



NICA

# Complaints Policy

## National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA)

### 1. Purpose

This policy outlines the principles and procedures for managing complaints at NICA, with a specific focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in accordance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and relevant state legislation.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, contractors, volunteers, and visitors involved in NICA-related activities, wishing to lodge a complaint. This policy may be read in conjunction with the NICA Staff Grievance Policy and the NICA Child Safe Policy.

### 3. Policy Statement

NICA is committed to providing a fair, safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of its community, particularly children and young people. NICA takes all complaints seriously but prioritises any complaint involving Child Safe reporting. For this reason, there are two distinct processes for complaint handling see 7.1 and 7.2 below.

NICA has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to upholding the rights of children as outlined in the Child Safe Standards.

## 4. Guiding Principles

**Child Safety First:** The safety and wellbeing of children are paramount. All complaints involving or affecting children will be treated with the utmost seriousness and urgency.

**Respect and Fairness:** All parties to a complaint will be treated with respect, and the process will be fair, transparent, and culturally sensitive.

**Accessibility:** The complaints process will be accessible to all, including children and young people, with appropriate support and communication methods.

**Education and Awareness:** Staff and students will be educated on their responsibilities under the Child Safe Standards and how to report concerns.

**Confidentiality and Privacy:** Complaints will be handled confidentially, with information shared only on a need-to-know basis.

## 5. Responsibilities

- NICA Board: Oversight and endorsement of the policy.
- NICA CEO: Ensures implementation and resourcing of the policy
- **Child Safe Officer:** Leads child safety initiatives and manages child-related complaints.
- The Operations Manager, People and Culture is the NICA **Complaints Officer** and will record complaints in the Complain Register, investigate complaints and respond with an Outcome
- The CEO of NICA is the **Review and Appeals Officer** for NICA outcomes.
- All Staff and Students are responsible for upholding child safety and reporting concerns.

## 6. Related Documents

- NICA Child Safe Policy
- NICA Workplace Behaviour Policy
- NICA Employee Grievance Policy
- Safe Kids@ NICA Poster
- Complaint Register

## 7. Complaints Process

### 7.1 – Child Safe Complaints

In alignment with the Child Safe Standards, NICA has appointed our Operations Manager, People & Culture and NICA's Child Safe Officer to oversee compliance and act as a points of contact for concerns relating to child safety.

Emily O'Connor, People and Culture – [people&culture@nica.com.au](mailto:people&culture@nica.com.au)

Paula McKaskill, Child Safety Officer – [pmckaskill@nica.collarts.edu.au](mailto:pmckaskill@nica.collarts.edu.au)

Complaints involving a child or young person, will be addressed within 3 business days and acknowledgement will include information about immediate safety measures and support services.

#### **How to lodge a Complaint:**

- Complaints can be submitted in person, online, via mail or email, or through the Safe Kids @ NICA QR code to the designated Child Safe Officer.
- Anonymous complaints will be accepted for Child Safe matters and investigated where possible.

#### **Initial Assessment:**

- All complaints involving children will be immediately assessed for risk and referred to appropriate authorities if required.
- The NICA Child Safety Officer will be familiar with Cultural Safety Guidelines and respond to children and their families in a sensitive manner

[Understanding-cultural-safety-CSS1-guide.pdf](#)

#### **Investigation:**

- A fair and impartial investigation will be conducted, ensuring procedural fairness for all parties.
- The NICA Child Safety Officer will explain what information NICA needs to collect and how it will be used.
- The NICA Child Safety Officer will commence the investigation immediately and provide regular updates to the parties. Depending on the

nature of the complaint, it may take longer than a general complaint to resolve.

- Complaints involving allegations of harm or risk to a child will be escalated immediately to the Child Safe Officer and relevant external authorities, as required by law.
- The NICA Child Safety Officer will ask if a child or their carers and family identify as Indigenous and not press for additional details
- The NICA Child Safety Officer will create an environment where people know they can always raise their concerns or needs by asking if there are anything they wish to share about their carers and family that will help us make them feel welcome or help meet their needs
- The NICA Child Safety Officer understands there are differences between Aboriginal families and kinship arrangements, and non-Aboriginal familial ties, and will be guided by you as to who your carers and family and support people are

#### **Ongoing Communication:**

- Complainants will receive regular updates at least every 10 business days during the investigation process.
- For child-related complaints, updates will be tailored to ensure age-appropriate communication and culturally appropriate support.

#### **Outcome and Resolution:**

- Outcomes may include mediation, disciplinary action, policy changes, or referral to external agencies.

#### **Review and Appeal:**

- Complainants and respondents may request a review of the outcome of NICA decisions by writing to the NICA CEO within 30 days of the Outcome. Decisions made by other authorities will have their own review mechanisms.

## 7.2 Complaint Process – General Matters

To ensure timely and effective resolution of complaints, NICA commits to the following response timeframes for all complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 3 business days of receipt.

### **Lodging a Complaint:**

- Complaints can be submitted in person, online, via mail or email
- Informal complaints should be addressed to year group Coordinators
- Informal complaints where there is risk of harm or a breach of NICA values will be escalated to formal complaint status a duty of care
- Formal complaints should be addressed to [people&culture@nica.com.au](mailto:people&culture@nica.com.au)
- Formal complaints regarding student academic matters should be directed to [Collarts](#)
- Formal complaints involving student misconduct should be directed [Collarts](#)

### **Initial Assessment:**

- An initial assessment by the Complaint Officer to determine the nature, urgency, and risk level of the complaint will be completed within 5 business days.
- Complaints involving allegations of harm or risk to a child will be escalated immediately to the Child Safe Officer and relevant external authorities, as required by law.

### **Investigation:**

- Investigations will commence within 7 business days of the initial assessment.
- The expected timeframe for completing an investigation is 30 calendar days. If more time is required, the complainant will be informed in writing with reasons and an updated timeline.

### **Outcome Notification:**

- Complainants and respondents will be notified of the outcome of the complaint within 10 business days of the investigation's conclusion.

- Where appropriate, outcomes will include information on findings, actions taken, and available avenues for appeal.

**Review and Appeal:**

- Requests for review or appeal must be submitted to the NICA CEO within 20 business days of receiving the outcome.
- Reviews will be completed within 30 calendar days, unless exceptional circumstances require more time.

**8. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years or as required to ensure alignment with legislative changes and best practices in child safety and complaint management.

Version 1	Approved By	Date	Review date
24 October, 2025			