vinetur

Cathay Pacific under scrutiny after toddler served wine in business class on Hong Kong to London flight

Parents question airline’s safety protocols and staff training as Cathay Pacific promises review and additional crew education

Friday, May 9, 2025



A Cathay Pacific Airways flight attendant mistakenly served a glass of white wine to a three-year-old boy during a business class meal service on a flight from Hong Kong to London, according to the child’s mother. The incident took place on April 24 aboard flight CX255, with the family of three seated together in business class. The boy was seated by the window, his father in the aisle seat next to him, and his mother nearby.

The mother, surnamed Wong, reported the incident after sharing her experience on the Chinese social media platform RedNote. She said her son was served what appeared to be water with his chicken dinner, but after taking a sip, he complained that the drink tasted sour. The parents quickly realized it was white wine and notified the cabin crew.

Wong said that after she alerted a flight attendant, the crew member apologized, removed the glass, and replaced it with water. A senior flight attendant then filed an official complaint and contacted Medlink, an in-flight medical advisory service. A French doctor traveling on board also examined the child and reassured the parents that he would be fine, noting that in France, children as young as five sometimes consume alcohol. Medlink advised giving the child water and monitoring for symptoms such as nausea or fever.

The parents did not seek immediate medical attention for their son after landing in London, as he showed no signs of discomfort. However, Wong expressed concern about possible long-term health effects from even a small amount of alcohol and criticized Cathay Pacific for not providing a detailed explanation of how the mistake occurred or outlining steps to prevent similar incidents.

Cathay Pacific responded by apologizing to the family and offering a refund for the child’s ticket, three one-class upgrade vouchers, and coverage for any related medical expenses. In an official statement, a spokesperson said that an internal review had been conducted and follow-up actions were being implemented. The airline stated that cabin crew monitored the child throughout the flight and paged for medical personnel immediately after learning of the error.

A Cathay Pacific purser who spoke anonymously suggested that declining service standards and insufficient training for new cabin crew members contributed to the mistake. She claimed that recent hires receive less training than before and are less familiar with established protocols for serving food and beverages to children.

The purser also noted that standard procedure involves marking napkins or otherwise ensuring children receive appropriate drinks, but said newer staff often overlook these steps due to inadequate training. She added that parents also bear some responsibility for supervising their children during meal service.

Wong said she remains dissatisfied with Cathay Pacific’s response, stating that while the airline apologized and offered compensation, it did not provide a clear account of how such an error could happen or what measures would be taken to prevent recurrence. She described a lack of care from staff during and after the incident and called for more transparency from the airline.

Cathay Pacific maintains that it is taking the matter seriously and will continue to support the family as needed. The company has reiterated its commitment to reviewing internal procedures and providing additional training to cabin crew following this incident.