 'the shed' (e.g. Numurkah Town Hall) are still required to follow this policy and supporting documentation, including the Code of Conduct and Complaints and Reporting Procedures.

NSTI members must report any child health, safety or wellbeing concerns that arise during their time at the other premises to NSTI's designated Child Safety Officer and to the relevant premise coordinator if applicable.

Governance and Leadership:

NSTI Committee has ultimate responsibility for overseeing and promoting a culture of child safety and for the detection and prevention of, and response to child abuse by virtue of it being responsible for:

- Providing leadership for a culture of accountability for child safety and wellbeing which is open to scrutiny and is continuously reviewed and improved
- Ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and code of conducts are in place and regularly reviewed
- Ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place
- Ensuring a Child Safety Officer is appointed within NSTI
- Ensuring recruitment and induction processes for all members are in line with this policy
- Providing support for all members in undertaking their child safety responsibilities, including providing adequate resources and training

A Child Safety Officer is appointed to lead implementation and act as the contact point and has the responsibility for:

- Keeping up to date and complying with relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy and informing all NSTI members of any changes impacting their responsibilities under this policy
- Ensuring that all NSTI members are aware of relevant laws, policies and procedures and of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct
- Ensuring that all members are aware of their obligation to report suspected abuse of a child or young person in accordance with this policy and procedures outlined
- Receiving and ensuring NSTI responds to reports of child abuse in accordance with this policy and applicable legislations and regulations
- Advising the President and NSTI committee of any child safety reports that have been made in relation to a NSTI member, whilst respecting the confidentiality of the child involved, and any associated reports made to external parties (e.g. police, CCYP)

Risk Management

Child safety is at the for front when completing risk assessments for events, productions and rehearsals. NSTI take the responsibility of effectively identifying and managing risks of child abuse or harm very seriously.

Physical and online environments will also be reviewed regularly to maintain safe environments and prevent any risks of abuse or harm forming.

Recruitment and Training

NSTI take all reasonable steps to ensure we engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This involves maintaining a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process. This includes:

- An interview and conduct thorough referee checks on directors (with their most recent theatre companies), child safety supervisors (designated to supervise or chaperone children) and production team members
- Develop clear duty statements and job descriptions for roles that involve working with children that state clearly our commitment to providing safe environments for children
- Require compulsory Working with Children Checks or equivalent checks for all members with or without direct contact with children and attain and keep a record of such checks
- Ensure supervisors recruited are suitably experienced and qualified to care for the safety and wellbeing of children, in accordance with their age and needs

Induction for committee and production teams will include child safety training, signing of NSTI's Code of Conduct and introduction to the Child Safety Officer at the beginning of each event, production and program or at the first meeting after the AGM.

The cost of Working with Children Check Renewals is the employee's/volunteer's responsibility.

NSTI will ensure that all NSTI members over the age of 18 hold or have proof of obtaining a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) or equivalent (e.g. VIT) or show proof of exemption (i.e. Police Officer).

Code of Conduct

NSTI's Child Safe Code of Conduct establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children. It outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by members towards children. It aims to protect children and reduce opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps members by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

When reviewing the code of conduct and this policy, we take into account any views or feedback from children, parents and/or guardians through informal and established feedback reporting procedures.

Privacy

NSTI is committed to protecting an individual's rights to privacy. All members information will be kept protected by adhering to the Information Privacy Principles contained within the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. Privacy will be maintained at all times and information is only disclosed on a need-to-know basis.

Concerns, Allegations, Complaints and Breaches

NSTI is committed to ensuring members, parent/guardians, caregivers and children feel enabled, empowered and supported to safely raise any concerns or complaints about any perceived risks to a child's health, wellbeing and safety including indicators of harm or abuse.

NSTI take all allegations seriously and has a clear, confidential process in place for responding to disclosures or observations of child abuse and to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our committee are trained to deal with allegations appropriately.

We work to ensure all children, families and members know what to do and who to inform if they observe abuse or are a victim of abuse, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

At NSTI all members have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if they have reasonable belief that an incident has taken place.

Factors contributing to reasonable belief may include:

- A child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- Observing suspicious behaviour

Anyone can report a child safety concern to NSTI's Child Safety Officer or the President who will record all safety concerns and allegations of abuse using our incident reporting procedures. All records are securely stored. Permission is not required from a parent/guardian of a child in order to make a report where child abuse is suspected.

If the Victorian Police decide to conduct an investigation of a report, all NSTI members must co-operate fully with the investigation.

At NSTI we take our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 years of age have an obligation to report that information to Victoria Police.
- **Mandatory reporting:** Any NSTI member who is a mandatory reporter by their profession (e.g. registered teacher) must comply with their duties.
- **Failure to protect:** Any member of NSTI who has reasonable belief of a substantial risk of child abuse and has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk but negligently fails to do so is committing an offence by law.
- **Reportable conduct:** The child safety officer of NSTI must be made aware of any allegations of physical and sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, significant emotional or psychological harm or significant neglect by any member towards a child. We are also legally required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) of the allegation.
- **Duty of Care:** If a child is abused by an individual associated with NSTI, NSTI is believed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove that it took 'reasonable precautions' to prevent the abuse in question.
- **Grooming:** Grooming offence targets communication, including online communication, with a child under the age of 16 or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. This offence targets predatory contact undertaken to prepare a child for sexual abuse at a later time with the groomer or another adult.

If a child is in immediate danger, call Victoria Police on 000.

Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme

A Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme was introduced to enable an independent body, the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), to have oversight over an organisation's systems and processes to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse.

The Scheme requires that NSTI notify CCYP about allegations of child abuse and child related misconduct made against NSTI members. This includes conduct that occurs outside the workplace, and historic conduct.

There are 5 types of 'reportable conduct' covered by the Scheme:

- Sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- Sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- Physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- Behaviour that causes significant emotional or physical harm
- Significant neglect

See

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets/>

Once NSTI's Child Safety Officer becomes aware of a reportable allegation against a member, they must by law notify the CCYP **within 3 business days**.

NSTI's President must also be notified about reportable conduct allegations within the same 3 business day window for notifying the CCYP.

Within 30 Calendar days the Child Safety Officer must provide the CCYP detailed information about the reportable allegation and any action NSTI has taken.

As soon as practicable, following investigations, a copy of the investigation findings and information about actions must also be provided to CCYP.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
NSTI Child Safety Officer	Act as a first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parent/guardians and NSTI members regarding the safety and wellbeing of children engaged in NSTI Investigate any complaints or breaches in accordance with the Child Safety Policy and related code of conducts Ensure child safety training is delivered to relevant NSTI members at the beginning of each event, production and program or at the first meeting after the AGM each year Ensure compliance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme
Child Safety Supervisors	Appointed to always supervise or chaperone child performers for the duration of rehearsals and performances Must have either a WWCC or VIT
President	Promoting a child-safe culture Overseeing the implementation of child safety policies Responsible for ensuring the committee fulfills its legal obligations related to child protection and risk management Another first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parent/guardians and NSTI members regarding the safety and wellbeing of children engaged in NSTI Investigate any complaints or breaches within the company
Production Manager	Ensuring a safe environment all involved in theatre productions, encompassing various aspects of child safety including adhering to legal requirements like child safe standards as well as implementing and monitoring safety protocols throughout the production process
Secretary	Ensure all NSTI members have a WWCC or equivalent

Stage Manager	Crucial role of ensuring child safety and well-being This includes maintaining a safe working environment, adhering, implementing and up-holding to child safety policies, and communicating effectively with all relevant parties which may involve coordinating with supervisors, ensuring appropriate changing areas, and managing backstage access Play a role in identifying and mitigating potential risks related to the child performers' involvement in the production
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Appendix A – Definitions

Key Term	Definition
NSTI	Numurkah Singers Theatre Incorporated, a not-for-profit amateur theatre company
CCYP	Commission for Children and Young People An established independent statutory body responsible for managing and overseeing the Reportable Conduct Scheme and Child Safety Standards
Child	Includes children and young people under the age of 19 years old (unless specified by law).
Child Abuse	All forms of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and other exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child. Child abuse covers any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child including where a child witnesses family violence or where a child is subjected to bullying or racial, cultural or religious abuse. Where abuse is repeated and ongoing such that it detrimentally impacts a child's development and well-being it is known as "cumulative harm". Where multiple abuse types are experienced at the same time it is known as "multidimensional harm"
Child-Related Work	Work within one or more of the occupational fields defined in the Act where the contact with children is direct, unsupervised, and part of a person's duties, not incidental to their work
Child Safe Standards	The 11 standards per the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act that explain the minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe as regulated by the Commission for Children and Young People
Child Safety Officer	The person appointed by the NSTI committee to take primary responsibility for providing all relevant information on child protection and safety to all members and is the first point of contact for all concerns
Child Safety Supervisor	NSTI member appointed to supervise or chaperone child performers at all times
Code of Conduct	A set of rules and guidelines that outline the expected behaviour and ethical standards for individuals in an organisation
Culturally and/or linguistically diverse background	A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their birthplace, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis
Cultural Safety	Encompasses the child being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being

	themselves, expressing their culture, their spiritual and belief systems, and they are supported by family
Direct Contact	For the purpose of Working with Children Check requirements around child related work, direct contact means any contact between a person and a child that involves – Physical contact Face to face contact Contact by post or other written communication Contact by telephone or other oral communication Contact by email or other electronic communication
Director	The person responsible for the interpretive aspects of a stage production The person who supervises the integration of all the elements, as acting, staging, sound and lighting, required to bring their vision of a production to life
Disability	A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden
First Nations	A person who is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community
Parent or Guardian	Includes any parent, legal guardian, caregiver or appropriate family member responsible for the child
Production Manager	The key individual responsible for overseeing all practical and logistical aspects of a theatrical production, ensuring it runs smoothly from concept to opening night They bridge the gap between the creative vision of the director and designers and the technical execution of the show, managing the budget, schedule, and various production teams.
Reportable Conduct	There is an allegation of 'reportable conduct' where a person has a reasonable belief that there has been: A sexual offence Sexual misconduct Physical violence Emotional and psychological harm Neglect Misconduct involving any of the above
NSTI Member	An individual who is a financial or life member of Numurkah Singers Theatre Inc.
Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme	A scheme that seeks to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their members
Working with Children Check	Assists in protecting children from sexual or physical harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for children are subject to initial and on-going screening process

Appendix B – Supporting Documentation

A) Forms and Records Management

Forms or records that are generated by the policy are as follows:

Form	Retention Period	Location
Working with Children Checks	For the duration of the NSTI member's involvement with the company, and/or until card expiration	
Child Safety Training Attendance Records	Two years after training has occurred	
Code of Conduct		
Complaint Form		
Exposure to Adult Themes Consent Form		
Cease of Supervision Consent Form		
Media and Photography Consent Form		

B) Related Policies, Operating Procedures and Legislation

Legislation
Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (VIC)
Working with Children Check Act 2005 (VIC)
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC)
Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2005 (VIC)
Wrongs Act 1958 (VIC)
Worker Screening Act 2020
Children Legislation Amendment Act 2019
Crimes Act 1958
Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
Reportable Conduct Scheme
The Domestic Animals Act 1994
Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Related Policy or Operating Procedure
Audition and Casting Policy and Procedure
Cease of Supervision Parent/Guardian Consent Form
Child Safe Reporting Procedure
Child Safety Code of Conduct
NSTI Complaint Forms
Exposure to Adult Themes Policy and Procedure
Exposure to Adult Themes Consent Form
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record
Media, Photography and Filming Policy and Procedure
Media, Photography and Filming Consent Form
Privacy Policy
Recruitment Policy and Procedure
Supervision of Children Code of Conduct
Social Media and Communication Policy
Work Health and Safety Policy

C) Compliance Assurance Activities

Activities related to assuring compliance with this policy are as follows:

Task	Documentation Method	Reference
Child Safety Training	Managed by NSTI Child Safety Officer	
Duty Statements and Position Descriptions for all roles including those intending to Work with Children	Managed by NSTI Secretary	
Working with Children Checks	Managed by NSTI Secretary	

Appendix C – Governance

A) Responsibility

Policy Owner	Child Safety Officer
Approving Body	Numurkah Singers Theatre Incorporated Committee of Management (NSTI)

B) Document Management

Document Title	Child Safety Policy and Procedure
Document Type	Policy and Procedure Guidelines
Creation Date	8/9/2025

C) Version Control and Charge History

This policy will be reviewed once a year after the post implementation review below and following significant incidents if they occur.

As part of the reviewing process improvements to the policies, procedures and child safe practices will be taken from the following considerations:

- Analysis of complaints, concerns, safety incidents and significant breaches of policy
- Feedback from members, children, families and communities through both informal and established feedback and reporting mechanisms
- Implementation of Child Safe Standards as revised on CCYP website

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved By	Amendment
1.0		NSTI	First Version
Post Implementation Review			
Due Date			8/9/2026
Commission for Children and Young People of Victoria Review			
Due Date			8/9/2026