

BELL SHAKESPEARE CHILD SAFE POLICY

Please note, this is a summary of Bell Shakespeare's Child Policy. If you require the full version, please contact learning@bellshakespeare.com.au

1. OVERVIEW

Bell Shakespeare places the highest priority on the care, wellbeing and protection of children. This Child Safe Policy outlines the appropriate standards of behaviour by adults toward children participating in Bell Shakespeare activities and forms part of our commitment to creating a child safe environment in-person and in our online programs. The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any possibility that abuse or harm could occur.

2. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this document the following definitions shall apply as per the LPA Guide to Child Safety in the Live Performance Industry:

Child: a person under the age of fifteen

Young person: a person aged fifteen years and over and under eighteen years of age

Workplace participant: any adult (over the age of eighteen) engaged by an organisation that may work with children at any time including but not limited to all employees, self-employed persons, contractors, subcontractors, teaching artists, volunteers and secondments who come in contact with children and young people.

Employer: organisation in the live performance industry that employs or engages children as a part of their business activities. This may include but is not limited to casting them in a production, attendance of and interaction with child audience members, providing instruction to children as a part of a class/program/workshop, using photos of children for media and promotion, using children for professional promotional material (photography, voice-overs, film commercials), providing internships or work experience and any other form of direct interaction with children performed as a part of the organisation's business activities.

Industry: refers to organisations in the live performance industry. This includes any live entertainment involving a performance art form including (but not limited to) dance, opera, music, circus, musical theatre and theatre. Organisations may be (but not limited to) performing arts companies, festivals, concert promoters or venues.

Parent / Carer / Legal Guardian: includes any parent, legal guardian, carer or family member responsible for a child

Child Safety Officer: an employee of Bell Shakespeare appointed to be responsible as the first point of contact for the child or young person, providing advice and support to the children, young people, parents, carers, legal guardians and other workplace participants on issues regarding the care of children.

Supervisor: qualified employee appointed to supervise or chaperone children (e.g. child performers, education program participants, work experience students). For the purposes of this policy the definition of supervisor includes chaperones unless otherwise indicated.

Note: the term child shall be used throughout this policy to refer to both children and young people. In the interests of best practice this policy shall apply to all persons under the age of eighteen engaged by Bell Shakespeare unless otherwise indicated.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all workplace participants and any adult person engaged by Bell Shakespeare that may work or interact with children.

This policy complies with Bell Shakespeare's obligations under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1988*, the *Children and Young Person's (Care and Protection) (Child Employment) Regulation 2015* and the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* as made or amended.

4. COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

All children working with or engaged by Bell Shakespeare have a right to feel safe, respected, valued and protected from harm. Children should be made aware of and feel confident in their rights and responsibilities.

Bell Shakespeare is strongly committed to the safety and well-being of all children that interact with our organisation as employees, audience members, education program participants or otherwise by creating and maintaining a child safe environment. The welfare of children entrusted under our care is our first priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse of any form.

Bell Shakespeare will take all necessary steps to prevent and protect children from abuse and neglect including:

- Physical abuse: purposefully injuring or threatening to injure a child
- Emotional abuse: an attack on a child's self-esteem e.g. through bullying, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child
- Sexual abuse: any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child
- Neglect: harming a child by failing to provide basic physical or emotional necessities

5. SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION AND SATISFACTION

Bell Shakespeare supports, enables and promotes the active participation of children by:

- Encouraging expression of and respecting the views of children and parents, carers and legal guardians
- Encouraging and empowering children and parents to raise any concerns or complaints
- Listening to and acting upon any concerns raised by children, parents, carers or legal guardians
- Seeking the input of children when making decisions about matters that concern them
- Ensuring children understand their rights and the appropriate behaviour expected of both adults and children
- Teaching children what they can do and who they can turn to if they feel unsafe
- Ensuring workplace participants dealing with children are skillful in facilitating their participation
- Valuing diversity and not tolerating any discriminatory practices

Bell Shakespeare aims to create an environment where children gain satisfaction from their interaction with Bell Shakespeare as employees, participants in a class, program, workshop or other activity by:

- Supporting children to feel respected and in control of their behaviour and work
- Ensuring children enjoy the overall experience of being engaged with a production or other Bell Shakespeare activity
- Encouraging children to assist each other in fulfilling their employment obligations and developing a positive sense of pride in their work e.g. discussing character development and stagecraft in groups and leading warmup activities
- Offering opportunities for children to derive personal satisfaction from and a sense of achievement throughout their experience and the relationships they make
- Encouraging children to develop self-discipline in balancing their commitment to their performance, their education and their social and family activities.

6. VALUING DIVERSITY

Bell Shakespeare values diversity and we do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. Bell Shakespeare is committed to protecting children engaged with our organisation from physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse as well as neglect, contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture, religion, gender (including transgender, non-binary and gender diverse status), sexual orientation or ability.

In our activities with children, Bell Shakespeare:

- Promotes the cultural safety of Indigenous and First Nations children
- Promotes the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Promotes the safety of children living with disability
- Promote the safety of LGBTI children

7. CODE OF CONDUCT

Bell Shakespeare has developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to all workplace participants on expected behaviours when in direct contact with or working around children.

All workplace participants must abide by the Code of Conduct and are asked to sign a written statement confirming that they have read, understood and will comply with the Code of Conduct. Bell Shakespeare retains a copy of all signed statements.

8. COMMUNICATION

Bell Shakespeare is committed to encouraging workplace participants, children, parents, carers and legal guardians to raise any concerns or provide their views on the well-being of children involved in our organisation.

Bell Shakespeare keeps workplace participants, parents, carers, legal guardians and children informed of Bell Shakespeare's child safe policies and procedures by:

- Ensuring that workplace participants have read, understood and are aware of their obligation under the Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and any other relevant policies and procedures
- Making relevant documents easily accessible by displaying child safe materials in areas of common traffic, uploading relevant documents to our website, distributing documents to all relevant individuals and having copies available upon request
- Providing children, parents, carers and legal guardians with relevant Plain English child safe materials

Parents, carers and legal guardians of children employed by Bell Shakespeare as performers are provided with at least one contact from Bell Shakespeare that is available to speak with them or to facilitate speaking with their children at any time during periods of work.

Bell Shakespeare provides parents, carers, legal guardians and child employees with information on:

- The child's expected role, activities, responsibilities and actions during their period of employment
- The child's progress throughout the production and timely notice of schedules
- The rights of parents and children regarding supervision and workplace conditions, as determined by relevant state regulation
- Bell Shakespeare's Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and any other relevant policies and procedures

Children are encouraged to communicate and ask questions regarding their employment.

9. ONLINE PROTOCOLS

Bell Shakespeare recognises the opportunities and challenges new technology brings to those working with children. We advocate applying the same principles, expectations and standards for interacting and communicating with children and adults online as in other areas of practice, maintaining personal and professional boundaries in communication with children and their families.

The term online safety is defined here as the process of limiting the risks to children when using any internet, digital and mobile technology. To this end Bell Shakespeare expects all workplace participants to adhere to the following:

- When communicating with children online observe the same rules of behaviour as if speaking with them in person; that is by being polite, respectful, not using coarse language and saying anything (using written word, images or icons) that could be regarded as sexual innuendo, bullying or discrimination. Workplace participants must maintain professionalism in their communications online and on mobile devices at all times.
- Do not use Bell Shakespeare equipment to create, view, download or share (with colleagues or children) illegal content including abusive images of children
- Contact with children online should be only with the knowledge and approval of the Child Safety Officer and strictly for Bell Shakespeare work purposes only
- If workplace participants identify online concerns – be they about illegal online content or suspicious behaviour by another adult online, then they must follow the Bell Shakespeare procedures for reporting those concerns
- Do not correspond or communicate with children on social media, unless this is part of professional Bell Shakespeare activity using a professional account or device
- Do not accept children as followers, friends or contacts on social media, or ask to become a follower, friend or contact of children on social media
- Do not give personal contact details to children, including personal mobile phone numbers, email addresses, home addresses, social networking accounts, personal websites and blogs, online image storage sites, passwords etc.
- Do not share personal details with any child on a personal social networking site

10. REPORTING

Bell Shakespeare believes workplace participants, parents, carers, legal guardians and children should feel enabled, empowered and supported to safely raise concerns or complaints about any perceived risks to a child's safety or signs of abuse.

Bell Shakespeare has developed a Complaints and Reporting Procedure to respond to any complaint of abuse or conduct not in keeping with this Policy or Code of Conduct, including means to take disciplinary action or rectify issues when necessary.

Any person that believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse should call 000.

If you have any questions about this Policy please contact Joanna Erskine, Head of Education, Bell Shakespeare at joanna@bellshakespeare.com.au or on 02 8298 9000.



Gill Perkins
Executive Director



Peter Evans
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