

HINTERLAND DANCING ACADEMY

Working with Children Policy

1. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Hinterland Dancing Academy (“HDA”) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who attend our classes. We will take all reasonable steps to keep safe from harm children and young people in our care (“our students”).

HDA recognizes that it is a privilege to work with children and young people and that it is also a great responsibility. Parents / guardians trust HDA to look after their children, to care for them, give them leadership and keep them safe from harm.

HDA requires all employees and volunteers who are engaged in teaching or caring for our students to comply with state legislative requirements to obtain appropriate documentation and following risk management strategies prior to commencing work with HDA.

2. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000
Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulations 2000
Child Protection Act 1999
Risk Management Policy
Code of Conduct

3. DEFINITIONS

- (a) “**blue card**” is a card issued by the Commission as a positive notice to an individual that they are safe to work with children. These cards are issued after investigation into whether a person has a criminal history and a consideration of their suitability to work with children. Relevant police information held by the Queensland Police Service and other Police Services in Australia are checked for any charges or convictions;
- (b) “**Commission**” means the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian formed under the legislation;
- (c) “**student**” means a child under the age of 18 years or a young person enrolled with HDA;
- (d) “**harm**” to a student, is anything that causes a detrimental effect of a significant nature on the student’s physical, psychological or emotional well being. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.

Harm can be caused by:-

- (i) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
- (ii) sexual abuse or exploitation;

(Section 9 Child Protection Act 1999)

- (e) “**HDA Risk Management Strategy**” means this Working with Children Policy, the Risk Management Policy; the Risk Assessment Plan, the Code of Conduct and the GCAC Concert Policy;
- (f) “**volunteer**” is a person who is not paid (other than being reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses) but who helps out at HDA dance studios and the Gold Coast Arts Centre.

4. APPLICATION OF POLICY

This policy is applicable to all HDA staff and volunteers (who are not also parents) who help either at our dance studios or the Gold Coast Arts Centre. These people are required to obtain a blue card prior to commencing employment or assisting as volunteers

5. BLUE CARD APPLICATION PROCESS

- (a) All staff and volunteers to whom this policy applies must ensure they have a current Blue Card at all times when working with our students.
- (b) Employees may apply to the Commission by completing the 'Paid Employees' Application Form which can be downloaded from the Commission's website. There is also a special "Volunteers" application form which can be downloaded and completed by volunteers.
- (c) The completed application forms must be lodged with the Commission. Payment of Blue Cards (if any) is at the applicant's expense.

6. REGISTER

On receiving a Blue Card, all staff and volunteers must provide details to Annette Ashenden. Annette Ashenden will check these details with the Commission to confirm their correctness and then enter them in her Blue Card register.

7. GENERAL INFORMATION

- (a) Blue cards are valid for two years and are transferable to other types of child-related employment.
- (b) Loss of blue cards by HDA employees and volunteers will require a re-application process, any re-application fees will be met by the individual.
- (c) The application for a Blue Card involves a criminal check on the individual. It is an offence to employ or engage a person in child-related employment where neither a criminal check nor a Blue Card has been obtained.
- (d) Blue Card holders must notify HDA if there is any change in their criminal history. For privacy reasons the nature of the change does not need to be disclosed only the fact that a change has occurred.
- (e) Where a person's Blue Card has been withdrawn or the Commission has advised they are unsuitable to work in child-related employment, they will no longer be able to be employed by or assist HDA in any way connected to the students.

8. MONITORING COMPLIANCE

Annette Ashenden has responsibility for regularly checking each staff member and volunteers' Blue Cards and for excluding any staff member or volunteer who cannot produce a Blue Card.

9. BREACHES

Any breaches of this Working with Children policy will be dealt with in accordance with the breach procedures set out in the Risk Management Policy.

10. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of Annette Ashenden to review this Working with Children Policy.

Should any of our staff, volunteers, students or parents want to comment or suggest changes to the Working with Children Policy, they should put their comments or suggestions in writing and give them to Annette Ashenden.

This Working with Children Policy will be reviewed from time to time but at least after any significant changes in the legislation. Any changes to the policy will be made available at registration for the following year.

UPDATED: November 2007