

Code of Conduct – Supervision of Children

Melbourne International Comedy Festival provides an open, safe and friendly environment for all children. This Code of Conduct outlines expected standards of behaviour regarding the supervision of children by designated supervisors (including chaperones) and any other relevant staff in directly caring for children employed or engaged by the organisation (e.g. child performers, program participants, work experience students).

Scope

All employees are required to comply with the Code of Conduct. This includes any adult person (over the age of 18) engaged by an organisation that may work directly with or around children at any time including:

- 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
- work experience students/interns/secondments
- any other individual in the organisation that may deal with children

(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).

Melbourne International Comedy Festival’s employees are responsible for promoting the safety and well-being of children by complying with the following:

- adhere to our child safe policies and procedures
- take 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.
- treat all children with dignity, equality and respect
- listen to and value the ideas and opinions of children
- act as a positive role model in your conduct with children
- develop positive relationships with children and parents (including carers and legal guardians) based on mutual trust and open communication
- be professional in your actions through your use of language, presentation and manner
- respect the privacy of children and parents (including carers and legal guardians), and only disclose information to people who have a need to know
- be aware of risks with communication and behaviour between employees and children (including online and mobile)
- be aware of risks with communication and behaviour between children (including online and mobile)
- aim to ensure children understand they are valued members of the production, program, audience or other experience
- acknowledge 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, direct and accompany children to their supervisor or relevant management immediately report any breaches of these standards of behaviour to the Child Safety Officer or relevant management promptly

Melbourne International Comedy Festival's employees *MUST NOT*:

- 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 video of children without the explicit permission of the child (if 15 years of age or older) and their parent, carer or legal guardian, and relevant management
- share personal information or photos of children on social media without the informed consent of the child (if 15 years of age or older) and parent, carer or legal guardian, 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 an adult's dressing room or crew areas, unless accompanied by their supervisor and approval has been granted by those in the dressing room
- 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

All complaints or reports of conduct not keeping with this Code will be pursued in accordance with the organisation's Complaints and Reporting Procedure, including means to take disciplinary action if necessary.