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**POLICY STATEMENT**

**HR-09**

**TITLE: PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR CARE POLICY**

**PURPOSE:** The Royal New Zealand Ballet (RNZB) is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people in its care. We recognize the responsibility to promote safe practice and protect children and young people from harm and exploitation while participating in RNZB activities. This policy outlines how the RNZB ensures we will do this.

**NEXT REVIEW: SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**STATEMENT**

We recognise all children and young people's right to feel and be safe, Respected and valued.

Our staff will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.

We will work in partnership with children/young people and their guardians/caregivers to promote the welfare, health and development of children and young people involved with the RNZB.

To this end we will:

- Take reasonably practicable steps to prevent and protect children and young people from health and safety hazards as well as harm, including - but not limited to
  - physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.
- Encourage children and young people to raise any concerns or complaints and to act upon those concerns in an appropriate manner.
- Create an environment where children and young people feel safe in their interactions with all RNZB staff members and contractors.
- Recognise that the primary responsibility for children and young people's protection lies with their legal guardians or the guardians' nominated caregivers and ensure we are communicating and consulting with them in good faith.
- Ensure that all staff members interacting with children and young people are familiar with the Protecting Children and Young People in our Care Policy and understand their responsibilities.

## **SCOPE OF POLICY**

This policy will apply to children and young people employed by the RNZB, those voluntarily dancing for the RNZB, children and young people visiting the premises of the RNZB, children and young people involved in marketing and publicity activities and children and young people our staff are in contact with through our education programmes. This policy will also apply to the RNZB staff who work with these children and young people and contractors who work onsite and could potentially interact with children and young people.

## **DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this policy and associated procedures, a child is recognised as someone under the age of 14 years and a young person is someone aged 14 - 17 years. A caregiver includes any parent, legal guardian, teacher, family member or any other person whom their legal guardian deems responsible for the child at that time.

## **PERFORMANCE STANDARD(S)**

The "Protecting Children and Young People in our Care Policy" aims to ensure our practices for dealing with children and young people are best-practice and enhance the reputation of the RNZB as a caring and connected organisation.

The RNZB has a legal responsibility under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 to ensure that we have a child protection policy as a provider of children's services to schools through our education programme. We also have a responsibility to ensure staff are safety checked if they have contact with children such as when the company tours.

We have a responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 to protect workers and others against harm to their health, safety, and welfare by eliminating or minimising risks arising from work.

With regards to the management of the wellbeing of children and young people on tour, we have taken account of the Ministry of Education EOTC Guidelines for the provision of care of children and young people by others when away from their home environment.

We follow "The Guide to Safe Working Practice in the Entertainment & Events Industry" developed by ETNZ in regard to working hours for children.

## **PROCEDURES**

### *Employment of Staff Working With Children and Young People*

- The RNZB will nominate a designated coordinator for children/young people with the relevant experience and understanding of responsibilities to oversee the wellbeing of children and young people in their charge.
- The identity of all new employees is verified through the sighting of their passport or accepted form of identification.
- RNZB police vets all new employees before appointment and will ensure all

current employees who work directly with children are police vetted and then re-vetted every three years.

- All reasonably practicable steps will be undertaken to ensure that the most suitable and appropriate people are recruited where the role requires interaction with children by developing clear position descriptions and competency checking.

### *Induction of Children and Young People Involved in Productions*

- An induction will be provided for all children and young people employed or voluntarily dancing for the RNZB as well as their legal guardians/caregivers.
- Children and their legal guardians/caregivers will be advised of the existence of this policy and have it explained to them and their child in a child appropriate manner.
- The RNZB will outline in detail the situation specific steps it takes to keep children and young people safe and will ensure children/young people are made aware of the expectations RNZB has of them.
- Children, young people and their legal guardians/caregivers will also be advised that they and their charges must comply with the RNZB Code of Conduct. The code will be explained to them at the time of induction and in an age-appropriate manner.
- Legal guardians will be responsible for providing the RNZB with the child/young person's contact information (mobile phone number and email, if appropriate), next of kin and emergency contact details including a contact name, relationship to the child/young person, their mobile phone number, email and physical address. The RNZB also requires that legal guardians advise them of any relevant medical conditions/medications and critical allergies for the child/young person. This information will be held by RNZB for the duration of the child/young person's involvement and will be treated confidentially.
- For employees, the RNZB will discuss with the legal guardian if the RNZB needs to allow for schooling hours within their working days. It is the responsibility of legal guardians to apply to Te Kura, the New Zealand Correspondence School, if education by correspondence is required.
- Legal guardians/caregivers of children will be advised to bring age-appropriate food, drink, clothing, and necessary homework and entertainment activities for when their child is not onstage.
- Legal guardian/caregivers of young people will be advised that it is their responsibility to ensure their young person manages their own requirements for the provision for food, clothing, homework and entertainment for when they have free time.
- Children/young people and parents/caregivers will be given an orientation walk around the theatre and an evacuation briefing for each venue they perform in.
- RNZB will use best endeavours to ensure children/young people will not watch any action onstage or via show relays that depict adult themes, nudity or excessive violence. Parents/caregivers will be made aware of any content that may be objectionable prior to agreeing to undertake the work and will be required to sign a Content Permission Form.

## *Support, Care and Safety for Volunteer and Employed Performers*

- A Designated Coordinator will be assigned to oversee the supervision and care of children working as employees or voluntarily for RNZB. The Designated Coordinator is responsible for agreeing with the legal guardian/caregiver their definition of 'reasonable care' for their child/young person and ensuring all supervisors, chaperones and buddies responsible for children and young people are informed, trained and supervised appropriately.
- The Designated Coordinator will identify potential hazards and plan for their mitigation. Children/young people will be encouraged to understand their responsibilities for their own safety and the safety of others.
- A chaperone will be assigned to any child employed voluntarily dancing with the RNZB to support them and provide reasonable supervision and care when their legal guardian/caregiver is not present.
- An appropriate dance buddy will be provided to young people employed by the RNZB to support and mentor them through the transition from school to company member.
- Children/young people will be advised that they should talk to their chaperone or the Designated Coordinator if they are having problems understanding instructions, feeling unwell or unsafe during the performance. The Designated Coordinator will catch up regularly with the child/young person employee or volunteer to ensure they are feeling safe and comfortable.
- The children and parents/guardians/caregivers will be encouraged to go to the Designated Coordinator if there are any issues that arise.
- For employees under the age of 18 years:
  - The RNZB will provide a transportation option for getting home at the RNZB's expense, if working outside usual working hours of 9.30am-6.00pm.
  - Wardrobe fittings will be done with more than one person present. Where possible a guardian/caregiver will be present.
  - Rehearsals undertaken will be with more than one person present.
  - Children are escorted whenever in the theatre by either their designated chaperone or stage management.
  - Children/young persons under the age of 16 will not share dressing rooms with adults. If a dressing room is not available then a private space will be created for them to change in.
  - Children will not remain in costumes longer than they need to.
  - Makeup used must be non-irritating and uncontaminated.
  - If parents are sitting in the auditorium watching a rehearsal, they will be advised what is happening when children are taken to the stage or a break is called.
- Legal guardians/caregivers will be advised in advance the name of the designated chaperone for their child/young person during a rehearsal or performance. Legal guardians/parents of young children are responsible for escorting their children to the stage door and handing them over to the designated chaperone. The RNZB will often request that guardians/caregivers assist with chaperone duties and then collect their

child from the chaperone from stage door (inside the venue) after the performance.

- Legal guardians/caregivers of young people may vary their escorting responsibilities only if prior arrangements have been made with the designated coordinator and the variation is agreed under their definition of "reasonable care."
- Trained first aiders will be available on site.
- The photographing or recording visual imagery of children/young person will only take place following the signing of a "young person's permission for a photograph or video" form being completed giving permission for this to occur. This form requires signoff by a legal guardian.
- When photographing or recording visual imagery of children the photographer /videographer will not be alone with the child/young person.
- The RNZB, or the venues in which it performs, will take reasonable steps, for example, signage and announcements, to ensure that children and their carers are aware of any filming or photography at public events such as performances or open days.
- When undertaking media interviews, the RNZB will ensure that the child's guardian is in attendance, together with a representative of the RNZB or another approved adult, for example, the child's dance teacher.

### *Behaviour Expectations*

- Children/young persons and their guardians/caregivers will be expected to comply with the RNZB code of conduct.
- Children/young persons and their guardians/caregivers must not comment on behalf of the RNZB in the media. Any media inquiries must be referred to RNZB Media and Communications Advisor in the first instance and await guidance from the RNZB.
- Children/young persons and their guardians/caregivers will be expected to comply with the RNZB social media policy. Any social media posting must not be offensive, illegal or harm the RNZB's interests, and must follow the RNZB's Computer, Internet and Social Media policy. Any discussions on personal media accounts must represent the RNZB positively and not harm the RNZB's reputation.
- No alcohol is to be consumed at any event by those less than 18 years old.
- All RNZB employees are reminded about appropriate language, behaviour and clothing at the start of any production that involves children.

### *Safe Working Hours*

- Wherever possible during school nights, children are released from rehearsals by 9.30pm.
- Children must have at least a twelve-hour overnight break exclusive of travel time.
- Using the "The Guide to Safe Working Practice in the Entertainment & Events Industry" developed by ETNZ in regard to working hours for children working hours of children and young persons will be as follows:

<b>Age of Child/Young Person</b>	<b>Maximum Hours Per Day</b>
Up to and including 8 year olds	6 Hours
9 to 11 Year Olds	8 Hours
12 to 16 Years	10 Hours

### *Care for Children and Young People on Tour*

- The Designated Coordinator will assume overall responsibility for children and young people on tour or delegate responsibility to a suitably vetted adult supervisor/chaperone.
- In the absence of the presence of a guardian/caregiver the coordinator /supervisor will be fully responsible for care and protection of the child/young person overnight and during the day, working to prevent incidents occurring and providing support should an incident arise.
- The designated coordinator and/or supervisor will draw up a Safety Risk and Assessment Plan that identifies risks and hazards that may be encountered on tour and in venues and accommodations. These must be shared with their charges and appropriate plans and processes put in place to deal with critical incidents and unforeseen events.
- For children and young persons under the age of 16, the supervisor will be responsible ensuring they are accompanied by an approved adult at all times outside of a venue after hours and on tour. They must ensure they have appropriate guardian consent forms and fully understand the guardian's definition of 'reasonable care.' The supervisor is responsible for ensuring the child/young person has necessary food/clothing requirements for rehearsals and productions, and that they have access to emergency contacts and health profiles of the child/young person in their care.
- RNZB employees under the age of 18 years who are working after hours or on tour must advise the Designated Coordinator with regards to their plan for moving between venues and accommodation.
- In keeping with the domestic touring agreement, if accommodation is provided for children and young people, where possible it will be booked close to the performance venue.

### *Complaints*

Children and young people will be well supported to ensure they have a safe person they can confide in if they have an issue that needs to be addressed. All attempts will be made to deal with complaints without unnecessarily escalating if possible. If a complaint is more serious and requires a formal process the RNZB Disputes and Positive Conflict Resolution policy process will apply.

### *Raising Concerns*

If any person has concerns about the welfare or safety of a child under the care of RNZB they have a duty to report this concern to an appropriate person - their Manager, Director of People & Culture, Executive Director, Artistic Director, Operations Manager, Stage Manager, or Ballet Masters.

Their concern will be taken seriously. Any concerns can be raised through the channels identified in the Disputes and Positive Conflict Resolution policy and the processes identified in that policy will be followed to deal with the concern.

### *Responding To Concerns Raised By A Child*

The RNZB will follow the following process for responding to a child if they raise an issue:

Listen to the child/young person	Disclosures by children are often subtle and need to be handled with care
Reassure the child/young person	Let the child/young person know that they are not in trouble and have done the right thing
Involve the child's parent/guardian	Do not progress until you are sure the child is well supported by their parent/guardian
Ask open-ended prompts - e.g. "What happened next?"	Do not interview the child/young person and do not put words into their mouths by asking closed questions
If the child/young person is visibly distressed	Provide appropriate reassurances and try to re-engage in activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities.
If the child/young person is not in immediate danger	Re-involve the child/young person in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.
As soon as possible formally record the issue the child/young person has raised	Record <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the child/young person said, word for word</li> <li>• The date, time and who was present</li> </ul>

All incidents must be included in the Health and Safety Report presented to the Board. Procedures should be reviewed if necessary.

## **RELATED RNZB DOCUMENTS**

Workplace Bullying Prevention Policy  
Code of Conduct  
Health and Safety Policy  
Disputes and Positive Conflict Resolution  
Computer, Internet and Social Media Policy  
Audio and Video Recordings Policy

## **RELATED LEGISLATION**

Vulnerable Children Act 2014  
Employment Relations Act 2000 and amendments  
Privacy Act 1993  
Human Rights Act 1993  
Health and Safety at Work Act 2015  
Summary of Offences Act, Section 10b

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