

# DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

## Early Years Services

### 1. Purpose

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for dealing with complaints. The Dealing with Complaints policy means the service community can be confident that complaints and grievances are taken seriously and addressed effectively.

### 2. Policy

City of Stonnington recognises the need for an effective process where members of the service community can feel confident concerns or issues they raise will be handled promptly and professionally.

Effective complaints management make sure complaints and grievances are taken seriously and allows services to reflect on feedback, allowing opportunities for continuous improvement.

#### **Definitions:**

*Complaint:* Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required

*Complaint Handling:* Effective resolution of a problem before it becomes worse and providing a resolution

*Investigation:* A formal and systematic inquiry to establish facts about a complaint by collecting, documenting, examining, and evaluating evidence

*Personal information:* Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:

- a. whether the information or opinion is true or not; and
- b. whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not. Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Early Years Coordinator
- Team Leaders
- Educators
- Administration Officers

- Parents/Guardians
- Cook
- Students on placement
- Volunteers
- Agency Educators engaged at the service

#### 4. Responsibilities

The following roles are responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy:

- Early Years Coordinator
- Team Leaders
- Administration Officer
- Educators
- Health and Safety Representative (HSR)

#### 5. Procedure

##### Children

- If a child raises a concern to an Educator they will respond respectfully and age appropriately, letting the child know the concern is heard and will be followed up
- If a child's concern is related to conflict with another child or Educator refer to the *Interactions with Children Policy*
- If a child's concern is related to their safety or wellbeing refer to the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- Educator should report to the Team Leader for further discussion and investigation
- Educators may also approach the service Child Safety Representative or City of Stonnington Child Safety Officer to discuss child safety-related concerns

##### Parent/Guardian

- All complaints should be addressed by following *Dealing with Complaints policy* and procedure outlined
- Feedback from parent/guardians is welcomed and all complaints will be taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly
- The service will reflect on complaints, identifying concerns, and use these opportunities to improve the quality practices of the service

Concerns regarding children's safety, health, wellbeing, or the education program

- Contact the child's room leader

If unresolved

- Step 1: contact the service Team Leader

Princes Close Early Years Service	8290 3247
Winter Street Early Years Service	8290 6060
Alternatively, email any concerns to the applicable service email address	<a href="mailto:princesclose@stonnington.vic.gov.au">princesclose@stonnington.vic.gov.au</a> <a href="mailto:winterstreet@stonnington.vic.gov.au">winterstreet@stonnington.vic.gov.au</a>

If unresolved

- Step 2: contact Early Years Coordinator **8290 3343**

If unresolved

- Step 3: contact Manager of Community Services **8290 3327**
- Further to the above, parent/guardian may contact the Victorian Government Department of Education:

Southern Metropolitan Region

165-169 Thomas Street (PO BOX 5), Dandenong, Victoria 3175

Phone: (03) 8904 2500

Email: [smr.qar@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:smr.qar@education.vic.gov.au)

### **Educator/Other Staff**

- If there is concerns or conflict between Educators/other staff open and respectful communication is encouraged and supported to ensure a positive healthy working environment

If unresolved

- Step 1: contact the service Team Leader

If unresolved

- Step 2: contact Early Years Coordinator **8290 3343**

If unresolved

- Step 3: contact the People Team [peopleandculture@stonnington.vic.gov.au](mailto:peopleandculture@stonnington.vic.gov.au)
- Keep written records of issues and/or concerns and ensure such documentation can be referred to if required. Educators/other staff should keep records with personal or sensitive information secure and protected
- For further support Educators/other staff can contact one of the City of Stonnington Contact Officer or the Employee Assistance Program

### **Team Leader**

- Ensure that *Dealing with Complaints Policy* is clearly displayed in the foyer and the service community are aware of who complaints can be addressed too
- Listen respectfully to all concerns, feedback and/or complaints and advise that an investigation will be undertaken, and a response provided accordingly
- Communication and response to complaints and concerns are child focused
- Document details of complaints and ensure personal and sensitive information is secure, kept confidential and privacy maintained
- Report information to the Early Years Coordinator and/or Manager Community Services for further discussion and/or investigation
- Work with the Early Years Coordinator, Manager Community Services, Educators/other staff and/or parent/guardian during the investigation and resolution of a complaint
- Report complaints regarding children's health and safety to ACECQA via the NQA IT system within 24 hours as required
- Refer to the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and complete a Solv Safety report if a complaint relates to a child safety concern

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- Complete a Child Protection notification to *Victorian State Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing* South Division and complete a Solv Safety report if a complaint relates to a child protection concern
- Refer to the *Child-Related Reportable Conduct Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, or Employee Code of Conduct* if a complaint relates to the conduct of Educator/other staff

## **6. Relevant Legislation, Policies & Sources**

[ACECQA Policy Guidelines Dealing With Complaints - September.pdf](#)  
([acecqa.gov.au](http://acecqa.gov.au))

*Child Safe Standards*

Child Safe Environment Policy

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Child Safety Code of Conduct for Parents and Guardians

Child Safety Code of Conduct for Children and Young People

*Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy*

*Child-Related Reportable Conduct Policy*

[Commission for Children and Young People CCYP | Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused](#)

*Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*

*Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653) – Version 1st October 2023*

*Employee Code of Conduct*

*Interactions with Children Policy*

*National Quality Standards*

*Privacy and Data Collection Act 2014*

## **7. Related Services Forms**

Communication Record

Parent Exit Survey

Employee Exit Survey