

GEMCO PLAYERS COMMUNITY THEATRE INC

MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

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MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

The purposes of the association are:

- a) To encourage community involvement in the performing arts
- b) To develop skills in all aspects of the theatre
- c) To provide live entertainment to the people of Emerald and the surrounding district
- d) To provide a vehicle for locally written productions

2. Purpose of Our Policy

The main objective of our Member Protection Policy (policy) is to maintain responsible behaviour and a safe and inclusive environment for all the members of our association. It outlines our commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to be safe and protected from abuse. Our policy informs everyone involved in our association of his or her legal and ethical rights and responsibilities and the standards of behaviour that are required. It also covers the care and protection of persons participating in our association's activities.

3. Who Our Policy Applies To

Our policy applies to everyone involved in the association and attending Gemco Players events/activities.

4. Extent of Our Policy

Our policy covers unfair decisions and actions, breaches of our code of behaviour and behaviour that occurs at any events organised or sanctioned by the association. It also covers private behaviour where that behaviour brings our association into disrepute or there is suspicion of harm towards a person.

5. Association Responsibilities

We will:

- implement and comply with our policy;
- promote our policy to everyone involved in our association;
- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- respond to breaches or complaints made under our policy promptly, fairly, and confidentially;
- review this policy every 12-18 months; and
- seek advice from and refer serious issues to Victoria Police where appropriate

Serious issues include unlawful behaviour that involves or could lead to significant harm and includes criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault, child abuse) and any other issues that are required to be reported by law.

6. Individual Responsibilities

Everyone associated with our association must:

- comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in our policy;
- treat others with respect;
- always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- be responsible and accountable for their behaviour;
- follow the guidelines outlined in this policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible child abuse, discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour.

7. Protection of Children

7.1 Child Protection

Gemco Players is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our service. We support the rights of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is maintained at all times. We also support the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all participants.

Gemco Players acknowledges that our staff, members and volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the positive experiences of children involved in our association and aims to continue this and to take measures to protect the safety and welfare of children participating in our activities.

7.1.1: Identify and Analyse Risk of Harm

Gemco Players will develop and implement a risk management strategy, which includes a review of existing child protection practices, to determine how child-safe and child-friendly the organisation is and to determine what additional strategies are required to minimise and prevent risk of harm to children because of the action of an employee, volunteer or another person.

7.1.2: Develop Codes of Conduct for Adults and Children

Gemco Players will ensure that the organisation has codes of conduct that specify standards of conduct and care when dealing and interacting with children, particularly those in the organisation's care. The organisation will also implement a code of conduct to address appropriate behaviour between children.

The code(s) of conduct will set out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behaviour. (see Attachment 2)

7.1.3: Choose Suitable Employees and Volunteers

Gemco Players will ensure that the organisation takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children (in prescribed positions).

This may be achieved using a range of screening measures. Such measures will aim to minimise the likelihood of engaging (or retaining) people who are unsuitable to work with children.

Gemco Players will ensure that working with children checks/criminal history assessments are conducted for employees and volunteers working with children, where an assessment is required by law.

If a criminal history report is obtained as part of their screening process, the association will ensure that the criminal history information is dealt with in accordance with relevant state requirements. (See Attachment 1)

7.1.4: Support, Train, Supervise and Enhance Performance

Gemco Players will ensure that volunteers and employees who work with children or their records have ongoing supervision, support and training such that their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child-safe environment.

7.1.5: Empower and Promote the Participation of Children in Decision-Making and Service Development

Gemco Players will promote the involvement and participation of children and young people in developing and maintaining child-safe environments.

7.1.6: Report and Respond Appropriately To Suspected Abuse and Neglect

Gemco Players will ensure that volunteers and employees are able to identify and respond to children at risk of harm.

Gemco Players will make all volunteers and employees aware of their responsibilities under respective state laws if they have suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected.

In addition to any legal obligation, if any person feels another person or organisation bound by this policy is acting inappropriately towards a child or is breaching the code(s) of practice set out they may make an internal complaint to the committee.

7.2 Supervision

Members under the age of 16 must be signed in and out of classes, performances and other activities by a parent/guardian. At all other times it is expected that children under 14 will be supervised by a parent or guardian..

Parents must turn up on time to collect their child for reasons of courtesy and safety. If it appears a member will be left alone at the end of a training session with just one child, they will ask another member to stay until the child is collected.

7.3 Transportation

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their children to and from Gemco Players activities. Where our association makes arrangements for the transportation of children (except via public transport), we will conduct a risk assessment that includes ensuring vehicles are adequately insured, the driver has a current and appropriate licence for the vehicle being used and appropriate safety measures are available (e.g. fitted working seatbelts)]

7.4 Taking Images of Children

The nature of Gemco Players activities is such that images (photographs, video, etc.) of children and adults involved in productions, classes and events are likely to be taken without seeking express permission on each occasion. Parents are asked to address this in completing membership forms for their children each year. Where a parent does not give permission for their child's image to be taken all effort will be made to include that child in performances in a manner that will allow staff to advice audiences of this preference.

Images taken may be used by Gemco Players for publicity, website and archival purposes. No information other than an individual's name will be attributed to those images.

If a particular image that is used is of concern to either the person photographed or their parent/guardian a request may be made to the committee to have that image removed. The committee will make all effort to resolve any issues.

8. Anti-harassment, Discrimination and Bullying

Our association opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. This includes treating or proposing to treat someone less favourably because of a particular characteristic; imposing or intending to impose an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice which has an unequal or disproportionate effect on people with a particular characteristic; or any behaviour that is offensive, abusive, belittling, intimidating or threatening – whether this is face-to-face, indirectly or via communication technologies such as mobile phone and computers. Some forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying are against the law and are based on particular characteristics such as age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, political or religious beliefs, race, and marital status.

Our association takes all claims of harassment, discrimination, bullying and cyber bullying seriously. We encourage anyone who believes they have been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise the issue with the committee (see Responding to Complaints).

9. Inclusive practices

Our association is welcoming and we will seek to include members from all areas of our community.

9.1 People with a disability

Where possible we will include people with a disability in our activities. We will make reasonable adaptations (e.g. modifications to equipment and rules) to enable participation.

9.2 People from diverse cultures

We will support and respect people from diverse cultures and religions to participate in our association and where possible will accommodate requests for flexibility.

9.3 Sexual & Gender Identity

All people, regardless of their sexuality, are welcome at our association. We strive to provide a safe environment for participation and will take action over any homophobic behaviour.

10. Responding to Complaints

10.1 Complaints

Our association takes all complaints about behaviour seriously. Our association will handle complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness (natural justice), that is:

- all complaints will be taken seriously;
- both the person making the complaint (complainant) and the person the complaint is against (respondent) will be given full details of what is being said against them and have the opportunity to respond (give their side of the story);
- irrelevant matters will not be taken into account;
- decisions will be unbiased and fair; and
- any penalties imposed will be fair and reasonable.

More serious complaints may be escalated to consumer affairs or mediation.

If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then Gemco Players will report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority.

10.2 Complaint Handling Process

When a complaint is received by our association, the person receiving the complaint (e.g. President, Secretary) will:

- listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the problem;
- ask what the complainant would like to happen;
- explain the different options available to help resolve the problem;
- take notes; and
- maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity.

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the association will assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process.

10.2.1 Complaints made by Children about Children

Where a complaint or issue arises between children during or in relation to activities associated with the Gemco Players Youth Groups the following procedure applies:

- First Breach – on the first breach of this policy, the child or children involved will have a restorative session. This will involve the children involved discussing the issue with their group leader in an attempt to resolve matters. This will be the first caution except where the issue is of a sexual or physical nature or is deemed to be grossly abusive. In such a circumstance the issue may be referred to Victoria Police and parents will be notified.
- Second Breach -- If there is a second breach by any child during that year, a written warning will be given to the child and a phone call will be made by the leader to the child's parent/guardian. Again, a restorative session will be held as above
- Third Breach – If there is a third breach of this policy during that same year the parents of the child/ren involved will be called immediately to come and collect them. A restorative session will be held at which the parents will be expected to attend with their child. The child will not be allowed to attend further activities until this has taken place.
- Any further breaches will follow the procedure as in the third but will likely result in the child being asked to leave the program.

10.3 Disciplinary Measures

Our association will take disciplinary action against anyone found to have breached our policy or made false and malicious allegations. This procedure is laid out in our Rules of Association.

Attachment 1: SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

This attachment sets out the screening process for people in our association who work, coach, supervise or have regular unsupervised contact with people under the age of 18 years.

Our Association will:

1. Identify positions that involve working, coaching, supervising or regular unsupervised contact with people under the age of 18 years.
2. Where possible, check a person's referees (verbal or written) about his/her suitability for the role.
3. Ask the people identified in step 1 to complete a working with children check.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK REQUIREMENTS

Working with Children Checks aim to create a child-safe environment and to protect children and young people involved in our sport from physical and sexual harm.

They assess the suitability of people to work with children and young people and can involve:

- criminal history checks
- signed declarations
- referee checks, and
- other relevant background checks to assess a person's suitability to work with children and young people.

Working with Children Check requirements vary across Australia. [Fact Sheets](#) for each state and territory are available on the Play by the Rules website: www.playbytherules.net.

Detailed information, including the forms required to complete a Working with Children Check, are available from the relevant agencies in each state and territory.

Victoria

Contact the Department of Justice

Website: www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren

Phone: 1300 652 879

Attachment 2: CODES OF BEHAVIOUR

All members, performers, production staff and volunteers will:

- treat all persons with respect
- be fair discrete and considerate at all times
- display control and a professional attitude
- Be courteous
- Respect other people's property and boundaries
- Treat the venue and everything in it with care and respect

Criminal behaviour of any sort is unacceptable. Gemco Players will not tolerate discrimination, bullying, physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual harassment or abuse towards or by any of its members or at any of its activities.

“Bullying” is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person or group of persons. It includes behaviour that could be expected to intimidate, offend, degrade, humiliate, undermine or threaten.

“Unreasonable behaviour” is behaviour that is offensive, humiliating, intimidating, degrading or threatening. It includes, but is not limited to,

- Verbal abuse
- Initiation pranks
- Excluding or isolating employees
- Giving a person the majority of an unpleasant or meaningless task
- Humiliation through sarcasm, or belittling someone's opinions
- Constant criticism or insults
- Spreading misinformation or malicious rumours
- Deliberately setting work routines or procedures to inconvenience certain employees
- Displaying written or pictorial material which may degrade or offend certain employees

“Repeated ... behaviour” refers to the nature of the behaviour, not the specific form of that behaviour. “Repeated unreasonable behaviour” may thus be a pattern of diverse incidents.

Workplace bullying can occur between:

- Two or more employees/volunteers
- Manager(s) and employees(s)/volunteer(s)
- Employees/volunteers and other persons at the workplace (apprentices, students, clients).

Bullying can occur at any level of the organisation, can be experienced by both men and women and may involve a co-worker, a volunteer, supervisor, manager, service provider, user or customer.

Formerly agreed behaviour may be found to be bullying when it continues after a request from the recipient for the behaviour to stop, or at the point it becomes intimidating, offensive or humiliating.

There are bound to be occasional differences of opinion, conflicts and problems in every workplace. Only when the treatment of another person is unreasonable, offensive or harmful does workplace bullying exist.

Similarly, the exercise of a supervisor's legitimate authority at work through the direction and control of work responsibilities, the monitoring of workflow, and giving feedback on performance, is not bullying insofar as the supervisor's actions are intended to assist staff to improve their tasks, their work performance, or the standard of their behaviour. If an employee has performance problems, however, these should be identified and dealt with in a constructive way that is neither humiliating nor threatening.

Bullying that directly inflicts physical pain, harm, or humiliation amounts to assault and should be dealt with as a police matter.

Attachment 3: REPORTING FORM**RECORD OF COMPLAINT**

Name of person receiving complaint		Date: / /
Complainant's Name	[] Over 18 [] Under 18	
Complainant's contact details	Phone: Email:	
Complainant's role/status in Association		
Name of person complained about	[] Over 18 [] Under 18	
Person complained about role/status in Association		
Location/event of alleged issue		
Description of alleged issue		
Nature of complaint (category/basis/grounds) Can tick more than one box	<input type="checkbox"/> Harassment or <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual/sexist <input type="checkbox"/> Selection dispute <input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality <input type="checkbox"/> Personality clash <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Physical abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Victimisation <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy <input type="checkbox"/> Child Abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Unfair decision Other	
What they want to happen to fix issue		

Information provided to them	
Resolution and/or action taken	
Follow-up action	