

Garden City Ballet ***Guidelines for Working with Minors***

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1. Guidelines for Appropriate Behavior with Minors

As a Garden City Ballet (GCB) employee, independent contractor or volunteer, it is my duty to prevent harm towards the minors in my care. The following are behavior guidelines while working with minors.

Best Practices for Safely Working with Minors

1. Avoid being alone with a single minor where you cannot be observed by other adults.
2. Do not discipline minors by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
3. Physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual abuse of minors is unlawful and prohibited by state law.
4. Appropriate guidelines around physical contact should always be followed. Please see the following pages for these guidelines.
5. Understand and respect the boundaries set by minors regarding physical touch or sharing of personal information.
6. In sensitive situations and in case of injury, involve another staff member or parent.
7. Minors are not allowed on premises of rehearsal space or in theatre without a staff member present. Minors should not be in areas of the theatre specified as off limits, as stated at the start of technical week inside the theatre.
8. No Internet social networking with minors for *personal* reasons or through personal profiles is allowed. Networking through approved production sites/profiles may be used when the contact is related to the production.
9. Staff should understand the program emergency plan for responding to a crisis situation. In case of emergency, contact minor's emergency contact person as soon as possible.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a safe environment for both staff and minors, and to raise awareness of how to manage risk when minors are present. "Minors" includes any youth under the age of 18 years. "Staff" includes both employees, independent contractors and volunteers. "Parent" is considered both

parents and legal guardians. This policy will be provided to all new staff upon hire, and reviewed with returning staff on an annual basis. These guidelines emphasize the responsibility that staff, volunteers, parents, and minors each have in ensuring a safe environment and successful production.

2. Preventing Harmful Relationships with Minors

The following are specific actions staff can follow in order to avoid harmful relationships with minors.

1. Establish clear boundaries with minors.
2. Do not have inappropriate physical contact (see below).
3. Treat all minors equitably, i.e. fairly and consistently. Avoid showing favoritism.
4. Do not discuss your personal life with minors.
5. Do not swear or tell off-color jokes.
6. Do not discuss your own or minor's sex life or activities.
7. Do not smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of minors.
8. Do not share sexually explicit literature, magazines, books, music or videos.
9. Seek support for high risk situations, such as discussions of very personal stories.
10. When in doubt, seek assistance from the Administrative Director, Artistic Director or a Board Member.

3. Appropriate and Inappropriate Interactions

1. Zero Tolerance – Represents gross misconduct and may include termination of employment/volunteer privileges:
 - a. Sexual Abuse / Molestation
 - b. Physical Abuse
 - c. Verbal Abuse
 - d. Bullying
 - e. Providing alcohol or illegal drugs
 - f. Failure to fully cooperate with an investigation by law enforcement agency or other authorized outside agency.
2. Not Allowed – These behaviors *could* result in corrective action up to and including termination of employment / volunteer privileges:
 - a. Touching any parts of the body without consent.
 - b. Emotional Abuse
3. Appropriate – These behaviors are generally ok, however, even appropriate touch can be inappropriate when excessive.
 - a. High fives
 - b. Side hugs
 - c. Frontal hugs, if appropriate for the situation, assuming consent by the minor.

Minors may be informed in a manner that is age appropriate of their right to set their own physical limits for personal safety. They will be encouraged to tell an adult if someone is abusing them. They will also be encouraged to tell an adult if they are in a situation or observe something that makes them uncomfortable.

4. How to Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Minor

Abuse can occur

- a. At home / away from the production; signs of abuse may be observed or a minor may make a written or oral disclosure.
- b. During the production by staff or other adult or minor:

If you have reasonable cause to believe a minor has been abused, or if a minor has disclosed an abuse to you, you have a duty to report that abuse to the proper authorities. Failure to do so is a violation of Garden City Ballet's Guidelines for Working with Minors and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Even if you're not sure whether something constitutes abuse, it's better to have others help you decide rather than keep information to yourself.

At the first reasonable cause to believe that abuse has occurred (off-site or on-site), or if you witness abusive behaviors, you must:

- **If the safety of a minor is of immediate concern, call the police;**
 - **Call 911 for immediate intervention**
- **For all other cases, notify the Administrative Director so that our crisis management plan can be implemented.**
- **The administrative director is responsible for notifying either Child Protective Services (CPS) or local law enforcement.**
 - **CPS: 1-866-820-5437**
 - **Local Police: 406-552-6300**
 - **The crisis management plan includes notification of the minor's parent/guardian (if the parent or guardian is not the accused).**

Questions that will be asked include:

- The name, address and age of the minor.
- The name and address of the minor's parent, guardian or other persons having custody of the minor.
- The nature and extent of the abuse, including location and description of the incident.
- Any knowledge of previous incidences.

If you are unsure about whether a report is justified, you may use Child Protective Services as a sounding board to help determine whether a report should be made and to whom.

Confidentiality of information related to abuse is crucial.

5. CONFIRMATION OF UNDERSTANDING

I have read *GCBs Guidelines for Working with Minors* and I agree to abide by the organization's rules and boundaries for staff relationships with minors as stated.

I UNDERSTAND VIOLATIONS OF THESE GUIDELINES MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION UP TO AND INCLUDING DISMISSAL. I ACKNOWLEDGE I AM AWARE OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES AND HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THE *GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WTH MINORS*.

Print Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____