Example: Code of Conduct – Employees

This template should be amended and expanded upon as applicable to your organisation’s individual circumstances, taking into account mitigating factors (including but not limited to):

* size of organisation
* level of engagement with children (e.g. regularly employ child performers, regularly run education programs, occasionally hire out venue for school performances, occasionally have child audience members that may be unsupervised)
* type of engagement with children (e.g. performers, employees, work experience, education program participants, audience members)
* exposure to risks of harm in the organisation (e.g. transport of children)
* state legislative requirements (e.g. child employment, WH&S).

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| [Organisation name] **Code of Conduct – Employees** |

*[Organisation Name]* provides an open, safe, and friendly environment for all children. This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults toward children. The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any possibility that abuse or harm could occur. It provides guidance to employees on how best to support children and prevent or better manage difficult situations.

## Scope

All employees are required to comply with this Code of Conduct. This includes any adult (18 years or older) engaged by *[Organisation name]* that may work directly with or around children including:

[Guidance note: Amend this list to be applicable for your organisation]

* employees (permanent and casual):
* leadership and management roles
* administration
* education instructors and youth workshop facilitators
* production and venue personnel (actors, stage management, chaperones, technical crew, ushers, etc.)
* volunteers
* contractors and sub-contractors
* tutors
* work experience students/interns/secondments
* any other individual in the organisation that may deal with children
* board members.

(Note: In this Code, the term “employee” is used to cover all persons occupying any position listed above.)

A child includes children and young people up to the age of 18 (unless otherwise specified).

## Your responsibilities

*[Organisation Name]*’semployees are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children by:

* adhering to our child safe policies and procedures
* taking all reasonable steps to protect children from the risk of abuse and neglect including:
* physical abuse: purposefully injuring or threatening to injure a child
* emotional abuse: an attack on a child’s self-esteem e.g. through bullying, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child
* sexual abuse: any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child
* neglect: harming a child by failing to provide basic physical or emotional necessities
* exposure to family violence: behaviour by a person towards a family member that may include physical violence or threats, verbal abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, financial and social abuse
* grooming: preparing a child for the act of a sexual activity
* treating all children with dignity, equality and respect
* listening to and valuing the ideas and opinions of children
* acting as a positive role model in your conduct with children
* developing positive relationships with children and parents/carers based on mutual trust and open communication
* being professional in your actions through your use of language, presentation and manner
* respecting the privacy of children and parents/carers, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know
* being aware of risks with communication and behaviour between employees and children (including online and mobile)
* being aware of risks with communication and behaviour between children (including online and mobile)
* aiming to ensure children understand they are valued members of the production, program, audience or other experience
* acknowledging the uniqueness and potential of all children, in recognition that enjoying their childhood without undue pressure is important
* if by chance any children are found unsupervised, directing and accompanying them to their supervisor or relevant management immediately
* reporting any breaches of these standards of behaviour to the Child Safety Officer or relevant management promptly.

*[Organisation Name]* employees **MUST NOT**:

[Guidance note: Amend this section to be applicable for your organisation]

* discriminate against any child because of age, gender (including transgender status), cultural background, religion, vulnerability, disability or sexuality
* engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children
* engage in any activity with a child that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them
* take photos or videos of children without the explicit permission from the child (if 15 years of age or older), and parent/carer, and relevant management
* share personal information or images of children on social media without informed consent from the child (if 15 years of age or older), parent/carer and relevant management
* work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs
* ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse
* show overly familiar physical affection towards children or any unnecessary physical contact with children
* marginalise or exclude specific children
* show favouritism towards specific children such as the offering of gifts, special thanks, special treatment or inappropriate attention
* subject children to any form of physical punishment, social isolation, immobilisation or any other conduct likely to humiliate or frighten children
* enter children’s dressing rooms (unless they are a designated supervisor, or approved to do so by a supervisor or relevant management)
* allow children to enter crew areas unless accompanied by their supervisor
* allow children to enter an adult’s dressing room, unless accompanied by their supervisor and approval has been granted by those in the dressing room and management
* close doors in rooms where children are present, unless children need privacy to dress
* allow children to (un)dress with others around (dressing should take place in private)
* do things of a personal nature for children that they are able to do for themselves, such as assisting with going to the toilet or dressing
* gossip in the presence of children
* distress a child for the purpose of eliciting a dramatic reaction
* develop any ‘special’ relationships with children outside of the professional relationship or arrange contact with children outside of work obligations
* have unauthorised contact with children online or by phone
* discuss topics with adult/mature themes in front of children.

All complaints or reports of conduct not keeping with this Code will be pursued in accordance with *[Organisation name]*’s Child Safe Reporting Procedure *[guidance note: update with name of your reporting procedure]*, including means to take disciplinary action if necessary.

## Additional guidance on professional conduct

[Guidance note: In this section, include detail to cover situations that are specific to your organisational context. Some common scenarios are addressed below]

This Code of Conduct applies to physical, virtual and online environments. In circumstances where the risk of unsafe conduct is increased or children may be particularly vulnerable, employees are required to act with an increased sense of professionalism and model the Code of Conduct’s professional boundaries and expectations.

### Bathrooms/dressing room procedures

*[Organisation name]*’s procedures for supervising and monitoring children and young people’s use of a bathroom whilst in [*Organisation name*]’scare or activity include:

* Employees and stakeholders should not use the bathroom at the same time as children and young people.
* Children and young people not using the bathroom should wait outside of the bathroom with staff members/stakeholders.
* If children and young people are getting changed outside of the bathroom/dressing room in a communal space, ensure adequate privacy (keeping genders separate, ensuring adults of the same gender supervise etc).
* Minimise children and young people of different ages using the bathroom at the same time, where appropriate (i.e. a four-year-old and 16-year-old).
* If assisting children and young people in a toilet stall, the staff member/stakeholder should seek assistance from the child’s parent/carer first. If unavailable, the door to the stall must be kept open.
* Require children and young people to ask permission to use the bathroom.
* If using a public bathroom, require all staff/stakeholders to check the facility prior to allowing the child to enter, and require the Supervisor to remain within the general bathroom area while the child is in the cubicle.
* Ensure staff and stakeholders know and understand the risks that bathroom times may create for sexual or physical abuse, or the recruitment of one another (peer to peer or by an adult) into situation of exploitation.

### Engaging with children in a one-on-one setting

There are various circumstances in which an employee may work with a child or young person in a one-on-one setting. These include but are not limited to:

[Guidance note: Amend this section to be applicable for your organisation]

* conducting a solo performance or assessment
* engaging with a child or young person online for purposes of a makeup lesson or performance
* one-on-one coaching
* putting on a child’s makeup
* assisting a child to get dressed in costume.

Working with children and young people in a one-on-one setting should only occur where there is a wellbeing or health reason to do so. For example, a child/young person who suffers from anxiety when performing in front of others may conduct their performance with a single teacher. Where such circumstances occur, employees should:

* operate where there is a line of sight to other adults and young people (e.g. keeping the door open, operating in a room that has clear windows, etc); and
* seek guidance from their line manager regarding the appropriateness and necessity to operate one-on-one with a child/young person.

Employees should also seek guidance from a Child Safety Officer when considering removing a child or young person from their ordinary course of work/activities.

[Guidance note: Only include this section if applicable for your organisation]

### Transporting students

Employees who transport students as part of [*Organisation name*]’s activities should transport children and young people in groups and in [*Organisation name*]’s vehicle or third-party provider. While *[Organisation name]* does not encourage employees to use their own cars to transport children and young people or to transport children and young people in a one-one-one setting, there may be exceptional circumstances where this occurs (e.g. an emergency).

Children and young people may be passengers in an employee’s car if:

* there is more than one child/young person in the car throughout the journey; and
* written (or emailed) permission has been obtained from the child/young person’s parent/carer for each journey or set of journeys; and
* written (or emailed) permission has been obtained from the Head of the Organisation or delegate for each journey or set of journeys; and
* the vehicle has comprehensive insurance and driver has a full unrestricted licence.

Children and young people may be transported by the designated supervisor (or member of management) in exceptional circumstances, such as a parent failing to pick up their child/young person late at night. When this occurs, the designated supervisor should, obtain consent from the Child Safety Officer and child’s parent/carer prior to providing transport. If not possible, the Child Safety Officer and the child’s parent/carer are to be advised, as soon as practicable, that the transportation occurred, when it occurred and the reasons for the transportation.

When designated supervisors use their own car or travel in a one-on-one setting, it is advisable that the child/young person sits in the back seat of the car.

### Contact outside of the organisation

Employees including third-party contractors, such as performers, must not arrange social activities or engage with children and young people outside of the organisation (including via online means such as social media).

Employees must also not engage in relationships with former children and young people (who are now adults) who are affiliated with [*Organisation name*] until at least 12 months after either party leaves the organisation.

In instances where children and young people contact employees (including third-party contractors, such as performers, via social media or other means), employees should not respond to the child/young person and report the information to [O*rganisation name*]’s Child Safety Officer.

## Breaches of the Code

All employees are required to report any breaches of this Code to *[Organisation name]*’s Child Safety Officer. In instances where an allegation of child abuse has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with [*Organisation name*]’s Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Reporting Procedure *[guidance note: update with name of your policy/reporting procedure]*.

Employees who breach this Code may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. *[Organisation name]* may also conduct an investigation and will report serious instances of child abuse to child protection authorities and/or the police.

## Review

This Code of Conduct was approved *[insert date]* and last reviewed *[insert date]*.

## Acknowledgement

I have read this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it at all times.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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