



Gondwana Choirs Child Safe Statement

1. Purpose

Gondwana Choirs Child Safe Statement outlines the mission and core values that shape Gondwana Choirs' child safe strategies, policies and procedures for compliance as a child safe organisation.

2. Mission

To shape the Australian sound through the creation and presentation of exceptional work for young people, giving voice to contemporary Australia in all its diversity. As the premier home for the nation's young singers, Gondwana Choirs occupies a unique space in the Australian arts ecology.

3. Statement of Commitment

Gondwana Choirs places the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at the centre of all we do. We are committed to providing a safe environment for the young people in our community and to supporting the rights of children.

4. Gondwana Choirs Core Values

Innovation and creativity

At the core of Gondwana. A never-ceasing hunger to reinterpret, reinvigorate, and redefine.

Collaboration

Our collaborations allow us to take the art form to new places. They magnify the impact of what we do.

Respect

Respect for all; from the five-year old chorister through to the revered Elder and the celebrated conductor. We don't operate without it.

Inclusion

Opportunities, not barriers, are woven through the fabric of Gondwana. The greater the diversity in the music and in the performers, the more we reflect Australia.

5. Child Safe Organisation Overview

Introduction

Gondwana Choirs strives to be a child safe organisation, and provide a happy, safe and supportive environment for its choristers and their families. We have zero tolerance for all forms of child abuse and are committed to the creation and maintenance of a child safe culture. We are committed to complying with our legal obligations in relation to child protection.

Child safety is a shared responsibility that includes the important involvement of parents and guardians.

Purpose

The purpose of Gondwana Choirs' Child Safe Policies are to guide employees in their everyday work, as well as in specific situations of concern, and to guide our volunteer supervisors as they support the organisation.

What does a safe environment mean?

A safe environment is one where the risk of harm is minimised, and choristers feel secure. Harm relates not only to dangers in the built environment, involving such matters as architecture and construction, lighting, space, facilities and safety plans, but also refers to violence, physical threats, verbal abuse, threatening gestures, sexual harassment and racial vilification.

What does a supportive environment mean?

A supportive environment facilitates and enhances the social, academic, physical and emotional development of young people. A supportive environment strives to be one in which:

- our choristers are treated with respect and fairness by artistic and administrative staff, volunteers and other choristers;
- members of the Gondwana Choirs community feel valued;
- effective learning takes place;
- positive support and encouragement are provided by members of staff and choristers;
- non-discriminatory language and behavioural practices are defined, modelled and reinforced by members of the Gondwana Choirs community; and
- consultation takes place on matters relating to choristers' choral education and welfare.

What does chorister welfare mean?

Chorister welfare encompasses the mental, physical and emotional well-being of choristers. The provision of chorister welfare policies are essential in developing a sense of self-worth and fostering personal development. These include:

- opportunities that Gondwana Choirs provides for choristers to develop a love of choral singing;
- programs that Gondwana Choirs provides to meet the personal, social and learning needs of choristers;
- effective discipline; and
- monitoring chorister attendance.

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategies

Areas covered by our policies that ensure Gondwana Choirs provides a safe and supportive environment to our choristers include:

- security, with specific reference to:
 - choristers and families;
 - buildings and facilities; and

- evacuation procedures;
- supervision, with specific reference to protocols and guidelines including risk management for choristers undertaking regular rehearsal, performance and touring activities;
- codes of conduct for members of the Gondwana Choirs community, with specific reference to:
 - staff code of conduct;
 - chorister code of conduct;
 - supervisor code of conduct; and
 - anti-bullying;
- management and reporting of serious incidents;
- complaints or grievances, with specific reference to processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by choristers and/or parents;
- pastoral care, with specific reference to:
 - health and the distribution and monitoring of medication; and
 - response to serious incidents and emergencies.

Gondwana Choirs' Executive Director and Artistic Director regularly informally review these policies and codes of conduct, and formally on an annual basis, to ensure we continue to operate at best practice as a child safe organisation and comply with legislation around working with children in each of the states and territories in which the organisation operates.

6. Inclusion of Children

Encouraging the participation of our choristers is a priority for Gondwana Choirs.

Gondwana Choirs is aware that children experience safety differently to adults and that for children, feeling safe is as important as being safe.

By engaging with children about their experiences, Gondwana Choirs is able to identify and manage risks earlier and to improve the quality of the learning we provide.

Gondwana Choirs is committed to encouraging the participation of children by treating all children fairly, engaging skilled and caring adults to work and volunteer with Gondwana Choirs and encouraging families and guardians to communicate with us.

Gondwana Choirs' commitment

Gondwana Choirs actively does the following:

- asks the children in our care what would make them feel safe;
- acts on the children's views and addresses their concerns;
- upholds our child-friendly complaints process, making it easy for children to raise concerns and provide feedback;
- consults children before making important decisions and informs them how the information they provide will be used;
- ensures that conductors and program managers within Gondwana Choirs inform the children about their rights and about how adults should behave towards them;
- commits to upholding our child safety policies; and
- ensures that when a child makes a complaint or an allegation, they are informed of what the next steps are in Gondwana Choirs' reporting procedures.

Examples of the above include:

- making sure that all children going on tour have a copy of the Tour Handbook;
- holding meetings with the children before tour, NCS, camps and rehearsals where their safety is discussed and seen as a priority in a sensitive and measured way to encourage the choristers' input rather than inducing fear;
 - At these meetings, staff may use dialogue to the effect of "as you can see, all of those points we just discussed are around keeping you safe while you are on the tour, like safety at the airport, at the hotel and while you are billeted. Can anyone think of any other ways we can make sure everyone is safe? Does anyone have any questions or anything they want to discuss about what we've talked about today?"; and
- ongoing informal dialogue between artistic staff and choristers, including staff listening for messages and cues from choristers about their safety.