



Barça Academy Safeguarding Children and Young People - Complaints Handling Policy

1. Purpose

Barça Academy (**BA**) is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and culturally safe environment for all children, young people, families, staff, and volunteers.

This policy outlines how concerns or complaints relating to child safety and wellbeing are managed in a timely, respectful, and culturally safe way.

This policy must be read together with **Appendix A – Aboriginal Cultural Safety Supplement: Complaints**, which provides detailed guidance on culturally safe complaint handling for Aboriginal children, families, and communities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All children and young people accessing BA services
- All staff, volunteers, contractors, and Board members
- Families, carers, and community members involved with BA

It covers complaints about:

- Abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm to children
- Breaches of the BA Code of Conduct
- Bullying, harassment, or discriminatory behaviour

3. Principles

BA complaints handling is guided by the following principles:

- **Zero tolerance** for child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or discrimination.
- **Child-focused:** children's voices are heard, respected, and acted upon.
- **Culturally safe:** Aboriginal children and families are supported according to Appendix A.
- **Responsive:** complaints are addressed promptly and fairly.
- **Confidentiality:** privacy of all parties is maintained, with legal reporting obligations met.
- **Transparency:** complainants are informed of the process and outcomes as appropriate.
- **Empowerment:** children and adults are supported to participate in a safe and respectful way.

4. Raising Concerns or Complaints

Concerns or complaints can be raised by children, families, staff, volunteers, or community members.

Concerns or complaints may involve:

- abuse or harm of a child by an adult
- abuse or harm of a child by another child
- grooming, exploitation, or unsafe behaviour
- racism or culturally unsafe practices
- breaches of the Code of Conduct
- unsafe physical or online environments
- staff or volunteer misconduct
- dissatisfaction with the outcome of a previous complaint



Any matter affecting child safety is treated as serious and urgent.

Concerns or complaints can be made via:

- speaking to any staff member or manager
- online complaint form which can be anonymous
- through a trusted support person

5. How BA Responds to Complaints

BA will:

- Take all concerns seriously
- Act immediately to protect any child at risk
- Respond in a respectful, culturally safe, and timely way
- Inform families where appropriate, while upholding privacy and legal obligations
- Document decisions and actions and keep records secure
- Report to external authorities (e.g., State/Territory Police, Child Protection, the Commission for Children and Young People) when required by law. BA complies with mandatory reporting and external reporting requirements in all Australian states and territories. When a complaint or concern indicates a child may be at risk of harm, abuse, or criminal conduct, BA will report to the relevant authority in the jurisdiction where the child or incident is located.

6. Complaint Handling Process

Step 1 – Immediate Safety Check

- Assess immediate risks to the child and take urgent action if necessary

Step 2 – Acknowledgement

- Complaints are acknowledged promptly in writing or verbally, using child-friendly language if required

Step 3 – Risk Assessment

- Assess risks to the child, staff, and others
- Consider cultural safety requirements, particularly for Aboriginal children (see Appendix A)
- Implement interim safety measures as needed

Step 4 – Investigation

- Assign an investigator who is trained in child safety and culturally safe practices
- Gather information from all parties involved
- Ensure investigations are trauma-informed and respectful

Step 5 – Reporting to Authorities

- Report to authorities as required by law, including:
 - State/Territory Police
 - Child Protection
 - Reportable Conduct regulators
- When reporting directly to an external authority, you need to know the reporting process in your jurisdiction. [Click here](#) for contact details for each state and territory.

Step 6 – Decision & Outcome

- Determine whether the complaint is substantiated, unsubstantiated, or inconclusive
- Implement safety, support, or disciplinary measures as appropriate



- Document outcomes and communicate with complainant within privacy and legal boundaries

Step 7 – Record Keeping

- Maintain secure records of all complaints, investigations, actions, and outcomes
- Records must comply with legal, privacy, and employment obligations

Step 8 – Review & Continuous Improvement

- Analyse complaints for trends or systemic issues
- Update policies, procedures, and training as required

7. Support for Complainants

Support may include:

- access to a trusted adult or advocate
- Aboriginal liaison or cultural support
- interpreters or communication support
- wellbeing or counselling referrals
- clear information about rights and process

Children are reassured that they will not be punished for raising concerns.

8. Cultural Safety

All complaints must be handled in a way that is culturally safe, particularly for Aboriginal children and families.

Refer to Appendix A – Aboriginal Cultural Safety Supplement: Complaints for guidance on:

- Culturally respectful communication
- Working with families, Elders, and community
- Managing complaints involving racism or cultural harm
- Ensuring Aboriginal children feel safe and empowered

15. Document Control

Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Document Owner	Next Review Date	Change Summary
V1.0	2 February 2026	Director	Safeguarding Lead	2 February 2027	Initial release



Appendix A – Aboriginal Cultural Safety Supplement: Complaints

Purpose

This supplement ensures that Aboriginal children and families experience a complaints process that is culturally safe, respectful, and empowering.

Principles

- Cultural identity is central to child safety and wellbeing
- Respect for family, kinship, and community is maintained
- Racism or cultural harm is treated as a serious breach
- Children's voices and cultural rights are supported

Guidance for Handling Complaints

1. **Consultation and Support**
 - Involve Aboriginal Liaison Persons, Elders, or trusted community members where appropriate
 - Offer culturally safe support during meetings and interviews
 - Allow children to have a trusted adult or family member present
2. **Communication with Families**
 - Use clear, respectful, culturally safe language
 - Adapt communication to the family's preferences
3. **Managing Complaints Involving Racism or Cultural Harm**
 - Treat all allegations seriously
 - Protect the child from further harm
 - Take disciplinary or safety action as required
4. **Risk Management**
 - Assess cultural safety risks in addition to general child safety risks
 - Address power imbalances and barriers to reporting
5. **Reporting to Authorities**
 - Share information respectfully and only as required by law
 - Liaise with culturally informed professionals when possible
6. **Post-Complaint Support**
 - Provide ongoing culturally safe support to the child and family
 - Address systemic issues highlighted by complaints