



Family Homestay Services

Your safe and friendly family away from home

www.familyhomestay.com.au

Postal address:
PO Box 87
Miranda NSW 1490
Australia

Complaint Handling Policy - DRAFT

Preamble

1. Purpose of this policy:
 - a. Family Homestay Services ('FHS' or 'us' [or derivatives thereof], ABN 37 111 924 095) is committed to an environment that prioritises child safety and wellbeing. This commitment is fully outlined in our **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**.
 - b. This policy outlines how allegations of child abuse/ harm are addressed, in line with the following Child Safe Standards:
 - i. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture¹; and
 - ii. Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focussed².
2. What are Concern and complaints?³
 - a. Concern - any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.
 - b. Complaint - an expression of dissatisfaction to us related to one or more of the following:
 - i. allegations of abuse or misconduct by a person under the scope of our **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**;
 - ii. disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child;
 - iii. Breach of the **Child Safety Code of Conduct**;
 - iv. the conduct of a child using our services;
 - v. the inadequate handling of a prior concern.

The Policy

3. Our obligations to act and report
 - a. Department of Family & Community Services (FACS NSW)
 - i. Any persons with reasonable grounds to believe a child is at risk of significant harm, may report via 132 111.
 - b. Office of the Children's Guardian (NSW) / Commission for Children & Young People (Vic)

¹ NSW Child Safe Standard 1; Vic Child Safe Standard 2.

² NSW Child Safe Standard 6; Vic Child Safe Standard 7.

³ CCYP Vic (2022), *Codes of Conduct – a guide to developing child safe Code of Conduct*, OCG NSW. ([Link](#) [pdf] as of 21/12/2022) – also see FHS Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

- i. Reporting bodies are legally obliged to investigate allegations of sexual misconduct (including grooming) and serious physical assault involving children by a child-related worker.
 - ii. Any findings of misconduct must be reported to the above authorities.
- 4. Complaint-handling process
 - a. We will receive the complaint (outlined in Section 5), by listening carefully and respectfully:
 - i. We will ask complainant if they wish to stay informed, and how, and to whom (subject to reporting obligations – Section 3)
 - ii. We will explain confidentiality and reporting obligations (Section 3).
 - iii. We will discuss with complainant on a suitable venue.
 - iv. We will explain what information is needed, and boundaries of discussion (e.g. may need to refer to other services).
 - b. We will make a record:
 - i. At time of complaint: key details, e.g. complainant's details, communication/support required; subject, and other relevant issues;
 - ii. Ongoing: How it investigated, resolution, risk managed, outcome.
 - c. We will escalate according to the nature of the complaint:
 - i. If the complaint involves inappropriate behaviour and/or breach of our **Child Safety Code of Conduct** - We will take appropriate action to investigate and make findings according to our internal processes.
 - ii. If the complaint involves matters that we have obligation to report (Section 3):
 - 1. Our management staff will report to the appropriate authority.
 - 2. Our internal investigation will be pending on authority's clearance.
 - d. Ongoing and end-of-process report to complainant and relevant parties:
 - i. We will only do so with complainant's consent (Section 4.a.i).
 - ii. We will debrief with the complainant/ appropriate person - appropriately, hear their feedback, and inform them on how their input has helped investigation.
 - e. If the complainant is not satisfied, we will provide resources on how to contact other relevant bodies, e.g., Ombudsman, CCYP.
- 5. Who is responsible for receiving complaint?
 - a. All complaints must be reported to the Manager:
 - i. Alex Li – office@familyhomestay.com.au
 - b. This applies to all persons under the scope of our **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**, including FHS staff members, contractors, and homestay hosts.
- 6. Who can make a complaint, and how to?
 - a. A child or young person, or any staff member/ contractor/ homestay host can make a complaint or raise a concern.
 - b. This can occur by face-to-face meeting, email, phone or online call.
- 7. Supporting complainants
 - a. We will find out if child needs any specific support, e.g. cultural, trauma, disabilities.

- i. If required, we will seek external resources, e.g. interpreter, advocate, support persons.
 - b. We will act in ways that maximises child’s feeling of safety, e.g. counselling referral.
- 8. Transparency and documentation
 - a. We will record and store complaints on our internal filing system for at least 10 years.
 - b. This includes material that may not directly form the complaint, but may assist in the investigation, e.g., emails.
 - c. We will maintain privacy of parties and contents, subject to external reporting obligations (Section 3).
- 9. Our commitment to ongoing improvement of the process
 - a. We will review our procedures:
 - i. At least yearly;
 - ii. After each instance of investigation or near-miss.
 - b. Specifically, we will look for trends, systemic issues, and/or behavioural patterns of complainants, stakeholders, and/or other relevant parties.

Acknowledgement and signature

I have read this Policy and agree to abide by it and its terms.

Name (print)	Signature
Date:	
Office use:	
<i>Last review</i>	<i>Next review</i>
<i>Responsible officer (print)</i>	<i>Responsible officer (sign)</i>