



CHILD SAFE POLICY

Version 1



ROCKY HILL MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY
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ABOUT US



As Goulburn's only dedicated musical theatre group, Rocky Hill Musical Theatre Company (Rocky Hill MTC) provides a platform for children to perform in quality, locally produced, musical theatre productions. Our aim, as a not-for-profit, community based organisation, is to bring Goulburn's children and youth together through engaging and entertaining musical theatre programs. We strive to grow local talent and promote the Arts to people of all ages and backgrounds.

OUR INTENTION

This policy has been drawn up for the members, leadership team and anyone outside the company who has any direct contact with children in the company. It is designed to help those engaged with us, to reflect on how they work with children in our care and to ensure that protection of the child is built into any activity in which they are involved. Anyone under the age of 18 is considered a child or minor, by law.

As a company, we strive to support, engage and empower minors, through our musical theatre programs. Our aim is that this policy guides members and workers on how to behave when interacting and engaging with minors. The policy focuses on how we can build and maintain a child safe environment which is inclusive, transparent and promotes children's participation.

This document should be read alongside other relevant legislative and company policies and codes of conduct. It is important that all stakeholders understand their personal responsibility for protecting the minors with whom they interact.

POLICY'S PURPOSE

We are committed to promoting child safety, in accordance with the Children's Guardian Act 2019.



Office of the
Children's Guardian

We acknowledge that a minor's safety is a community responsibility and is everyone's business. The welfare of minors in our care is our first priority and we have zero tolerance towards any form of neglect or abuse.

We are committed to creating and maintaining a child safe and child friendly company where all minors feel valued and protected. We want them and their parent/guardian to know that we will listen to them respectfully and advocate for their right to feel safe.

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Rocky Hill MTC supports the active participation of minors in our educational programs, social activities, productions and programs.

We value diversity and inclusivity and invite minors from all backgrounds to partake in our programs. We encourage them to express their views and they are invited to make active choices about activities in our programs.



GOOD PRACTICE

Rocky Hill MTC values all our stakeholders' rights, especially those of minors in our care. We (meaning all stakeholders involved with the company) will, at all times, strive to:

- collaborate and work in an open, transparent environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations with minors.
- engage with all minors equally and with respect and dignity.
- maintain a safe and appropriate physical and emotional distance with minors and avoid inappropriate intimate relationships.
- strive to build balanced relationships based on mutual trust, open communication and respect which empowers them to share in decision making processes.
- strive to make learning and performing fun and enjoyable.
- ensure families that if any form of manual/physical contact or support is required of a minor, it should be provided openly and with the minor's permission (eg, blocking or demonstrating a dance move).
- ensure that all material (i.e scripts /scene content/photographs, film) are age appropriate and should not make a minor feel uncomfortable. Challenging content will be discussed openly with them.
- be role models to minors, always aiming to speak in a positive manner, politely and supportively, not only with them, but also with adults when in the presence of minors.
- give enthusiastic and constructive feedback, not negative criticism.

The following practices are NOT acceptable with or in front of children.

No person (minor or adult) should ever:

- engage in rough play, physical or sexually provocative activity.
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- use inappropriate language or swearing.
- make sexually suggestive comments to a minor or to other adults.
- bully a minor, threaten, intimidate or reduce them to tears, as a form of control or humiliation.
- allow allegations made by a minor to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not be acted upon.
- do things of a personal nature for children, that they can do for themselves.
- engage in any illegal drug/alcohol use with minors or be under the influence of any drugs/alcohol when around minors

MEDIA USAGE

In relation to photography and filming of minors during Rocky Hill MTC's events, we do not allow filming or photography of them, unless:

- Signed (or in some cases verbal) consent has been given, in advance, by a parent or guardian. This is in regards to footage to be used in an official company capacity. We may hire professionals to photograph/film for archival or marketing purposes.

Regarding the personal use of phone cameras, videos or other, we discourage individuals taking footage of minors, without the parent/guardian's express permission.

- Rocky Hill MTC is not responsible for what an individual shares on their private, social media accounts. If anyone has a concern regarding this and discovers an image has been used or distributed without their permission, they should seek guidance from a company leader.
- We ask that parent/guardians inform their own children of this policy and ensure they understand our guidelines before commencing a show or attending an event with us.
- We ask members to put mobile phones away during rehearsals to ensure no distractions.



RECRUITMENT

Our committee maintains a consistent screening process for our administrative roles, to ensure effective leadership practices. We take all reasonable steps to ensure that suitable people are engaged with the company. When undertaking pre-selection checks (for leadership, membership or volunteering) the following are included:

- Members/stakeholders must now notify the committee or crew and self-disclose any criminal record or any ongoing legal, personal, parental or guardianship issues, that may impact the safety of a minor, whilst in our care. Consent may need to be gained to seek information from other relevant bodies, regarding their right to have access to minors.
- Evidence of official photo identity is required by new people engaging with or joining the company.
- To ensure the safety of our minors, a compulsory requirement of our membership and volunteering is a WWCC (Working with Children Check).

During show productions, meetings are undertaken with the production crew to ensure they have the experience and awareness of how to work with children.

We also aim to have qualified teachers, carers or trained and experienced personnel, present at our events, which are focused on children's performance development.



TRAINING

Our policies are made publicly available and we expect stakeholders to familiarise themselves with them. All new members receive access to this policy and are provided opportunities to discuss it with the committee, to clarify their understanding.



Volunteers in shows will have a more senior supervisor from the production crew or committee assigned to support and supervise their work, to ensure they meet our Child Safe Policy Guidelines. Each show and/or children's program is required to have a Child Safety Contact, who reports back to the committee's Child Safety Officer.



Training of our leadership team is an ongoing process. Child safety is a standing agenda item at meetings, related to child-related activities. Members are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to the continuous improvement of child safe policies, procedures and practices in the theatre space. The Child Safety Officer guides and leads the team on matters related to child safety.



COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

We communicate our key messages and policies via our website, social media and email. Stakeholders, who will be engaging with children, are required to sign a form and acknowledge their commitment to child safety and their adherence to it, our policies and the member code of conduct.

RELEVANT POLICIES/ ACTS

Government

- The Privacy Act
- Children's Guardian Act 2019

Company Policies

- Membership Obligations and Code of Conduct Agreement
- Committee Handbook
- Complaints Procedures Document
- WHS Policy



REPORTING PROCEDURES

Our Complaints Procedures Document outlines the organisational procedures for minors and adults to raise concerns or complaints.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working with/for Rocky Hill MTC, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child neglect or abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns, through contact with the appropriate authorities. The company assures members that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concerns of neglect or abuse.

When there is a complaint, there may be three types of investigation:

1. A criminal investigation.
2. A child protection investigation.
3. A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

Any person who has a child safety concern or complaint should report their concerns directly to the relevant Child Safety Contact, who will liaise with the company's Child Safety Officer. We will investigate the complaint and report findings to relevant bodies, which may include the Department of Family and Community Services, the NSW Ombudsman, NSW Police and the Office of the Children's Guardian. Any complaints made are accepted and addressed in confidence, with respect to both parties involved.

REVIEW

Rocky Hill MTC reviews and updates all procedures and policies every two-three years. During the normal course of a show season or year, risks or issues may be identified and resolved. A risk register may be maintained by the committee.

This policy and its guidelines will be reviewed and incorporate comments and suggestions from a range of our stakeholders (minors and adults).

Date of Policy Implementation: September 2020

Version: 1

Written By: Alex Ridley, President and Child Safety Officer (reviewed by members and committee)

Date of Policy Review: February 2023 (or if legislation changes before this date)



Purpose. Passion. Performance.