

Armidale Drama and Musical Society



Working with Children – Becoming a Child Safe Organisation.

The Armidale Drama and Musical Society (ADMS) as an organisation that can involve children should have a strong interest in keeping children safe. As such we have developed a number of procedures ensuring that all members of this Society are compliant with the guidelines for assisting us to become a child safe organisation. These guidelines are set by the Office of the Children's (Kids) Guardian in NSW. It is important for all members of ADMS to understand that good child safe policies and practices are the best way to reduce potential risks and keep kids safer in our organisation. All members are encouraged to use a range of responses to manage the potential risks in the areas of their individual responsibilities, including meeting their Working with Children Check (WWCC) legal obligations.

All members of the ADMS, no matter whether they are in a child-related role or not, have a responsibility to protect children. All members must inform themselves and follow ADMS policy, procedure and codes of conduct and should advise the nominated person in the ADMS if they observe or identify any risks to the safety of children. Members are accountable for their own behaviour and are expected to comply with any screening requirements and with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed under legislation and ADMS policy and procedures.

The Guiding Principles for ADMS to be a Child Safe Organisation

The Armidale Drama and Musical Society has many responsibilities in ensuring that it has procedures in place which guarantees all members have a safe environment in which to carry out the productions and associated activities that are a feature of this organisation. A child safe organisation has to be one of the primary aims of every member of ADMS, as we have long been an important source of artistic and educational development, for young people, in the field of dramatic arts in Armidale.

Armidale Drama and Musical Society aims to develop as child safe organisation by:

- helping to create and promote a safe and positive environment for children
- demonstrating that the organisation is taking its duty of care seriously
- providing the foundation for procedures and decision-making about an organisation's interactions and involvement with children.

The ADMS has adopted the following principles for ensuring that all activities conducted under its name will be Child Safe, simple and effective in providing for children.

1. Organisations that involve children in their work should have a strong interest in keeping children safe in those environments.
2. The Child Safe approach includes education and supervision of both paid and unpaid staff about appropriate and acceptable behaviours.
3. This policy applies to all children under the age of 18 who are defined as children.
4. The Working With Children Policy is seen to be closely linked with the ADMS Code of Conduct which already in existence and would include the following:
 - Treat everyone with respect and honesty. Use of inappropriate language and aggressive or bullying behaviour towards children, or anyone else, is totally unacceptable and should be reported if observed.
 - Remember to be a positive role model to children in all your conduct with them.
 - Set clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour eg not leaving the rehearsal space or theatre without first notifying an adult in charge.
 - Ensure the safe return of children to their nominated care person at the conclusion of rehearsals/performances (This could be the producer or delegate) This would include liaising with the TAS Principal or delegated staff member, should some of their pupils be involved with a production to ensure safe return to rooms.
 - Always have another adult present or in sight when conducting one to one coaching, instruction etc.
 - Be aware of privacy considerations – particularly in dressing rooms – this could include appropriate clothing so young children are not embarrassed and so that adults involved in the production are not compromised.
 - Be aware of NOT developing inappropriate relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism or improper conduct such as the offering of gifts, conducting conversations of an unacceptable nature or special treatment.
 - Do NOT do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.
 - Ensuring that all children are aware of whom to contact on site should they find themselves in an unsafe position.
 - That person would then be responsible to notify the President and/or if considered necessary, the Police, if an incident involving the child was to occur.

Working With Children Checks (WWCC)

Armidale Drama and Musical Society, like any other organisation, is now obligated to complete Working with Children Checks (WWCC) for every active member, and for every non member involved in ADMS related functions and productions, who over the age of 18.

As a society we strive to provide a safe and secure environment for all of our members to perform and practice their craft. ADMS has a growing involvement of young people within our productions, including on stage and behind the scenes.

Members and non members deemed to be working with Children under the guidelines are required to provide a Working With Children number to the designated ADMS representative or they will not be permitted to be involved in any Productions or associated activities in which children are involved. If uncertain of who to contact direct your enquiries to the President of the ADMS, or to the ADMS Child Safe Committee.

1. It is important to identify all key members of the ADMS, who are aged 18 or over, who should undergo a WWCC. These include people who are Executive or Committee members and those who are involved and have key roles and positions in Productions, staging or rehearsals. In the long run it would be expected that all members of ADMS who anticipate being active in Productions and associated activities will apply for a WWCC.
2. Only paid workers are required to pay the \$80 fee for a 5 year clearance. Volunteers are exempt from payment when registering for a WWCC. The vast majority of people involved with ADMS activities, are considered to be volunteers.
3. Key positions would cover all locations of the production/rehearsal and should include the:
 - Director
 - Producer
 - Stage Manager
 - FOH Manager and regular FOH staff
 - Costume Manager
 - Performers
 - Stage Crew
 - Technical Crew
4. All people involved with the productions and other related activities associated with the ADMS e.g. drama/music workshops, bump-ins/outs, set building, clean-ups etc should be inducted into their responsibilities under the Working with Children legislation.

Do I need a Working with Children Check?

The law requires anyone working with children (i.e. under the age of 18 years) to have completed a working with children check. The good news is that this is easy to obtain and is **free** for volunteers.

If you don't complete this check for shows that involve children, unfortunately you won't be able to participate either on stage or backstage. It's so easy to do and the

ADMS Committee is always ready, willing and able to help if needed. Further information is available from www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au.

The process to obtain a Working With Children number is as follows:

- Go to the website – <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children/working-with-children-check/apply/apply>
- Fill in the application. Select Volunteer for the Purpose of Check.
- In the Child-related sector select Entertainment for Children.
- Once your form is submitted online, you will need to take a printed copy to a Service NSW Office. There is an office at 169 Rusden Street Armidale
- You will be sent a WWC number, usually within a few weeks, and you will then need to provide that number to the Committee representative as soon as possible. Once the number is verified in our system it will be active for the next 5 years.

NOTE: If you have already been issued a WWC number as part of your paid employment or other voluntary work then you are not required to obtain another number. However, you must advise your existing number to the ADMS Child Safe Committee.

Where a volunteer or employee of a not-for-profit organisation, such as ADMS, falls into one of the exempt categories, they will not be required to undergo a WWC Check. This will be the case even where they are performing 'child-related work'.

Working With Children Check Exemptions

Exemptions are able to be applied to some volunteers.

Exemptions apply to workers or volunteers who:

- * are children (under the age of 18)
- * perform administrative, clerical, maintenance or ancillary work not ordinarily involving contact with children for extended periods
- * perform very short term work (for up to five days in a year) with minimal direct or unsupervised contact with children
- * perform very short term work as a visiting speaker, adjudicator, performer, assessor or other similar visitor for a one off occasion, in the presence of one or more other adults
- * perform informal domestic work (not on a professional/commercial basis)
- * work only with close relatives (except as an authorised carer)
- * are a parent or close relative of a child (except where the work is part of a formal mentoring program or involves intimate, personal care of children with a disability) volunteering with a team, program or other activity in which the child usually participates or is a team member

* are interstate visitors working or volunteering at a one-off event such as a jamboree, sporting or religious event or tour (for up to 30 days a year)

* are health practitioners working in NSW from interstate for less than five days in any three-month period

* are home carers with a current police certificate for aged care where the clients are not primarily children

* are NSW Police or Australian Federal Police officers in the role of police officer,

* are private practice health practitioners who do not ordinarily treat children without other adults present.

* Those that already have a WWC Check from employment in another Child Safe organisation e.g. schools

If an employee or volunteer falls within one of the exemptions, they are still eligible to apply for and receive a WWC Check. If you are in doubt about whether an exemption applies, we suggest that the volunteer undertake a WWC Check to be certain you are complying with the law.

Volunteers who believe they are eligible for an exemption will need to discuss it with the ADMS Child Safe Committee, before being cleared for an exemption. Those that have been exempted from a WWC Check, may be asked for further details if required.

Armidale Drama and Musical Society's Requirements and Responsibilities as a Child Safe Organisation

Organisations such as the ADMS that involve children in their work have a strong interest in keeping children safe in those environments.

We are intent on developing good child safe policies and practices as they are the best way to reduce potential environmental risks and keep kids safer in those environments. The child safe approach includes education and supervision of both paid and unpaid staff about appropriate and acceptable behaviours.

Our Code of Conduct is designed to articulate with the ADMS's Child Safe Policy to ensure that there are clear expectations for:

- 1) Personal and professional boundaries for those participating in ADMS sponsored activities.
- 2) Ethical behaviour by members towards other adults and children.
- 3) What constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and relationships for paid employees, volunteers, parents and children.

Central to this is the requirement is that the ADMS registers as an employer organisation with the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian. This will enable the ADMS to confirm WWCC details on all those who those who have been granted a WWCC approval. It will also assist the ADMS to help those who have not been

granted an exemption under the terms of the Working With Children Guidelines, to register with NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, so that they can work with children in ADMS activities.

The ADMS will provide parents of children involved in ADMS activities with the following information and forms, about us as a Child Safe Organisation.

*Each parent of a child under 18 will be provided with a copy of the **Parents' Information Sheet** (attachment 1) which is available from the Office of the Children's Guardian NSW.

* Each Parent will be provided with a copy of this Policy

*A signed **parental Consent Slip** (attachment 2) will required from each child's parents for them to be able to participate in the ADMS programs they are interested in.

Summary of Procedures for handling complaints and issues of concern, involving children, should they arise during the Production, Rehearsal or Performance or any other activity associated with the ADMS.

1. The Director or person in charge of the activity should assign a person to be responsible should anyone have a complaint. (This could be themselves, Producer or Stage Manager.)
2. The cast should be made aware of whom this person is at the very first rehearsal or meeting.
3. Parents should be given contact details of the President of ADMS along with the Consent form so that they have a point of contact should their child come home with a complaint or concern (this is particularly important if the child has not drawn this to the attention of the designated ADMS person.)
4. Should a complaint be made during a rehearsal or performance the nominated contact person, then informs the Director and/or the Producer. The complaint or concern should be precise and preferably in writing.
5. The person receiving the complaint will consult with a member of the ADMS Child Safe Committee and the President of ADMS to assess the seriousness of the issue and determine the process required to investigate and mediate it.
6. The President, the Contact Person for the ADMS production/activity and a member of the Child Safe Committee then communicates with the parents and if necessary the senior executive/Police and enact procedures to deal with the issue.
7. When a decision is made on the complaint, level of action, and resolution procedures the decision is then announced to the concerned parties by the President of ADMS.
8. The person making the complaint, the parents of the young person and the person who is the subject of the complaint, should also be informed of the ADMS Code of Conduct (if needed) and Appeals Procedures when the final decision is made by the Committee group that has adjudicated the complaint.
9. During the complaints/concern inquiry process, the privacy of the individuals and security of the process is to be respected and be beyond reproach.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 (Page 1) – Information For Parents

Children's Employment

Information for Parents

December 2015



What do parents need to know about their child's employment?

In NSW there are specific laws to protect the safety and wellbeing of children under the age of 15 years who are employed as actors, performers, and in door-to-door sales, and children under the age of 16 who are employed as models.

The employer of your child must:

- hold a valid Authority to employ children in NSW covering the dates of your child's employment,
- follow the rules in the Code of Practice
- provide you with a copy of the Code of Practice or this information sheet
- provide you with a copy of their Code of Conduct which sets out best practice guidelines for the care and protection of employed children

To find out if your child's employer holds a current Authority, check the Register of Authorised Employers at www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au

Code of Practice

Your child's employer is required by law to comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice, which is set out at Schedule 1 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) (Child Employment) Regulation 2015*

This information sheet explains the key requirements of the Code of Practice. You can download the full regulation and Code of Practice from www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au

Code of Conduct

Your child's employer is required to develop a Code of Conduct which sets out best practice guidelines for the care and protection of employed children. The Code of Conduct will be different for each employer but may include:

- expectations regarding employees' behaviour around children
- process for dealing with any concerns or complaints
- child safe policies and procedures

Employers need to provide a copy of their Code of Conduct to every employee, including the parent of any child employee.

Supervision

The best person to support and supervise your child while they are working is you, the parent. If this is not possible, you may nominate another adult to do so. This person should be someone your child is comfortable with and preferably knows very well (such as a grandparent or other close relative).

Your child must be in view of their supervisor at all times.

If your child will be employed for a long period of time, the employer may hire a chaperone. The employer must ensure that the chaperone holds a valid [Working With Children Check](#).

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Attachment 1 (Page2)

On the job

An employer must tell you everything they're planning to ask your child to say, see, hear and do. During casting they must ask you and your child about any concerns with what is required and take all comments into account.

An employer cannot cause or allow your child to become distressed in order to produce a desired performance, such as acting scared or crying.

Smacking or hitting of any kind is not allowed, nor is any other behaviour likely to humiliate or frighten your child.

The employer can only ask your child to do things that are appropriate and within their capabilities. The employer must take into account your child's age, maturity and experience. They must also consider sensitivities to the subject matter, setting, costuming, dialogue, other actors or animals.

The employer must not employ your child where your child or any other person has an exposed genital area, buttocks or in the case of female children or other persons, breasts.

When at work your child must be able to make contact with you at all times. The employer must allow this to happen whenever your child asks or when it is in your child's best interests to have contact with you.

From time to time an employer may ask you about a variation to work outside the Code of Practice. Any variation will only be approved when the employer has your agreement and the OCG is satisfied that your child's welfare is properly taken care of. The employer must tell you if the variation has been approved and explain any conditions that have been imposed.

Maximum employment days and times for children differ depending on age and activity but may be extended by a variation. A child cannot have a combined total of more than 50 hours of school and work in one week.

Entertainment or Exhibition – Modelling, Shopping Centre Performances, Film, Television, Still Photography, Radio etc.

Age of child	Work hours	Days per week	Call time is between
Under 6 months	4	1	6am and 6pm
6 months to under 3	4	2	6am and 6pm
3 to under 8 years	6	4	6am and 11pm
8 to under 15 or under 16 for models	8	5	6am and 11pm

Live Performances - Theatre, Musical Performances e.g. Orchestra or Choir, Circuses etc.

Age of child	Work hours	Days per week	Call time is between
Under 6 months	4	1	6am and 6pm
6 months to under 3 years	4	2	6am and 6pm
3 years to under 6	4	4	6am and 9pm
6 years to under 8 years	6	4	6am and 10pm
8 years to under 15 years	8	4	6am and 11pm

Your child must be given minimum rest breaks of 10 minutes each hour and one hour after no longer than every 4 hours. There must be at least 12 hours between the end of one employment call and the start of another.

Education and health

Children's work, school and home life balance is important. Your child cannot be employed past 9pm if they have schooling the following day, or for more than 4 hours if they have had schooling on the same day they work. The employer is expected to adjust their requirements to fit with your child's educational needs or, if you agree, apply to the OCG to vary the rules.

www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au
December 2015

2

Attachment 1 (Page3)

School students cannot be employed during school hours unless their Principal agrees to the absence. This includes missing school for pre-production activities such as rehearsals and wardrobe checks after they are cast. You must ask for the Principal's agreement in writing and give this to the employer before your child begins work.

An employer must provide appropriate facilities such as toilets, private changing areas, rest spaces and protection from the elements. If food is being provided it must be sufficient, nutritious and take into account any dietary and cultural needs.

Children under 3 and babies under 12 weeks

If your child is less than 3 years of age the employer must have a Registered Nurse/ Midwife present and follow their advice about your child's health and wellbeing.

If your child is less than 12 weeks of age, the employer must gain specific permission from the OCG to employ them. Only four people may handle your baby while they are employed. This includes you and the Registered Nurse/Midwife. There are also strict rules that employers must follow concerning direct lighting, makeup and contact with anyone who may have a cough, cold or any other respiratory or skin infection.

Working With Children Check (WWCC)

An Authority is not the same as a WWCC clearance. A WWCC is a legal prerequisite for anyone over 18 in paid or unpaid child-related work. A child is anyone under 18.

To find out whether someone is cleared to work with children, you must verify their WWCC (or APP) number online. Do not accept paper evidence.

For more information, please visit www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au. If you have any questions, call (02) 8219 3600 or email kids@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au.

Attachment 2 – Parental Consent Form

ADMS (*logo*)

President: Neil Horton (contact email or phone number)

Parental Consent Slip

(Date)

Dear Parent/Carer

ADMS recently held auditions for their forthcoming production of the (*Production Name*) and your child was successful in their audition for a role, or alternatively they have indicated their availability to act in a technical or back-stage capacity.

Rehearsals are due to commence from (*Date*) and as your child is under 18, it is important that we confirm with you your permission for them to participate. This is especially important given that ADMS maintains liability insurance but does not maintain personal accident cover for its members. This is explained further overleaf.

Rehearsals are to be held according to the schedule distributed to your child, so please ensure that your child arrives prior to the commencement of times they are required and that they are picked up promptly afterwards.

If you wish for your child to participate in the activity, please complete this consent form overleaf and return it and this letter via email or in person at the next rehearsal to:

(Name)

Producer (Name Of Production)

(ADMS Contact NameDetails)

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Attachment 3 – Important Definitions

Definitions as provided by the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian

Employer

This means:

- a person who, in the course of business, arranges for the placement of a person in employment with others
- a person who engages a person under a contract to perform work
- a person who engages a worker to perform work as a volunteer for the person under an agreement (whether written or unwritten).

Worker

This means any person who is engaged in work:

- as an employee
- as a self-employed person or as a contractor or subcontractor
- as a volunteer
- as a person undertaking practical training as part of an educational or vocational course (other than as a school student undertaking work experiences)

Children

Persons under the age of 18 years.

Adult

A person who is 18 years of age or older

Parent

Is the person having, in relation to the child, all the duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which, by law, parents have in relation to their children.

Close relative

A close relative of a person is:

- a spouse or de facto partner of the person
- a child, step-child, sibling, step-sibling, parent, step-parent, grandparent, step-grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew of the person
- in the case of an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander, a person who is part of the extended family or kin of the person according to the indigenous kinship system of the person's culture.

Prohibited Person means a person who has been convicted of a Serious Sex Offence.