



Policy Statement

The Royal South Street Society (RSSS) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, supportive and child-centred environment for all children and young people who participate in, attend, volunteer with, perform at, compete in, or otherwise engage with RSSS activities and events.

RSSS recognises that every child has the right to feel safe, be safe and be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, harassment and harm.

RSSS has zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect, grooming, exploitation, racism, discrimination, harassment, bullying or any conduct that compromises the safety, wellbeing or dignity of a child or young person.

RSSS is committed to implementing and maintaining the Victorian Child Safe Standards, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and all relevant child safety legislation and regulatory requirements.

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is embedded in the leadership, governance, culture, operations and decision-making of RSSS.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Promote and protect the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children and young people.
- Embed child safety within the culture, governance and operations of RSSS.
- Ensure compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Establish clear expectations and responsibilities for all individuals associated with RSSS.
- Prevent, identify and respond appropriately to child abuse and child safety concerns.
- Foster environments where children are respected, valued, heard and supported.

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- Board Directors
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Discipline Chairs
- Committee Members

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- Contractors and consultants
- Adjudicators
- Accompanists
- Guest artists and presenters
- Event officials
- Competitors and participants
- Parents, guardians and carers
- Patrons attending RSSS events
- Any individual acting on behalf of RSSS

This Policy applies across all RSSS-operated activities, competitions, events, meetings, rehearsals, performances, online environments and venues utilised by RSSS.

Definitions

Child

A child or young person under the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse

Includes:

- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- emotional or psychological abuse;
- grooming;
- serious neglect;
- family violence exposure;
- exploitation;
- online abuse.

Grooming

Behaviour undertaken with the intention of establishing an emotional connection, trust or relationship with a child, their family or carers to facilitate abuse, exploitation or inappropriate conduct.

Child Safety Concern

Any allegation, disclosure, suspicion, complaint, observation, incident, risk or breach that may impact the safety or wellbeing of a child.

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Personnel

Includes Board Directors, employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants, adjudicators, committee members and any person acting on behalf of RSSS.

Child Safe Standards

The Victorian Child Safe Standards and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations as amended from time to time.

Guiding Principles

RSSS recognises that:

- Child safety is everyone's responsibility.
- Children have rights and must be empowered to exercise those rights.
- Children are more likely to speak up when they feel respected and heard.
- Families and communities are important partners in child safety.
- Diversity strengthens our organisation.
- Cultural safety is fundamental to child wellbeing.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have the right to culturally safe environments.
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disability, LGBTQIA+ children and other vulnerable children deserve equitable access, participation and protection.
- Risks to children exist in both physical and online environments.
- Continuous improvement is essential to maintaining child safe environments.

Commitment to the Victorian Child Safe Standards

RSSS will:

Standard 1 – Culturally Safe Environments

RSSS actively supports culturally safe environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are respected, valued and supported.

RSSS:

- acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Country;
- promotes cultural inclusion and participation;
- does not tolerate racism in any form;
- encourages reporting of racist behaviour;
- supports children to express and celebrate their cultural identity.

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Standard 2 – Leadership, Governance and Culture

The RSSS Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring child safety is embedded throughout organisational governance, strategy, decision-making and culture.

RSSS will:

- maintain child safety policies and procedures;
- monitor compliance;
- assess child safety risks;
- allocate resources to child safety initiatives;
- promote accountability and transparency.

Standard 3 – Children are Empowered

RSSS will:

- inform children about their rights;
- encourage participation in decisions affecting them;
- provide opportunities for feedback;
- take concerns seriously;
- support children to understand reporting pathways.

Information will be provided in age-appropriate and accessible formats wherever practicable.

Standard 4 – Families and Communities

RSSS recognises the critical role families, schools, teachers, carers and community organisations play in promoting child safety.

RSSS will:

- communicate child safety expectations;
- provide access to child safety information;
- encourage participation and feedback;
- work collaboratively with schools and community organisations.

Standard 5 – Equity and Diversity

RSSS is committed to creating inclusive environments that are:

- welcoming;
- accessible;
- equitable;
- respectful; and
- free from discrimination.

RSSS supports the participation of children from diverse cultural backgrounds, children with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children who may be vulnerable or at greater risk of harm.

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Standard 6 – Suitable Personnel

RSSS will implement recruitment, screening and selection practices that prioritise child safety.

Where applicable RSSS will require:

- Working with Children Checks;
- referee checks;
- qualification verification;
- child-safe recruitment practices.

Individuals who do not satisfy screening requirements may be refused engagement.

Standard 7 – Complaints and Concerns

RSSS maintains child-focused complaint and reporting processes.

Children, families, employees, volunteers and community members are encouraged to report concerns.

RSSS will:

- take all reports seriously;
- respond promptly;
- maintain confidentiality where appropriate;
- document complaints and outcomes;
- support children throughout the process.

No person will be victimised for making a genuine report.

Standard 8 – Knowledge, Skills and Awareness

RSSS will provide child safety information, education and training appropriate to the role and responsibilities of personnel.

Training may include:

- Child Safe Standards;
- recognising abuse indicators;
- reporting obligations;
- professional boundaries;
- online safety;
- cultural safety.

Training requirements will form part of induction and ongoing professional development.

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Standard 9 – Physical and Online Environments

RSSS actively identifies and manages risks within physical and online environments.

Risk controls may include:

- supervision requirements;
- venue access controls;
- backstage procedures;
- dressing room management;
- communication protocols;
- online safety controls;
- photography restrictions.

Standard 10 – Continuous Improvement

RSSS will regularly review:

- incidents;
- complaints;
- risk assessments;
- policies;
- procedures;
- training programs;
- stakeholder feedback.

Lessons learned will be incorporated into continuous improvement activities.

Standard 11 – Policies and Procedures

RSSS maintains child safety policies, procedures and supporting documentation that are regularly reviewed and updated.

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Child Participation and Feedback

RSSS encourages children and young people to:

- ask questions;
- provide feedback;
- raise concerns;
- contribute ideas;
- participate in decisions affecting them.

Children's views will be respected and considered in an age-appropriate manner.

Child Safety Responsibilities

Board of Directors

The Board is responsible for:

- promoting child safe culture;
- approving child safety policies;
- monitoring compliance;
- overseeing child safety risks;
- ensuring continuous improvement.

Child Safety Officer

RSSS shall appoint a Child Safety Officer responsible for:

- receiving concerns and complaints;
- coordinating responses;
- supporting reporting obligations;
- maintaining records;
- advising the Board.

Employees and Volunteers

All personnel must:

- comply with this Policy;
- comply with the Child Safe Code of Conduct;
- maintain professional boundaries;
- participate in training;
- report concerns immediately;
- prioritise child safety.



Professional Boundaries

Personnel must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children and young people at all times.

Personnel must not:

- establish inappropriate relationships;
- engage in favouritism;
- communicate privately without legitimate organisational purpose;
- exchange personal gifts;
- engage in grooming behaviour;
- exploit power imbalances.

Gifts and Benefits

Personnel must not provide gifts, money, personal benefits or preferential treatment to individual children unless approved by RSSS and communicated to parents or guardians.

School Group Participation

Where schools participate in RSSS activities:

- schools remain responsible for obtaining parent or guardian permissions and consents;
- schools must notify RSSS of restrictions or safety requirements;
- RSSS will implement reasonable operational controls;
- schools remain responsible for student supervision unless otherwise agreed.

RSSS cannot guarantee exclusion from incidental public photography or filming occurring within public event environments.

Backstage and Dressing Room Safety

RSSS will implement measures to promote child safety in backstage and dressing room environments.

These may include:

- restricted access zones;
- accreditation systems;
- supervision requirements;
- authorised personnel controls;
- photography restrictions;
- incident reporting processes.

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Where applicable, persons entering restricted backstage areas may be required to hold a valid Working with Children Check.

Adjudicators, Guest Artists and Presenters

Adjudicators, guest artists and presenters must:

- maintain professional boundaries;
- avoid one-on-one unsupervised interactions;
- not engage in private social media communication with children;
- not seek personal relationships with competitors;
- comply with all RSSS child safety requirements.

Online Safety and Communications

Personnel must not:

- communicate privately with children through personal social media accounts;
- share inappropriate material;
- use digital platforms in a manner that compromises child safety.

Communications must remain transparent, professional and related to authorised RSSS activities.

Parents or guardians should be included in electronic communications involving children wherever practicable.

Photography, Filming and Media

RSSS will manage photography, filming and media activities in accordance with its Media, Social Media, Photography & Videography Policy and associated procedures.

Children's privacy, dignity and safety will be prioritised at all times.

Use of photographs, video recordings and digital media involving children will occur only in accordance with approved consent arrangements and organisational procedures.

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Reporting Child Safety Concerns

Any person who:

- witnesses child abuse;
- receives a disclosure;
- suspects abuse;
- observes inappropriate conduct; or
- identifies a risk to a child,

must report the concern immediately.

Reports may be made to:

- the Child Safety Officer;
- a senior RSSS representative;
- Victoria Police;
- Child Protection; or
- any relevant statutory authority.

Immediate danger or emergencies must be reported to Victoria Police on 000.

Mandatory Reporting and Legal Obligations

RSSS personnel must comply with all applicable child safety legislation including:

- Mandatory Reporting obligations;
- Failure to Disclose obligations;
- Failure to Protect obligations;
- Reportable Conduct Scheme requirements;
- Information Sharing Scheme requirements where applicable.

Reports to statutory authorities will occur whenever required by law.

Responding to Concerns and Allegations

RSSS will:

- prioritise the safety of the child;
- respond promptly;
- maintain confidentiality where appropriate;
- cooperate with authorities;
- document actions taken
- support affected children and families

Transport of Children

RSSS personnel must not transport children unless:

- authorised by RSSS;
- parental consent has been obtained; and
- appropriate risk controls are implemented.

Where practical, two adults should be present.

Transport arrangements should be documented.

Record Keeping

RSSS will maintain secure records relating to:

- incidents;
- disclosures;
- allegations;
- complaints;
- investigations;
- outcomes;
- training;
- Working with Children Checks
- risk assessments.

Records will be managed in accordance with privacy and legal requirements.

Records will be retained even where allegations are not substantiated.

Awareness and Communication

This Policy will be:

- available on the RSSS website;
- communicated to personnel;
- incorporated into induction programs;
- supported through training activities;
- available upon request.

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Related Policies & Documents

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Media, Social Media, Photography & Videography Policy
- Media Consent Forms
- Complaint Handling Policy
- Volunteer Management Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Working with Children Check Procedures

Legislative and Regulative References

This Policy is informed by:

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act requirements
- Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed:

- every two years;
- earlier where legislative, regulatory or organisational changes occur.

Policy Authorisation

Approved by RSSS Board	17 June 2026	Responsible Person	Executive Officer
Version	Version 3 May 2026	Scheduled Review Date	01/06/2028