

Dealing with Complaints Policy

Purpose

We aim to investigate all complaints and grievances with a high standard of fairness and equity. All persons making a complaint can expect to be guided by principles of procedural fairness and natural justice, ethical conduct, transparency, and a culture free from discrimination or harassment. Our service philosophy underpins the way complaints are handled, ensuring children's safety, wellbeing, and learning remain central at all times.

Scope

This policy applies to all children, families, staff, management, visitors, and volunteers at the OSHC Service.

Implementation

Grievances and complaints can transpire in any workplace. Handling them appropriately is imperative for sustaining a safe, healthy, harmonious, and productive work environment. Our Dealing with Complaints Policy ensures that all persons are presented with procedures that value the opportunity to be heard, promote conflict resolution, encourage the development of harmonious partnerships, ensure that conflicts and grievances are mediated fairly, and are transparent and equitable.

Complaints and Grievances Management Register

This register records information about complaints and grievances received at the Service, along with the outcomes. Documents must be kept in a secure file, accessible only to management and the Regulatory Authority. The register provides valuable information to the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor to ensure children's and families' needs are being met.

Grievance

A grievance is a formal statement of complaint that cannot be addressed immediately and usually involves matters of a more serious nature. Workplace grievances may be raised towards an employer due to a violation of legal requirements, workplace policies, employment contracts, or national standards.

Mediator

A mediator is a person who attempts to assist and support people involved in a conflict to reach an agreement.

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Mediation

Mediation is the process of bringing about a peaceful settlement or compromise between disputing parties through the objective intervention of a neutral person.

Notifiable Complaint

A notifiable complaint alleges a breach of the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, the National Quality Standard, or that the health, safety, or wellbeing of a child may have been compromised. Any such complaint must be reported by the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours. Written reports must include details of the event or incident, the name of the person making the complaint, if appropriate the child involved and their condition, contact details of a nominated member of the Grievances Subcommittee (or Nominated Supervisor), and any other relevant information.

Serious Incident

A serious incident results in the death of a child or an injury, trauma, or illness for which medical attention is sought or should have been sought. It also includes situations where a child is missing, removed without authorisation, or locked in/out of the premises. Serious incidents must be documented in an Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Record and reported to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours. The Approved Provider must also notify the Regulatory Authority if there is a reasonable belief that physical or sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Management and educators adhere to the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy when handling complaints. However, complaints involving staff misconduct or child protection issues may require informing relevant government agencies.

Conflict of Interest

It is essential that complainants feel confident they will be heard fairly and that decision-making is unbiased. If a complaint involves the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor, other management or an independent mediator will handle the matter. The service may also use an Independent Conflict Resolution Service if required. The Service's Code of Conduct is always followed throughout the process.

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Managing Complaints about Harmful Sexual Behaviours Exhibited by a Child

Our Service is committed to ensuring that all complaints about a child exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours are handled with urgency, sensitivity, and in line with our legal and ethical obligations to protect children's safety and wellbeing. All concerns or complaints will be taken seriously and recorded factually, with staff documenting exact words and observations rather than investigating independently. Immediate action will always be taken to safeguard the children involved, which may include separating children to prevent further harm and ensuring close supervision at all times. Where behaviours indicate a risk of harm or abuse, mandatory reporting procedures will be followed, and the matter will be referred promptly to the appropriate Child Protection authorities and relevant regulatory bodies as required under the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations. Families of the children involved will be informed with care, confidentiality, and respect, ensuring that information is shared only on a need-to-know basis. Both children and families will be offered appropriate support, including referrals to specialist services such as counselling, to help them navigate the situation. The Service will uphold strict confidentiality, sharing information only with those directly responsible for managing the matter. Following any incident, our team will review the environment, supervision practices, and staff training needs to minimise risks and strengthen our capacity to respond effectively. This approach reflects our commitment to children's rights, ethical practice, and continuous improvement, as outlined in the National Quality Standard, the ECA Code of Ethics, and the My Time Our Place Framework.

Child Safe Standards and Paramountcy Principle

The Service is committed to upholding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and embedding a strong child safe culture across all practices. In accordance with the Paramountcy Principle, the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child are the primary and overriding consideration in all decisions, actions and practices undertaken by the Service, including the management and resolution of complaints and grievances.

This means that all complaints and grievances must be managed in a way that prioritises the protection of children from harm and ensures their safety, wellbeing and rights are upheld above all other considerations. Educators, staff and management are required to exercise professional judgement and take all reasonable steps to respond to complaints promptly, fairly and appropriately, particularly where a child's safety, health or wellbeing may be at risk.

The Service will ensure that all complaints are handled with transparency, procedural fairness and confidentiality, while maintaining a strong focus on child safety. Where a complaint relates to a child protection concern, serious incident or potential risk of harm, immediate action will be taken to safeguard children, including following mandatory reporting requirements and notifying relevant authorities as required.

All practices relating to the management of complaints must prioritise children's safety, dignity and wellbeing, ensuring that every child is protected, supported and able to feel safe at all times.



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Review

Date:	Changes:	Reviewed by:
26/11/2021	New policy (All updated)	Charmayne Nathan
04/10/24	No changed made - reviewed policy	Charmayne Nathan
15/09/25	Policy was updated, information was condensed.	Charmayne Nathan
05/08/25	Managing Complaints added	Charmayne Nathan
24/4/2026	Child Safe Standards & Paramountcy Principle was implemented in align with new laws and regulations	Charmayne Nathan