Penola Festival Association Inc.
Child Safe Environment Policy

Commitment to the safety of children and young people

The Penola Festival Association Incorporated, also known as the Penola Coonawarra Arts Festival, are committed to providing a safe environment to all children and young people. Our policy complies with the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 and aligns with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

We value and respect children and young people and welcome them regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social economic or cultural background. Bullying and harassment won't be tolerated.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, work placement students, contractors and board/committee members referred to throughout the policy collectively as workers.

All workers are required to agree in writing to accept and act in accordance with the policy.

Communication

This child safe policy and related documents are available to children, young people and their families on our website or on request.

This child safe policy and related documents are provided to all workers as part of their induction following recruitment.

We encourage and respect the views of children and young people and involve them in decision making as appropriate. We provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people including their right to safety and their right to be listened to. We let them know they can provide feedback or make a complaint if they have a concern, to any worker or ask their parent/guardian to do this on their behalf. We will listen to and act upon complaints or concerns that a child or young person raises with us.

Code of Conduct

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for all workers. We are responsible for promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Workers must:

- abide by the organisation's child safe policy at all times and take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people
- treat everyone including those of different race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability, or attributes and religious beliefs with respect and honesty and ensure equity is upheld
- 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
- be a positive role model to children and young people in all conduct with them
- set clear boundaries and maintain appropriate behaviours with children and young people – boundaries help everyone to understand their roles
- listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people
- be alert to bullying behaviours and respond promptly and appropriately
- ensure another adult is always present or in sight when conducting one to one consulting, coaching, instruction or other activity
- take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse and harm
- be alert to children and young people who have been harmed, or may be at risk of harm and reporting this quickly to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78)
- respond quickly, fairly and transparently to any complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian
- encourage children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them
- include a child's parent or carer in any direct online communication or correspondence with a child or young person
- raise concerns with the leadership team if risks to child safety are identified
- make sure breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct and any instances of concerning behaviour from adults are reported immediately.

Workers must not:

- 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
- use hurtful, discriminatory or offensive behaviour or language with children
- use racial, cultural, homophobic, transphobic, or sexist slurs
- be intimidating such as yelling, finger pointing, moving into a child's personal space
- be verbally abusive to a child, or create a climate of fear
- engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child
- encourage a child to communicate in a private setting, including online or on social media
- engage in rough physical games
- develop any 'special' relationships with children and young people that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment
- do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability, or sexuality.

Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct should be reported as soon as practicable to management either in person or via email at info@artsfestival.com.au. Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly, fairly, and transparently.

Any worker who breaches the Code of Conduct will face disciplinary action and depending on severity of the breach, the worker may have their volunteer status revoked or their employment terminated.

Recruitment

To ensure we engage the most suitable people to work with children and young people we have the following recruitment practices in place:

- our commitment to child safety is included in all job advertisements
- clear position descriptions that include our commitment to child safety and wellbeing
- face-to-face interviews that include behavioural questions to determine the applicant's knowledge of child safeguarding

- at least 2 referee checks and qualification checks.

In accordance with the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, our organisation is registered with the Department of Human Services (DHS) Screening Unit and we link all Working with Children Checks (WWCC) to our registration.

All persons running the organisation (e.g. business owner, board/committee members, directors, managers etc) and all workers over the age of 14 years who will be working in a role with children and young people must hold a current, not prohibited WWCC issued by the South Australian DHS Screening Unit. Evidence of a valid WWCC must be provided prior to employment and renewed every 5 years. We will verify the accuracy of all WWCCs in the DHS Screening Unit portal as required by law.

We will immediately contact the DHS Screening Unit when we become aware of assessable information regarding any person involved with our organisation, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information.

Training, supervision and support for workers

We have strategies in place to supervise, train and support workers to understand our organisation's child safe policy, their mandatory reporting obligations, how to build culturally safe environments and their responsibilities to create a child safe and friendly environment. Our strategies include:

- Training:
    - as part of their induction, ensure all workers read and understand the Mandatory Reporting Information Booklet available at: https://dhs.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF
    - include child safety as a standing item on meeting agendas
- Supervision:
    - regular supervision sessions that include a focus on child safety and wellbeing
- Support:
    - an induction process for all new workers including a copy of this policy
    - regular performance appraisals that discuss child safeguarding
    - appointing a child safety officer who has an educative role within our organisation.

Reporting and responding to harm or risk of harm

We aim to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and risk of harm. Section 17 of the Safety Act defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

Mandated reporters in our organisation are workers who:

- provide services to children and young people
- hold a management position in the organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children and young people.

Mandated reporters have a legal obligation to report direct to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a suspicion that a child or young person has been harmed or may be at risk of harm. If the child or young person is at immediate risk, report to South Australia Police (SAPOL) on 000.

Even if not a mandated reporter, any person can report harm or risk of harm to a child or young person. The non-mandated reporter who identifies the harm or risk of harm is encouraged to make the report to authorities and can request the support from another worker to do so if required.

Information about making appropriate reports of harm or risk of harm is available from the South Australian Department for Child Protection website: https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse.

All adult workers (even if not a mandated reporter) have a legal obligation to report child sexual abuse by another worker to the police and to protect a child from sexual abuse by another worker. Failure to meet these obligations may be considered a criminal offence.

Following a report being made to CARL or SAPOL workers must make an internal report to management. We will be guided by the Department for Child Protection and/or SAPOL after a report has been made as to whether we can conduct an internal investigation.

If a worker is reported to CARL or SAPOL for causing harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they will be removed from any role that involves working with any child or young person until authorities have concluded their investigation.

Following a report to CARL or SAPOL we will support the child or young person by:

- referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services
- continuing to provide a service to the child, young person and their family and monitor their circumstances.

We will document all information received regarding the report and store this securely in a separate file.

Reporting and responding to general complaints or feedback

Providing opportunities for complaints and feedback ensures that children, young people and their families feel valued and respected and enables us to improve the quality of our service. In our festival program, and on our website, children, young people and their families are informed that they can provide feedback or make a complaint.

Compliments, complaints or feedback can be provided verbally to any worker or direct to management via email at info@artsfestival.com.au.

We will deal with all complaints and feedback received promptly, sensitively and fairly. We will:

- listen to the complaint/feedback
- the person receiving the complaint will make a record of it if received verbally
- advise of the time expected for an outcome
- if a worker receives a complaint, they must forward it to management as soon as possible
- prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people when handling complaints and concerns
- respond to the complainant with an outcome in a timely manner
- clearly document and securely store decisions and actions taken in response to complaints and feedback
- make sure that procedural fairness is followed at all times.

If the child, young person or their family is not happy with the outcome from the complaints process they can contact:

- Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner Tel: 08 8226 8666
- Australian Human Rights Commission Online: www.humanrights.gov.au Tel: 1300 656 419
- South Australian Equal Opportunities Commission (for complaints relating to discrimination) Online: www.eoc.sa.gov.au Tel: 08 8207 1977.

Risk management

Identified risk	Actions to minimise risk
Physical contact	• physical contact must be appropriate to the delivery of services being provided • if physical contact is required, this is undertaken in a safe way by explaining why contact is required and what will happen, and asking the child/young person for their permission (or their family if this is more appropriate) before proceeding • unnecessary physical contact is not allowed
Online communications	• cyber safety and social media guidelines are in place and provided to all workers • appropriate supervision is provided for all online activities • workers must not communicate with children or young people via social media
Transport of children and young people	• workers must have approval to transport a child or young person • parents/guardians must provide consent before transporting a child or young person • worker must have a valid, unrestricted driver's licence • vehicle must be registered, insured and in roadworthy condition • worker must not be alone in a vehicle with a child or young person
Supervision	• children and young people are to be supervised by parents/guardians at all times, or • one to one consultation with a child or young person will be in line of sight of another adult • if child/young person not collected by parent/guardian at end of an event, show, or class, two adults are to stay with child/young person until they are collected
Taking images of children and young people	• consent of child/young person and their parent/guardian required • disclosure will be made to the child/young person and parent/guardian as to how the image is to be used

	• images must be presented in a way that de-identifies the child or young person
Physical environment	• maintain a risk register that is reviewed annually to ensure effectiveness • conduct risk assessments for all activities • ensure all equipment is in good working order
Privacy and confidentiality	• documents containing confidential information will be stored securely with restricted access • digital files containing confidential information will be protected electronically with restricted access • workers must not disclose information regarding any child or young person without written consent of the child, young person and their parent/guardian unless legally required to
Overnight	• the festival will never have any overnight activities involving children or young people

Policy review

We will, at a minimum, review this policy and the related procedures once every 5 years as required by the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017. We will also review this policy when:

- new or added risks are identified for children or young people, which may require a change in the policy or procedures
- a critical incident occurs where a child or young person has experienced harm through involvement in the organisation
- concerns are raised by anyone involved in your organisation about child safety or welfare in the organisation
- awareness or compliance to the child safe policy and/or procedures is low
- legislative changes/requirements.

We will lodge a new child safe environments compliance statement with the Department of Human Services each time we review and update this policy.

Policy date: 02/09/2026

Review date: 02/09/2031