

## Child Protection Policy

Date Endorsed:	April 2022
Date for Review:	April 2024

### Statement

Noteable Theatre Company (NTC) is committed to providing a safe environment for children taking part in a production. NTC will ensure its committee and its members meet their obligations under the Ombudsman's Act 1974 (NSW) and the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 (NSW) in relation to matters of reportable conduct and misconduct that may involve reportable conduct.

It is NTC policy to support children by applying protective behaviour procedures and by complying with all child protection legislation and requirements. We are proactive in supporting children to be resourceful and confident in their own protective behaviour. All NTC members have a responsibility to behave in a way that ensures the protection and safety of children, treat children with dignity and respect and maintain an environment that is free from violence and exploitation.

### Commitment

Noteable Theatre Company will:

1. Ensure that each member of a production (including production team, cast and production crew) has completed a working with children check which will be verified online with the [Office of the Children's Guardian \(OCG\)](#).
2. Ensure that the company's policies, procedures and practices conform with the Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW) and the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 (NSW) which require the head of agency to:
  - 2.1. Make arrangements to require all members to inform them of any allegation or conviction of a child protection nature involving a member regardless of the member's views about the validity or otherwise of the allegation
  - 2.2. Investigate such reportable allegations or convictions, address any associated risks and make decisions on whether or not the allegation is sustained
  - 2.3. Notify the Ombudsman of allegations or convictions against members that may constitute sexual offences, sexual misconduct, physical assault, ill-treatment, neglect or behaviour that causes psychological harm to children, regardless of whether or not the allegation is production related
  - 2.4. Ensure members are aware that for an allegation to be notifiable to the NSW ombudsman, a child does not need to be at risk of harm and the requirement to report is regardless of whether the head of agency believes the allegation is false, vexatious or misconceived

### Procedures and Practice of Creating a Safe Company

To enable a safe production environment for children, NTC will follow the following procedures:

1. Members will be required to read this policy as part of their induction to the company
2. Committee members, cast members, production team or crew will not take a child out of sight of another adult
3. Children will never be withdrawn to rooms that can be locked
4. During production show runs a chaperone will be present at all times with children
5. During production show runs children will not share a bathroom with adults. A separate bathroom for use only by minors will be allocated
6. During production show runs children will be in a separate dressing room to adults and may not enter adults dressing rooms without the presence of a chaperone
7. During a production show run, children will be signed in and out by a parent or guardian. The chaperone will ensure the child is released into the care of a parent or guardian over the age of 18 years.
8. If a parent or guardian is delayed from collecting their child from rehearsals or shows, a minimum of two adults will remain present with the child.
9. Unauthorised persons are not permitted to view rehearsals or be backstage at any time that children are present

10. Unauthorised persons are not to take recordings or images of children at any time without parental consent
11. Members will not give out personal information about a child in the cast. Any enquiries no matter how insignificant must be asked in writing or in person and verified by the parent/guardian or committee member
12. Members will alert a committee member or the head of agency if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child who is part of the production has been exposed to harm or risk, including physical, sexual emotional abuse or neglect.
13. Committee will investigate any allegation and where applicable report to the NSW Ombudsman.
14. If the child or young person is in immediate danger phone 000 immediately

### **Obligation to Notify under the Reportable Conduct Scheme (NSW)**

Under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, members of NTC are not mandatory reporters (unless their job states otherwise) and are therefore not required by law to notify the government bodies if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at harm or risk, including physical, sexual emotional abuse or neglect. However, the procedures and practice stated in the policy require that you must report such suspicions to the committee.

The committee has an obligation to protect the children in their care and will investigate concerns appropriately. Committee members will seek guidance from the Reportable Conduct Enquiries Line ph. 02 8219 3800 and or the [Mandatory Reporters Guide](#).

### **Grounds for Notification**

Under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1988 (The Act) anyone who forms the belief on reasonable grounds through consultation with the [Mandatory Reporters Guide](#) that a child has been or is in danger of being at risk of significant harm should notify the Child Protection Helpline on ph. 132 111.

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect**

Once the committee has made the decision to report suspected abuse or misconduct it needs to be submitted as soon as possible and within 7 days of the incident with guidance from the Child Protection Helpline ph. 132 111 and online via the [Reportable Conduct Notification Form](#). Time is of the essence in such circumstances because physical indicators can disappear, and disclosures can be withdrawn (it is common for a child who has disclosed abuse to retract his/her statement under potential pressure following the disclosure) and the suspected abuse may still be happening.

### **Confidentiality**

Other Company Members outside of the committee members should only be informed of the decision to report if there is a compelling reason for them to be informed. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

### **Liability**

If you make a notification in good faith and on 'reasonable grounds', you will not be liable for defamation or legal action being taken against you and the report will not provide grounds for a civil action to be taken against you.

### **Relevant Legislation**

- Children and Young Person's (Care and Protection) Act 1988
- Ombudsman Amendment (Child Protection & Community Services Act) 1998

### **Sources**

- NSW Legislation <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au>
- Office of the Children's Guardian <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au>
- Mandatory Reporting Guide <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au>.