

Brainstorm Productions
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Brainstorm Productions acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we operate. We acknowledge and respect their contributions, experience and knowledge as First Nations people. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy was approved by Brainstorm Productions management on 22 August 2022. It demonstrates the strong commitment of management and staff to child safety and wellbeing, and how our organisation keeps children safe from harm, including child abuse.

Policy title	Brainstorm Productions Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Purpose	This Policy outlines how Brainstorm Productions prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.
Statement of commitment to child safety	<p>All children who attend a Brainstorm Productions performance have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our audiences will always be our first priority and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm.</p> <p>We are committed to delivering content that helps children to be safe and protect their social and emotional wellbeing. We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun while enjoying a live performance.</p>
Scope	This policy applies to all staff, management, children and other individuals involved in our organisation. This policy applies to all activities conducted by Brainstorm Productions, including performances in schools, the post-performance discussion and any other activities that may involve contact with school staff or students (e.g. set up and pack down; school sign in).
Responsibilities	<p>Management has the role of ensuring Brainstorm Productions prioritises children’s safety and that action is taken when anyone raises concerns about children’s safety.</p> <p>Management will champion and model a child safe culture at Brainstorm Productions. We encourage anyone involved with the organisation to report a child safety concern. Management will work to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns.</p> <p>Everyone at Brainstorm Productions has a role in identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm. Management will make sure that staff are</p>

	<p>conducting risk assessments and taking action to manage risks in accordance with this policy. They will also ensure that appropriate child safety training for staff is identified and completed, and that ongoing training and support is provided throughout the year.</p> <p>Management is responsible for ensuring child safety and wellbeing is carefully considered throughout the process of recruitment, screening, staff induction, training, supervision, staff support, complaints management, record keeping, external reporting, risk assessment and risk management.</p> <p>Management will conduct an annual review of how effectively Brainstorm Productions is delivering child safety and wellbeing. The input of people involved with Brainstorm Productions will be sought as part of this review.</p> <p>Management is responsible for ensuring child safety and wellbeing is appropriately addressed in the Employee Handbook and Code of Conduct.</p>
<p>Definitions</p>	<p><i>Management</i> means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Owner/Director • The Compliance Officer and; • The Clinical Psychologist. <p><i>Child abuse</i> means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sexual offence committed against a child; • an offence committed against a child such as grooming; • physical violence against a child; • causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child; • serious neglect of a child. <p><i>Harm</i> is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.</p> <p><i>Child/Children</i> means a person who is under the age of 18 years.</p> <p><i>Concern</i> refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.</p> <p><i>Complaint</i> refers to an expression of dissatisfaction to Brainstorm</p>

	<p>Productions related to one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our services or dealings with individuals; • allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member or another individual associated with Brainstorm Productions, including disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person; • the inadequate handling of a prior concern; • general concerns about the safety of children attending a performance.
<p>Relevant legislation and standards</p>	<p>National and NSW standards and legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National Principles for Child Safe Organisations</i> • <i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012</i> • <i>Children’s Guardian Act 2019</i> • <i>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</i> • <i>The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</i> <p>While Brainstorm Productions is based in NSW, the company also has operations in VIC, QLD, SA and ACT. Therefore, the following legislation may be relevant to the safety and wellbeing of children who attend our performances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (VIC)</i> (including the Child Safe Standards) • <i>Child Protection Act 1999 (QLD)</i> • <i>Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)</i> • <i>Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)</i>
<p>Access to the policy</p>	<p>This policy is publicly available to download on the Brainstorm Productions website.</p>
<p>Policy status and review</p>	<p>This policy was reviewed and approved by Management on 22 August 2022. For more information or assistance regarding this policy, or in the event that a breach of this policy is identified, please contact Kas Curtis at shows@brainstormproductions.edu.au.</p> <p>This policy is due to be reviewed by Management on the 22 August 2023.</p>

The information below outlines how Brainstorm Productions will implement each of the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, as well as the additional considerations included in the revised Victorian Child Safe Standards.

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

- The welfare of children will always be our first priority and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm;
- We are committed to delivering content that helps children to be safe in all aspects of life, including at school, at home, in the community and online. Our programs aim to empower children with the skills and confidence to care for their social and emotional wellbeing and seek help when they feel unsafe or emotionally distressed. We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun while enjoying a live performance;
- This commitment to child safety and wellbeing is modelled by Management and office staff, by placing child safety and wellbeing at the centre of the recruitment, training, induction and supervision of all employees, especially the actors who perform in schools;
- We publicly demonstrate our commitment to child safety on our website and social media, and celebrate dates and initiatives that champion child safety in the community, such as National Child Protection Week and Working with Children Week.

2. Children and young people are informed and empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

- Brainstorm Productions is a child-centred organisation. We value the voices of children and respect the rights of children, and will act on safety concerns raised by children or their families.
- The primary aim of our organisation is to empower children and to educate and engage them about their rights, how to raise concerns, express their feelings and needs, and access support from formal and informal support networks if they feel unsafe. We do this in the following ways:
 - We demonstrate and describe social, emotional and help-seeking skills and provide information about children's rights through the content of our live performances in schools;
 - At the start of each performance we ask a member of school staff to remind all students of their right to feel safe and how to access support from school staff and

- other trusted adults if any concerns arise from the performance;
 - We provide direct information to students about their right to safety and wellbeing and their help-seeking options in the post-performance discussion;
 - We provide further information and opportunities for skills practice, including a deeper exploration of help-seeking behaviours, via the post-performance classroom resources;
 - We provide information to the broader community about the rights of children via our social media and website content.
- We provide information and training to our staff, to ensure they understand the rights of children, can recognise and act on the signs of child abuse and harm, and are skilled at engaging with children, empowering them to express their needs and seek help if they feel unsafe.
- We actively seek to include children's views and ideas in the development of our programs. We collect student feedback via post-performance discussions, teacher evaluation forms, online reviews and student evaluation forms. We use this feedback to inform the development of new programs and to improve existing programs.
- We seek to maintain our endorsement by the eSafety Commissioner as a Trusted eSafety Provider, which requires us to meet a comprehensive set of child safety standards. The eSafety Commissioner is a government organisation committed to protecting the safety, wellbeing and rights of children in online environments, and aims to empower children to stay safe and understand their rights and responsibilities online.

3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

- Brainstorm Productions recognises the important role of families.
- We provide schools with a range of resources to inform and prepare families for the upcoming performance, including permission slips, newsletter inserts and social media content. All promotional material includes a link to our website so that parents can learn more about our organisation and programs prior to giving permission for their child to attend a performance, including our commitment to child safety.
- Parents, families and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time, either via their school or directly through our contact email address. Staff are trained to respond appropriately and respectfully to any feedback or concerns from parents and families, including procedures for following up with the school and providing families with information about support services where necessary.

4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice, including cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

- Brainstorm Productions values diversity and equity for all children. We take active steps to create an environment where children's diverse circumstances and needs are recognised, and all children feel safe, welcome and included. The following measures are in place to achieve this:
 - We provide training for all staff on identifying and responding to children with diverse circumstances and needs;
 - We deliver programs that respect the diversity of Australian students, their interests and cultures;
 - We welcome and support the participation of all children in our programs, including children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTIQ+ children and Aboriginal children and their families;
 - Throughout the booking process, and in preparation for the performance, we offer schools the opportunity to provide information about their students and communities, including anything specific required for them to participate fully in our programs;
 - We have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified, including discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation;
 - We strive to create an inclusive culture and reflect the diversity of our audiences through representation in our actors. We actively seek to recruit actors from diverse backgrounds and aim to represent actors from diverse backgrounds on our social media, website and marketing material. We publicly declare our commitment to equal opportunity employment in our Audition and Casting Policy and on our website;
 - We acknowledge and celebrate a range of events, special dates and initiatives that celebrate diversity through our social media and website content, and participate in school events such as Harmony Week;
 - We strive to ensure our performances and online activities are accessible and promote inclusion of children of all abilities, whenever possible. We strive to create accessible online content through the use of closed captions, image descriptions and Auslan translations.

- Brainstorm Productions is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal culture is celebrated and Aboriginal children, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal children include:
 - An Acknowledgement of Country at all performances, on our website and on all email correspondence;
 - Celebrating NAIDOC Week and other significant events, including National Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day and Indigenous Literacy Day;
 - Providing programs that celebrate diversity, inclusion and respect, and support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights;
 - Providing opportunities for children to share their cultural identity and express their culture through the post-performance classroom activities;
 - Providing training for staff and volunteers on the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children.

5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

- Brainstorm Productions puts child safety and wellbeing at the centre of recruitment and screening processes, as outlined in the Audition and Casting Policy. The following measures are in place to ensure staff are suitable and supported to work safely with children:
 - We only recruit staff who are appropriate to engage with children, including Management and office staff, and we require staff to have appropriate qualifications for their roles;
 - All staff are required to undertake a Working with Children Check in each relevant jurisdiction. A register of Working with Children Check details is maintained by the Compliance Officer, and actors are notified if a Working With Children Check is due for renewal, to ensure checks are always up-to-date;
 - Employees are formally and regularly reminded they are obligated to vacate their position if they become a prohibited person;
 - Schools receive a compliance pack prior to the performance that includes the Risk Management Strategy, the Disclosure and Mandatory Reporting Policy, and the WWC check details for each actor attending the school. Brainstorm Productions is registered with Sam4Schools and all performers must comply with any additional legal requirements and policies related to child safety;

- Brainstorm Productions is committed to ensuring that all leaders and staff receive ongoing training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety and to support their engagement with children. Brainstorm Productions assists its staff to promote a safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them;
- All staff who work in schools and have contact with children are required to complete annual child safety training and ongoing training throughout the year. Staff are trained to comply with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Risk Management Strategy, Code of Conduct and Disclosure and Mandatory Reporting Policy, and complete the NSW Government Child Protection Awareness Induction Training and annual Child Protection Update;
- All staff are trained to ensure students are supervised by school staff at all times, including while students are entering and leaving the venue, and during the performance and discussion. Procedures are in place to ensure Brainstorm Productions staff members are never alone with a student;
- Staff will receive ongoing training and supervision to support their engagement with children and comply with all child-related policies. Brainstorm Productions aims to create a culture where all staff feel safe to report any concerns, especially concerns regarding child safety and wellbeing, without fear of consequences;
- Issues or concerns about behaviour with children will be raised immediately and addressed in line with our Code of Conduct, Complaint Handling Policy and Discipline Policy.

6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.

- All reports of child abuse and child safety concerns will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child and whether they are about the conduct of an adult or a child. All complaints and child safety concerns will be responded to promptly and thoroughly:
 - Brainstorm Productions has a Disclosure and Mandatory Reporting Policy, supported by step-by-step procedures document, which include information for staff about how a child safety concern will be responded to;
 - If a complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm by a Brainstorm Productions staff member, then staff at Brainstorm Productions must report it in accordance with the Complaints and Grievances Handling Policy;
 - Brainstorm Productions Management and staff are required to prioritise children's safety and wellbeing in any response and to report all potentially criminal conduct

to police in the relevant jurisdiction;

- If a complaint is about the conduct of a Brainstorm Productions staff member, this staff member may be subject to actions to support child safety in accordance with the Complaints and Grievances Handling Policy, including being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation, being suspended from working in schools, and removing their access to the Brainstorm Productions IT system and facilities.
- Complaints can be emailed to info@brainstormproductions.edu.au, with the subject line: Attention Compliance Officer (CONFIDENTIAL), or you can speak with the Director, Compliance Officer or Clinical Psychologist.

If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child, immediately call 000.

7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

- Thorough induction training is provided upon commencement of employment, followed by direct supervision in schools and ongoing training throughout the year. Annual training is provided at the start of each calendar year for returning actors. Training in child safety and wellbeing includes:
 - Our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures;
 - Recognising signs of child abuse or harm;
 - Responding to disclosures;
 - Mandatory reporting obligations;
 - Record keeping;
 - Risk assessment and management;
 - Creating safe and inclusive environments for children in diverse circumstances, including responding to discrimination, racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia.
- Child Safety and Wellbeing training is provided by the Director, the Compliance Officer and the Clinical Psychologist.
- In addition to the internal training, all employees complete the NSW Government Child Protection Awareness Induction Training and annual Child Protection Update.

- Actors have regular contact with Management and office staff and submit a weekly report providing details of any feedback, concerns or areas for training/development.

8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

- We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse that may occur during the delivery of a Brainstorm Productions program.
- We conduct regular risk assessments and have a risk management strategy in place to manage the risk of child abuse and harm. The risk management strategy is developed in consultation with staff and schools. We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the benefits of participating in a Brainstorm Productions program. Management is responsible for approving the risk management strategy.
- Any contractors or other providers of services will always be supervised by a member of staff while working with us to ensure child safety, in accordance with the Code of Conduct and other child safety policies.

9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

- Brainstorm Productions will review all child safe practices and policies annually. We will also review relevant practices and policies in response to any child safety incidents.
- Findings from reviews will be reported to the people involved in our organisation and also inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices. Reviews are overseen by Management and will be informed by consultation with schools and our staff.
- Any changes to our child safety policies and procedures will be updated in the compliance documents for schools on the online teacher resources portal. Updated documents will be sent to staff via email and any significant changes will be communicated via a formal training session, to ensure staff are aware of the changes and understand how to implement them.

10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

- The following policies and procedures work together to support child safety and wellbeing

across all of our operations:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
 - Disclosure and Mandatory Reporting Policy;
 - Risk Management Strategy;
 - Code of Conduct;
 - Employee Handbook;
 - Discipline Policy;
 - Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy;
 - Audition and Casting Policy;
 - Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy;
 - Complaints and Grievance Handling Policy;
 - COVID-19 Policy;
 - Social Media Policy.
- These policies have been developed by Management, in consultation with key stakeholders (e.g. teachers, school staff and the actors who perform in schools). All staff are trained on these policies as part of their induction. Annual training is provided, as well as additional training throughout the year as needed.
 - Key policies and procedures are provided to schools approximately six weeks prior to the performance, accessible via the Brainstorm Productions website with an access code. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is publicly available to download from our website. All relevant policies are available to the public on request.
 - Brainstorm Productions is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about any child-related complaints, disclosures or safety concerns:
 - All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system;
 - Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint;
 - We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken;
 - Records will be stored securely and kept by Brainstorm Productions for at least 45 years.

- Brainstorm Productions may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests:
 - For example, if a child discloses a child safety concern to one of our staff, then we will take steps to ensure the relevant members of school staff or child protection agencies are aware of the disclosure to ensure the child receives appropriate support, in accordance with our Disclosure and Mandatory Reporting Policy;
 - Brainstorm Productions will keep information about complaints and disclosures confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety. We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety. More information is available in our Complaints Handling Policy, Disclosure Policy and Mandatory reporting Policy.