

Policy | Public Concerns & Complaints

Last Update	July 2025
Due for review	July 2027
Reviewer	Youth Safety Lead
Approver	CEO
Owner	General Manager National Programs

This public document must always be up to date and available via minus18.org.au

① See Policy Ownership and Review

1 Overview

Minus18 is committed to the safety of young people, and recognises complaints as a valuable form of feedback and critical to child safety.

This policy explains how members of the public (including young people and adults) can make a complaint about their experience of safety at Minus18, and how Minus18 will respond and investigate.

2 What Concerns Can I Raise?

Anyone who uses services or information provided by Minus18 can make a complaint, including young people, parents, caregivers, and community members.

You can make a complaint or express concerns about any aspect of our work that you think was unsatisfactory, or that you are feeling unhappy about. This includes if you:

- Feel a service, program or event of Minus18's was unsatisfactory.

- Did not receive enough information or received incorrect/inaccurate information.
- Are unhappy about how a Minus18 representative interacted or communicated with you or with another person..
- Are concerned about your safety or another young person's safety.
- Feel you were denied respect or privacy.

What Can't I Raise?

Staff, volunteers or contractors who have personal work-related complaints (e.g. experiences that relate to current or former employment at Minus18 such as discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation or bullying) are not managed through this Policy. Work-related complaints are handled using Minus18's internal **Complaints Resolution** Policy found in the **Employee Handbook**.

3 How to Make a Complaint

Please Note: If you or someone you know is in immediate danger because of something that is happening right now, you should contact:

- **Emergency:** Call **000** (Police or Ambulance)
- **After hours child protection (Victoria):** Call **13 12 78**

Option 1: Talk to Someone At Minus18 Immediately

You can speak to any representative of Minus18 (like a Youth Worker or employee) at the event or program where your concern has taken place.

You're welcome to bring a friend, family member or support person when you speak up.

The Minus18 representative will listen, and may be able to resolve the issue for you quickly. Otherwise, they'll work with you to find a solution, and share the process for Option 2: to Make a Complaint.

If your concerns are resolved, you don't need to take any further steps.

Please note: Minus18 employees and volunteers are not allowed to talk to you on social media or via other private channels.

Option 2: Make a Complaint

If Option 1 did not resolve your concern or complaint, or you wish to contact Minus18's Youth Safety Team directly, you can use either of the following options:

- **Contact Form**

Fill out the Contact Form minus18.org.au/contact/ and select the subject "feedback, concerns and complaints"

- **Email us directly**

You can contact us directly at complaints@minus18.org.au.

4 What Happens Once A Complaint Is Received?

When you make a complaint via our Contact Form or complaints@minus18.org.au email address, this goes directly to our Youth Safety Lead and Senior Management Team.

We'll Confirm That We've Received It

If you have provided contact details, we'll let you know that we've received your complaint. If you haven't provided any contact details, we'll still investigate your complaint but won't be able to follow up with you to inform you of the actions that we've taken.

We'll Look Into Your Complaint

We listen to all feedback, concerns and complaints and take them seriously. Our response will vary depending on the nature of the complaint and the amount of information provided.

We will ensure that your complaint is kept private and confidential. If you disclose that someone is in danger, or that the law has been broken, we may be required to report this to the relevant authorities.

We'll Determine if an Investigation is Required

Our Youth Safety Team will determine if an investigation is required. If your complaint involves a member of this team, they will be excluded from the process, and the Minus18 Board will be notified.

If it is determined that an investigation is required, a suitable manager, employee or third-party will be appointed as an Investigator by the Youth Safety Team. The confidentiality of the investigation will be maintained and where appropriate, a person being investigated will be provided with details of any complaint that involves them (to the extent permitted by law) and be given an opportunity to respond.

All employees, volunteers, and contractors must cooperate fully with any investigation.

After the investigation

The Investigator will draw conclusions based on the investigation and present findings and recommendations to Minus18's Senior Leadership, who will determine an appropriate response.

If you have provided your contact details, when it is appropriate for us to do so, we will let you know about the outcomes of the investigation, and any actions we are taking to address the complaint.

We aim to undertake this process in 3 weeks.

5 If The Complaint Relates to Child Abuse

As required by law, if there is a reasonable belief that child abuse or harm is likely to occur or have occurred, then the Minus18 employee, volunteer or contractor must ensure this is reported to the relevant authority (i.e., Child Protection, Victoria Police). This must

also be disclosed to Minus18's Youth Safety Lead who will provide oversight of this process.

Failure to report

Failing to report a reasonable belief that child abuse or harm has occurred is a serious offense.

- It is important to remember that the duty to report abuse or suspicions of abuse exists, even if the child or young person advises you not to proceed with reporting suspected abuse.
- The maximum penalty for failing to disclose is 3 years imprisonment.

6 Breach of Policy

Any potential breach of this policy will be investigated and the policy will be enforced. Potential breaches may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action.

7 Words and Definitions

- **Complaint:** A concern or expression of dissatisfaction made to or about Minus18 regarding our services, staff, volunteers, programs, or communications.
- **Young person / young people:** Any person under the age of 18. Persons aged 18 to 25 who may be considered under Minus18's care, including Volunteers or anyone who has sought from us mental health support.
- **Child:** Any person under the age of 18.
- **Minus18 Representative:** Any employee, volunteer, or contractor acting on behalf of Minus18.
- **Youth Safety Team:** Minus18 Employees: Youth Safety Lead, General Manager of National Programs and CEO.