

The Australian Children's Choir Inc

Code of Conduct

DD March 2024



1. Introduction

Section 41(c) of the ACC Rules allows for the Committee to “...establish, promulgate, issue, amend or vary policies regarding the conduct of the Association’s operations aimed at achieving or facilitating the orderly conduct of the affairs of the Association, including policies regarding the conduct expected of members, staff of the Association, choristers and parents or legal guardians of choristers.”

The ACC Code of Conduct (“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 be addressed in accordance with Division 2 of the Rules and 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 and the ACC Child Safety Policy. The ACC has 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.

All Choristers, Members and Staff are required to sign an attestation to ongoing compliance with the Code on joining the ACC and annually thereafter.

1.1 Values

The Code is based on the Values of the ACC found in Section 2(2) of the Rules:

- The ACC works as one organisation, made up of a diverse group of children and young adults, to foster musical development and excellence.
- The ACC prioritises children and young people, focusing on their musical interests to inform our actions and administration of the choirs.
- The ACC is a community in which children and young adults are encouraged to develop friendships, socialise with one another, and have fun together in a caring and safe environment.

- The ACC expects commitment from its community of children, young adults, families, staff, and committee, requiring full and enthusiastic participation from everyone.
- Parents/guardians are an integral part of the ACC organisation, both directly through membership, and indirectly in fostering a love of music, cooperation, understanding and tolerance in their children in support of the purpose and values of the Association.

These values arose from extensive consultation with Choristers and Members and set the basis for the ACC’s conduct framework.

2. Framework

Our Choristers, staff and community trust the ACC to conduct itself with integrity, and this Code is a critical resource in maintaining that trust. It helps us to

- Comply with applicable laws, regulations, and ACC policies.
- Promote the highest standards of ethical conduct.
- Address common ethical situations we could encounter as we go about our ACC activities.
- Manage improper conduct and behaviour.
- Avoid even the appearance of anything improper in connection with the ACC’s activities.

2.1 Inclusivity

Within the ACC, we strive to be inclusive, welcoming of unique contributions and fostering a trusting and open environment where each person is treated in a way that is consistent with our values. We aim to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment, retaliation, vilification, bullying, and victimisation. We make the safety and wellbeing of our Choristers and staff a top priority, and we are active in the communities where we live and work, promoting quality of life outside the ACC.

2.2 Stewardship

As Stewards of our young people, we protect and nurture their musical and emotional development, so that we can together achieve the best possible performances of all our choirs. We understand the importance of clear, accurate communication about the ACC and

the need to preserve the reputation we have worked hard to earn. That's why we let only designated individuals speak on the ACC's behalf.

2.3 Choir Activities

In Choir activities, we are passionate about protecting privacy and following laws aimed at safeguarding personal information. We also protect other confidential information (about our service providers and other stakeholders with whom we work). We conduct ourselves with integrity and zero tolerance for bribery and corruption. We make decisions based on what's best for our young people and strive to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

2.4 Speak up culture.

We Speak Up if we see or suspect behaviour that violates our Code, our policies, or the law. We know that the actions we take (or fail to take) have an impact on the ACC, helping to define the kind of organisation we are today and the kind of success we will achieve tomorrow.

3. Conduct

Safeguarding our young people is a fundamental obligation on the ACC, and as a community, every chorister, member and staff member of the organisation. More detailed obligations in relation to safeguarding our young people and any vulnerable members of associates of the ACC, can be found in The ACC Child and Vulnerable Persons Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. Compliance with that document forms part of the behavioural expectations contained within this Code.

3.1 Choristers

3.1.1 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.

3.1.2 Expectations on Choristers:

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

3.2 Parents and Guardians

3.2.1 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.

3.2.2 Expectations on Parents/Guardians:

- I will observe the provisions of the Rules and policies of the organisation.
- I will support and encourage my child's¹ attendance and participation. (Note S16 of the Rules in relation to resigning as a member)
- I will notify the ACC of any absences.
- I will provide correct and current contact and medical information and I will update the ACC with any changes.
- I will adhere to the payment schedule as applicable and agreed.
- I will inform the ACC's General Manager of any emotional, physical, behavioural, medical, or special needs that my 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 my child.
- I will ensure my 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.
- I will provide written confirmation to the ACC's staff when the chorister will be collected by anyone other than the regular parent/guardian.
- I will be polite and courteous to staff and all members of the ACC community.
- I will allow staff / volunteers to leave a rehearsal at the hour to which they have been contracted.

3.3 Staff

3.3.1 Staff can expect:

¹ "my child" also means the child in their care or for whom they are responsible.

- to be treated with respect
- to be protected under all relevant workplace laws and practices
- to be consulted and heard on all matters relating to the choir to which they are appointed.
- to have unfettered access to the Artistic Director and, in the event of any workplace dispute, the General Manager and/or the Committee of Management.

3.3.2 Expectations on staff

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

3.4 Committee Members

3.4.1 Committee Members can expect:

- Respect and understanding for the additional work undertaken as a volunteer as well as member of the ACC.
- That their views and opinions will be heard and, if appropriate, adopted by the ACC for the betterment of the ACC and its choristers, members and staff, subject to normal governance processes.

- That the ACC understands that each Committee Member has duties and obligations outside the ACC which may sometimes conflict with the commitment expectations of the ACC.

3.4.2 Expectations on Committee Members

- I will, in all business conducted under the aegis of the ACC, place the interests of the ACC over my own interests of those of any other person or persons.
- I will observe the provisions of the rules and policies of the organisation.
- I will, as far as possible, attend all meetings of the Committee, and, in the event that I am prevented from attending any meeting of the Committee, shall notify the Secretary of my absence in advance of the meeting.
- I will devote to my duties the amount of time required to carry them out thoroughly and effectively.
- I will undertake any training necessary for the performance of my duties.
- I will treat the other members of the Committee, other members of the ACC, Choristers and staff of the ACC with respect.
- I will not so act as to bring the ACC or its mission into disrepute.

3.5 Office Bearers

Office bearers are members of the Committee and can expect to be treated as such.

As an office bearer:

- I will carry out enthusiastically and competently the duties assigned to the position.
- I will, in all business conducted under the aegis of the ACC, place the interests of the ACC over my own interests of those of any other person or persons.
- I will observe the provisions of the Rules and policies of the organisation.
- I will, as far as possible, attend all meetings of the Committee, and, in the event that I am prevented from attending any meeting of the Committee, shall notify the Secretary (or in the instance of the Secretary, the Chair) of my absence in advance of the meeting.
- I will devote to my duties, the amount of time required to carry them out thoroughly and effectively.

- I will undertake any training necessary for the performance of my duties.
 - I will treat the other members of the Committee, other members of the ACC, Choristers and staff of the ACC with respect.
- I will not so act as to bring the ACC or its mission into disrepute.

4. Unacceptable Conduct

4.1 Harassment and Bullying

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

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.

Harassment: means 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: means 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.

4.2 Breach of Key Policies

The ACC has a number of key policies which have been established to safeguard the young people in its care, staff members, volunteers, members, and members of the public when attending ACC activities. Breaches of these policies also constitute a breach of the ACC Code of Conduct and may be subject to disciplinary procedures as addressed in Section 5. These policies include:

- The ACC Child and Vulnerable Persons Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- The ACC Rules of the Association and
- The ACC Risk Management Policy.

5. Performance and Consequence Management

Any serious non-compliance with this Code or the Rules may result in disciplinary processes as allowed for in the Rules and Appendix 1 of this Code.

6. Training and Awareness

All Committee Members, Choristers, Members and Staff are to be made aware of the parameters as outlined within this Code.

6.1 Document Control

- The owner of the Policy is the **ACC Committee of Management**, and they are authorised to approve minor changes.
- The approver of the Policy, and any material changes to the Policy, is the **ACC Committee of Management**.
- This Policy will be reviewed every **2 years**, or when material changes occur in the internal or external operating environment of the ACC. Or on significant changes to Committee of Management

Effective Date	Next Review Date	Release Level
23 March 2024	March 2026	Public Facing Website

Appendix 1 – Disciplinary Responses

In addition to the disciplinary clauses contained in the ACC Rules, the following responses specifically relate to matters involving choristers.

A1.1 Chorister Discipline Procedures

When a chorister violates this Code, the Artistic Director 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 requires 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:

A1.2 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.

A1.3 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.

A1.4 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.

A1.5 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.

A1.6 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.

Any disciplinary action against a member will be conducted in accordance with Division 2 of the Rules