



Safe Studio Handbook

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Our Promise

Diamond Valley Dance Academy is committed to child safety and the safety of all our students and family members.. As a dance community, we want students to be safe, happy and confident. We support and respect all students, regardless of age, as well as our team members and any other members of our dance community such as parents, grandparents, siblings etc. We are committed to the safety of all children and students in our care. There is zero tolerance of child abuse or any other abuse towards any person in our community,, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures. We meet our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities if we have reason to be concerned about a child's or student's safety.

Diamond Valley Dance Academy is committed to being a Safe Dance School. We follow the Child Safety Standards as follows:

Diamond Valley Dance Academy is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. Diamond Valley Dance Academy is committed to:

- Upholding the Diamond Valley Dance Academy's statement of commitment to child safety at all times (Child Safe Policy).
- Treating students and families in the dance school community with respect within and outside the studio environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are disclosing that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about the safety of themselves or another student.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Principal.

- Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the students are safe and protected from harm.

Code of Conduct

Our Students

This policy is intended to empower children who are actively enrolled in dance classes with the Diamond Valley Dance Academy. We encourage our students to make appropriate decisions and to respect each other. We will respect them and listen to their view points with interest and without judgement. We will promote inclusiveness, diversity and empathy.

Our students will:

- Uphold and constantly display our studio values of inclusivity, community and creative innovation.
- Demonstrate kindness and empathy towards other students and team members..
- Will allow others to speak and be heard in class.
- Will demonstrate positive behaviours and be role models to younger students
- Will abide by our rules and regulations of our terms of enrolment.
- Will speak to a team member if they feel anxious, upset or think it will help another student.

Our students will not:

- Bully, either verbally, on social media or with body language any member of our DVDance Community.
- Speak ill of a student member, team member or the DVDance Community in general.

Our Families

This policy will allow our parents and family members of our students to demonstrate an understanding of our rules and regulations and terms of enrolment as well as an understanding of our values.

Our families will:

- Pick up and drop off students in a safe manner as per our pick/up drop off policies.
- Support all our students, not just their family members.
- Provide positive feedback and reinforcement to students.
- Disclose any information about their child that may assist us with our learning strategies.
- Be a positive role model and uphold our values whilst on the premises of the Diamond Valley Dance Academy.

Our families will not:

- Bully, in any shape or form any members of our DVDance Community.
- Go against our pick up/drop off policy.
- Video/film or take photos of any members of our DVDance Community without prior permission. Please refer to our Photo/Video Policy.

Team Members

This policy guides our Team Members on best teaching practices at Diamond Valley Dance Academy. All our Team Members, upon signing of their contracts, must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Our Team Members will:

- Provide a positive space for our students to learn
- Provide adequate curriculum and lesson plans to ensure students are engaged and supervised at all times.
- Look out for and be aware of any students who are anxious, upset or acting up and try and assist.
- Communicate and liaise with parents of students.
- Provide a safe, welcoming and encouraging learning environment.
- Provide various learning strategies to enhance the curriculum and ensure all students' learning needs are catered to.
-

Our Team Members will not:

- Ignore or disregard of any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- Developing a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to grooming behaviour eg. Offering gifts.
- Exhibit behaviours, discuss or engaging in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive or sexual in nature and/or not justified by the educational, therapeutic or service delivery context.
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate.
- Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- Communicate with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc).
- Photograph or video a child in the dance studio environment except in accordance with the Diamond Valley Dance Academy's Photography/Video policy.

Application and Interviewing Process

Diamond Valley Dance Academy prides itself on hiring and training exceptional personnel as teachers and support staff.

Our comprehensive application process makes clear the responsibilities of each role on the team and is designed to ensure the right fit for each position.

Suitable applicants are interviewed to assess their suitability for the role and a probation period accompanies each new hire.

References are checked and the feedback recorded in the applicant's file.

Most of our team members have grown up at the Diamond Valley Dance Academy and have been part of our DVDance Community for over 10+ years. We try very hard to employ team members in-house through our teaching programs so as to ensure reliability, good ethical standards, employment history and appropriateness for the role.

Police and Child Safety Checks

All DVDance team members have a current Working With Children Check (WCC) as per current Victorian legislation. A number of our team members are also school teachers so have a VIT (Victorian Institute of Teaching) card instead of WWC.

Any parent helpers we have throughout the year (backstage at concert, costume helpers, bbq helpers) all have a current WWC with Diamond Valley Dance Academy listed as an "employer".

We accept and encourage applications for positions within our Dance School from those with a culturally diverse background. We will conduct reference checks and further police checks on applicants.

Teacher Training, Mentoring and Supervision

Diamond Valley Dance Academy teachers and support staff maintain an excellent level of knowledge, understanding and procedural awareness throughout the year.

We ensure a very high level of expertise in child safety and wellbeing through the following;

- Monthly zoom team meeting check ins
- Termly in house meetings with ongoing child safety and teaching methodology training
- First Aid and CPR training undertaking yearly/every three years as required
- Professional Development in child safety, teaching methodology and curriculum developments undertaken by Cecchetti Ballet, ATOD and Acrobatic Arts.
- Other professional development opportunities such as VDF, Come Together Australian Ballet workshops. Australian Tap Festival. Connect for Boys etc

Ongoing training and education is important to ensure that everyone at the Diamond Valley Dance Academy understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

In support of our Team Members, we always have a Senior Member of staff on duty at any time and at least two teachers present when classes are running/scheduled. This applies to the 30mins prior to scheduled classes and 30mins after classes have finished. New and younger Team Members are supervised regularly to ensure they comply with our policies. We support our Team Members through ongoing training in order to develop their skills.

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services and/or Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Responding & Reporting

'Child abuse is an act (or omission) which endangers a child's health, wellbeing and/or development.'

Child Abuse includes:

- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Exposure to Family Violence
- Neglect
- Grooming

“The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) are compulsory minimum standards for all organisations that provide services to children including Victorian schools. The aim of the Standards is to ensure organisations are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect. It is recognised that many schools will have existing policies and procedures that aim to keep children safe.

The Standards provide a framework to identify gaps and improve policy and practices around child safety. On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015, which amended the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 to introduce the Child Safe Standards that would apply to all organisations involved in child related work in Victoria.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) as regulator for all Victorian schools has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Child Safe Standards in schools. The Standards are:

Standard 1 - Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

Standard 2 - A Child Safe Policy or statement of commitment to child safety

Standard 3 - A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

Standard 4 - Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Standard 5 - Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Standard 6 - Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Standard 7 - Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children tolerance of students from all cultural backgrounds and those with a disability. All students, regardless of their background will feel safe and be able to participate equally.”

Legislative responsibilities

Diamond Valley Dance Academy takes its 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
- **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 potential danger.

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified

(see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

The Diamond Valley Dance Academy has a number of risk management strategies in place to help minimise and reduce child abuse risks. These include but are not limited to:

- At least two Team Members present at any time on the premises.
- At least two Team Members in attendance with First Aid qualifications.
- Adherence to Safe Dance Practices and affiliation with AusDance.
- Viewing windows
- Small dressing area with open roof with lockable door (unlockable from outside with key)
- Toilet in Foyer area with lockable door (unlockable from outside with key)
- Social Media policy for Team Members to not have students under the age of 18 as friends on any social media platforms.
- Photography policy

Safety Procedures

At Diamond Valley Dance Academy we are constantly reviewing and improving our procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students and families.

1. Physical Safety

1.1 Drop off & Pick Up

Drop Off:

Families of students aged 10 and under are asked not to leave their children unsupervised for more than 15minutes prior to class times.

Students 10yrs old and above are welcome to attend the studios earlier than their designated class times for extra practice, warm up and catch up with friends.

Students who are enrolled in the first class of the session are asked not to arrive any earlier than 30minutes prior to the scheduled start time of their class. Ie a 4.15pm

Tuesday afternoon class is not to arrive prior to 3.45pm as our team are still setting up for the afternoon ahead.

Students are welcome to be dropped off in the carpark but should be supervised until they get to our front door.

Pick Up:

Students are asked to be picked up no later than 15minutes after their scheduled class has finished, unless otherwise arranged with our front desk staff.

Students under the age of 10yrs should be picked up from inside our building.

Students should not be waiting in the carpark to be picked up. All students should remain in the vicinity of our building until their lift has arrived.

1.2 Teacher Punctuality and Supervision of Students

DVDance Team members should be in attendance at the studio no less than 15minutes before the start of their scheduled class time.

1.3 Class Equipment, Performance Spaces & Technical Equipment.

The Diamond Valley Dance Academy is committed to providing a safe space for our DVDance Community. Accordingly:

- The safety of our students is a priority. Teachers will point out all emergency exits and where students are expected to go in the case of an emergency evacuation. In an emergency evacuation, teachers will take their attendance sheet and account for all students once the evacuation is complete..
- Teachers will notify the front desk about any potentially dangerous circumstances in the studio or any other part of the school. These include (but are not limited to) ceiling leaks, problems with locks on exterior doors, extra-slippery floors, etc. All water spills must be cleaned immediately.
- Teachers will not allow students to bring food or drink other than bottled water into the studio.

- Acrobatics teachers will use extreme care within the studio. Students should not execute tricks without the full supervision of the teacher. Acrobatics teachers will not leave an assistant teacher alone in any class.
- DVDance teachers will never put our students at risk by eliminating a proper warm-up or barre at the start of each class or rehearsal. This policy is in place throughout the year, including performance time.
- Teachers will not encourage students to execute tricks or movement that is inappropriate for their skill or age level.
- Our warm up area remains a “acro free” area at all times!

1.4 First Aid

All DVDance team members are Level 2 First Aid qualified. DVDance provides its team with in-house training every year ensuring they are all up to date with their yearly CPR and three yearly Level 2 First Aid qualifications.

Any team member who is not present for the training must obtain their own qualifications by the due date each year.

First Aid Policy:

- If a student is injured during class, stop all activity immediately and clear the area in the vicinity of the student. Commence DRSABCD as per training.
- Report the incident to the front desk. In the case of a serious injury, call an ambulance and ask the front desk staff to call the child’s parents immediately. Teachers are required to fill in an accident report form (at front desk in First Aid kit) pertaining to any injury.
- Teachers will never distribute medication of any kind, including aspirin/panadol.
- All injuries must be filled out in our Injury/Accident Report form and signed by teacher in charge (First Aider) and the parent upon pick up.
- Our first-aid kit and supplies are situated at the front desk.

1.5 Allergies, Medical Conditions & Action Plans

All families are asked to disclose any medical conditions, allergies, action plans or other issues that may be helpful for our team to teach your child, at the time of registration. Our online portal has provision for this.

DVDance Admin Team are asked to note any of the above and make this known in our "Student's Trello Board" and to the appropriate teacher(s).

1.6 Photographs/Videos

All families are asked to sign our Photo and Video policy and choose whether they are happy for photographs of their children to be taken. Accordingly:

- All team members will check our student database to see if we have permission to take photographs/film students before taking photos/filming for external sources (ie social media). Photos and video may be taken for purposes of uploading to Movitae regardless.
- Only photos/videos of students who have given permission via our online registration portal to be uploaded to social media.
- No parent, student, family member or person attending our studios is to take photographs or film any part of our classes/students in any capacity without prior consent.
- We have engaged the use of Movitae to assist us with this element. Only teachers can upload to Movitae into the specific groups they are designated to and only students/families in those specific classes can view content. No content can be downloaded from Movitae which makes it a very safe and valuable tool.

2. Emotional Safety

2.1 Behaviour Management

For the safety of all our DVDance Community members including students, team members and family members, please note our Behaviour Policy below:

1. Student will be asked to stop said behaviour by the teacher in charge in the class/warm up room. Team members are asked to use the student's name and give a clear and concise warning to stop. If the behaviour stops at this point, there is no further action.
2. If the behaviour continues, a second warning, as per no 1, is required.
3. If the behaviour still continues and it is now disrupting the class, the student is asked to sit down the front of the studio and the Principal/Studio Manager or Admin Manager are notified of the behaviour.
4. When the parent arrives the teacher will speak to the parent about the child's behaviour. If the parent/teacher is not available, then a mutually agreeable time to meet/talk on phone should be arranged. If possible, this conversation should be held in the company of the Principal/Studio Manager or Admin Manager.
5. The teacher in charge will then add a note about the said behaviour in our Student Database.

2.2 Bullying

At DVDance we have zero tolerance for bullying. Any reports of bullying from students or parents will be acted upon immediately.

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

2.3 Acceptance & Embracing Diversity

One of our core values at DVDance is “Inclusivity”. We encourage our DVDance Community, our students, team members and families, to be inclusive in nature around all aspects of our learning and performing to embrace our cultural and learning diversity.

These are some of the ways the DVDance Team encourage diversity:

- Diverse and various uniform items for varying body types.
- Modest and well fitting costumes for performances.
- Teachers with specialist training for students with special needs.
- “Aides” provided for one on one assistance for students with special needs if required.
- Qualified RWID teachers.
- Performances opportunities for every student.
- Exam opportunities regardless of ability.
- Teachers are trained to adapt lesson plans as required so that all students can participate at their own level.
- Open lines of communication exist between teachers and parents in order to create a ‘toolbox’ of techniques for each student with special needs.
- Cultural awareness is given to students with different ethnic backgrounds.

2.4 Teaching Methods and Pedagogy

All teaching staff are continuously evolving their training on teaching methodology and pedagogy.

All teachers are required to attend both internal and external Professional Development days with emphasis on both syllabus and teaching methodology.

Teachers are required to submit lesson and term plans to their mentors and for feedback to be given and adhered to.

2.5 Mental Health

At DVDance we pride ourselves on being very present and available to our students when they need us the most. This can be to talk through something that has happened at school or home, some stresses they are finding due to workloads, upcoming school and dancing exams, general anxiety and any other mental health issue.

A number of our team members have undertaken training to support our students with these issues and are available to book a discussion time. If a matter is pressing and a student needs support immediately, they are asked to see Emma Lanza-Craig (Studio Manager) or Samantha Grant (Principal) who will assist.

3. Artistic Safety

3.1 How we respond to mistakes

At DVDance we embrace mistakes as an integral part of learning. Mistakes are met with acknowledgement, discussion and praise in the knowledge that they will help our students grow.

3.2 Encouraging Artistic Risk-Taking

At DVDance we understand that achievements in the arts are directly related to students feeling safe to take artistic risks within their class environment. Our students are encouraged to aim high and believe in their ability to consistently improve their artistic skills. Our team always empower their students by encouraging growth and expansion within their learning.

3.3 Freedom of Expression

All students at DVDance are made to feel comfortable expressing their opinions artistically. Our teachers applaud individuality the use of student ideas and collaboration as often as possible.

One of our core values is creative innovation as we see this to be an important aspect of our student's learning and engagement within the studio.