



## FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF HIGHLAND DANCING INC

# Child Safe Code of Conduct

### Commitment to child safety

At Far North Queensland Regional Committee of Highland Dancing Inc, we are committed to supporting the safety of all children, with a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. This includes a culture where preventing and reporting abuse is encouraged and supported.

All members and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children. This includes understanding and responding to children's diverse needs and cultural considerations.

Our Child Safe Code of Conduct sets out how we expect adults in our organisation to behave around children to help prevent harm and abuse in our physical spaces and online. Our Child Safe Code of Conduct identifies:

- 'I will' child safe behaviours that we consider acceptable
- 'I won't' behaviours that we consider unacceptable.

Engaging in unacceptable behaviour is a breach of our Child Safe Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action.

### Different types of child harm and abuse

Child abuse takes many forms. It can include psychological, physical and sexual abuse, grooming, misconduct and lack of appropriate care as defined below.

#### **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.



## FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF HIGHLAND DANCING INC

**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.

### **Neglect**

Failing to provide basic physical & emotional necessities, harming a child or putting a child at risk.

**Discrimination** Prohibited on grounds of: Age, disability, marital status, parental/carer status, physical features, political belief, pregnancy, race, religious belief, sex/gender, sexual orientation or sexual identity. This also includes indirect discrimination – requesting, assisting, instructing, encouraging another person to engage in discrimination.

**Victimisation** Where a person is subject to, or is threatened to suffer, any detriment or unfair treatment – because that person has or intends to pursue their legal rights under anti-harassment legislation.

## Acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in our organisation

The list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours below are in relation to interactions of members and volunteers with children who interact with our organisation's services, locations or activities.

### **I will:**

- treat all children with respect regardless of personal characteristics such as race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, cultural background, financial situation, disability, or other characteristics
- uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs
- make sure the needs of all children remain the paramount focus of any decision-making
- listen to and value the ideas and opinions of all children, and respond to them appropriately



## **FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF HIGHLAND DANCING INC**

- welcome all children and their families and carers, and ask them to participate in decisions around child safety
- actively promote safe and inclusive practices for all children, including those with diverse needs, circumstances and backgrounds, including children with disability
- adhere to the organisation's child safe policies, procedures and practices
- participate in all compulsory child safe training
- include a child's parent or carer in any direct online communication or correspondence.
- when transporting a child at work, take all reasonable steps to ensure at least two adults are travelling with the child at all times or put in place a suitable arrangement between my organisation and the parents or carers of the child. If the child is alone, they must sit in the back seat of the vehicle
- let the organisation know about any out-of-hours contact with any children in the care of our organisation or who interact with our services, and make sure there is a valid reason for this contact, and parents or carers are also aware of this contact.
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm and abuse, and report and act on any concerns or allegations (see reporting obligations below)
- report any conflicts of interest such as a relationship with a child that is outside the organisation
- raise concerns with the Child Safety Officer if risks to child safety are identified
- take a child seriously if they disclose harm or abuse and follow the correct procedures for responding to a disclosure 2 Child Safe Code of Conduct
- make sure breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct and any instances of concerning behaviour from adults are reported immediately
- respect the privacy of children, and their families, and keep all information about child protection concerns confidential
- encourage friendships and positive peer support
- Disclose any conflicts of interest that may affect my role
- Respect professional boundaries in physical contact, limited only to what is necessary for teaching dance safely
- Hold and maintain a valid Blue Card and notify AIDA Qld of any change to my status
- Complete regular child safety training as required by AIDA Queensland.

### **I won't:**

- condone or participate in unsafe, harmful or abusive behaviour towards children, including psychological, physical and sexual abuse, grooming, misconduct or lack of appropriate care
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- persistently criticise, denigrate or isolate a child
- use hurtful, discriminatory or offensive behaviour or language with children
- verbally assault a child, or create a climate of fear
- deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships
- engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child



## FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF HIGHLAND DANCING INC

- be alone with a child without supervision or adequate risk management in place
- enter change rooms without knocking and without another adult present.
- have contact after hours with children
- encourage a child to communicate with me in a private setting, including online or on social media
- give personal gifts or benefits of any kind to a child unless direct permission has been given from the parent or carer
- offer children alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs
- touch children in unnecessary or inappropriate ways
- share details of sexual experiences with a child
- use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- show sexual, violent or other inappropriate images to a child
- take videos or images of children interacting with the organisation or under the care of the organisation on a personal device without permission from the organisation and parents/carers
- share videos or images of children on social media without consent
- fail to report information to police or other relevant authorities if I know a child has been harmed or abused (see reporting obligations below).

### Concerning behaviours

**Concerning behaviours** are behaviours that on their own may not constitute a breach of our Child Safe Code of Conduct but when viewed together may indicate grooming behaviour.

These include:

- Showing favour to one child over others
- Babysitting children without prior consent from the organisation (babysitting outside the organisation is only allowed in exceptional circumstances when the child and their family or carer is known has a pre-existing relationship with the FNQRCHDI member or volunteer outside the organisation)
- Participating in the lives of children outside the service without a valid reason
- Crossing professional boundaries with the children in our care.
- Spending time alone with children
- Being 'child centric', which means showing a preference for hanging out with children rather than adults.

### Child Participation

- Children have the right to access FNQRCHDI's complaints process
- We will provide safe and accessible avenues for children to raise concerns.



## FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF HIGHLAND DANCING INC

### Internal and external reporting obligations

You must follow all internal and external reporting obligations set out in our organisation's Child Safe Policy

[Child Safe Standards | Queensland Family and Child Commission](#) [Child Safe Standards | Queensland Family and Child Commission](#)

If I suspect that this Code of Conduct has been breached by another person in the organisation, I WILL:

- Prioritise the safety and best interests of the child
- Take immediate action to ensure the child is safe
- Report the incident or concerns to the Child Safety Officer using the Child Safety Complaints Process
- Keep a written record of my concerns or actions
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality, consistent with organisational guidelines.

### Legal Responsibilities

Any person in authority within FNQRCHDI who becomes aware of a substantial risk that a child may be sexually abused by an adult associated with the organisation must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove the risk. Failure to act can result in criminal charges of failing to protect.

- Any adult who reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed against a child under 16 must report it to Queensland Police by calling 000 or attending a police station. Failure to report can be a criminal offence.

### Criminal offences for not acting to protect children

Some breaches of this code of conduct may need to be reported to Qld Police, Child Safety Services (Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs) and Blue Card Services.

It is a criminal offence for adults not to report to police **if they know or believe that a child abuse offence has been committed**. In addition, people employed in child-related work may be subject to a criminal offence **if they fail to reduce or remove the risk of a child becoming a victim of child abuse**. Failure to report concerns is considered a breach of this code.

The adult concerned should reach out to the child safety officer within the organisation if they are unsure of what may need to be reported externally.





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