

# Staff & Student Professional Boundaries Policy

MAPA is committed to maintaining professional, respectful and appropriate relationships between staff, contractors, volunteers and students at all times.

This policy outlines expected professional boundaries to ensure the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and young people in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

## Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees, contractors and volunteers
- Assistant teachers, student teachers and mentors
- All interactions with students, both **in person and online**
- All studio activities, performances, events, rehearsals, camps and communications

## Guiding Principles

- Children's safety and wellbeing are paramount
- Power imbalances between adults and children must be recognised and managed
- All interactions must be professional, transparent and appropriate
- Professional boundaries protect **students, staff and the organisation**

## Appropriate Professional Behaviour

Staff are expected to:

- Treat all students with respect, fairness and dignity
- Maintain appropriate physical, emotional and digital boundaries
- Use language that is age-appropriate, respectful and inclusive
- Act as positive role models at all times
- Follow all MAPA Child Safety policies and procedures

## Physical Contact

Physical contact with students must:

- Be **necessary for teaching or safety purposes only**
- Be age-appropriate and culturally sensitive
- Be explained to the student beforehand where possible
- Never be secretive, coercive or excessive

Examples of acceptable contact may include:

- Demonstrating technique or posture correction
- Preventing injury
- Providing appropriate reassurance in line with studio guidelines

Physical contact must **never**:

- Cause discomfort, fear or distress
- Be sexualised or intrusive
- Occur in private or isolated settings where it can be avoided

## One-on-One Interactions

Where one-on-one interaction is necessary:

- It should occur in **open, observable spaces**
- Doors should remain open where possible
- Other staff should be nearby or aware
- Private or isolated situations should be avoided wherever practicable

## Communication & Digital Boundaries

Staff must:

- Communicate with students in a professional manner only
- Use MAPA-approved platforms for communication
- Avoid private messaging with students outside approved channels
- Never engage in personal, secretive or inappropriate online interactions

Staff must not:

- Share personal contact details with students unless authorised
- Engage with students on personal social media accounts
- Share or request personal photos, videos or private information

## Favouritism & Gifts

Staff must not:

- Show favouritism towards individual students
- Give gifts to students without approval from management
- Engage in relationships that could be perceived as preferential or inappropriate

## Language, Humour & Behaviour

Staff must not:

- Use sexualised, offensive or discriminatory language
- Engage in teasing, shaming, humiliation or sarcasm
- Comment on students' bodies, weight or appearance inappropriately
- Use intimidation, yelling or aggressive behaviour to manage students

## Relationships Outside the Studio

Staff must not:

- Socialise privately with students outside studio activities
- Provide transport to students unless approved by management
- Engage in romantic or sexual relationships with students under any circumstances

## Recognising Boundary Concerns

Boundary concerns may include:

- Over-familiar behaviour
- Excessive attention or personal interest
- Secretive communication
- Ignoring studio procedures or safeguards

Staff must report any boundary concerns immediately.

## Reporting Concerns

Any concerns regarding professional boundaries must be:

- Reported to the **Studio Director / Child Safety Officer**
- Documented using **MAPA's Child Safety Incident Report Form**
- Managed in line with MAPA's Reporting Procedures

Staff must **not investigate** boundary concerns themselves.

## Breaches of This Policy

Breaches of this policy may result in:

- Disciplinary action
- Termination of employment or contract
- External reporting where required under Victorian law

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with:

- Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Relevant legislation
- Best practice in child-safe dance education
- Date Updated: 22nd January 2026
- Review Timeline: Annual
- Date of Next Review: January 2027