

# Beyond the Square Drama workshops

## Duty of Care statement

January, 2020

Riverside Theatres' runs a drama and movement based workshops for adults with disability. These workshops run weekly for a 90 minutes for a term of approximately 10 weeks. We usually run the workshops for 4 terms throughout the year, February to December. Participants who enrol are required to attend workshops with appropriate support staff to enable them to participate fully in the workshops with a suitable level of support for their needs.

There are generally two Riverside's drama tutors per workshop, for classes with more than six participants. These teachers will discuss and demonstrate the importance of respectful behaviour when participants are experimenting and exploring the drama activities.

Recognising that some activities may make people feel uncomfortable, participants are encouraged to extend themselves and try new things that initially may seem strange. No one will be made to do anything that they do not want to do, and they are encouraged to speak up if an activity makes them feel uncomfortable. Staff will work with the participants to create a safe and secure environment.

Participants and carers share the responsibility to maintain safety and security for themselves and others. This might include alerting tutors to participants' triggers or to any dynamics that they notice in the space that may compromise the safety and security of anyone present.

The tutors endeavour to make instructions simple, clear and accessible, defining boundaries for each activity. The tutors will rely on support workers to provide additional instruction and engaged support when needed so the people they are supporting are able to participate as fully as possible.

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### Warnings and Cooling Off periods

If inappropriate behaviour with others in the group is observed or experienced before, during or immediately after the workshops, it is the drama tutors' responsibility to address the issue, explaining to the individual, inclusive of their support worker(s), why the behaviour is inappropriate and what the appropriate behaviour is.

The tutors will discuss with the individual seek to clarify that the individual understands the issue, and reiterate acceptable behaviour. Where appropriate, individual(s) involved in the incident will be required to offer an apology to those adversely affected. If support staff are not present for any reason, they will be advised of the incident by the drama tutors as soon after the incident as possible.

If actions or behaviour are deemed to be very serious by the teaching staff, the individual and their support worker will be advised as close to the incident as practical. The tutors will seek to reach an understanding with the participant (and support staff if necessary) as to why the behaviour is unacceptable, and an Incident Report which will be completed by teaching staff entered into City of Parramatta Council's WH&S reporting system, *SafeHold*, by Riverside Theatres' workshop Program Coordinator. Furthermore, there will be a 'consequence' for unacceptable behaviour.

If an incident of poor behaviour warrants an Incident Report, the person(s) in question will:

- a) have explained to them why the behaviour is unacceptable, and
- b) be issued with a 'consequence'.

The 'consequence' of the action will include immediate ejection from the class and advised that they will not be permitted to attend the next workshop session because of their unacceptable behaviour. If the situation is regarded as volatile, speaking with the participant about concerns and consequences will be recorded but communication delayed until staff believe it is safe to have that discussion.

If tutors regard the incident to be a result of a shortfall in the level of care needed for that participant, the family or service will be advised, and requested to adjust to a higher level of care for the participant to continue in the workshops.

This process is designed to alert all people involved and create an opportunity to review and revise interactions to keep the workshop environment a safe and supported space for everyone.

If the incident is regarded as serious and/or highly likely to be repeated/ or unclear how it can be avoided in the future, the Riverside Theatres' Program Coordinator, after discussion with the key stakeholders, will impose termination of enrolment and issue a refund of the remaining portion of the enrolment fee minus an administration charge. This ban will remain in place until the family/ disability service can demonstrate to Riverside Theatre's Program Coordinator that the unsocial behaviour is actively being managed, and can reassure Riverside that their staff and program participants will be safe.

Riverside Theatre's 'Program Coordinator – Access' will coordinate and communicate these changes to relevant staff, services and participants as soon as practical within a 14-day period

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These steps are in place to minimise risk to staff and participants in an environment of creative play where people have a diverse range of cognitive, intellectual, neurological, sensory and physical disabilities.

### Steps in managing Warnings and Cooling Off period

The drama tutor(s) will:

1. Address the individual in question, and/or their support worker(s) where relevant, to point out what behaviour was unacceptable and why, seeking to confirm an understanding, if it is safe to do so.
2. Advise the individual if there is a 'consequence' due to the seriousness of their action, and advise that the consequence is to stop participation the class immediately, and subsequently a cooling off period for one week while there is an enquiry, if it is safe to do so.
3. Notify Riverside's Program Coordinator – Access as soon as possible after the incident, either through a message or phone call or both, of the incident and any subsequent action or 'consequence'
4. Complete and submit a City of Parramatta Council Incident report form to Riverside's Program Coordinator-Access as soon as practical and within 48 hours of the incident.

The Program Coordinator will:

1. Follow up on the incident and the Report with the drama tutors involved, and
2. Within 48 hours communicate with the nominated key contact to inform them of the incident and the proposed 'cooling off' period. The Program Coordinator will seek out a copy of any other reports generated from disability services/ support workers regarding the incident.
3. Report the incident in Council's WH&S reporting system, *Safehold*
4. Discuss and seek mutual understanding and agreement from all stakeholders or their representatives about the adopted course of action/ consequence for the individual in question.
5. Liaise with drama tutors as to the proposed action(s) going forward; Liaise with Riverside Management as needed
6. Notify all stakeholders, in writing, the course of action decided and any additional considerations; Complete the Council reporting system within the recommended 14 days