



hey dee ho Child Safety Complaint Policy



Australian Institute of
Music & Childhood
Development



INTRODUCTION

We are committed to dealing with complaints made by children, families, education and support staff, hey dee ho employees, franchisees and members of the community as promptly and confidentially as possible, with professionalism, fairness, and sensitivity. All reports of child abuse and safety concerns will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child and whether they are about the conduct of an adult or a child.

hey dee ho will always take immediate action to protect children at risk of harm or abuse.

This policy ensures everyone in hey dee ho's community understands how to report abuse allegations and raise child safety concerns, and feels comfortable and equipped when doing so. We are committed to ensuring that anyone who reports allegations of abuse or a child safety concern is supported and feels that a fair process is followed.

hey dee ho will adopt a trauma-informed approach at each stage of the complaints process. Where possible, we will use strategies to help children participate safely in the complaints process without causing further trauma.

If a complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, then the hey dee ho employee or franchisee must report it in accordance with this child safety complaints handling policy.

CHILD SAFETY COMPLAINTS GENERAL PROCESS¹

Who can make a complaint?

A report can be made by anyone, including a:

- child
- parent or carer
- education and support staff member
- hey dee ho employee
- a hey dee ho franchisee
- Community member

What can be reported?

Call 000 if a child is in immediate danger

Any concerns or complaints may be reported, including:

- with regard to hey dee ho's programs and activities
- a breach of our child safety policies or code of conduct
- allegations of abuse or misconduct by an employee, franchisee or other person associated with hey dee ho
- disclosure of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
- the inadequate handling of a prior concern
- general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.

How can a report be made?

We will receive complaints from a number of sources including:

- A face-to-face verbal report

¹Adapted from Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), Complaint handling guide: upholding the rights of children and young people, appendix G, 2019.

- A letter
- Email
- Telephone call
- Text Message
- Via hey dee ho's social media channels

Who can a report be made to?

A child safety complaint can be made directly to:

Adam Isaacs (Director/Child Safety Officer)

Ph: 0409 857 098

E: adam.isaacs@heydeeho.com.au

Post:

hey dee ho PL

Shop 2

1 Heversham Drive

Seaford VIC 3198

What happens next?

The Child Safety Officer will:

- offer support to the child, the parents or carers, the person who reports and the accused employee or franchisee;
- wait for clearance from authorities before starting an investigation;
- initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of all children including an alleged victim;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and commence investigation;
- decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should/must be reported to the Police, Child Protection and/or other relevant Government body (e.g. The Commission for Child and Young People *Victoria*) and make the report as soon as possible if required; and
- initiate a disciplinary process as applicable.

Outcomes

Once the investigation has been completed an outcome will be decided. The child, parent, carer, employee and/or franchisee will be notified of the outcome of the investigation. Where appropriate disciplinary action (up to and including termination) will be taken against the employee or franchisee.

hey dee ho will then review its risk management plans, policies and procedures and update where necessary.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE²

Receipt and Acknowledgment

² The complaints handling procedure outlined in this policy will also be followed for complaints that involve historical allegations or concerns.

A hey dee ho employee or franchisee who receives a complaint must immediately forward the complaint to the Child Safety Officer (Adam Isaacs). The Child Safety Officer will document*:

- the complainant's contact details;
- details relating to the child;
- the nature of the complaint;
- the complainant's desired outcome (if known);
- immediate risk considerations;
- recommended next steps;
- all other relevant information.

*see Appendix 1 (Complaint Record Form)

Hey dee ho will acknowledge a complaint within 3 business days from receipt of either verbally or in writing. The acknowledgment will include an explanation of how the complaint will be handled and when the complainant will next be contacted.

Initial Response and Risk Management

hey dee ho will take action to prioritise children's safety, particularly when receiving a child safety concern or complaint. We will undergo an initial risk assessment to identify potential risks and take appropriate action. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint the hey dee ho may take action to manage risks including³:

- calling 000 if the concern is life threatening or posing an immediate risk to the health and safety of anyone;
- telling the child's parents or carers about the complaint (as appropriate);
- providing support to the child, parent, carer, employee or franchisee;
- reporting to authorities (Police, Child Protection, Reportable Conduct Schemes etc.);
- ensuring children are safe (including while the complaint is investigated);
- providing general details of the complaint to the employee or franchisee who is the subject of complaint;
- standing down the subject of the complaint (with pay if an employee) during the investigation⁴;
- altering the duties of the accused employee or franchisee including not permitting them to engage with children or have unsupervised contact with children (if the subject of the complaint is not stood down);
- notifying the Director of the child care centre (if applicable);
- removing the accused employee or franchisee's access to hey dee ho's IT system or social media accounts (if applicable)
- notifying hey dee ho's insurer (if applicable).

Note: *The Directors of hey dee ho and franchisees must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove any substantial risk that a child or children will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by a person over the age of 18 who is a person associated with hey dee ho. This includes but is not limited to:*

- *immediately removing the associated person from all child-related work pending investigation by the relevant child protection authority;*

³ This list is adapted from the *Commission for Children and Young People: A Guide for creating a child safe organisation*.

⁴ In accordance with the Organisation's 'failure to protect' obligations, as detailed in the *Child Protection and Reporting Obligations policy, POL HR 10.2*. Until an investigation has been completed and a finding is made, any risk management action taken (e.g. standing down an employee/volunteer) is not to be seen as indication that the alleged conduct has occurred.

- *prohibiting a community member who is known to pose a risk of sexual abuse to children from undertaking any child-related work with hey dee ho.*

Reporting

Complaints against an employee or franchisee that involve allegations or suspicion of child abuse or harm, or other child protection concerns, or other criminal conduct (including grooming) will be reported by the Child Safety Officer to the Police, Child Protection or other Government body in accordance with legislative requirements.

Note: *Failure to disclose a sexual offence committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 to the police is a criminal offence. If there is any suspicion that the complaint relates to a sexual offence involving a person over 18 and a child under 16 then it must be reported to the Police.*

The Child Safety Officer will ensure appropriate reporting lines are followed in accordance with legislative requirements. Not all complaints require reporting to external authorities, however all complaints will be treated seriously and considered internally.

Providing Support

hey dee ho is committed to supporting children, parents/carers, education and support staff, employees, and franchisees throughout the complaints handling process. We will always consider the particular needs of a child or adult when determining how to support each individual. This may include:

- working collaboratively with the education and support staff to ensure appropriate support networks are in place;
- private or family counselling services;
- referring to telephone and online support services such as Lifeline Australia, Kids Help Line, Headspace and Beyond Blue;

Assessment and Investigation

Following the initial response and risk management process, the Child Safety Officer will assess how the complaint will be managed and will consider the following:

- how serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is;
- what communication support or other specific needs are required by the child;
- the child's diverse and/or cultural background;
- our policies and procedures;
- the impact and risks posed to children;
- whether the complaint is suitable for informal or formal resolution;
- whether an investigation is required;
- the involvement of a child and/or their parent/carer in the complaint investigation and resolution process.

The Child Safety Officer should:

- advise the employee/franchisee that a complaint has been made against them and provide as much information as possible;
- confirm that the employee/franchisee will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations in writing or through an interview;
- provide information about the complaints process and potential outcomes;

- offer additional support to the employee/franchisee;
- explain that the matter is to be kept confidential.

Complaints that appear to have arisen from a misunderstanding or miscommunication may be resolved informally. Informally managed complaints may not require investigation.

Note: *If an allegation may involve criminal conduct and has been reported to the Police, hey dee ho will not start our own investigation until and unless the police have advised hey dee ho that an investigation can be commenced.*

Complaints that raise child safety concerns or allegations will usually undergo investigation and formal resolution.

The Child Safety Officer (or an external agency) will investigate the complaint and will:

- plan and document the investigation process
- ensure the rights, safety, cultural safety and wellbeing of children are upheld in the investigative process;
- gather evidence (oral evidence, electronic evidence such as images and emails, documents, meeting minutes, conducting interviews etc.);
- assess the evidence;
- finalise and report on the investigation;
- make and communicate findings;
- keep detailed and accurate records;
- ensure that all information collected is maintained and managed in accordance with our privacy policy and legislation.

Once an investigation has been completed and findings reached, the Child Safety Officer will determine what action should be taken as a result of the investigation. This may include:

- reporting to external bodies;
- a written/verbal apology;
- an acknowledgment of how the situation, service or conduct has affected the child and what they are entitled to expect in the future in terms of quality service;
- an explanation of what happened or information that may be needed to address the complaint;
- disciplinary action up to and including termination of an employee or franchisee;
- employee or franchisee training;
- changes to the services provided by hey dee ho;
- changes to our policies, procedures and/or practice;
- a media statement release;
- re-issuing of the Code of Conduct to all employees and franchisees;
- provision of counselling or other support;
- changes to our child safety risk management strategy.

Response and Review

The complaint should be resolved within a reasonable period of time from the date of receipt. Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issue raised, the Child Safety Officer will contact the child and their parent/carer and/or community member and advise them of:

- what action was taken to investigate the complaint;
- the outcomes, decision or finding of the complaint;
- the reason/s for the decision;
- action taken, or that will be taken, to address the complaint, including by whom and when; and
- any other remedy or resolutions that have been proposed or put in place.

Note: *Privacy will be considered when deciding what to share about the findings or decisions made about an employee or franchisee who is the subject of the complaint.*

The employee or franchisee who is the subject of the complaint will also be notified of any findings or decisions.

hey dee ho will review the complaint, the complaint handling process and outcomes to determine what can be done to improve child safety, wellbeing and empowerment and the quality of our services, policies, procedures and risk management.

Feedback

All feedback regarding our child safety complaints handling policy and procedures is welcomed. Please contact Adam Isaacs on 0409 857 098 or send your feedback to adam.isaacs@heydeeho.com.au.

Confidentiality and Privacy Obligation

Complaints will be dealt with in a confidential and respectful manner and in accordance with hey dee ho's privacy policy. Reasonable steps will be taken to protect personal information from loss, unauthorised access, use, disclosure or any other misuse during the complaint-handling process. We cannot give an assurance of absolute confidentiality given statutory obligations and principles of natural justice.

RECORD KEEPING

Hey dee ho will keep detailed and accurate records about all complaints and safety concerns on our secure Child Safety Complaints Register. A full account of the complaint will be documented. Our Child Safety Complaints Register entries will be kept for a minimum of 45 years.

APPENDIX

CHILD SAFETY COMPLAINT RECORD FORM

Date:		Complaint Register Reference Number:	
Person who received the complaint (Name & Position):		Complaint assigned to Child Safety Officer(Name & position): Adam Isaacs, Director	
How was the complaint received (e.g. phone, email, website, in person):			
Name of Complainant	Name of child involved in the complaint:		
	Name of person making the complaint (if different to above):		
Name of person who the complain was made about:			
Child Care Centre or Community location(s) of the above person's place of work:			
Complainant contact details	Phone:		
	Email:		
	Other:		
Details relating to the child or <u>young person</u>	Child Care Centre (if applicable):		
	Age: Gender: Do they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Are they from a culturally and linguistically diverse background? If yes, specify: Are they in out-of-home care (if know)? Do they have a disability? If yes, provide relevant details: Do they have communication support needs? Provide any relevant information relating to the child's preferred communication methods, support needs, and involvement in the complaints-handling process: <i>(e.g. have they been offered an interpreter?)</i>		
If the complainant has a disability, provide any relevant details relating to their guardianship, advocacy or other decision-making arrangements: <i>(e.g. name and contact details of any nominees authorised to receive information of their behalf)</i>			
	Relationship to affected child or young person: Do they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?		

Details relating to the complainant (if made by an adult)	<p>Are they from a culturally or linguistically diverse background? If yes, specify: Do they have a disability? If yes, provide any relevant details: Do they have communication support needs?</p> <p>Provide any relevant information relating to the complainant's preferred communication methods, support needs, and involvement in the complaints-handling process:</p>	
Nature of the complaint	<p>Complaint description (accurately record the issues, concerns, details of any witnesses, as far as possible in the child's own words):</p> <p>What outcome to the complaint is the complainant seeking?</p>	
Immediate risk considerations	<p>Details of any injuries and if the child or others received medical attention:</p> <p>Does the complaint indicate the possibility of criminal conduct? Yes/No/Unsure</p> <p>Is a mandatory child protection report required? Yes/No</p> <p>Does the complaint involve a reportable allegation/incident? Yes/No/Unsure</p> <p>Is any immediate risk management action required? Yes/No</p>	
Next Steps		
Name:	Signature:	Date: