

The Australian Children's Choir

Code of Conduct Policy

Introduction

The ethical climate of an organisation is an essential element in establishing its credibility and furthering its mission. An organisational culture that takes ethical considerations into account at every point cannot be produced simply by having the Committee lay down a code; ethical principles must arise from consultation with and responsiveness to the organisation's members, clients, employees, volunteers, and stakeholders.

Purpose

This policy is designed to provide guidelines for procedures that will allow The Australian Children's Choir to evolve a consensus on the ethical principles that should guide its conduct.

Policy

The Australian Children's Choir commits itself to operating in accordance with an ethical code drawn up through agreed procedures following consultation with members, clients, employees, volunteers, and stakeholders.

Authorisation

Signature of Secretary: *C. Scott*

Date of approval by the Committee: May 7, 2021

The Australian Children's Choir

Australian Children's Choir Policy Statement:

The Australian Children's Choir (ACC) requires that all choristers, ACC members, parents/guardians and volunteers who work with the ACC will comply with the ACC's Code of Conduct Policy.

In Practice This Means:

The Australian Children's Choir (the ACC) Code of Conduct (the Code) sets out the standards of individual behaviour that is required to be displayed by all people involved with the ACC from choristers, ACC members, parents/guardians and volunteers.

The Code is designed to ensure that all people associated with the ACC are aware of their obligations and expectations in being a part of the ACC. Membership of the ACC implies acceptance of the intent of the Code. Failure to comply with the Code may lead to the withdrawal of membership from the ACC. Compliance to the Code also assists maintain the excellent reputation of the ACC, promotes member confidence in the ACC and ensures compliance to the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004. The ACC have an obligation under this Act to maintain as far as is reasonably practicable a working environment that is safe and without risks to health which includes emotional health.

Choristers can expect:

To attend rehearsals and performances in a safe environment.

- To experience the highest standard of musical education
- To be treated with respect and courtesy by everyone
- To learn in an environment that is free from bullying.
- To know that all staff and volunteers have current Working with Children Checks where this is required by law
- To not have their performances or rehearsals interrupted by other choristers, parents/guardians or volunteers.
- To have their current medical information on file, accessible and understood by the ACC's staff, Committee of Management and/or volunteers in line with prior parental approval to deliver medical attention if required.
- To not have their personal information disclosed to any other person other than whom it is required
- To not be exposed to inappropriate material or language consistent with their age

Choristers have the Responsibility:

- To be polite and courteous to all members of the ACC community
- To not damage any property or personal belongings
- To ensure they perform at their best during rehearsals and performances
- To follow the direction of ACC staff and/or volunteers
- To not undertake inappropriate behaviours*, including bullying or harassing others
- To be punctual to all rehearsals and performances
- To wear correct uniform
- To act as ambassadors for the ACC
- To report any concerns about safety or welfare to the ACC staff, Committee of Management or volunteers

Parents/Guardians can expect:

- To feel secure that their child is receiving the highest standard of education and care
- To be treated with respect and courtesy by the ACC community
- To communicate with staff and the ACC's Committee of Management as required
- To have access to the ACC's Rules and policies
- To know that the ACC has assessed the suitability of staff to work with children by ensuring that they hold a valid Working With Children Check or equivalent
- To receive feedback about their child's progress

Parents/Guardians have a Responsibility:

- To support and encourage their child's attendance and participation. A child who has not attended rehearsals for eight consecutive weeks is deemed to have resigned as a member of The Australian Children's Choir. Any fees paid in advance will be refunded bank account as nominated by the parent, or via bank cheque sent via mail.
- To notify the ACC of any absences
- To provide correct and up to date contact and medical information
- To adhere to the payment schedule as applicable and agreed
- To inform the ACC's Administrative Manager of any emotional, physical, behavioural, medical or special needs that their child may have, including any custodial or legal issues and acknowledge that this information is passed on appropriately to other staff or volunteers if the ACC believes that this is needed to ensure the safety of the child
- To ensure their child is punctual and to ensure that an adult drops off the child and signs them in to and out of all rehearsals and performances
- To provide written confirmation to the ACC's staff when the chorister will be collected by anyone other than the regular parent/guardian
- To be polite and courteous to staff and all members of the ACC community
- To allow staff / volunteers to leave a rehearsal at the hour to which they have been contracted

Staff

- Shall, in all business conducted under the aegis of The Australian Children's Choir, place the interests of the organisation over their own interests of those of any other person or persons;
- Shall observe the provisions of the Constitution, policies, and rules of the organisation, including any policies on conflict of interest;
- Shall enthusiastically and competently carry out the duties specified by their contract of employment;
- Shall treat the other staff of the organisation, and the members of the organisation, and the office-bearers of the organisation, and the clients of the organisation, with respect;
- Shall undertake any training necessary for the performance of their duties;
- Shall, in any work carried out for the organisation, follow the directions of their designated supervisors;
- Shall not so act as to bring the organisation or its mission into disrepute.

Committee members

- Shall, in all business conducted under the aegis of The Australian Children's Choir, place the interests of the organisation over their own interests of those of any other person or persons;
- Shall observe the provisions of the Constitution, policies, and rules of the organisation.
- Shall, as far as possible, attend all meetings of the Committee, and, in the event that they are prevented from attending any meeting of the Committee, shall notify the Secretary of their absence in advance of the meeting.
- Shall devote to their duties the amount of time required to carry them out thoroughly and effectively.
- Shall undertake any training necessary for the performance of their duties.
- Shall treat the other members of the Committee, and the other members of the organisation, and the staff of the organisation, and the office-bearers of the organisation, and the clients of the organisation, with respect.
- Shall not so act as to bring the organisation or its mission into disrepute.

Office bearers

- Shall carry out enthusiastically and competently the duties assigned to the position.
- Shall, in all business conducted under the aegis of The Australian Children's Choir, place the interests of the organisation over their own interests of those of any other person or persons;
- Shall observe the provisions of the Constitution, policies, and rules of the organisation;
- Shall, as far as possible, attend all meetings of the Committee, and, in the event that they are prevented from attending any meeting of the Committee, shall notify the Secretary of their absence in advance of the meeting;
- Shall devote to their duties the amount of time required to carry them out thoroughly and effectively;
- Shall undertake any training necessary for the performance of their duties;
- Shall treat the other members of the Committee, and the other members of the organisation, and the staff of the organisation, and the office-bearers of the organisation, and the clients of the organisation, with respect;
- Shall not so act as to bring the organisation or its mission into disrepute

***Inappropriate behaviour = Harassment and Bullying – see Appendix A for definitions.**

Appendix A

Harassment and Bullying both involve behaviour which harms, intimidates, threatens, victimises, undermines, offends, degrades, or humiliates.

Definitions:

Harassment: unwelcome behaviour which makes an individual feel embarrassed, intimidated or insulted. Harassment may include comments about:

- Gender
- Race
- Ethnic background
- Religion or belief
- Disability
- Social skills
- Physical appearance
- Intellectual ability
- Emotional development.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to;

- Physical – including fighting, pushing, kicking, spitting, hitting, gestures and invasion of personal space
- Sexual – including unwanted touching and offensive comments.
- Verbal – including threats, offensive language, rumour spreading and name calling
- Victimisation – including intimidation and deliberate exclusion
- Online – including offensive language, threats, rumour spreading, name calling, intimidation and deliberate exclusion by e-mail, texting, social networking and other websites, mobile phones, and mobile phone cameras

Bullying: aggressive and or inappropriate behaviour that undermines a right to dignity. Behaviour is generally repeated over time and may involve individuals or a group. Genuine and reasonable disciplinary procedures are not bullying.

Bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following forms;

- Physical – constant intrusive surveillance and inappropriate interference with personal belongings
- Verbal – yelling, screaming or offensive language
- Emotional – direct or indirect emotional abuse and unreasonably undermining performances
- Undermining performance by deliberately withholding information

No member of the ACC community, including choristers, parents/guardians, staff or volunteers has the right to bully or harass another member. If you experience or witness inappropriate behaviour, you must report it to a staff member or member of the ACC's Committee of Management. The intention of the person committing the harassing or bullying behaviour is not considered when deciding if the behaviour is inappropriate. The Committee of Management may choose to investigate such an allegation but due to the privacy of individual people, may not disclose the process and/or outcome to others.

Chorister Discipline Procedures

When a chorister violates the ACC's Code of Conduct Policy (the Code), the Director of Music and/or members of the Committee of Management may invoke consequences that are consistent with the Code being broken. If a chorister is to have disciplinary procedures undertaken, they must firstly have the Code that they have breached explained to them so that they can understand the connection between the behaviour and the consequence and learn to be accountable and responsible for their actions.

The ACC require that a chorister receive a verbal warning prior to disciplinary action being taken. The verbal warning is to include which part of the Code is being breached. Depending on the nature of the breach, the chorister may face disciplinary action that will follow a set sequence:

1. Withdrawal of privileges

The ACC's staff, Committee of Management and/or their delegates are permitted to withdraw privileges from a chorister as a local consequence of breaches of the Code including but not limited to such things as being separated from friends, asked to step out of rehearsal for short time, etc.

2. Withdrawal from rehearsal, performance, camp or tour

If the chorister's breach of the Code interferes with other choristers, staff or volunteer's activities or safety, or negatively impacts on the reputation of the ACC, the chorister can be withdrawn from a rehearsal, performance, camp or tour. The chorister must be adequately supervised after they are withdrawn, and in most instances will be asked to be collected by parents/guardians at the earliest time possible.

3. Discipline meetings

Following a breach of the ACC's Code, the ACC's Committee of Management or the parent/guardian of the chorister may request a meeting between the relevant parties to discuss the chorister's behavioural issues. This meeting is to be organised at mutually agreeable times. The ACC's Code will also apply within these meetings.

These discipline meetings will define the issues, set goals and determine strategies, tasks and responsibilities associated with the goals. The outcomes of these meetings will be summarised in a brief written statement that includes the names of people that attended the meeting, the outcome, expectations and requirements. The statement should be signed by the Chair of the Committee of Management and the parent/guardian of the chorister. The statement shall remain confidential.

4. Suspension from the ACC

Suspension from the ACC shall generally only be used when other disciplinary measures have not resulted in the chorister abiding by the ACC's Code. The period of suspension will be based on the nature of the breach and will be the subject of the disciplinary meeting, however in most instances will be no longer than 4 days of rehearsal, camp, tour or performance time. There may be instances where a suspension will apply immediately.

Grounds for suspension from the ACC include but are not limited to:

- Exhibiting behaviour that constitutes a danger to the health or safety of any member of the ACC community, including other choristers, staff, volunteers, or members of the public
- Committing an act of violence or causing significant property damage or theft
- Possession of illicit drugs, alcohol or inappropriate substance or material
- Consistently behaving in a manner that disrupts other choristers, staff or volunteers
- Failure to comply with a reasonable direction from the ACC's staff or volunteers or others involved in the management of rehearsals, performances, camps or tours
- Damages the public reputation of the ACC
- Engages in discriminatory behaviour towards other choristers, staff or volunteers

5. Expulsion from the ACC

A chorister or ACC member may be expelled from the ACC following a meeting of the ACC's Committee of Management (COM) where a majority of the COM vote in favour of expulsion. Except in the most unusual or extreme circumstances expulsion would only be considered as a last resort after other avenues of the disciplinary procedure have been exhausted. Expulsion will result in any unused fees paid by parents being returned to the parent.

Note:

The Code Reflects the Rules of The Australian Children's Choir Incorporated

"15. Expulsion of Choristers and Probationers...

...b) The Board may expel from the Choir any chorister whose conduct is such as in the opinion of the Committee be injurious to the character or interests of the Choir. Before a Chorister is expelled his conduct shall be inquired into by the Committee and he shall be given full opportunity to defend himself and justify or explain his conduct.

c) Pending any enquiry and decision thereon as set out in r b) above the Chorister shall be suspended from the Choir and ineligible to attend any rehearsals, performances, gatherings, meetings or functions of the Choir....."

Agreement: By signing the Enrolment Form Parents and Choristers are acknowledging you have read and understood and agree to abide by the conditions outlined in The ACC Code of Conduct.

ACC Member, Parent/Guardian, Volunteer

I have read and understood the content of the Australian Children's Code of Conduct (the Code).

I agree to abide by the conditions outlined in the Code.

sign _____

For Choristers

(Under the age of 18 years):

I have read and explained the Code to my child who is a chorister at The ACC. My child understands the type of behaviour expected. He /she agree to abide by these conditions, and I agree to support him / her in doing so.

sign _____