



## Child Protection Policy

Updated March 2021

### **Introduction:**

**Rockdale Musical Society Inc** Child Protection Policy document has been prepared in accordance with the society's Code of Conduct and was implemented as a special resolution of the Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

### **Purpose:**

This policy applies to any adult person (18 years of age and over) engaged by **Rockdale Musical Society** who may work or interact with children at any time during one of the society's productions or activities, including but not limited to:

- Financial members (adult, associate, and life members)
- Leadership and management roles (committee or production teams)
- Administration
- Production and venue personnel, including but not limited to: (Director, Choreographer, Musical Director, Actors, Stage Management, Orchestra, Chaperones, Parents, Caregivers, Technical Crew and Ushers)
- Volunteers
- Contractors and sub-contractors
- Work experience students, interns, and secondments
- Any other individual in the organisation that may deal with children.

Please note in this policy the term "member" is used to cover all persons occupying, but not limited to, any position listed above.

A "child" includes children and young people up to the age of 18 (unless otherwise specified).

### **Our Commitment To Child Safety**

All children working with or engaged by **Rockdale Musical Society** have a right to feel and be safe, respected, valued and protected from harm. We aim for children to have a safe and happy experience participating in our society.

Children should be made aware of and feel confident in their rights and responsibilities.

**Rockdale Musical Society** is strongly committed to the safety and well being of all children that interact with our organisation as members, audience members, education program participants or otherwise by creating and maintaining a child safe environment.

The welfare of children entrusted under our care is our priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse or misconduct of any form.

**Rockdale Musical Society** will take all necessary steps to prevent and protect children from of abuse and neglect including but not limited to:

- 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: by the way of harming a child by failing to provide basic physical or emotional necessities.

### Supporting Children's Participation and Satisfaction

**Rockdale Musical Society** supports, enables, and promotes the active participation of children by:

- Encouraging expression of and respecting the views of children and parents (including carers or legal guardians)
- Encouraging and empowering children and parents to raise any concerns or complaints.
- Listening to and acting upon any concerns raised by children and parents, carers, or legal guardians.
- Seeking the input of children when making decisions about matters that concern them.
- Ensuring children understand their rights and the appropriate behaviour expected of both adults and children.
- Teaching children what they can do and who they can turn to if they feel unsafe.
- Ensuring members dealing with children are skilful in facilitating their participation.
- Valuing diversity and not tolerating any discriminatory practices.

**Rockdale Musical Society** aims to create an environment where children gain satisfaction from their interaction with our organisation as members, participants in a class /program/ workshops/performances or other activity by:

- Supporting children to feel respected and in control of their behaviour/work.
- Ensuring children enjoy the overall experience of being engaged with a production or other organisational activity.
- Encouraging children to assist each other in fulfilling their membership obligations and developing a positive sense of pride in their work. (e.g., discussing character development and stagecraft in groups and leading warm-up activities)
- Offering opportunities for children to derive personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement throughout their experience and the relationships they make.
- Encouraging children to develop self-discipline in balancing their commitment to their performance, their education, and their social and family activities.

## Valuing Diversity

**Rockdale Musical Society** values diversity and we do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. Our organisation is committed to protecting children engaged with our organisation from physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse, as well as neglect and contempt, ridicule, hatred, or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture, religion, gender (including transgender status), sexual orientation or disability.

In our activities with children, we will:

- Promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children.
- Promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promote the safety of children with a disability.
- Promote the safety of LGBTIQ+ children and young people.

## Recruitment Practices

**Rockdale Musical Society** will take all reasonable steps to ensure we engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This involves maintaining a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening, and selection process.

It is **Rockdale Musical Society's** policy to:

- Require all 18-year-old or above members to have a current and valid Working with Children Check Number issued by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, which will be collected and verified as early as possible in the production cycle.
- Develop clear duty statements and job descriptions for roles that involve work with children that state clearly our commitment to providing safe environments for children.
- Attain and keep a record of Working with Children Check numbers and clearances for anyone with direct and unsupervised contact with children, such as members designated to supervise or chaperone children.
- Ensure supervisors and chaperones recruited are suitably experienced and qualified to care for the safety and well-being of children in accordance with their age and needs.

## Support for Members

**Rockdale Musical Society** seeks to support members by:

- Inducting new members to our Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and other relevant policies and procedures
- Encouraging relevant members to attend periodical information sessions as they become available, to remain up to date with knowledge of child protection, nature

and signs of child abuse, cultural competency, regulation updates and other matters that affect children

- Appointing a Child Safety Officer to be a point of contact to provide advice and support to members on the safety and well-being of children engaged with the organisation.
- Ensuring members feel encouraged and empowered to report any complaints, concerns, or perceived risks to child safety to the Child Safety Officer or other relevant management positions.
- Ensuring designated supervisors and chaperones of children that are new to the role work with experienced supervisors sufficiently before working on productions or programs requiring single supervisors.

## Communication

**Rockdale Musical Society** is committed to encouraging members, children and parents (including carers or legal guardians) to raise any concerns or provide their views on the well-being of children involved with our organisation.

Parents (including carers or legal guardians) of children casts can phone the director, production manager or member of the committee to speak with them or to facilitate speaking with their children at any time during periods of work.

## Complaints

**Rockdale Musical Society's** processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused and addressed through the Child Safety Officer and other members of the society in accordance with NSW child safety policies.

## Information

**Rockdale Musical Society** keeps members, parents (including carers or legal guardians) and children informed of our organisation's child safe policies and procedures by:

- Ensuring that members have read, understood, and are aware of their obligation under the Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct, and any other relevant policies and procedures.
- Making relevant documents easily accessible by displaying child safe materials in areas of common traffic, uploading relevant documents to our website, distributing documents to all relevant individuals, and having copies available upon request
  - Providing children and parents (including carers and legal guardians) with relevant Plain English child safe materials.

We provide parents (including carers or legal guardians) and child members with information on:

- The child's expected role, activities, responsibilities, and actions during the show
- The child's progress throughout the production and timely notice of schedules

- The rights of parents and children regarding supervision and workplace conditions, as determined by relevant state regulation.
- Our Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct, and any other relevant policies and procedures. Children are encouraged to communicate and ask questions regarding their membership.

Resources:

<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/2019/11/06/child-safe-organisations-information-organisations-how-keep-children-safe>