

# APDA Club Member Child Safety Policy

## PURPOSE

This Child Safety Policy is issued by PYMBLE PHYSIE AND DANCE (the Club) for the purpose of outlining its standards and procedures for ensuring child safety, in line with APDA Ltd's requirement that all member clubs have suitable child protection policies and procedures.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- a) Provide guidance on reporting obligations for those adults within the Club who know or suspect that a child within the Club is or has been subjected to child abuse;
- b) Outline the Club's requirements for adults, both employees and volunteers, who work with children within the Club to undergo appropriate checks and hold necessary clearances for working with children and vulnerable people, and to undertake appropriate training on child protection;
- c) Outline the Club's standards of conduct when dealing with children.

## APPLICATION

This policy applies to everyone involved in the Club, including individual members, teachers (registered and assistant), parents and guardians of members, club office holders, contractors and volunteers.

This policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person following the end of their association or employment with the Club. This means that, even if a person is no longer club member (or parent/guardian), teacher or volunteer with the Club, and there are concerns about that person's behaviour towards a child, that person's behaviour may be dealt with in accordance with this policy.

This document is for general publication to everyone involved in the Club.

This document should be read in conjunction with the APDA Ltd Child Safety Policy.

## POLICY STATEMENT

- a) The Club is committed to providing a safe and positive environment, as far as reasonably practicable, for its members, particularly children, to experience physie and dance.
- b) The Club considers that the health, safety and wellbeing of children takes priority over all other competing considerations. The Club considers that this is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its members, and to protect the image and reputation of the sport, the Club, and APDA Ltd.
- c) The Club has a zero tolerance approach to child abuse and is committed to protecting children from abuse and neglect to the greatest extent possible.
- d) The Club recognises that its teachers, officials and volunteers are in a privileged position to have a positive influence in the lives and experiences of its child members, and that teachers and others can be a safe avenue for a child to report child abuse that occurs either within the Club, APDA Ltd, or outside these organisations. It is important the teachers, officials and volunteers have appropriate guidance and support to manage such reports, in order to support child members of the Club.

- e) The Club supports the active participation of all children. It listens to their views, respects what they say, and involves them when making decisions, where appropriate, especially about matters that will directly affect them (including their safety).

## ENGAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

- a) The Club requires that the following people, whether paid or volunteer, have a 'working with children' clearance, in accordance with the relevant NSW legislation:
- Registered Teachers
  - Assistant Teachers
  - Club owners, office holders
  - Judges
  - Volunteers who may have unsupervised access to children
  - Contractors
  - Parent helpers at competitions (including interclubs hosted by the Club, and zone and national competitions)
- b) The Club Principal may require other adults involved in the club, who may have unsupervised access to children, to hold a 'working with children' clearance.
- c) If there are costs associated with obtaining or renewing a 'working with children' clearance, the Club will not meet the cost of that clearance.
- d) If you are required to have a 'working with children' clearance under this policy, and your clearance is suspended, revoked or it expires without being renewed, you must advise the Club Principal as soon as reasonably practicable (usually, as soon as you become aware). The Club will advise APDA Ltd of the suspension.

If this happens, you must not engage with children within the Club (or more broadly within APDA Ltd) without an adult present, unless and until your clearance is reinstated.

If your clearance has been suspended or revoked for any reason (including if you are under investigation by the relevant State authority), the Club Principal and/or APDA Management may decide to suspend or terminate your individual membership with APDA, or Registered or Assistant Teacher status, or other appropriate action.

- e) The Club will ensure that any new teachers, contractors, office holders, employees or volunteers are not engaged until appropriate screening activities are completed. This will include confirming that the individual has a 'working with children' clearance by checking with the relevant State authority. It may also include:
- Police or criminal history check;
  - Interview;
  - Referee checks.

The Club Principal will decide what checks are necessary, depending on how regularly the person will be involved in club activities, what opportunity they will have for unsupervised access to children, and the person's history with the club.

- f) The Club Principal will ensure that all new/prospective and existing teachers, employees, contractors, volunteers and office holders have access to this policy, and have read and understood it as part of the engagement process.

## TRAINING

- a) The Club supports its Registered and Assistant Teachers, Club Principals and Office Holders to undertake training relating to child protection. Where APDA Ltd requires or facilitates training, the Club will ensure that these people undertake that training, whether in person through some other method, and if a person fails to do so, the Club Principal will require that the person stands down from their role until the training is complete.

## BEHAVIOURAL STANDARDS

- a) Adults involved with the Club must comply with behavioural standards set by APDA Ltd (under the APDA Child Safety Policy, APDA Code of Conduct, and Social Media Policy).

## CLASSES AND CLUB EVENTS

- b) Teachers and Club Officials will monitor class venues to ensure that only known adults attend classes, and the Club requests that parents/guardians assist in ensuring that only known adults attend classes.

Parents/guardians should advise the class teacher if there are visiting adults attending class (for example, friends or grandparents).

- c) Parents/guardians must come into the class venue to collect children after class. Children must be collected immediately at the end of class, as teachers cannot properly supervise children from earlier classes while teaching other classes.

Teachers will remind children not to leave the class venue until their parent/guardian has come in to collect them (unless, for example, the child knows that they are to go home with a classmate).

- d) If a child needs to leave the class venue during class (e.g. to go outside the studio/hall to go to the bathroom) they are appropriately supervised while outside the venue.
- e) Photos and videos (including live stream videos to social media) are not to be taken in class without the permission of the class teacher. The class teacher will not grant permission if there are children who are unable to have their image published on social media. If permission is granted, a parent/guardian must ensure they only photograph or video their own child.

If you inadvertently photograph or video a child other than your own in class, you must not use or publish the photo or video without the consent of the other child's parent/guardian.

- f) Teachers will ensure that physical contact with students is necessary and appropriate (e.g. to correct a position or ensure the student is safe while stretching), and will explain the physical contact to the student.
- g) Teachers will respect boundaries set by children (particularly Tiny Tots and very young students), and will not force physical contact during class, and will also respond appropriately to a child who might be affectionate towards a teacher in class (e.g. by not embarrassing them or rejecting them).
- h) The Club will ensure there are appropriate arrangements for leotard try-ons, including ensuring that there are private change areas for children who wish to use them and ensuring that only known adults attend try-ons. The Club does not permit photos or

videos during leotard try-ons.

- i) The Club does not permit alcohol during classes or competitions. Social events run or encouraged by the Club will be managed to carefully consider the availability of alcohol and suitability of activities while children are present.

## COMPETITIONS

- a) Adults involved with the Club must comply with Competition and Event Conduct standards set out in section CP3.3 of the APDA Child Safety Policy, and in particular, must have regard to rules about:
  - access to marshalling areas;
  - photography and videoing;
  - not having alcohol at competitions.
- b) If the Club agrees to help your child with travel or attendance at competitions without you (the parent/guardian) being present, then:
  - You will need to make arrangements with the responsible Club adult in advance of the competition – please do not assume that the Club will be able to assist in all cases;
  - You will need to meet costs necessary to ensure that your child has their own room, and is not required to share sleeping arrangements with an adult;
  - The responsible adult, and other adults associated with the Club, will not be alone in accommodation or other rooms with your child without another adult present;
  - You will need to enter into a written arrangement with the responsible Club adult about the travel or competition arrangements.

## REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

- a) In the course of your involvement with the Club, you may reasonably believe that a child member of the Club needs protection from child abuse. If this happens and:
  - You are a mandatory reporter, then you must report the matter in line with your professional reporting obligations.
  - You are not a mandatory reporter, then you may make a voluntary report about the matter.

Note: in some jurisdictions it is an offence if you don't report a sexual offence against a child. If you are unsure whether you should report suspected child abuse, then you should contact the relevant State child protection agency or the police.

- b) If you believe that a child is in immediate danger, then you should call '000'. If a report is less time-critical, you can report to either your local police, or to the relevant State child protection agency.
- c) The APDA Procedure for Handling Allegations of Child Abuse provide further information on when APDA Ltd must be notified of a report being made about suspected child abuse.

### *How will the Club approach reports of abuse?*

- a) The Club supports and encourages a person to report suspected child abuse in accordance with this policy, if they form a reasonable belief about suspected child abuse, and make the report in good faith to the appropriate authorities. This support

applies regardless of whether the alleged offender is a teacher or member of the Club, or is someone outside of the Club.

- b) A person who makes a report in accordance with this policy will not be penalised by the Club or by APDA Ltd. In particular, a report will not constitute a breach of privacy by the person who makes the report.
- c) If an allegation is made against an employee or volunteer of the Club, the Club and APDA will follow the APDA Procedure for Handling Allegations of Child Abuse, and APDA and the Club will take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child is paramount.
- d) The Club will keep appropriate records of any reports of abuse.

#### BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

- a) If you don't comply with this policy, your behaviour may be in breach of the APDA Code of Conduct (as the behavioural standards here are consistent with the APDA requirements), and you may be investigated in accordance with the APDA Dispute Resolution Policy.
- b) In addition to action taken by APDA Ltd, the Club may also take whatever action it considers necessary and/or appropriate in the circumstances.

## ATTACHMENT A – DEFINITIONS

- **Child** means a person involved in the activities of the Club (including Individual Members and assistant teachers) who is under the age of 18 years (unless otherwise stated under the relevant State or Territory law applicable to the person).
- **Sexual offence** means any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child (or the child's carer, family or supervisor) to lower the child's inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.
- **Mandatory reporter** means a person who is legally required to make a report to the relevant State or Territory authority or the Police if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. Mandatory reporters may include school teachers, principals, registered psychologists, nurses, doctors and midwives, depending on the jurisdiction.
- **Child abuse** can be divided into four categories:
  - (a) **Physical abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of a physical injury, such as a non- accidental physical injury.
  - (b) **Sexual abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse, such as when a child is exploited, or used by another for his or her sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.
  - (c) **Emotional and psychological abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is or is likely to be significantly damaged; and
  - (d) **Neglect:** occurs when a child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly damaged. It refers to an omission, such as depriving a child of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.
- Child abuse includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child, in circumstances where the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child.
- **Reasonable belief** means that a reasonable person would, in the circumstances, believe that:
  - The child is in need of protection;
  - The child has suffered or is likely to suffer from significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and

- The child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

Circumstances that might cause you to have a reasonable belief might come about because of:

- The source of the allegation (e.g. the child tells you personally, or someone you trust indicates there is an issue);
- The facts and details disclosed to you;
- How the matter was communicated to you;
- Any background you may have about the child or the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief doesn't mean that you need proof, but it should be based on more than gossip, rumour or speculation.