CAPER
PERFORMING ARTS

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

At Caper School of Performing Arts (Caper), the safety, wellbeing and dignity of every child is our priority.

We are committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment where students can enrich their lives through dance while feeling safe, respected and valued.

Our studio is committed to maintaining a culture where children are listened to, families are respected, concerns are taken seriously, and every adult shares responsibility for protecting children.

PURPOSE
The purpose of this policy is to:
- Demonstrate our commitment to child safety.
- Outline the responsibilities of staff, volunteers, parents and students.
- Comply with the NSW Child Safe Standards and relevant legislation.

SCOPE
This policy applies to everyone involved with Caper, including:
- Employees
- Contractors
- Volunteers
- Student teachers
- Guest teachers
- Work experience students
- Parents and carers
- Students, and
- Visitors attending the studio.

Everyone is expected to contribute to maintaining a safe environment for children.

RESPONSIBILITIES
Everyone is expected to carry out the requirements specific to their role to keep children safe. This includes:
- Upholding our commitment to child safety.
- Reading, signing and upholding the behaviours set out in our Employee/Contractor Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Meeting requirements across all other child safe policies and procedures, including child safe recruitment practices and risk management.
- Taking part in our regular reviews of our child safe documents.
- Reporting all breaches of our policies or any allegations of child harm or abuse, and meeting all external reporting obligations.
- Completing all child safe training.

Please contact Kate Valdez (0402 328 721) with any child safety related questions or concerns.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES
The Child Safe Policy and WWCC Register are accessible via the App.

Students, parents and carers from diverse backgrounds and circumstances are encouraged to provide feedback on our child-related policies and procedures.

All students are encouraged to provide feedback on what makes them feel safe, supported and included.

DEFINITIONS OF HARM AND ABUSE

Psychological abuse (also known as emotional abuse)	This includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.

Physical abuse	This includes physical punishment, such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.
Sexual abuse	This includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material.
Grooming	This is a process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child.
Misconduct	This is inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse, but could indicate that abuse is occurring and would often be in breach of an organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct. This could include showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a child or an adult sitting with a child on their lap.
Lack of appropriate care	This includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.

CHILD SAFE PRACTICES
All staff are expected to model respectful, professional and appropriate behaviour at all times.

Staff will:
- Treat every child respectfully
- Provide an inclusive environment
- Use language appropriate to the child's age
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Act in the best interests of every child
- Immediately report any concerns regarding child safety.

Staff will not:
- Humiliate, ridicule or intimidate a child
- Use abusive or degrading language
- Engage in favouritism or grooming (or engage in any behaviour that could be interpreted as grooming such as gifts).
- Develop inappropriate personal relationships with students
- Transport students

Parents and carers are expected to:
- Support studio policies (for example, not contacting staff through Instagram and supporting child safe practices such as students remaining on the premises during a break between classes).
- Treat all children respectfully.
- Follow photography and supervision requirements.
- Contribute to a respectful studio environment.

Physical Contact:
Dance instruction sometimes requires limited physical guidance to teach safe technique, alignment, posture or injury prevention. Staff will ensure:
- Physical contact is kept to the minimum necessary (but generally altogether avoided).
- Teachers explain why assistance is required whenever practical.
- Verbal instruction and demonstration are used wherever possible (and instead of physical guidance).
- Physical guidance is always respectful and appropriate.
- Teachers respect a student's personal boundaries while ensuring safe participation.
- Classes are live-streamed to reception.
- Injuries must be reported to the receptionist and first aid administered in a safe space within lines of sight of other adults.
- Physical contact is never used as punishment, discipline, intimidation or reward.

Photography, Video Recording and Social Media:
Children's privacy is important. Photographs and video recordings may only be taken in accordance with studio policies and parental permissions.

To help protect the privacy of all students:

- Photography may be restricted during classes, examinations, performances or backstage areas.
- Images are only used for promotional purposes where appropriate permission has been provided.
- Parents and visitors are expected to follow any photography restrictions advised by the studio.
- Images are stored and managed responsibly.
- Staff must abide by the studio's Social Media Policy.

Digital Communication:
To maintain professional boundaries:

- Communication with families occurs through the studio office or approved studio communication platforms.
- Teachers do not communicate privately with students through personal social media accounts or private messaging applications.
- Staff use professional communication that is appropriate at all times.

Supervision:
Children are supervised while participating in scheduled classes and studio activities.

Parents and carers remain responsible for their children:

- Before classes commence,
- After classes conclude,
- Unless otherwise advised during organised studio events.

Parents are to ensure children are collected promptly at the conclusion of class.

Students are expected to inform a teacher before leaving class early.

Students on a break between classes are not permitted to leave the premises without a parent/carer. This includes walking down to Domino's.

Recruitment:
Caper School of Performing Arts is committed to employing suitable people to work with children. Staff at Caper:

- Hold a valid Working with Children Check.
- Undergo appropriate screening.
- Have access to child safe policies, information, training and documentation.

Staff are required to declare any secondary employments and ensure there are no conflicts of interest. Professional boundaries with students must be maintained at all times and staff must not participate in the lives of children outside their employment without a valid reason (for example, they may be a family relation to that child).

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
All complaints should be reported and everyone in our community must:

- Report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person immediately to Kate Valdez (0402 328 721).
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child is paramount when responding to a disclosure or allegation about a child being harmed or at risk.

Anyone making a report will be supported when doing so. Reportable complaints include:

- Criminal conduct
- Disclosures or reports of abuse
- Risk of Significant Harm
- Reportable allegations (an allegation that an employee has engaged in conduct that may be reportable conduct)
- Unacceptable behaviour around children and young people that breaches the staff Code of Conduct.

When concerns are raised, we will:

- Listen respectfully
- Record relevant information
- Assess the concern appropriately

- Comply with legal reporting obligations
- Cooperate with relevant authorities where required
- Support affected children and families throughout the process.

Caper teachers and employees are mandatory reporters. Our reporting practices will be regularly reviewed and updated to make sure they remain effective and comply with legislation.

CHILD SAFE DOCUMENTS
Child safe practices are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to reflect current legislation, best practice and the needs of our students and families.

Staff have access to all Child Safe documents via the online Staff Hub. It includes, but is not limited to, the staff Code of Conduct, First Aid Policy, Ambulance Action Plan, Incident Reporting, Food and Allergies Policy, Social Media Policy, Privacy Policy, Dismissals, Recording Attendance, Teaching Handbook, Complaints and Allegations Procedure, Guide to Child Safe Standards, and Fact Sheet for Identifying Abuse.

Parents have access to the WWCC Register and Child Safety Policy via the App.

Feedback from children, parents, staff and the wider studio community is welcomed and considered as part of our continuous improvement process.

POLICY REVIEW & COMPLIANCE
We understand and comply with a number of NSW child protection laws and schemes. These include:
- NSW Child Safe Scheme
- Children's Guardian Act 2019
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Next Review Date:
1 July 2027