**Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**

1. Purpose and Scope

The Art Factory is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment for all children and young people participating in our programs and activities. This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy outlines our commitment to child safety and provides guidance on how to create a child-safe environment in compliance with the Victorian Government's Child Safe Standards.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other individuals associated with The Art Factory who are involved in providing services to children.

1. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

The Art Factory is dedicated to the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children in our care. We have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and are committed to acting in the best interests of the children and young people involved in our programs.

1. Organizational Culture of Child Safety

The Art Factory will foster a culture of child safety through effective leadership and clear expectations. Our leadership team will:

* Provide regular training and resources to all staff and volunteers on child safety and wellbeing.
* Encourage open communication, empowering children, their families, and staff to raise any concerns related to child safety.
* Ensure policies, procedures, and expectations related to child safety are widely understood and consistently implemented.
1. Code of Conduct

All staff, volunteers, and associates of The Art Factory must adhere to our Code of Conduct, which outlines appropriate behavior when interacting with children. The Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to:

* Treating all children with respect and valuing their ideas, opinions, and personal boundaries.
* Maintaining professional boundaries and avoiding favoritism or inappropriate relationships with children.
* Reporting any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of child abuse immediately to the designated Child Safety Officer.
1. Human Resources Practices

The Art Factory will implement rigorous recruitment, screening, and training processes to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers working with children. This includes:

* Conducting thorough background checks, including Working with Children Checks, for all staff and volunteers.
* Providing regular training and professional development on child safety, including mandatory reporting obligations and appropriate behavior.
* Supervising and monitoring staff and volunteers to ensure compliance with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct.
1. Reporting and Responding to Child Abuse

The Art Factory is committed to promptly and appropriately responding to all concerns, suspicions, or allegations of child abuse. We will:

* Designate a Child Safety Officer responsible for receiving and managing reports of child abuse.
* Provide clear procedures for staff, volunteers, children, and their families to report concerns or incidents of child abuse.
* Work collaboratively with relevant authorities, such as the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Victoria Police, in cases of suspected child abuse.
1. Identifying and Managing Risks

The Art Factory will regularly assess and manage risks related to child safety by:

* Conducting periodic risk assessments to identify potential hazards or situations that may expose children to abuse.
* Implementing strategies to minimize or eliminate identified risks.
* Reviewing and updating risk management practices as needed to ensure their ongoing effectiveness.
1. Empowering Children and Young People

The Art Factory believes in the importance of involving children and young people in decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing. We will:

* Provide opportunities for children and young people to express their views and provide feedback on our programs and activities.
* Involve children and young people in developing and reviewing our child safety policies and procedures.
* Foster a culture of inclusion and respect, where all children and young people feel valued and heard.
1. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or as required by legislative changes or organizational developments.

By implementing and adhering to this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, The Art Factory is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all children and young people in our care. We recognize the importance of continuous improvement and will actively seek feedback from children, their families, staff, and other stakeholders to ensure our practices remain effective and up-to-date.

1. Communication and Awareness

The Art Factory will ensure that this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is:

* Made available to all staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other individuals associated with The Art Factory.
* Accessible to children and their families through our website, orientation sessions, and printed materials.
* Discussed and reinforced during staff meetings, training sessions, and other relevant forums.
1. Breaches of the Policy

Any staff member, volunteer, or associate found to have breached this policy or the associated Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include:

* Counseling and additional training.
* Formal warnings or performance management.
* Suspension or termination of employment or association with The Art Factory.

In cases where a breach of the policy involves suspected child abuse, The Art Factory will report the matter to the appropriate authorities, including DHHS and Victoria Police.

1. Contact Information

For questions or concerns related to this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, or to report a concern or incident related to child safety, please contact:

**Priti Roberts**

Child Safety Officer

The Art Factory

priti@theartfactory.com.au

By adopting and implementing this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, The Art Factory is committed to upholding the highest standards of child safety and wellbeing, ensuring that all children and young people in our care have the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in a secure and supportive environment.