

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

WORKING WITH CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

Queensland Theatre (QT) is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment free of discrimination, bullying and harassment - sexual or otherwise. This commitment is articulated in QT's 'Respectful Workplace Policy' that applies to everyone in the workplace, which includes, but is not limited to:-

- Board members;
- leadership and management personnel (e.g. artistic directors, executive directors, general managers, company managers, heads of department, human resources managers, managers, supervisors, producers, promoters);
- show personnel (e.g. actors, dancers, directors, choreographers, writers, stage management, chaperones, technical crew, front of house);
- production and administrative staff;
- full-time, part-time, seasonal and casual employees;
- job candidates, including people auditioning for roles;
- student placements, apprentices, work experience students/interns;
- contractors, sub-contractors and secondees (e.g. casting, Teaching Artists, talent and freelance agents who have been contracted or sub-contracted for a specific purpose);
- volunteers and anyone working in an unpaid capacity

In addition, QT exercises a high degree of care, supervision and authority over children (ie persons under the age of 18 years) who participate in QT's education and youth artistic programs, and mainstage productions, and is committed to creating and maintaining a child-safe environment/workplace with a zero tolerance approach towards any form of child abuse, harassment or unfavourable treatment. This is achieved through adherence to ethical work practices and compliance with QT's Code of Conduct, Respectful Workplace Policy, Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and legal obligations.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- QT creates and maintains a safe and respectful environment for a child who participates in any QT activity or production; and
- QT fulfils its ethical and legal responsibilities and obligations.

3. Scope

This policy applies to people who are employed or engaged (or who are seeking to be employed or engaged) in child-related work in QT, in any one of the following capacities:

- as a paid employee;
- as a self-employed person, or as a contractor;
- as a volunteer
- as a person undertaking training as part of an education or vocational course.

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4. Policy

- (1) The safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and, in particular, protecting them from harm or abuse, is a paramount consideration in QT's workplace and QT takes a zero tolerance approach towards any form of abuse, harassment or unfavourable treatment towards a child participating in QT activities/programs and theatre productions.
- (2) This policy applies in all QT workplaces which may include touring venues, Queensland Theatre vehicles or other places where work is carried out on behalf of Queensland Theatre. It also extends to work-related functions.

This policy also outlines the following procedures which must be applied in conjunction with this policy:-

- A. Creating and maintaining a safe environment in which to conduct child-related work/activities.
- B. Employment/engagement screening to determine a person's suitability for employment or engagement, including a Blue Card Check for child-related work.
- C. Induction
- D. Reporting

5. Responsibilities

1. As an employer, QT has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure that all persons to be employed or engaged in child-related work are suitable for child-related work.
2. The Executive Director, HR and Governance Manager, and team Directors are responsible for ensuring that recruitment processes within each area of responsibility are consistent with this policy and procedures. This includes ensuring that all persons who are required to either obtain a Working with Children Check have met the relevant requirement, prior to commencing employment or engagement.

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6. Procedures

The following procedures outline the ways in which QT manages its responsibilities for employees and non-employees under this policy.

A – WORKING WITH CHILDREN

(a) *Creating and maintaining a safe and respectful environment*

To create and maintain a safe and respectful environment in which to conduct child-related work at QT, the following procedures should be followed.

- (i) A child will never be alone in the presence of one adult during the conduct of QT programs and activities that involve a child or the supervision of a child/children.
- (ii) Further to (i) above, two or more adult workers must be present during QT programs and activities that involve children or the supervision of children. This includes young artist performance rehearsals, costume fittings, workshops, auditions, program interviews and meetings that involve a child. Where it is not possible for two or more adult workers to be present, activities should occur in a room with an open door.
- (iii) Listen to the needs of a child and respect their point of view.
- (iv) Encourage a child to ask questions if they are unsure of a task.
- (v) Refrain from touching a child at all times, unless it is an authorised action as part of demonstrating drama techniques or safety procedures. Where this action is required:-
 - a drama workshop/demonstration plan is required to be submitted by the teaching artist/s to the Director, Education, Youth and Regional Engagement for approval, or this Director's delegate outlining instances where touching a child may occur in a drama scene or workshop; and
 - permission should be sought from the child before any touch contact is made on any occasion. Repeatedly touching the same child should be avoided unless permission from the child is granted.
- (vi) A child must not be transported in a private vehicle, unless accompanied by another adult (who holds a current Blue Card) with appropriate permission from a parent/guardian.
- (vii) One-on-one acting or note sessions must only be conducted in person or online with another adult present.
- (viii) An adult must not use the common/public areas of toilets or change rooms in QT workplaces/venues to undress or change clothes, where there is the possibility of a child accessing that area.
- (ix) An adult should not be present in a room where a child is dressing/undressing/changing clothing.
- (x) An authorised QT employee will speak to each child about dressing room arrangements to provide them an opportunity to raise any concerns.
- (xi) Encourage children to say 'no' to anything they may not feel comfortable doing.
- (xii) Do not use offensive language in the presence of a child.
- (xiii) Do not discuss any personal alcohol or drug use in the presence of a child.

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- (xiv) Do not discuss any personal sexual behaviour in the presence of a child.
- (xv) Do not ask a child questions about personal matters or sexual behaviour.
- (xvi) Do not offer a child advice or counselling on personal matters.
- (xvii) Do not accept a child as 'Friends' or 'Followers' on social media.
- (xviii) Do not correspond with a child on social media.
- (xix) Report harm or a suspicion of harm to a child, to a QT representative (eg management, Director, Education, Youth and Regional Engagement, Associate Director, or Education Coordinator (see section D – Reporting for further information on reporting procedures).
- (xx) An authorised QT representative will ensure that a child/children are supervised at all times, including when a child is waiting after workshops/excursions to be picked up by their parents/guardians.
- (xxi) When discussing issues of behaviour or conflict management with a child, ensure that at least one other adult is present.
- (xxii) Encourage a child to report any bullying, inappropriate, unfavourable or harmful behaviour that they may experience.
- (xxiii) QT programs/activities with participation of a child/children will be open to observation by family, friends or guardians and QT employees have the right to ask people, who do not have a valid reason to be present at QT activities, to leave.
- (xxiv) Report any observation of adult misbehaviour/misconduct with a child, immediately to QT management.
- (xxv) If a staff member sees a person doing something which might be inoffensive towards a child but may be misinterpreted by others as potential harm, the staff member should advise the person undertaking the action or advise their manager.

Young artist drama programs/activities with physical contact

In drama workshops, rehearsals auditions and performances, physical contact is sometimes required as part of a play script and production/performance. The following procedures must be followed where physical contact with a child is proposed.

- More than two adults must be present in a workshop, rehearsal, audition or performance room where a child is present and one of those adults must be an authorised QT representative/employee with a current Blue Card.
- During young artist drama workshops, rehearsals or performances, physical contact with children sometimes forms part of demonstrating drama techniques and safety procedures, however, before conducting any youth activity involving physical contact:
 - Teaching artists must submit lesson planning to the Director, Education, Youth and Regional Engagement or this Director's delegate, for approval, outlining any touching required as part of the workshop.
 - When physical contact is necessary as part of a workshop, teaching artists should also ask permission from the child before making physical contact and they should avoid repeatedly touching the same child unless the child grants permission.
- A teacher must be present at all times during a workshop held at a school.

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- Before a production rehearsal commences:
 - production directors are required to submit a rehearsal and performance plan, outlining any touching required as part of the play script and production, to the Director, Education, Youth and Regional Engagement or this Director's delegate, for approval;
 - the production director and actors in a rehearsal should ask permission from the child before making any proposed physical contact, and they should avoid touching a child unnecessarily or repeatedly.
- a production director in a rehearsal room should ensure that there is always more than one adult present at all times.

Costume fittings

- More than two people must be present at a costume fitting involving a child, one of which must hold a current Blue Card.

(b) Suspicion of harm

The following points provide guidance in recognising the suspicion of harm:

- A child tells you they have been harmed.
- Someone else tells you that harm has or may occur to a child.
- A child tells you that they know of someone who has been harmed (they may also be referring to themselves).
- You have observed significant changes in the behaviour of a child.
- The appearance of new, unexplained or suspicious injuries.
- You see harm happening.

(c) Disciplining children

It is not the responsibility of Queensland Theatre or people engaged by Queensland Theatre to discipline a child. If a child does not abide by the rules or expectations set out by Queensland Theatre, or becomes an obstruction to the care of other children and which may cause harm, the child will be removed and referred back to their parent or guardian. At no time will Queensland Theatre employees or representatives engaged by Queensland Theatre, administer any form of physical, emotional, financial or mental discipline.

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B – WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

Queensland’s Blue Card system – Working with Children Check – is a screening process to identify a person’s eligibility to work with children. The check must show that the individual is not precluded from working with children and has not committed a serious offence involving a child/children.

(a) *Requirements*

1. All employees and non-employees whose role requires them to be involved in child-related work, are required to hold a current, valid employee Blue Card.
2. Where relevant, QT job advertisements will state the requirement for a successful candidate to obtain a Blue Card (Working with Children Check) as a condition of employment.

(b) *Alternatives to a Blue Card*

At its discretion, QT may recognise equivalences to a Blue Card or other relevant jurisdiction.

(c) *Applying for a Blue Card*

1. The Queensland Government Blue Card Services website provides information on Blue Card screening and the application process.
2. It is an offence, and for employees will be considered to be serious misconduct, to:-
 - a. provide false or misleading information as part of an application or reassessment of a Blue Card/Working with Children Check; or
 - b. use a false Blue Card/Working with Children Check.

(d) *Costs for a Blue Card*

Employees and non-employees (eg contractors such as Teaching Artists) who are involved in child-related work are required to have or obtain a Blue Card. This requirement will be included in any relevant recruitment/appointment process. QT will cover costs for employees and costs for non-employees will be determined/assessed on a case by case basis.

(e) *Adverse notices*

Persons who are employed or otherwise engaged with QT who apply for or hold a Working with Children Check and are issued with an Adverse Notice, are subject to the following requirements:

	Employee	Non-employee
Requirement to notify – Adverse Notice	Notify team Director, HR and Governance Manager or Executive Director	QT must be advised as soon as practicable, no later than 7 days, of an Adverse Notice being received
Work restrictions – negative notice or notice of suspension	May remain engaged in certain capacity subject to approval	Named individual must not engage or apply for child-related work, or any work that involves or may involve a child until such time as a reassessed positive outcome is known.

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C – EMPLOYMENT/ENGAGEMENT SCREENING

Persons who are employed or otherwise engaged with QT who are involved in activities or programs involving a child/children must be carefully selected and screened. Prior to commencing employment/engagement or volunteer services, the following procedures will be followed:

- Persons who are to be employed or otherwise engaged with QT in a role where child-related work, activities or programs involving a child will be carried out, must submit a resume/CV with details of relevant past experience, positions held.
- Short-listed candidates will undergo an interview which will include consideration of past experience working with children;
- Preferred applicant reference checks will be conducted to establish an applicant's/person's suitability for role where child-related work will be performed;
- Persons who are to be employed/engaged in child-related work must have or obtain a Blue Card (or exemption card), Queensland's Working with Children Check through the *Queensland Government Blue Card Services*, identifying a person's eligibility to work with children.
- The Blue Card system includes a Blue Card Check which is more than a police check. The Blue Card Check must show that the individual is not precluded from working with children and has not committed a serious offence involving a child, otherwise, a person will not be able to work with children.
- If the Blue Card Check identifies that an applicant/employee has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence, they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for employment or engagement with QT.

PART D – WORKPLACE INDUCTION

1. Persons who are employed or otherwise engaged with QT who are involved in activities or programs involving a child/children will be issued with a copy of Queensland Theatre policies and receive induction and training in;
 - Queensland Theatre's Code of Conduct,
 - CAST policies and procedures that have been adopted by Queensland Theatre, including:-
 - National Code of Behaviour,
 - Respectful Workplace Policy
 - Reporting Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
 - Grievance Resolution Procedure
 - Disciplinary Procedure
 - Queensland Theatre's Working With Children Policy,
 - Reporting procedures
2. For all artists commencing work on mainstage productions, the abovementioned policies and procedures will be issued with their contracts. Before signing a contract, artists are required to read and accept these policies and procedures and all other policies provided. By signing their contract, they are agreeing to abide by these policies and procedures. All new and returning artists receive an induction usually held on the first day of rehearsals.

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PART E – REPORTING PROCEDURES

Reports of suspected harm/unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with in a sensitive, professional and timely manner, with reference to the Respectful Workplace Policy and Grievance Resolution Procedure. Upon reporting an issue, next steps will be explained to the person making the report. At all times, the personal health, safety and wellbeing of a child will be treated as a high priority.

If any suspicion of harm, actual harm or unacceptable behaviour is observed (refer Respectful Workplace Policy for examples of unacceptable behaviour), the issue can be raised with any relevant person in a position of authority, for example, Executive Director, Artistic Director, HR Manager, team Directors, Education and Youth team members, parent/guardian, Teaching Artist, or anyone else in a leader or management position.

PART F – PHOTOGRAPHY OR FILMING OF CHILDREN

- Photography or filming of children is not permitted unless permission has been obtained from the child's parent or guardian prior to an activity.
- A Queensland Theatre Media Release form must be completed and signed by a parent or guardian when Queensland Theatre wishes to photograph, film, record and/or retain images of children for archival, reporting, promotional material or distribution by media mediums. The form is to be provided and managed only by relevant Education and Youth team employees.
- A parent or guardian can withdraw consent at any time.
- Where unauthorised photography or filming of children takes place, a relevant QT employee will engage with the person undertaking the activity, advise them of the media policy and politely ask them to cease immediately.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- QT Code of Conduct
- CAST policies and procedures adopted by QT:-
 - CAST National Code of Behaviour
 - CAST Respectful Workplace Policy
 - CAST Reporting Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
 - CAST Grievance Resolution Procedure
 - CAST Disciplinary Procedure

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APPENDIX 1

DEFINITIONS

- a. QT is Queensland Theatre
- b. QT management: person holding the internal QT position of Executive Director, Artistic Director, Chief Financial Officer or is a team Director.
- c. Child/children: a person under the age of 18 years.
- d. Adult: a person 18 years and over.
- e. Child-related work: work that usually involves or is likely to involve regular, direct contact with a child in the conduct of QT activities, programs and theatrical productions.
- f. Blue Card/working with children check: Queensland's Working with Children Check to identify eligibility to work with children, contributing to the creation of a child-safe environment.
- g. Employee: ongoing, fixed term and casual employees, board members.
- h. Contractor: a natural person, business, or corporation that provides goods and/or services through a contract (written or verbal) for a specific purpose and period of time to QT. This includes show personnel.
- i. Non-employee: Directly appointed contractors, collaborators and volunteers.
- j. Visitor: a person who is visiting someone or somewhere on QT premise and who is not engaged.
- k. Teaching artist:
- l. Engaged means engaged either:
 - a. under an employment contract or contract for services (whether written or unwritten)
 - b. as an officer or other honorary position; or
 - c. as a volunteer
- m. Direct contact: physical contact, face-to-face contact, contact by post or other written communication, contact by telephone or other oral communication, or contact by email or other electronic communication.
- n. Exposure: contact or interaction (including through physical or virtual environments) or contact or interaction that may be made possible as a result of access to personally identifiable information of children, whether or not the contact or interaction is incidental to the work the person is engaged to performed.
- o. Harm: The *Child Protection Act 1999* defines harm as 'any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing'. Harm may be caused by:
 - physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect, or
 - sexual abuse or exploitation