

Western Edge Youth Arts
3 Harris Street, Yarraville
03 8658 4052 | westernedge.org.au



**WESTERN
EDGE
YOUTH
ARTS**

During times of crisis, instability or uncertainty it is even more important that communities come together to learn, create and have fun together. Though COVID-19 prevents us from being together in the same room, Western Edge Youth Arts will continue to create space for our communities to meet online. Our masterclasses, in-school residencies and community youth theatre programs will go ahead using online conferencing programs like Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

WEYA is committed to providing a safe and supportive creative environment for young people, including online. Safety and wellbeing in our online spaces is a shared responsibility: our staff, young collaborators, and their parents, carers and teachers must work together to ensure our programs are safe and secure.

WEYA's responsibilities:

We will provide a **secure space** using the following safety procedures:

- There will always be a staff member present in the online space, preventing unsupervised online communications.
- Only staff or participants will be able to access the online spaces. Our Zoom meetings are password protected, and utilise waiting rooms so that staff can vet anyone trying to enter the space. Our Teams meetings are invite-only. Staff will have the power to eject anyone from the meeting if necessary.
- We will not share any personal contact details or identifying information with other participants.

We will ensure that **only appropriate content** is shared with participants:

- The 'private chat' functions will be disabled so participants cannot privately contact each other and share inappropriate content.
- Staff will ensure that only appropriate material will be visible on their screens when screen-sharing.

We will provide a space that is **welcoming and encouraging**:

- It can feel strange not being in the same room as everyone else, but our staff will make sure everyone feels comfortable sharing their ideas, and that everyone gets a turn.

Young Collaborator's responsibilities:

Young Collaborators will treat each other and WEYA staff with respect:

- Listen to instructions and follow them.
- Be supportive when other collaborators present ideas or perform for the group. It can be strange not being in the same space, but by giving your full attention to others, and encouraging each other, we can build that same sense of community.
- Do not use inappropriate language, or share inappropriate content. This includes material that may be in the background of your screen while screen-sharing.

Young Collaborators will help protect the privacy of the community:

- Do not take screenshots or video/audio recordings of the meeting
- Both Zoom and Teams have 'blurred background' features. If you don't want anyone to see the room you are in, please utilise these features. If you're unsure how to do this, ask one of the WEYA staff members.

Young Collaborators can help keep the space safe and supportive by letting the Lead or Support Artists know if anything is making you feel uncomfortable.

Parents and Carer's responsibilities:

If the young person in your care is under the age of 13, a parent or carer should be supervising them from the same premises, not necessarily the same room.

Parents and Carers will respect the decision of the WEYA staff member to respond to inappropriate behaviours, and if necessary, work with staff to address the behaviour with the young person.

Addressing breaches of these responsibilities:

It can be challenging to adapt to new spaces and routines, but negative or inappropriate behaviour can really disrupt our creative processes and compromise the safety of everyone. WEYA staff will be using a 3-stage warning system to respond to negative or inappropriate behaviour, acknowledging that some young people may need time to settle into the new space, but also respecting the rights of other young people to feel safe and supported.

Stage One: Warning

The young person will be invited into a separate online space (like a Zoom breakout room), and given a firm warning that identifies which behaviour is inappropriate and provides clear directions for how to address that behaviour.

Stage Two: Time Out

If the young person continues to behave inappropriately, they will be locked-out from the current workshop session. A WEYA staff member will follow-up with them after the session, and follow-up with a teacher, parent or carer if appropriate.

Stage Three: Suspension

If the young person demonstrates dangerous, violent or aggressive behaviour, they will be suspended for multiple sessions. A WEYA staff member will follow-up with the young person and a teacher, parent or carer to discuss the incident and how the young person may be able to move forward with the program.

If a young person or their parent, carer or teacher believe that a WEYA Staff member has not met their responsibilities, they are encouraged to contact the Lead Artist via email to discuss. If the response is not adequate, they may reach out to the program supervisor via info@westernedge.org.au

