Purpose

Estia Foundation of Australia supports people with disabilities to live with dignity, exercise choice, strengthen belonging and experience a full everyday life. This policy explains your rights as a participant and how Estia will uphold them in everyday support. Every person supported by Estia will be known, respected and included.

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all participants and to everyone working for or representing Estia, including directors, employees, contractors, volunteers and students. Families, representatives and advocates are welcome to use it to understand what participants can expect. Your rights do not depend on your ability to communicate verbally, make a complaint or sign a document.

Policy objectives

1. Treat you with dignity and respect

You have the right to be treated with courtesy and to have your views taken seriously. We respect your identity, culture, language, values and beliefs. We will support you to practise your faith or choose not to participate in religious activities. Discrimination, humiliation, bullying and harassment are unacceptable.

2. Support your choice and control

You have the right to make decisions about your life, daily routines, goals and supports. We will explain options in a way you understand, give you time to consider them and respect your will and preferences. You can involve people you choose. We will support decision-making and check the scope of any legally appointed representative's authority, while continuing to involve you directly.

3. Help you understand and agree to your supports

We will explain the support available, fees, service agreements and any conditions in accessible language. You can ask questions, seek advice and take time before deciding. We will seek your informed consent and explain how to change your preferences or withdraw consent. We will make reasonable efforts to involve you in choosing your workers, including preferences for personal care.

4. Respect independence and dignity of risk

You have the right to learn, build skills and try new things. We will help you understand the benefits and risks of your choices and agree on proportionate ways to manage risks with you. We will not deny or withdraw required support solely because you make a dignity of risk choice. Support should promote your independence and use the least intrusive options appropriate to your needs.

Policy objectives continued

5. Protect your safety and freedom from harm

You have the right to safe and competent support, free from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and sexual misconduct. Workers must recognise concerns, act promptly to protect you and report incidents through Estia's procedures. We will support you if harm is alleged, investigate appropriately and meet mandatory reporting obligations. Restrictive practices must meet applicable legal, authorisation, behaviour support and reporting requirements and must never be punished or used for convenience.

6. Respect your privacy and personal information

You have the right to privacy in your home, personal space, communications and personal care. We will explain what information we collect, why it is needed and how it is protected. Information is shared with consent or another lawful basis. Photographs, recordings and public stories require appropriate consent. You can ask to access your records, request corrections and ask how your information has been used or accessed, subject to lawful limits.

7. Support relationships and a life in the community

You have the right to maintain friendships, family connections and relationships you choose, and to have your intimacy and sexual expression respected. We will support your choices about visitors, social activities, work, learning, interests and community participation, respecting other people's rights and lawful arrangements. In shared living, your needs and preferences must be considered in decisions affecting your home.

8. Make communication accessible

You have the right to receive information in the language, format and communication method you are most likely to understand. We will listen to how you communicate and support access to interpreters, communication aids, Easy Read information or other assistance as needed. We will discuss this policy with you and check understanding, rather than relying only on a written copy.

9. Support your right to an independent advocate

You may choose a family member, friend, supporter or independent advocate to assist you and have them present at meetings. We can help you find an external independent advocacy organisation and will respect its role. Estia's support to express your views does not replace independent advocacy. You can seek independent advice at any stage of planning, support delivery, review or exit.

10. Listen when you speak up

You have the right to give feedback, make a complaint and be heard without threats, punishment or disadvantage. You will not lose support or be treated badly because you raise a concern. We will explain complaint options, help you use them, respond fairly and tell you what happens next. You may contact the NDIS Commission directly without first complaining to Estia.

If your rights are not respected

You can speak with your support worker, site lead, manager or the Chief Executive Officer. Tell us what happened and what you would like to change. You can ask someone you trust to help, use your preferred way of communicating, or request help to contact an independent advocate. If the concern is about the CEO, ask Estia's office to direct it to the Chair of the Board.

Contact Estia Foundation of Australia
5-7 Pearson Street, Gladesville NSW 2111
Telephone: **02 9879 8000** | Email: **admin@estia.org.au**

Contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Telephone:**1800 035 544**

Online: www.ndiscommission.gov.au/complaints/report
You can report a concern directly and choose to remain anonymous. Interpreting assistance can be arranged. People who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can use the National Relay Service.

If someone is in immediate danger or needs emergency help, call 000.

How Estia puts your rights into practice

We will listen to you, record your preferences and build your support plan with you. With your consent, we will involve your chosen support network. We will review your support with you at least every six months, and earlier when your needs, circumstances or preferences change. We will explain changes, seek your involvement and help coordinate safe transitions when services change or end.

Workers receive guidance and training in rights, consent, privacy, respectful support and safeguarding. Managers check that rights are reflected in daily practice. Complaints, incidents and feedback are used to identify improvements, and actions are followed up. When a concern involves harm or abuse, immediate safety and required reporting take priority.

Accessible copies and support

Estia's Participant Rights Charter is discussed at service agreement meetings, included in welcome information and displayed in Easy Read form at service sites. You can request a copy, another language or assistance to understand your rights. Please tell us the communication method that works best for you.

Responsibilities and review

The **Board** approves this policy and oversees participant rights and safeguarding. The **CEO** ensures implementation and accountability. The **Operations Manager** ensures the Charter is available, discussed with participants and included in training. **All workers** must uphold your rights, explain them in accessible ways and promptly report concerns. Participants are supported to express their views; they are not responsible for monitoring Estia's compliance.

Related policies and standards: Participant Rights Charter; Code of Conduct; privacy and confidentiality; complaints and feedback; safeguarding and incident management; consent and supported decision-making; advocacy procedures. This policy reflects the NDIS Practice Standards for rights and responsibilities, the NDIS Act 2013 principles and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.