Complaints & Reporting Procedure

Child safety concerns and complaints — Hive Kids, Hive Youth Theatre, Hive Art Studio

Purpose

This procedure sets out how anyone — a child, a parent or carer, a staff member, or a member of the public — can raise a concern about a child's safety or wellbeing at Hive Studios, how we respond, and when a concern must be escalated beyond Hive Studios to Police or the Child Protection Helpline. It applies alongside our Child Safe Code of Conduct.

This covers concerns about child safety specifically. General service complaints (e.g. about a class, an invoice, a schedule change) can continue to go to the studio office as usual — this procedure is for anything touching on a child's safety or wellbeing, or a possible breach of the Code of Conduct.

Who to contact

Role	Name	When to contact them
Child Safety Officer	Paul Adams	First point of contact for any child safety concern
Backup Child Safety Officer	Vanessa Lynch (Director)	If Paul is unavailable, or the concern involves Paul

If a child is in immediate danger, call 000 first, then notify the Child Safety Officer as soon as it's safe to do so.

How to raise a concern

If you're a child or young person

- Tell any Hive Studios staff member, instructor, or the Child Safety Officer — in person, or by asking a parent/carer to help you.
- You will always be listened to and believed, and you won't be in trouble for speaking up.

If you're a parent or carer

- Speak or write to the Child Safety Officer directly, or raise it with any staff member who will pass it on.
- You don't need to be certain something is wrong to raise it — any concern, even a small one, is worth telling us.

If you're a staff member, instructor or contractor

- Report any concern — including about a colleague's behaviour, or something a child has disclosed to you — to the Child Safety Officer as soon as possible, and always within 24 hours.
- You must report even if you are not completely sure, and even if the person involved is a friend or senior colleague. Raising a concern in good faith is expected of everyone, and is never treated as disloyalty.

How Hive Studios responds

Step	What happens
1. Acknowledge	The Child Safety Officer acknowledges the concern within 24 hours (or immediately, if there's any immediate risk).
2. Assess	The Child Safety Officer assesses whether the concern indicates a risk of significant harm requiring mandatory external reporting (see below), a breach of the Code of Conduct, or a lower-level issue to resolve internally.
3. Act	Where there's any immediate safety risk, the person of concern is removed from unsupervised contact with children immediately, pending the outcome. External reports are made without delay where required (see below).
4. Investigate & resolve	Hive Studios follows up thoroughly and fairly, keeping the person who raised the concern informed of progress (without breaching the privacy of others involved), and reaches a resolution within 10 business days where practical.
5. Record & review	The concern and its outcome are logged in the Incident & Complaints Register, and reviewed at the annual child safety review for patterns.

When a concern must go outside Hive Studios

Some concerns can't be resolved internally and must be reported to an external authority. This is a legal obligation, not a judgement call to make alone — if in doubt, contact the relevant service and let them assess it.

Immediate danger

Call 000 straight away if a child is in immediate danger.

Risk of significant harm — Child Protection Helpline (132 111)

Under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, anyone with reasonable grounds to suspect a child under 16 is at risk of significant harm should report it to the Child Protection Helpline. Several Hive Studios instructors (e.g. qualified early childhood and primary teachers) are mandatory reporters under NSW law and are legally required to make this report themselves when it arises in the course of their work — this obligation sits with the individual and isn't satisfied just by telling the Child Safety Officer, though the Child Safety Officer should still be informed.

"Risk of significant harm" is a specific legal threshold, not any and every concern — the Helpline caseworker will help assess whether it's met. When unsure, it's appropriate to call and ask.

Suspected criminal offence — NSW Police

It is a criminal offence for an adult to fail to report to Police a reasonable belief that a child abuse offence has been committed, unless a reasonable excuse applies. Any concern that may involve a criminal act against a child should be reported to Police as well as the Child Safety Officer.

Working With Children Check status

If a staff member's WWCC is found to be barred, interim barred, or cannot be verified, they must be removed from child-related work immediately and the matter reported to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

Confidentiality and fairness

- Concerns are handled confidentially, on a need-to-know basis.
- The person raising a concern in good faith will not face any adverse consequence for doing so, even if the concern turns out to be unfounded.
- The person a concern is raised about is treated fairly and given the opportunity to respond, except where doing so would compromise a safety response or an external investigation.

Records

Every concern, complaint and its outcome is logged in the Incident & Complaints Register, including the date, nature of the concern, action taken, and any external report made (with reference number where applicable). Records are kept securely and only accessible to the Child Safety Officer and Director.

Responsible officer: Paul Adams, Child Safety Officer
Last reviewed: [insert date] · Next review due: [insert date]