encore

Child Protection Policy & Working with Minors

August 2026

This policy applies to any adult person (over the age of 18) that may work or interact with children at Encore at any time, including staff, parent volunteers, contractors, interns, production and venue personnel.

All children at Encore have a right to feel and be safe, respected, valued and protected from harm. Encore is strongly committed to the safety and well-being of all children that interact with any adults during their time at Encore by creating and maintaining a child safe environment. The welfare of children in our care is a top priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse.

The Collective recognises that abuse can take many forms, whether it be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect, and is committed to practice which protects children from harm. All members of the Collective accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

This policy will be reviewed on or before: 1st August 2027



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Encore believes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff and volunteers at Encore should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

Encore will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- The duty of care to children will always be put first.
- A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision making process.
- Enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism.
- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- All adult members of the Collective provide a positive role model for dealing with other people.
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- A register of every child involved is maintained as well as keeping a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

Child Protection Procedures

For all rehearsals, classes & performances, Encore Theatre Collective will:

- Undertake a risk assessment and monitor risk throughout the process.
- Identify the person with designated responsibility for child protection.
- Engage in effective recruitment of staff, volunteers and other individuals with responsibility for children, including vetting if deemed appropriate and/or necessary.
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- Have a first aider present.

Parent volunteers

Encore believes it to be important that there is a relationship between parents and the Collective. Parents are encouraged to volunteer during Theatre Week, and to share responsibility for the care of children.

- Parent volunteers will help with the care of children during Theatre Week, acting in loco parentis and exercising the care which a parent is expected to give to a child.
- Where parent volunteers are not satisfied with the conditions for the children, they should bring this to the attention of the producer.
- If a parent volunteer considers that a child is unwell or too tired to continue, they must inform the producer.
- During performances, parent volunteers will be responsible for a designated group of children from their arrival to their departure, ensuring the child is ready and prepared for each performance and helping with quick changes.
- Parent volunteers cannot give instruction for children to leave the Theatre without prior consent from a staff member, unless in the event of an emergency.
- Parent volunteers should be aware of the safety arrangements and first aid procedures in the venue, and will ensure that children in their care do not place themselves and others in danger.
- Parent volunteers should ensure that any accidents are reported and recorded.

Contacting caregivers in an emergency

- Encore Theatre Collective will maintain an up-to-date register of emergency contact details for every cast member and this will be present at every rehearsal, workshop and theatre week.
- In the event of illness or accident, or in the very unlikely event of a lost cast member, appropriate actions will be initiated and a staff member will contact the parent/caregiver at first opportunity.

Health, safety & first aid

- Encore staff will act in loco parentis.
- At every rehearsal, workshop and theatre week, there will be at least two first-aid trained Encore staff members or key volunteers present.
- First-aid will be administered in an appropriate manner and without hesitation, should it be deemed necessary.
- Encore Theatre Collective will ensure that a well-stocked first-aid box is available at every rehearsal, workshop and theatre week.
- To avoid accidents, parent volunteers and cast members will be advised of "house rules" regarding health and safety and will be notified of areas that are out of bounds.
- If the administration of panadol (or any other medication) to a child/young person under the age of 18 years is deemed necessary and appropriate, this will only be undertaken if the parent/caregiver has given written consent. An exception to this would be the case where an individual needs help in the urgent administration of their EpiPen® or other device. In such an event, a dedicated staff member or key volunteer will act as the situation warrants, regardless of prior written approval.
- If it is necessary to transport a child/young person to an emergency clinic, and an ambulance is not deemed necessary, two Encore staff members or key volunteers will transport the child/young person to the nearest appropriate facility in a private registered and warranted vehicle.

Unsupervised contact

- Encore will attempt to ensure that no adult has unsupervised contact with children.
- If possible there will always be two adults in the room when working with children.
- If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimize risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area, or in a designated room with a door open.
- If it is predicted that an individual is likely to require unsupervised contact with children, he or she may be required to be vetted.

Physical contact

- All adults will maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children.
- Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity.
- Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear.

Photography/video

- Still images and video of a child/young person will only be used for the direct promotional purposes of Encore, or as part of a record of the performance, and will only be used if prior written consent has been granted for these purposes.

Suspicion of abuse

- Any suspected abuse of a child while in the care of Encore should be made known to a member of the Encore Team.
- If a serious allegation is made against any member of Encore, staff, parent volunteers venue staff, cast members etc., that individual will be asked to leave immediately until the investigation is concluded. The individual will be excluded from the theatre, rehearsal rooms etc. and will not have any unsupervised contact with any other children in the production.

Disclosure of abuse

In the event of a child confiding in an adult about abuse that has taken place, they should:

- Remain calm but do not delay taking action.
- Listen carefully and allow the child to tell you at their own pace, asking questions only for clarification.
- Make it clear to the child that you will need to share this information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Reassure the child that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Speak immediately to the person with responsibility for child protection. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services or the police.

Supporting Children's Participation & Satisfaction

Encore supports and promotes the participation of children by:

- Respecting the views of children.
- Encouraging children and parents to inform us of any concerns or complaints they may have.
- Listening to and acting upon concerns raised by children and parents.
- Seeking the input of children when making decisions about matters that concern them.
- Ensuring children understand the appropriate behaviour expected of them and adults around them.
- Letting children know what to do if they feel unsafe
- Ensuring Encore staff are skilful in facilitating a child's participation.

Encore aims to create and environment to inspire children so that they can gain satisfaction by:

- Supporting children to feel respected.
- Ensuring children enjoy their experience.
- Encouraging children to work together and develop a positive sense of pride in their work.
- Offering opportunities for children to have a sense of achievement and personal satisfaction.