



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Aligned with the NSW Child Safe Scheme and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations | Version 2.0 | Review annually

Statement of Commitment

NVA. | New Voices Australia is unconditionally committed to the safety, wellbeing, and best interests of every child in our programme. We believe every child has the right to feel safe, respected, heard, and protected at all times. Child protection is a shared responsibility, and all NVA. directors, staff, contractors, volunteers, and participating families are expected to uphold this commitment without exception. The welfare of children will always be the paramount consideration in all decisions made by NVA.

This policy is aligned with the NSW Child Safe Scheme, the 10 NSW Child Safe Standards (Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Act 2021), and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments.

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out NVA.'s approach to child protection and safeguarding. It applies to all directors, staff, contractors, volunteers, parents, guardians, and others who engage with NVA. activities, including rehearsals, recording days, filming days, performances, excursions, online activities, and all other programme-related engagements.

2. The 10 NSW Child Safe Standards

NVA. is committed to implementing the 10 NSW Child Safe Standards. These standards underpin this policy and all NVA. safeguarding practices:

- Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture
- Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously
- Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
- Equity is upheld and the diverse needs of all children and young people are respected
- People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safe values
- Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused
- Staff and volunteers are equipped with knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe
- Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for harm
- Implementation of child safe practices is continuously reviewed and improved

- Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

3. Definitions

- Child — any person under the age of 18 years.
- Child abuse — includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, neglect, exposure to domestic violence, and grooming.
- Grooming — behaviour intended to gain the trust of a child or their family in order to facilitate abuse.
- Mandatory Reporting — the legal obligation under NSW law to report a reasonable suspicion that a child is at risk of significant harm.
- Reportable Conduct — conduct by an employee or volunteer that must be reported to the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, including sexual offences, excessive physical discipline, and significant emotional or psychological harm.
- Young Artist — any child enrolled in the NVA. programme.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 NVA. Directors

- Ensure this policy is implemented, communicated, and reviewed at least annually
- Maintain a safe environment for all Young Artists at all NVA. activities
- Act as the primary point of contact for all child safety concerns and disclosures
- Ensure all staff and volunteers hold a valid NSW Working With Children Check prior to commencing any child-related role
- Maintain accurate, confidential records of all incidents, concerns, and reports
- Report all mandatory reporting obligations and reportable conduct as required by law

4.2 Staff and Contractors

- Hold a current, verified NSW Working With Children Check (WWCC) before commencing
- Adhere to this policy and the NVA. Code of Conduct at all times
- Never be alone with a single child in an isolated, unsupervised setting
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with all Young Artists
- Report any concerns, disclosures, or incidents to an NVA. director immediately
- Participate in child safety training as directed by NVA.

4.3 Parents and Guardians

- Supervise their own child outside of scheduled NVA. session times, including transport

- Notify NVA. of any relevant medical, welfare, or safety information relating to their child
- Treat all NVA. staff, volunteers, and other families with courtesy and respect
- Not film or photograph other children during NVA. activities unless explicitly authorised
- Report any concerns about child safety or welfare directly to an NVA. director

5. Code of Conduct for Adults

All adults involved in NVA. activities agree to:

- Treat every child with dignity, respect, and sensitivity at all times
- Use only age-appropriate language in all interactions with children
- Never engage in physical contact beyond what is appropriate in a performing arts context (e.g. directing stage positions, warm-up exercises)
- Never communicate privately with a child outside of official NVA. group channels without a parent or guardian included
- Never share images or recordings of any child without explicit written parental consent
- Avoid being alone with a single child in any setting that cannot be observed by others
- Never use language that is demeaning, sexualised, threatening, or discriminatory
- Immediately report any conduct that appears to breach this policy

6. Children's Rights and Voice

NVA. is committed to ensuring children are heard and respected within our programme. Young Artists have the right to:

- Be told what to expect from their participation in NVA., in language appropriate to their age
- Raise concerns or complaints without fear of penalty or exclusion
- Have concerns taken seriously and responded to promptly
- Have a trusted adult present or contacted if they feel unsafe

Where appropriate, NVA. will seek the views of Young Artists in decisions that affect them, including programme design.

7. Recognising and Responding to Abuse

7.1 Indicators of Concern

NVA. staff and volunteers should be alert to possible indicators of abuse or neglect, including:

- Unexplained or recurring injuries
- Significant or sudden changes in behaviour, mood, or engagement
- Withdrawal, fearfulness, anxiety, or expressions of distress
- Direct or indirect disclosures by the child

- Signs of neglect, including hunger, poor hygiene, or inappropriate clothing for the conditions
- Concerning behaviour by an adult towards a child

7.2 Responding to a Disclosure

If a child makes a disclosure to an NVA. staff member, director, or volunteer:

- Stay calm and listen actively without interrupting
- Reassure the child — let them know they have done the right thing
- Do not promise confidentiality — explain honestly that you may need to tell someone who can help
- Do not question or probe beyond what the child has volunteered
- Record what was said as accurately as possible immediately after the conversation
- Report the disclosure to an NVA. director without delay

Do not attempt to investigate the concern yourself. The role of NVA. staff and volunteers is to listen, record, and refer — not to investigate.

7.3 Mandatory Reporting

All NVA. directors, and any staff members holding a mandatory reporting obligation under NSW law, are required to report to the NSW Child Protection Helpline (13 36 27) if they form a reasonable suspicion that a child is at risk of significant harm. This obligation exists regardless of who the alleged perpetrator is, and regardless of whether the concern was disclosed directly or observed. When in doubt, report.

7.4 Reportable Conduct

NVA. is subject to the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme. If an allegation is made about the conduct of an NVA. employee or volunteer, directors are required to notify the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian. The subject of the allegation will be stood down from all duties pending investigation, and NVA. will cooperate fully with any statutory process.

8. Working With Children Check (WWCC)

All NVA. directors, staff, and volunteers who have direct contact with children must hold a current NSW Working With Children Check. Clearance must be verified against the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian register prior to commencement. Any expired or revoked clearance results in immediate suspension from all child-related duties until clearance is reinstated.

NVA. maintains a register of all current WWCC numbers and expiry dates, which is reviewed at the commencement of each programme term.

9. Photography, Filming, and Digital Safety

NVA. operates a filmed performing arts programme. The following rules apply to all content involving Young Artists:

- Only NVA.-authorised staff and production crew may film or photograph Young Artists during NVA. activities
- Parents and guardians may not film or photograph other children during rehearsals or filming sessions
- Written parental consent is required before any child's image is published
- Children's full legal names will not be published without separate explicit written consent
- Children will not be tagged on social media without specific, separate written consent from their parent or guardian
- Location data (geotagging) will not be associated with any published content featuring a child
- All digital content featuring children will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised NVA. personnel
- AI tools will not be used to train, synthesise, clone, or replicate a Young Artist's likeness, voice, or performance without separate written consent

10. Online Safety

NVA. recognises that digital platforms are central to its programme and to communication with families. To protect Young Artists online:

- NVA. - administered WhatsApp communications are only ever with parents and guardians, never the child.
- NVA. will not publish content that could enable a child to be identified or located without consent
- Any concerns about online safety, inappropriate online contact, or digital misuse must be reported to an NVA. director immediately

11. Cultural Safety and Inclusion

NVA. is committed to the safety and inclusion of all children, regardless of cultural background, religion, language, ability, gender identity, or family circumstance. NVA. acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work. We are committed to ensuring our programme is culturally safe for all First Nations children and families.

NVA. will take additional care to ensure that children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and other children with specific needs are equally protected and included in all aspects of this policy.

12. Complaints and Concerns

Any person — child, parent, staff member, or volunteer — can raise a child safety concern with an NVA. director at any time. NVA. will:

- Acknowledge the concern promptly
- Treat the person raising the concern with respect and without retaliation
- Assess and respond to the concern in accordance with this policy
- Keep the person informed of any relevant outcomes to the extent appropriate

If a concern is about an NVA. director, the person may contact the NSW Child Protection Helpline (13 36 27) or the Office of the Children's Guardian directly.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following any significant incident, change in legislation, or recommendation from a review process. All updates will be communicated to NVA. staff and made available to families on request.

14. Key Contacts

NVA. Directors

Jessica Westcott — jessica@newvoicesaustralia.com.au

Prudence Holloway — prudence@newvoicesaustralia.com.au

NSW Child Protection Helpline

13 36 27 (24 hours, 7 days)

NSW Police — Emergency

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NSW Office of the Children's Guardian

www.ocg.nsw.gov.au | (02) 9286 7276