

Child Safe Policy **Last reviewed February 2022**

This policy reflects Gertrude's respect of all children and its dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children who visit our exhibitions and participate in our education programs.

In accordance with the Health and Child Wellbeing Legislation Amendment Act 2018, we are committed to upholding the Victorian Child Safe Standards. We are also committed to the principles of supporting the cultural safety of First Nations children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Gertrude staff recognise that all children have a right to feel safe, happy and empowered and the organisation upholds zero tolerance of child abuse.

Gertrude is committed to:

- Ensuring the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. We believe in the imaginative, creative and transformative power of the arts for all children and the importance of arts access.
- Creating, upholding and renewing policies, practices and processes that ensure an organisational culture of child safety that supports staff and volunteers to keep children safe.
- Robust recruitment processes for all staff in line with Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Identifying, reducing and removing risks to child safety in a timely manner. This includes supporting staff to take a proactive approach to child safety that reduces the likelihood of risks emerging or escalating.
- Ensuring all safety concerns and allegations of suspected child abuse are treated seriously and in line with Gertrude policies and procedures and Victorian Child Safety Standards.

Gertrude will always take action to ensure the protection of children from physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and cultural harm. We acknowledge that our commitment to child safety must be dynamic, responsive and consistently reviewed to ensure we uphold the principles and standards of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Recruitment

Gertrude applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of incumbent staff. We interview and conduct reference checks on all staff and require valid Working with Children Checks for relevant positions to our Education programs. Contractors involved in the delivery of Education Programs or other services to children are also screened prior to commencement.

Training

All Gertrude Staff are provided with a copy of this Policy during their induction. It is publicly available in the Education section of our website. Staff are required to review the policy on an annual basis and are free to contact the Child Safety Representatives at any time.

Code of Conduct

All Gertrude staff, including employees, volunteers and contractors engaging with children must NOT:

- Raise their voices with children
- Ignore or disregard any incidents or safety concerns regarding children
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children
- Touch a child or spend time alone with a child
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race culture, vulnerability or sexuality
- Develop or show favouritism with children through the provisions of gifts or unnecessary attention
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children
- Have unauthorised contact with children online or by phone
- Take identifiable photos or film children if not for work purposes

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of risk management to minimise the potential for child abuse or harm. In addition to managing general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to children participating in our programs and activities through our recruitment procedures, training, compliance and staff and volunteer welfare.

Gertrude does not provide any unsupervised or one on one services to children. A teacher, parent or guardian is required in addition to Gertrude staff.

A venue safety and risk management plan for all Education Programs at Gertrude can be provided upon request.

Reporting

Gertrude's Executive Director and Gallery & Education Manager have been appointed as Child Safety Representatives with responsibility of responding to any complaints and/or reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse made by or about staff, volunteers, parents or children at Gertrude. Complaints can be made by contacting the gallery on 03 9480 0068 or directly to a Child Safety Representative. Complaints must include:

- Your name and contact details
- A description of the incident
- Details of any steps you have already taken to resolve the complaint and details of any conversations you may have already had with staff.
- Supporting documentation (if relevant)

Complaints will be dealt with immediately and in a confidential manner. All appropriate steps will be taken within the organisation, including the automatic suspension of any employee involved, before bodies external to the organisation are involved. Gertrude takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Once Reasonable Suspicion is established it is Gertrude's policy to notify the Police and our insurance provider.

Any employee found guilty of sexual abuse (either by internal investigation or court) will be automatically terminated.

If you think a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000

*Reasonable suspicion means fair and practical reason to believe an incident involving sexual abuse has occurred based on either verbal communication, hearsay, rumour or observance of behaviour.

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Review

This document will be reviewed every year or as the organisation becomes aware of new legislation. Community consultation is sought during review to ensure our policy is in line with best practice standards. Gertrude Contemporary welcomes comments and suggestions from parents, guardians, carers, staff and volunteers at any time.

Next scheduled review: February 2023