

# CHILD SAFE & PRIVACY POLICY

**Date: REVISED CHILD SAFE POLICY 2025**

## Our Commitment

At Riga Victoria Dance Academy (RVDA), the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people is paramount. We are committed to creating a child-safe environment, where every child feels valued, respected, and safe from harm. This commitment extends to all children, regardless of their cultural background, including Aboriginal children, children with disabilities, and children of diverse beliefs.

## Our Core Principles

- **Right to Safety:** All children have the right to feel and be safe.
- **Zero Tolerance:** RVDA has a zero tolerance for child abuse.
- **Child Protection is Everyone's Responsibility:** Every member of the RVDA community plays a role in protecting children.
- **Best Interests of the Child:** The best interests of the child will always be our primary consideration.

## Compliance with Victorian Child Safe Standards

This policy adheres to the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards:

1. Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected:
  - RVDA is committed to creating a culturally safe environment. We will actively seek to understand and respect the cultural backgrounds of all children, particularly Aboriginal children, and incorporate culturally sensitive practices.
  - We will ensure our resources and programs are inclusive and reflect the diversity of our community.
2. Child safety and wellbeing are embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture:
  - Our Principal is the designated Child Safety Officer and provides leadership in child safety matters and committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment.
  - Child safety is a standing agenda item in relevant meetings.
  - This policy is regularly reviewed and updated.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously:
  - We will create opportunities for children to express their views and participate in decisions that affect them.
  - We will actively listen to children's concerns and take them seriously.
  - We will educate children about their right to feel safe and how to report any concerns.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing:
  - This Child Safe Policy is readily available to families and the community on Studio Pro and our website.
  - We will communicate regularly with families about child safety matters.

- We encourage open communication and feedback from families.
- 5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice:
  - We will ensure our policies and practices are inclusive and equitable, addressing the diverse needs of all children, including those with disabilities and those from diverse cultural backgrounds.
  - We will take into account the diverse needs of all children when planning activities and have classes which address and support individual needs.
- 6. Staff and volunteers are suitable and supported to prioritise child safety and wellbeing:
  - All staff and volunteers who work with children must have a valid Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) membership or a Working with Children Check (WWCC) or its equivalent.
  - We provide ongoing training and support staff and volunteers on child safety matters. Training will cover relevant legislation, policies, and procedures.
  - We have clear procedures for employment and screening of staff and volunteers.
- 7. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse are child-focused and clear:
  - Believing and Validating: Our first priority is to listen to the child or young person without judgment. We use open-ended questions, offer comfort, and ensure the child or young person feels safe and heard. We will never "investigate" or press for details, but rather provide a supportive space for them to share.
  - Immediate Protective Action: Any suspicion of child abuse will be reported immediately to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection Crisis Line (13 12 78) or, in life-threatening situations, to 000. The child's immediate physical and emotional safety is our primary concern during this transition.
  - Internal Support: The Principal must be notified immediately by staff or RVDA members to ensure the school can provide a protective "wrap-around" environment for the child while the report is handled.
  - Sensitive Documentation: An Incident Report will be completed and documented with care, focusing on factual observations and the child's own words, ensuring their "voice" is accurately represented in the record.
  - Holistic Support: We provide ongoing emotional support to the child involved and extend support to any staff member making a report, recognizing that a safe community requires everyone to feel empowered and cared for.
- 8. Children and young people's safety is prioritised through knowledge, skills and awareness of staff and volunteers:
  - Ensuring children's safety is a core consideration in all our organisational planning and practices.
  - Staff and leadership systematically assess potential risks and implement robust safety measures across all activities and environments children engage with.
  - Staff are given guidance supporting children through a range of issues regarding child safety.
- 9. We promote the safety and wellbeing of children in physical and online environments:
  - Creating a safe environment for children is central to our organisational planning and practice. We achieve this by consistently assessing potential risks and implementing strategies across all aspects of our operations and the spaces children engage with.
  - We will promote safe online practices and when used, educate children about online safety.
  - We will monitor online interactions related to RVDA activities.
  - We have clear guidelines regarding the use of social media and online communication, outlined in our parent/student policy.

10. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and improved:
  - This Child Safe Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and aligned with best practice.
  - Feedback from our students, families, and the wider community is welcomed and plays a key role in our ongoing review process.
  
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people
  - Staff are aware of the policies and procedures of child safety through the documents and relevant meetings
  - The Child Safety Officer (the Principal) is responsible for ensuring that all documentation adheres to safe practices

## PRIVACY POLICY

Riga Victoria Dance Academy (RVDA) is committed to protecting your privacy in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Victorian Health Records Act 2001.

1. Information : We collect personal and sensitive information to safely conduct dance classes and business operations. This includes: personal information, student and parent names, addresses, contact details and dates of birth.

Health Information: Medical conditions, injuries, and allergies to ensure student safety during physical activity.

2. Use and Disclosure: We only use your information for the primary purpose of providing dance tuition and related services.

Staff Access: RVDA staff are granted access only to information necessary to perform their roles (e.g., emergency contacts for teachers). All staff are bound by strict confidentiality agreements.

Third Parties: We use Studio Pro as our secure data processor. We do not sell or trade your data.

Legal Requirements: We will only disclose information to third parties with your consent, or if required by law (e.g., law enforcement or public health orders).

3. Data Security and Retention: We take reasonable steps to protect information from misuse, interference, loss, or unauthorised access. We retain information only as long as necessary for business or legal purposes; once no longer required, it is securely destroyed or de-identified.

4. Your Rights: Access and Correction Under Australian law: you have the right to access and correct the personal information we hold.

Updates: Please keep your details current via the Studio Pro Parent Portal.

Requests: Formal access requests can be made to [doatesrvda@gmail.com](mailto:doatesrvda@gmail.com). We aim to respond within 30 days.

5. Communication and Opt-Out: RVDA uses email/SMS via Studio Pro for essential safety and operational updates (class changes, exam deadlines, etc.). While you may unsubscribe from marketing materials, opting out of the system emails/sms may result in missing critical information, including safety information..

6. Queries and Complaints If you have concerns about how your data is handled, please contact the Principal, in writing at [doatesrvda@gmail.com](mailto:doatesrvda@gmail.com). If a complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) or the Victorian Health Complaints Commissioner.