

# Goulburn Valley Academy of Ballet Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## Introduction

<b>Purpose</b>	GVAB's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy outlines how our dance school prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.
<b>Statement of commitment to child safety</b>	<i>'Goulburn Valley Academy of Ballet is committed to providing an environment in which all children are safe and respected and feel included, valued and listened to. We do not tolerate child abuse or harm in any form. We are sensitive, supportive and responsive to the individual needs of our students and their families and celebrate the diversity of all our students to help them thrive.'</i>
<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All people who conduct work for, or are connected to GVAB including teachers, families, external staff and volunteers.</li><li>• All activities at GVAB which involve, result in or relate to contact with children.</li></ul>
<b>Responsibilities</b>	All GVAB teachers are responsible for writing, reviewing, updating, implementing, complying and monitoring the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer oversees the monitor, implementation and compliance with the Policy.  All GVAB community members who sign the Code of Behaviour and Best Practice must be aware and comply with the Policy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers and Student Teachers</li><li>• Families</li><li>• Students (12 years old+)</li><li>• Volunteers</li></ul>
<b>Definitions</b>	The terms in this document can be defined as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Child/children</i>: Any persons under the age of 18 years old</li><li>• <i>Student</i>: A person who is enrolled at GVAB</li><li>• <i>Teacher</i>: a person who is qualified and/or teaches and supervises children outside the presence of another teacher.</li><li>• <i>Student Teacher</i>: a senior student who assists a teacher with classes. They may or not be over the age of 18 years old.</li><li>• <i>Volunteer</i>: a person who assists at GVAB, is unpaid and has contact with children.</li><li>• <i>Family</i>: people who care for or are connected to a student at GVAB</li></ul>
<b>Relevant legislation and standards</b>	The following legislation and standards are relevant to this Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</li><li>• The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</li><li>• The Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</li><li>• The Australian Child Safe Standards</li></ul>
<b>Related organisational policies and procedures</b>	Other internal policies and procedures related to child safety and wellbeing include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Action Plan</li><li>• Code of Behaviour and Good Practice (Code of Conduct)</li><li>• Risk Management Matrix</li><li>• Reporting Policy</li></ul>
<b>Access to the policy</b>	The policy can be accessed anytime via the Documents Tab in Team App, on our website and at the Hall. Copies can be sent upon request via email to <a href="mailto:gvballet@gmail.com">gvballet@gmail.com</a> .
<b>Policy status and review</b>	This Policy was approved by Principal - Melanie Coats and came into effect in February 2025. This policy is due to be reviewed in January 2026.  For information, assistance or to identify a breach of Policy, please contact the nominated Child Safety Officer: Tunya Jarvis <a href="mailto:tunya19@hotmail.com">tunya19@hotmail.com</a> or 0409866458

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## Child Safety and Wellbeing Standards

### Cultural safety for Aboriginal children

**Child Safe Standard 1:** *GVAB is a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.*

- All Aboriginal students are respected, supported and encouraged to participate fully in dance at GVAB.
- GVAB provides opportunities for Aboriginal families and students to communicate their cultural needs to staff, so that any barriers can be addressed or specific arrangements can be made.
- All staff at GVAB must complete Aboriginal cultural awareness training and support the expression of Aboriginal children's identity.
- All students, teachers and families must comply with GVAB Code of Behaviour and Good Practice which outlines expectations regarding racism and other forms of discrimination.
- GVAB acknowledges Aboriginal People as the traditional custodians of Australia, in-person, in print and online and specifically acknowledges the Yorta Yorta People of the land in which our school operates.
- All promotions and major materials highlight GVAB as a respectful and inclusive school, through displaying the Aboriginal Flag, acknowledgment of country and statement of inclusion.

### A commitment to child safety and wellbeing

**Child Safe Standard 2:** *Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture of GVAB.*

- GVAB's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy underpins all activities at the school through our statement of commitment, which is displayed in all locations that we operate in person, online and in print.
- All staff receive training in recognising child abuse, inclusion and diversity training, with updates provided annually at Staff PD and when new standards/guidance is released.
- Staff are responsible for setting and implementing child safety standards, while families and students are responsible for reinforcing and responding to standards set by staff.
- Staff hold monthly meetings to discuss any concerns in regards to child safety and risk management.
- All staff, families and students are required to read, acknowledge and comply with our Code of Behaviour and Good Practice and have access to all relevant documents via our communication platform, TeamApp.
- GVAB only seeks out relevant personal information from families which is securely stored on an online database, accessible only by relevant staff. Any information which is no longer required is deleted.

### Taking child participation and empowerment seriously

**Child Safe Standard 3:** *Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them.*

- GVAB centres student voice in all areas and promotes an environment where children are supported and empowered to speak out about activities at the school. Children are provided with a variety of options for feedback and reporting, including via the chatterbox, Team App or in person. Teachers are available upon request to have in-person discussions with students.
- Child Safety and Wellbeing is discussed openly and regularly with students in an age-appropriate manner, using peak-body resources. This includes discussion of policies, processes, communication options and behaviour expectations.
- Students and families are encouraged to provide input to policies, standards and expectations at any time and especially during the annual review period.
- Students are provided with regular opportunities to mix with different levels, try new dance experiences and meaningfully contribute to their dance training collaboratively with staff and other students (eg. choreographic workshops, chatterbox, events, Team App discussions etc)
- Students are reminded of the opportunities for feedback available twice annually at a minimum.

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## Involving families and communities

**Child Safe Standard 4:** *Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing at GVAB.*

- All aspects of a student's dance education can be discussed with staff at any time.
- Families are informed of all activities at GVAB via Team App, social media, phone, email or in person.
- All Child Safety and Wellbeing policies and procedures, including reporting processes, are displayed in the Hall, on the GVAB website and available on Team App.
- All students are educated about GVAB Child Safety and Wellbeing policies and about appropriate adult-child and peer-peer behaviour at the commencement of each year.
- Feedback can be provided at any time by families and students in person or via our Chatterbox or feedback form on Team App. Community feedback can be provided via our social media or email.
- Any future reviews of this policy will be informed by student and family feedback.

## Respecting equity and diversity

**Child Safe Standard 5:** *Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice at GVAB.*

- GVAB's statement of commitment to equity and inclusion is central to all policy and activities at GVAB.
- GVAB has a no tolerance policy to racism, discrimination and bullying.
- Families are encouraged to communicate any specific student needs in the enrollment form at the beginning of each year. Any updates are added to the enrolment list and relevant teachers are informed.
- GVAB takes all feasible actions to accommodate the diverse needs or circumstances of students.
- Staff prioritise student voice and developing rapport with students to create an environment where students feel comfortable and accepted in their diversity.
- Student feedback can be provided via chatterbox, Feedback form on TeamApp, or in person. Staff will consistently encourage open communication with students.
- GVAB considers socio-economic circumstances and provides individualised options for families/students with regard to payment of fees.
- GVAB's annual staff PD provides staff with tools and knowledge to identify and respond to children with diverse circumstances and needs.

## Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported

**Child Safe Standard 6:** *People working with children and young people at GVAB are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.*

- All staff are required to hold or be working towards qualifications suitable to their role.
- Staff cannot have any contact with children without a current Working with Children Check. All staff and volunteer WWC's are placed on a register and reviewed each year to ensure they remain valid.
- All Volunteers are required to hold a current Working with Children Check and be educated on GVAB's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and identifying child abuse. Volunteers are always supervised by staff.
- *GVAB has a small staff and limited turnover, ensuring quality teaching and staff in line with GVAB's policies.*

## Child-focused complaint systems

**Child Safe Standard 7:** *Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused at GVAB.*

- GVAB's Reporting Process is accessible to students and families and clearly outlines how to report.
- GVAB takes all allegations of child abuse or harm seriously
- GVAB prioritises the immediate safety of the child involved in a report, providing support and referral.
- GVAB creates an environment where students feel safe and comfortable to make a report and provides a number of age-appropriate avenues to provide feedback and reporting.
- Staff and volunteers must follow the reporting process for any disclosure or allegations of abuse.
- Any disclosure of Child Abuse is reported to relevant authorities.
- Staff are responsible for ensuring volunteers are educated about GVAB's reporting process.

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## Staff knowledge, skills and awareness

**Child Safe Standard 8:** *Staff and volunteers of GVAB are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.*

- Monthly staff meetings are held to share and discuss information between staff. Attendance and minutes are recorded and securely stored.
- All Staff participate in annual PD in the following areas:
  - children's rights
  - the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
  - recognising signs of child abuse or harm
  - responding to disclosures
  - understanding and responding to harmful behaviours by a child towards another child
  - record keeping
  - risk assessment and management
  - external reporting obligations
  - creating culturally safe and inclusive environments and responding to racism
- Volunteers are provided with training and information relevant to their role.
- Staff are encouraged to suggest updates and new training needs.

## Safe physical and online environments

**Child Safe Standard 9:** *GVAB's Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.*

- GVAB's Risk Management Matrix and Code of Behaviour and Good Practice outlines the acceptable use of online communication.
- All GVAB communication platforms are accessible by 2 or more staff members at all times.
- Any information sharing through online platforms, including photographs, is not permitted without consent from students and/or families.

## Review of child safe policies and practices

**Child Safe Standard 10:** *Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved at GVAB.*

- GVAB's Child Safe Policy is reviewed annually by all staff. The review is open to feedback from staff, students and families all year and during the end-of-year review period
- All Standards are implemented through the Child Safe Action Plan.
- All feedback and issues discussed in monthly staff meetings are analysed to identify systemic weaknesses and any actions to improve these issues will be implemented in the updated Policy.
- Updates to the Child Safe Policy are provided annually to all staff, students and families via Team App, GVAB website and at the hall.
- All updates will be informed by the Commission for Children and Young People and community feedback.

## Documenting policies and procedures

**Child Safe Standard 11:** *GVAB's Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.*

- GVAB Child Safety and Wellbeing documents include:
  - Child Safety and Wellbeing Standards (this document)
  - Action Plan
  - Risk Management Matrix
  - Code of Behaviour and Good Practice (Family, Student, Staff, Volunteers)
  - Reporting Procedure

# Child Safety Reporting Process

If any student, family or staff have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of any child associated with GVAB, they must report their concerns in accordance with the following process.

## If a child is in immediate danger, call 000

### Who can report?

Any student, family member, staff, volunteer or community member

### What to report?

Any child safety or wellbeing concerns including:

- Disclosure of abuse or harm
- Allegation, suspicion or observation
- Inappropriate behaviour around children
- breach of the Code of Behaviour and Good Practice
- Perceived risks in the organisation's environment

### How to report?

Reports can be made via:

- Face-to-face verbal report
- Phone call or text message
- Email
- Letter in Chatterbox
- Team App, Facebook, Instagram Message

### Who to?

Reports should be made to one of the following:

**Principal - Melanie Coats**

Email: [gvballet@gmail.com](mailto:gvballet@gmail.com) Phone: 0407 042 098

**Child Safety Officer - Tunya Jarvis**

Email: [tunya19@hotmail.com](mailto:tunya19@hotmail.com) Phone 0409 866 458

### What happens next?

1. Ensure the safety of the child involved in the report
2. Clarify and record factual information as part of the Incident Report
3. Listen to and offer support to the individual making the report
4. Report to Police and/or Child Protection in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care

The individual making the report will be continuously updated on the processes decisions and outcomes.

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Resources

<b>Emergency Services</b>	Call: 000
<b>Kids Helpline</b> - Free, private and confidential phone and online counselling	Call: 1800 55 1800 <a href="https://kidshelpline.com.au/">https://kidshelpline.com.au/</a>
<b>Headspace Shepparton</b> -Free mental health, physical health, drug and alcohol support and educational/vocational support for young people 12-25	Call: (03) 5823 8800 Email: <a href="mailto:headspace@gvhealth.org.au">headspace@gvhealth.org.au</a> 129 High Street, Shepparton
<b>eHeadspace</b> - Free and confidential phone and online service for young people 12-25 years.	Call: 1800 650 890 <a href="https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/">https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/</a>
<b>Commission for Children and Young People</b> - make a report, learn about children's rights	<a href="https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/children-and-young-people/">https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/children-and-young-people/</a> Facebook/Instagram: ccyp_vic
<b>eSafety Commissioner</b> - independent regulator for online safety, advice for children to have safe experiences online	<a href="https://www.esafety.gov.au/">https://www.esafety.gov.au/</a>
<b>Better Health Victoria</b> - information about nutrition, physical activity, sleep, immunisation and safety for children. Additional information about dealing with family issues, peer pressure, drugs and alcohol, sex and relationships for young adults.	Infants/Children: <a href="https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/child-health-0-6">https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/child-health-0-6</a> School Age Children: <a href="https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/children-4-12">https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/children-4-12</a> Young Adults: <a href="https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/young-people-13-19">https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/young-people-13-19</a>

## Risk Management Matrix

**Purpose:** This document outlines how risks to child safety and wellbeing are to be identified, categorised and managed at GVAB.

**Implementation:** The management and actions of this document must be implemented by staff of GVAB and the designated Child Safety Officer. This document is to be used to assess and manage the risks at the beginning of each year as well as for new events and initiatives undertaken by GVAB staff and students.

**Communication and Feedback:** All staff, families and students are invited to provide feedback throughout the year, in addition to the review period at the end of each year.

**Responsibility and Management:** The child safety officer is responsible for the management, monitor and review of this document.

**Monitor and Review:** This document is to be reviewed annually by the Child Safety Officer. Any necessary changes should be completed and the new document made available to all members of the school prior to the beginning of classes for the year.

Types of Risk	Areas of Risk	LEVEL OF CONCERN			
		LIKELIHOOD	Low	Moderate	Severe
Unintentional/accidental harm	Physical environment	Unlikely  Possible  Likely	Low Risk	Low Risk	Medium Risk
Psychological abuse	Staff, Supervision and Management		Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
Physical abuse	Peers and Community		Medium Risk	High Risk	High Risk
Sexual abuse	Consent				
Cultural abuse	Communication				
Neglect	Response to abuse/allegations/misconduct				

Risk	Description	Likelihood	Concern	Risk Level	Management
Classes and other circumstances where children are with a teacher, volunteer or peers	Students may be vulnerable to bullying, discrimination, abuse or neglect	Possible	Moderate	Medium	All staff, volunteers and any other adults who will work directly with students of GVAB are required to provide a current working with children check, read our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and sign the relevant Code of Behaviour and Good Practice prior to any interactions with students All permanent staff undertake annual child safety training and updates to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Children are educated on appropriate behaviour between adults and peers so that they are able identify discrimination, bullying, abuse or neglect GVAB prioritises student voice and encourages students to speak up about issues or feedback regarding activities at GVAB GVAB has a Tactile Feedback Policy which provides clear guidelines around touch between staff and students. Students are educated and empowered to understand and use consent.

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Use of Team App, Instagram and Facebook by students, teachers and families	Students, families and staff can message and communicate with one another via online platforms associated with GVAB	Unlikely	Low	Low	<p>Any communication between a staff member and student is always shared with another staff member</p> <p>Multiple staff members have administrative access to GVAB online platforms</p> <p>Students are encouraged to use public forms of communication such as posting to groups, group messages or comments (where appropriate) before undertaking direct or private communication with teachers or peers</p> <p>Online communication expectations are outlined and provided in the Code of Behaviour and Good Practice</p> <p>Students and families must report or share any inappropriate communication in accordance with our reporting process</p>
Use of personal social media platforms between students, teachers and families	Students, families and staff can message and communicate with one another via online platforms not associated with GVAB	Likely	Moderate	Medium	
Condition and access to dance hall and surrounding area	The space in which our school operates should be physically safe for children, staff and families to visit and safe from any potential external hazards	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<p>The hall is regularly cleaned and maintenance is undertaken for air conditioning and other equipment.</p> <p>Any hazards identified are immediately addressed and where this is not possible, measures are implemented to identify and reduce risks (eg. signage)</p> <p>Any potential tripping/falling hazards have been addressed in our physical environment (carpeted stairs, hand railing etc.)</p> <p>Children have access to a lockable dressing room and toilet. These spaces are exclusively for students and cannot be accessed by families or other community members</p> <p>Children are encouraged to bring their belongings into the dance hall and the external door to the hall is locked during evening classes to prevent people from entering the street.</p> <p>Students under 12 years of age must not arrive to or leave the hall without a responsible family member present to escort them</p> <p>Any major incidents in the Gardens are reported to council and/or police and staff are required to immediately take action to address safety of students in these situations</p>
External factors or risks to GVAB student	External bullying, discrimination, abuse or neglect of GVAB student	Possible	Severe	High	<p>Children are educated on appropriate behaviour between adults and peers so that they are able identify discrimination, bullying, abuse or neglect.</p> <p>GVAB prioritises student voice and encourages students to speak up about issues or feedback regarding activities at GVAB</p> <p>All permanent staff undertake annual child safety training and updates to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and must take action on any incidents or reports regarding a student</p> <p>GVAB takes allegations of child abuse seriously and staff must report any disclosures in accordance with reporting policy</p>