

## Gondwana Choirs Child Safe Policy

### 1. Purpose

Gondwana Choirs is committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment for children. The purpose of this document is to outline Gondwana Choirs' child safe strategies, policies and procedures for compliance as a child safe organisation. It underpins the Gondwana Choirs Child Safe Statement.

### 2. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all Gondwana Choirs' personnel including:

- full-time, part-time and casual employees
- contractors
- visitors (including volunteer supervisors) to a workplace under Gondwana Choirs' management and control
- work experience students and interns.

### 3. Mandatory reporting

A number of Acts relate to child protection in NSW. These include:

- the *Children's Guardian Act 2019* which provides the requirements for mandatory reporting
- the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* relating to working with children check clearances for all persons engaged in child-related work
- the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* which sets out the responsibilities of Community Services with regard to child protection.

Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act) 1998*, staff in child related employment must report to the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice if they believe a child or young person is at risk of harm or concerns exist in regard to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person. Effects of harm can be both physical or behavioural.

Gondwana Choirs is defined as a 'designated agency' under the *Children's Guardian Act 2019* to the extent that it provides 'substitute residential care' in the form of away-from-home camps to students who are under the age of 18 years; that is, to a student who is a 'child' for the purposes of Schedule 3A of the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*. As a result, Gondwana Choirs is required to comply with the child protection

responsibilities that are prescribed under the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*. In accordance with Division 3 of the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*, if a person becomes aware of any 'reportable allegation' or 'reportable conviction' against an employee (including volunteer, contractor or other associate), they must notify the Executive Director or Artistic Director or the Office of the Children's Guardian immediately.

Choristers can approach any person in the organisation to express concerns about their treatment and they will be taken seriously. If a chorister confides in any employee, volunteer, contractor or other associate of Gondwana Choirs, the Executive Director or Artistic Director must be advised immediately.

Individuals have a personal obligation under sections 316 and 316A of the *Crimes Act 1900* to report any suspected criminal activity or child abuse to the Police as soon as it is practicable.

Staff and volunteers must not conduct their own investigation.

Staff and volunteers are strongly encouraged to make a report to the Executive Director or Artistic Director before making a report on behalf of Gondwana Choirs to the Office of the Children's Guardian, the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice or the Police.

Any decision to report suspected abuse or neglect will be made by both the Executive Director and Artistic Director and in some cases, the Board.

## **4. Reportable Conduct – Head of Entity**

### **What is a Head of Entity?**

NSW has a Reportable Conduct Scheme that requires the head of a participating entity to:

- notify the relevant authority of any reportable conduct
- conduct an investigation into the allegation of reportable conduct
- take action to prevent further reportable conduct.

### **Appointment of the Head of Entity**

The Directors of Gondwana Choirs will appoint one person to act as Head of Entity. That person must:

- be over 18 years of age
- be a sufficiently senior member of the organisation to comply with any legislative requirements
- fulfil any legislative requirements for appointment.

The Executive Director would normally be appointed as Head of Entity. They may delegate some or all duties to another suitable employee within the organisation but are still ultimately accountable for the obligations being met.

### **Responsibilities**

The Head of Entity will have ultimate responsibility for administering the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The Head of Entity must have a thorough understanding of and be regularly trained in all of Gondwana Choirs' policies, as well as any legal requirements regarding mandatory reporting, reportable conduct, and Working with Children Checks.

The Head of Entity must maintain copies of all relevant policies and ensure that they are aware of any updates made by the relevant authorities.

The Head of Entity will ensure that all staff members are aware of, and understand, all Gondwana Choirs' policies by:

- providing all staff with copies of relevant Gondwana policies, including any amendments or updates
- organising and/ or administering training to all staff
- providing support and assistance to all staff in relation to their roles.

The Head of Entity will be responsible for verifying the Working With Children checks for all Responsible Persons.

The Head of Entity will be responsible for all record keeping relating to Working With Children Checks, reportable conduct and mandatory reporting, in accordance with the Privacy and Record Keeping Policy.

### **Reporting Requirements**

If the Head of Entity receives a report relating to the safety and wellbeing of children, they must take proper and timely action in response to the report in accordance with the Reporting Policy and the Reporting Guidelines in each state.

After receiving a report relating to the safety and wellbeing of children, the Head of Entity must consider any significant issues raised by the report, and undertake a review of any relevant policies to ensure they are fit for purpose.

The Head of Entity must create a confidential and permanent record of the report, in accordance with the Privacy and Record Keeping Policy.

The Head of Entity must take any steps necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any children who may be at risk.

### **Investigations into Reports Received**

The Head of Entity will be responsible for conducting or arranging an investigation into reportable conduct, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

## **5. Reportable Conduct – Staff and Volunteers**

### **What should be reported?**

All forms of actual or suspected child abuse ('Child Abuse') should be reported, this may include the following behaviours:

- a sexual offence committed against or in the presence of a child
- sexual misconduct towards a child, including through electronic communications
- grooming behaviour, which is conduct done with the intention of making it easier to commit a sexual offence or engage in sexual misconduct with a child. This behaviour may include exposing the child to indecent material, providing them with intoxicants, or giving the child material benefits.
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- ill-treatment, neglect or physical assault of a child (even if perpetrated by another child)
- failure to reduce or remove the risk of a child becoming a victim of child abuse
- failure to report a crime to police.

### **Who should be reporting?**

As a general rule, Gondwana employees and volunteers are not required to report actual or suspected child abuse to the Head of Entity, even in circumstances where they may have a legal obligation to report to the police or state authorities.

However, it is strongly encouraged that employees and volunteers do report to the Head of Entity in situations where:

- the employee/volunteer believes or has received credible information that a member of the Gondwana Choirs community has engaged in child abuse or engaged in improper conduct involving children
- the employee/volunteer believes or has received credible information that there is a current and ongoing threat to the safety and welfare of children in the Gondwana community
- a report to police or a state authority has been made and no investigation is conducted, however the employee/volunteer has ongoing concerns about the matters reported
- a report has previously been made to the Head of Entity, and the employee/ volunteer considers that their response to the report is unsatisfactory.

In most states, including New South Wales and Queensland, all adults have personal obligations to report crimes, including suspected child abuse or possession of child abuse images, to police.

### **Who should concerns be reported to?**

Everyone must report crimes relating to child abuse directly to their local police force. In most states, including New South Wales and Queensland, it is an offence for adults to fail to report child abuse crimes.

Everyone in the Gondwana community is encouraged to report concerns or disclosures relating to child abuse to the Head of Entity.

If an employee/ volunteer has concerns which mean that they are not comfortable reporting concerns or disclosures relating to child abuse to the Head of Entity, they should make a report directly to child protective services in their state.

### **What happens next?**

Employees/ volunteers should not investigate the truth or accuracy of information that they are aware of before making a report. Critically, employees/ volunteers should not:

- confront or interview the complainant(s)
- confront or interview the alleged perpetrator
- take any steps that directly or indirectly make the alleged perpetrator aware that inquiries are being made into their behaviour.

Once a report is made to the Head of Entity:

- the employee/ volunteer making the report should not undertake any further action in relation to the report
- depending on the nature of the report, it may be referred to state child protective services
- depending on the nature of the report, and the jurisdiction in which it is made, Gondwana may arrange for the report to be investigated.

### **Support for Victims**

If a child has experienced child abuse, or their safety or welfare is or has been at risk, it is important that they receive support, assistance and reassurance. Adults may also need support, assistance or reassurance if their child has experienced child abuse, or in relation to experiences from their own childhood.

Every situation is unique and it is essential that you seek advice and support from the Head of Entity if you are unsure about what support should be offered.

Some general principles for determining what support might be necessary and appropriate are:

- If a child has reported or confirmed that they have experienced Child Abuse or that their safety or welfare is or has been at risk, it is important to reassure the child that they have done the right thing in reporting it and that they are believed.

- If there is an ongoing risk to the child, it may be important to take immediate steps to ensure the safety and welfare of the child, including removing them from the risk involved. If that is the case, it is very likely that a report should be made to police or a state authority without delay. You should immediately make that report and seek advice from the police or state authority about what to do next.
- It may be important that a child and the child's family members receive counselling, medical assistance and other professional support, both immediately and on an ongoing basis. If you believe that there is a need for support of this kind, you should notify the Head of Entity so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

### Privacy and Confidentiality

Gondwana Choirs will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information in accordance with all applicable legislation and the Gondwana Choirs Privacy Policy.

### Protection of Reporters

Gondwana Choirs encourages its personnel to report genuinely held concerns about the safety and welfare of children. Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations will be fully supported by Gondwana Choirs.

### Reportable Conduct Checklist

The following checklist has been developed to help Gondwana Choirs personnel to identify and classify reportable conduct concerns under NSW legislative guidelines.

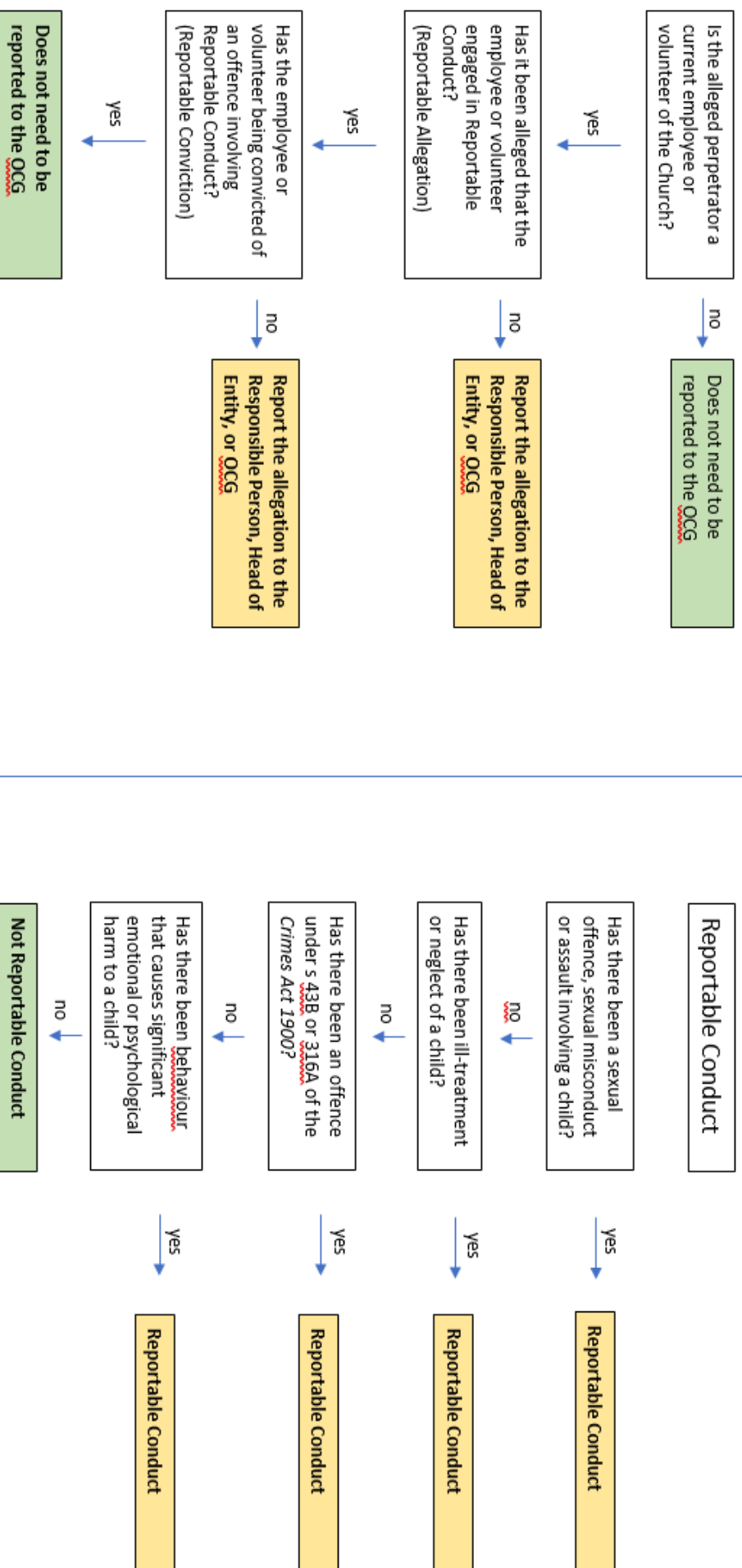
An allegation of any of the listed behaviours by Gondwana Choirs personnel towards a child (any person under the age of 18 years) is a reportable allegation and must be reported to the Police immediately. Gondwana Choirs strongly encourage that a report be made to the Head of Entity prior to reporting to Police.

SEXUAL OFFENCES	
<b>Has there been an allegation that any of the following have been committed against, with or in the presence of a child?</b>	
• Indecent assault	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Aggravated sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sexual intercourse and/or attempted sexual intercourse	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Possession/ dissemination/ production of child pornography or child abuse material	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Using children to produce pornography	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Grooming or procuring children under the age of 16 years for unlawful sexual activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Any sexual activity. Note - Within Gondwana Choirs any sexual activity with a child is deemed non-consensual on the basis of special care relationships.  Special care relationships are defined in section 73 of <i>the Crimes Act 1900</i> (NSW) and <b>include a relationship between a child and an adult with whom they have an established personal relationship in connection with the provision of religious, sporting, musical or other instruction to the child.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>SEXUAL MISCONDUCT - crossing professional boundaries</b>	
<b>Has there been an allegation that any of the following have been committed against, with or in the presence of a child or young person or group of children or young people?</b>	
• Overly personal or intimate relationship established when in a position of trust or power	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Overly personal or intimate conduct	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Overly personal or intimate focus on a child or young person or group of children or young people	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>SEXUAL MISCONDUCT - sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour</b>	
<b>Has there been an allegation that any of the following have been committed against, with or in the presence of a child or young person or group of children or young people?</b>	
• Conversations of a sexual nature not related to a valid educational role or context	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Unwarranted and inappropriate touching	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sexual exhibitionism	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Personal correspondence (including electronic communications such as emails and text messages) with a child or young person in relation to the adult's sexual feelings for a child or young person	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Exposure of children and young people to sexual behaviour of others including display of pornography	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Watching children undress. For example, in change rooms or toilets when supervision is not required or justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PHYSICAL ASSAULT</b>	
<b>Has there been an allegation of physical assault that includes ANY of the following?</b>	
• An act committed on or towards a child, involving either the unjustified use of physical force against the child or an act that caused the child to think that immediate force would be used on them	<input type="checkbox"/>
• An act committed on or towards a child, enacted with recklessness (where the person ought to have known that their actions would cause a person physical harm or cause them to fear injury.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>ILL TREATMENT</b>	
<b>Has there been an allegation of ill-treatment of a child, including (for example) in any of the following ways?</b>	
• Disciplining or correcting a child in an obviously unreasonable or abusive manner	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Making excessive and obviously unreasonable demands on a child	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Malevolent acts towards a child	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Hostile use of force against a child	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>NEGLECT</b>	

<b>Has there been an allegation of a PATTERN of failure by a person who has care responsibilities towards a child by their action or inaction in any of the following areas to the extent that the long-term physical, emotional or intellectual well-being of the child could be impacted?</b>	
• Supervisory neglect	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Carer neglect (involves depriving a child of the basic necessities of life - food, drink, clothing, critical medical care or treatment, or shelter)	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Failure to protect from abuse - an obviously or very clearly unreasonable failure to respond to information strongly indicating actual or potential serious abuse of a child.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Reckless acts (or failure to act) that involves a gross breach of professional standards and has the potential to result in the death of or significant harm to a child.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BEHAVIOUR CAUSING PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM</b>	
<b>Has there been an allegation of a PATTERN of behaviour that is inappropriate and causally linked to significant emotional harm or trauma to a child that includes ALL of the following?</b>	
• An obviously or very clearly unreasonable or serious act or series of acts that the employee knew or ought to have known was unacceptable, and	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Evidence of psychological harm to the child that is more than transient, including the child displaying patterns of 'out of character behaviour', regression in behaviour, distress, anxiety, physical symptoms or self-harm, and	<input type="checkbox"/>
• an alleged causal link between the employee's conduct and the psychological harm to the child.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>GROOMING BEHAVIOUR</b>	
Has there been conduct done with the intention of making it easier to commit a sexual offence or engage in sexual misconduct with a child? This behaviour may include exposing the child to indecent material, providing them with intoxicants, or giving the child material benefits.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>A SECTION 43B OF THE <i>CRIMES ACT 1900</i> (NSW) OFFENCE</b>	
• Has there been a failure to reduce or remove the risk of a child becoming a victim of child abuse?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>A SECTION 316 OF THE <i>CRIMES ACT 1900</i> (NSW) OFFENCE</b>	
• Has a crime not been reported?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>A SECTION 316A OF THE <i>CRIMES ACT 1900</i> (NSW) OFFENCE</b>	
• Has a child abuse offence not been reported?	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Do I need to report an allegation to the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian



## **6. Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct – Working with Children**

All employees and volunteers engaged by Gondwana Choirs are expected to protect the safety of the children in their care. Unless specifically stated, 'employee' refers to contract, casual and permanent employees of the Company.

The majority of the choristers of Gondwana Choirs are children, under the age of 18 years. Our choristers over the age of 18 years are still young people and therefore entitled to the same duty of care as younger choristers, though the application of that care may differ.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to outline the standard of conduct required from adults when they are working with children and young people, whether the engagement is volunteer, contract, casual or permanent.

It is based on the main principal that the safety and wellbeing of choristers and any children in our care is always paramount.

### **Professionalism**

All employees and volunteers are expected to maintain a professional standard of behaviour and perform their duties with skill, care, diligence, impartiality, and to the best of their ability.

In performing their duties, employees and volunteers must:

- keep up to date with advances and changes in their area of expertise
- conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the ethics of their profession
- comply with relevant legislative and administrative requirements
- be familiar with, and comply with, official guidelines, recommendations and company policies.

### **Child Safe Conduct**

When interacting and engaging with children and young people, employees and volunteers will:

- treat choristers and their families with courtesy and sensitivity
- use positive and appropriate language with children and young people, with a view to facilitating honest and open communication
- model behaviours for children and young people that encourages a positive and safe learning environment.

Employees and volunteers must listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they communicate that they do not feel safe. Any such concerns are to be immediately reported in accordance with the Reporting Policy, regardless of whether it was meant to be in confidence.

Physical contact with choristers must be appropriate, necessary and acceptable to the child.

- Examples of appropriate, necessary physical contact may include: injury management; or to demonstrate a skill or for instructional purposes as part of an activity.
- Examples of inappropriate physical contact may include: violent or aggressive behaviour such as hitting, kicking, slapping or pushing; kissing; hugging; or touching of a sexual nature.

Employees and volunteers must not spend time unsupervised with children or young people unless it is essential to do so. Any such unsupervised time should be with prior parental or company permission.

Where an employee is left with the responsibility for a single chorister they should ensure that this is in an open space or in view of others. Where this is not possible or practical and there is cause for concern, it should be discussed with the Executive Director or Artistic Director as soon as possible.

In the normal course of events an employee should not be alone with a chorister in a car without the written permission of the chorister's legal guardian. In this case, the employee must ensure the car is in good order, with current registration, and the driver has a current driver's licence.

Social relationships between employees/volunteers and choristers are discouraged, and staff must be alert to the risk involved given their position of special care.

Employees and volunteers must not, under any circumstances engage in intimate and/or sexual relationships with current choristers under the age of 18 or engage in any conduct of a sexual nature with a chorister:

- Relationships with recently departed choristers are also strongly discouraged.
- Any sexual activity with a person under 18 will be deemed non-consensual on the basis of special care relationships as provided for in section 73 of the *Crimes Act 1900*. Any suspected breach of the law will be immediately reported to the police.

Employees should be cautious of making personal comments about a chorister and never discuss matters of a sexual, sensitive or private nature.

It is acknowledged that relationships may pre-exist between staff and choristers and these should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director and/or Artistic Director for the avoidance of confusion, without exception.

### **Employees and Volunteers**

Employees and volunteers should take particular care if they find themselves invited to have a friendship with a chorister on social media or by telephone. It is acknowledged that communities on social media are extensive, and choristers themselves may initiate friendship connections with employees or volunteers on social media. Gondwana Choirs does not disallow social media friendships with choristers, though it is discouraged for the reason that private conversations can lead to inappropriate behaviours. Any interaction on social media between staff and choristers must adhere to the Gondwana Choirs Social Media Policy.

Employees and volunteers must not supply, neither should they condone, the use of alcohol or tobacco by choristers under the age of 18, nor should they supply or condone the use of illicit drugs by any chorister. Alcohol must not be consumed in the presence of choristers without the approval of the Executive Director and/or Artistic Director.

Employees and volunteers must immediately disclose to the Executive Director or Artistic Director if they:

- are the subject of an investigation into allegations of inappropriate sexual behaviour involving children, whether by police, regulatory authorities, or other institutions;
- have any criminal charges or convictions of sexual offences; or
- are suspended from, or refused a Working With Children Check (or equivalent).

### **Breach of this Policy**

Contravention of any of these Child Safe Policies and any of the associated company policies may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

### **Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of individual employees to adhere to this policy. Any questions should be referred to the Executive Director or Artistic Director.

## **7. Child Safe Practices and Procedures**

### **Background**

Gondwana Choirs has over 34 years of experience in running safe and successful educational, performance and touring programs in Australia and internationally, and assessing and managing this risk remains a constant focus of the Board and management.

Operational and logistical aspects of Gondwana Choirs' operations including performance and touring contract terms and conditions, venues, location, security, supervision, transport, accommodation, safety, etc are regularly reviewed against Board policies and legislative requirements across Australia to ensure the arrangements affecting our duty of care obligations meet our requirements.

### **Duty of care**

Duty of care is the responsibility to ensure the safety of those in our care. As outlined in our Statement of Commitment, Gondwana Choirs is committed to the safety and wellbeing of our choristers - all the children and young people who participate in our activities. Our staff, volunteers and external providers will treat choristers with respect and understanding at all times. Choristers over the age of 18 are entitled to the same duty of care as younger choristers, though the application of that care may differ.

Gondwana Choirs' staff and volunteers owe a duty to take utmost care for the safety and welfare of choristers whilst choristers are involved in Gondwana Choirs activities. The duty is to take such measures in all circumstances to protect choristers from risks of harm that ought to be foreseen. This requires not only protection from known hazards, but also protection from harm that could foreseeably arise and against which preventative measures can be taken.

In meeting their duty of care responsibilities, staff and volunteers must exercise their professional judgment to achieve a balance between ensuring that choristers do not face an unreasonable risk of harm and encouraging choristers' independence and maximising learning opportunities. In order to achieve such high artistic standards, Gondwana Choirs' choristers are capable of taking on high levels of artistic responsibility. We aim to foster a similar standard of personal responsibility.

### **Safety**

Staff and volunteers must take reasonable care to ensure that no chorister or adult is exposed to any risk of injury. Staff have an obligation to consider this in the planning stage of any activity and concerns should be raised with the Executive Director and/or Artistic Director. The standard of care required is that of a skilled professional. Staff must be familiar with and adhere to the Company's WHS policies, including evacuation and other emergency procedures.

### **Injury /illness**

Ill or injured choristers are to be treated in accordance with the company's WHS policy. Staff and/or volunteers are expected to maintain responsibility for the other choristers in their care, whilst ensuring prompt and adequate treatment for the ill or injured chorister/s. The Executive Director is to be kept informed and an accident/incident report must be completed within 24 hours of the event. Staff should use their judgment about whether minor accidents/illnesses require a written report - refer to the Executive Director if unsure.

Assessment of a chorister who is injured or ill may necessitate physical contact. Staff/volunteers should always advise the chorister of what they intend doing and seek their permission. As with any physical contact with a child, ensure that any physical contact with choristers is both appropriate and acceptable to the child. The employee or volunteer attending the child should, where possible, ensure this is done in the view of others.

Medication is only to be administered by staff/volunteers in line with the permissions granted by parents prior to any camp or tour. If in doubt, seek guidance from the most senior staff member available who will defer, if deemed necessary, to the parent.

At least one member of staff and/or volunteer is required to hold a current First Aid Certificate (or be a qualified medical professional) at each camp or tour. The company will endeavour to take a medically trained person on international tours.

## **Supervision**

Adult supervision is provided for all Gondwana Choirs activities at the approximate ratio of one volunteer supervisor per 15-20 choristers for non-residential activities, and for residential activities:

<b>10-12 Age Group</b>
10: 1 ratio
<b>13-14 Age Group</b>
15: 1 ratio
<b>15-17 Age Group</b>
20: 1 ratio

This ratio may be adjusted up or down for particular projects depending on the age and experience of choristers. Male and female volunteer supervisors are selected according to the number of male and female choristers participating in each activity. There is also at least one administration staff member assigned to each project in addition to artistic staff.

All volunteer supervisors are briefed by staff in advance of their roles and responsibilities for the particular project they are supervising. This briefing includes a Supervisor Handbook, a copy of the Child Safe Policies, the schedule for the project, important contact numbers, as well as guidelines appropriate to that particular activity.

Guidelines cover such topics as:

- residential accommodation
- dealing with health / medical issues
- dealing with behavioural issues
- security
- procedures for standard rehearsals, rehearsals at a different venue and performances.

Staff and/or volunteer supervisors are responsible for the supervision and management of choristers in their care. An adult should remain with choristers at any event until all choristers have been collected, parents have been contacted or safe movement of the chorister has been arranged. Choristers in high school may travel from rehearsal unaccompanied, if their guardian has granted this permission through the enrolment process, or in writing separately to staff.

## **Training**

**VOLUNTEERS:** As well as receiving written information in the Supervisor Handbook, all supervisors will be invited to attend an annual face to face training session. If unable to attend this training, the volunteer will

be given training individually by the appropriate staff member. Experienced supervisors are selected for high-risk projects such as international tours and residential camps.

**STAFF:** It is mandatory for staff to be across all Gondwana Choirs' Child Safe Policies and the Child Safe Statement. All staff receive written information across the suite of Child Safe Policies and procedures. Annual mandatory training will be held for all existing staff, led by the Executive Director to refresh on the Child Safe strategies and reporting mechanisms. New staff are also briefed by existing staff members as appropriate.

Senior managers and core administrative and artistic staff who work closely with young people will as required attend NSW Office of the Children's Guardian e-learning sessions.

### **Feedback**

Feedback is sought from volunteer supervisors and staff both during and at the conclusion of each project and incorporated into the planning of future projects as appropriate.

## **8. Working with Children Checks – NSW and QLD**

### **NSW**

In NSW a Working with Children Check is a prerequisite for anyone in child-related work. It involves a national criminal history check and review of findings of workplace misconduct. The result of a Working with Children Check is either a clearance to work with children for five years, or a bar against working with children. Cleared applicants are subject to ongoing monitoring, and relevant new records may lead to the clearance being revoked.

Gondwana Choirs falls under the 'Entertainment for Children' sector despite our work in education.

Whilst administrative staff who have minimal direct contact with children, short term staff (<5 days in a calendar year with minimal child contact) and parent volunteers are exempt from working with Children Checks, the company's policy is to require them to be completed.

The only exception being where parent supervisors are coming from interstate and are unable to complete the NSW Working with Children Check. In this situation the company requires proof of their interstate check which will suffice until the individual is as soon as practically possible able to complete the NSW check.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure that all staff and supervisors are issued with a Working With Children Check clearance number (WWCC) and that it remains current. The application process is required every 5 years and the company will reimburse staff the cost of the check.

### **QLD**

In Queensland staff are required to hold a Blue Card to verify their eligibility to work with children.

Gondwana Choirs is responsible for:

- applying to Blue Card Services for a blue card for paid employees; or
  - notifying Blue Card Services if a person who already holds a Blue Card or exemption card is commencing employment or volunteer work with us, and submitting the relevant form.
- Submitting the authorisation form is a requirement, and it ensures Gondwana Choirs will be advised of any important status updates for the person such as suspension or cancellation of a

#### Blue Card.

Gondwana Choirs must also make sure the applicant's identification documents are sighted by the appropriate person within the company and verify that the signature on the application or card matches the signature on their identification documents. Every person signing a declaration form is required to declare they are not a disqualified person and employers must provide a verbal warning to applicants that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a blue card application form.

Paid employees who work with children and young people must hold a Blue Card if they work, or are likely to work, for at least:

- eight consecutive days;
- once a week for each week during a period of four weeks;
- once a fortnight for each fortnight during a period of eight weeks; or
- once a month for each month during a period of six months.

Gondwana Choirs' policy is that staff and volunteers, regardless of the time periods specified above must hold a Blue Card (or exemption). It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure that there is compliance with Queensland legislation and this policy.

#### **Privacy and Record Keeping**

The Executive Director will support and promote best practice record keeping in accordance with Gondwana Choirs' Privacy Policy and statutory requirements.

Gondwana Choirs complies with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

Results of Working with Children Checks are treated with the utmost confidentiality at all times.

Appropriate security measures will be put in place to restrict access to confidential documents that are stored in both hard and soft copy.

## **9. Intersecting Policies**

Gondwana Choirs Child Safe Statement

Gondwana Choirs Chorister Bullying and Harassment Policy

Gondwana Choirs Photography Policy

Gondwana Choirs Social Media Policy

Gondwana Choirs Travel by Private Car Policy

Gondwana Choirs Child Safe Code of Conduct

Gondwana Choirs Billeting Host Code of Conduct

Gondwana Choirs Billeting Agreement

Gondwana Choirs Travel Risk-Crisis Management Plan

Gondwana Choirs Risk Management Policy

