DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Feedback from families, children, educators, staff and the wider community is fundamental in creating an evolving Childcare Service working towards the highest standard of care and education. In the event that feedback includes divergent views which result in complaints or a grievance, the Manager/ Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider will ensure the grievance is managed conscientiously and confidentially following the procedure below.

Working in conjunction with the Dealing with Complaints Policy (General), Dealing with Complaints (Families) and Dealing with Complaints (Staff), this procedure provides detailed steps for receiving and managing informal and formal complaints and grievances.

Education and Care Services National Law or Regulations (R. 84, 149, 168, 170, 173, 176 and 183) (sec. 172, 174) NQS QA 6 and 7: Element 6.1.2, 6.2, 7.1.2 and 7.2.1 Relationships with families and Governance practices and procedures
Related Policy: Dealing with Complaints Policy and Dealing with Complaints Policy (Staff)

STEP 1: COMPLAINT PROCEDURE		
1	The approved provider/ nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's *Dealing with Complaints Policy* and *Dealing with Complaints Procedure* each year in consultation with families	
2	The name and telephone number of the person to whom complaints can be made is clearly visible at the Service	
3	Information about our *Dealing with Complaints Policy* and the *Dealing with Complaints Procedures* as well as the complaints resources listed below will be easily accessible to all families, visitors, staff and volunteers	
4	The manager/ nominated supervisor or approved provider will treat all complaints and grievances seriously, professionally and as a priority while ensuring complaints or grievances remain confidential	
5	The manager/ nominated supervisor or approved provider will ensure complaints or grievances reflect procedural fairness and natural justice	
6	Families and complainants are encouraged to read through the Service's *Dealing with Complaints Policy* and *Family Conduct Guidelines* to ensure the most effective and appropriate method of communication is used when raising the complaint or grievance.	
7	Complainants are encouraged to contact an appropriate educator directly to make an appointment to discuss the complaint or grievance and raise their concerns. (In many cases an informal resolution can be achieved by communication and discussion). Complaints should be discussed privately and at an appropriate time. If complainants feel uncomfortable approaching the educator directly, we encourage them to contact Service Management to arrange a formal meeting.	

8	If the complainant feels as though their grievance or complaint has not been resolved when approaching the educator, management will be contacted to arrange a formal meeting. They will contact the family within 24 hours of receiving the grievance or complaint.	
9	If any complaint or grievance is made verbally to an educator, a record of the conversation must be made and shared with the Nominated Supervisor. This record, although informal, should be kept in the *Complaints Register*.	
10	Staff and families are encouraged to submit a written complaint through the *Complaints/ Grievance Form*	
11	Staff and families are encouraged to read through the Service's *Dealing with Complaints Policy* and *Dealing with Complaints Procedure* to ensure the most effective and appropriate method of communication is used when raising a complaint or grievance.	
12	Management, nominated supervisors and educators ensure child safe approach to complaints involving a child or young person, taking into consideration their age, intellectual development and maturity as a commitment to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.	

STEP 2: UPON RECEIPT OF A COMPLAINT/FEEDBACK		
1	The director/ nominated supervisor or approved provider will discuss the issue with the complainant within 24 hours of receiving the verbal or written complaint and will investigate and document the complaint or grievance fairly and impartially	
2	Management and staff will adhere to our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* when conducting an investigation into complaints or grievances. However, if a complaint or grievance involves a staff member or a child protection issue, a relevant agency will need to be informed. (See: *Child Protection Policy* for your state/territory.) Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse or harm NSW	
3	The approved provider will notify the regulatory authority in writing within 24 hours of any complaints that a serious incident has occurred or the Education and Care Services National Law has been breached (Sec. 174) or where there is a reasonable belief that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at the service, or any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at the service including a complaint that alleges a child is exhibiting sexual behaviours and this behaviour may be harmful to the child or another child.	
4	Families who wish to raise concerns regarding the management of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) should speak with the director/ nominated supervisor in the first instance. Families can raise concerns regarding management of the Child Care Subsidy to the dedicated Child Care Tip-Off Line either via phone or email: • Phone: 1800 664 231 • Email: tipoffline@education.gov.au	
5	A meeting will be arranged between the complainant and management of the service. The *Complaint Management Form* may be used during the meeting to fairly and impartially document the complaint or grievance.	

STEP 3: INVESTIGATING THE COMPLAINT		
1	The director/ nominated supervisor or approved provider will begin an investigation of the complaint/ grievance/ feedback by: a) reviewing the circumstances and facts of the complaint (or breach) and inviting all affected parties to provide information where appropriate and pertinent b) discussing the nature of the complaint (or breach) and giving the accused educator, staff member, volunteer, parent or visitor an opportunity to respond c) permitting the accused person to have a support person present during the consultation (for example: Union Representative or family member) d) providing the employee with a clear written statement outlining the outcome of the investigation. e) Ensuring the procedure is child-focused and addresses concerns of any child f) Children will be taken seriously and any disclosures of harm from any other person including other children will be addressed effectively (including a complaint of a child exhibiting sexual behaviours that may be harmful to the child or another child.)	
2	Management will use the *Complaint/Grievance Investigation Guide and Form* to record the investigation conducted, if an investigation is required.	
3	Should the director/ nominated supervisor or approved provider decide not to proceed with the investigation after initial enquiries, a written notification outlining the reasoning is to be provided to the complainant.	
4	Should a conflict of interest arise during a complaint or grievance that involves the approved provider or director/ nominated supervisor, other management will be nominated as an alternative mediator.	
5	Our Service may also engage the resources of an Independent Conflict Resolution Service to assist with the mediation of a dispute. We will ensure that throughout the conflict resolution process the Services Code of Conduct is be adhered to.	

STEP 4: EVALUATION OF THE INVESTIGATION		
1	The Manager/ Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider will advise the complainant and all affected parties of the outcome within 7 working days of receiving the verbal or written complaint or grievance	
2	Management will provide a written response outlining the outcome and provide a copy to all parties involved	
3	If a written agreement about the resolution of the complaint or grievance is prepared, all parties will ensure the outcomes accurately reflects the resolution and sign in agreeance	
4	The Manager/ Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider will monitor ongoing behaviour and provide support as required, and ensure the parties are protected from victimisation and bullying.	

STEP 5: KEEPING RECORDS OF COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK		
1	The Manager/ Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider will keep appropriate records of the investigation and outcome and store these records in accordance with our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* and *Record Keeping and Retention Policy*	
2	The Manager/ Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider will request feedback on the complaint or grievance process using a feedback form and review the effectiveness of the Service policy and procedures to ensure all complaints and grievances have been handled fairly and professionally	
3	The Manager/ Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider will track complaints to identify recurring issues within the Service through the *Complaints Register*.	

STEP 6: NOTIFICATIONS OF COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK		
1	The director/ nominated supervisor or approved provider will notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours if a complaint alleges a breach of the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, the National Quality Standard or alleges the safety, health or wellbeing of a child is being compromised. If the Director is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact the Regulatory Authority for confirmation. Written reports must include: • details of the event or incident • the name of the person who initially made the complaint • if appropriate, the name of the child concerned and the condition of the child, including a medical or incident report (where relevant) • contact details of a nominated member of the Grievances Subcommittee (or Nominated Supervisor) • any other relevant information	
2	Written notification of complaints must be submitted to the Regulatory Authority using the appropriate forms, which can be found on the ACECQA website: www.acecqa.gov.au and logged using NQA ITS (National Quality Agenda IT System).	

COMPLAINT/ GRIEVANCE RESOURCES	
Dealing with Complaints Policy (Family, General, Staff)	The Dealing with Complaints Policy provides information of how the service handles complaints or grievances, including notifiable complaints and serious incidents.
Complaints/ Grievance Procedure	This procedure provides detailed steps for receiving and managing informal and formal complaints and grievances.
Complaint/ Grievance Investigation Guide and Form	The investigation guide provides guidance for management when responding to complaints or grievances of a more serious nature to ensure investigations are conducted effectively and efficiently. A template form is available to document the investigation process.

Complaints/ Grievance Form - General	Template available to provide to staff, families and the general community to submit complaints or grievances.
Complaints/ Grievance Management Form	This form is to be used to record details of meetings held between the Service and families, a member of the community or staff to address and resolve a complaint or grievance submitted, as per our *Dealing with Complaints Policy*. A copy of this document should be recorded in the *Complaints/Grievance Register*.
Complaints/ Grievance Register	The Complaints/ Grievance Register provides an overview of complaints submitted to the service within a period of time.
Family Conduct Guidelines	The Family Conduct Guidelines are in place to emphasize the commitment and ethical responsibilities each family adopts when enrolling their child/ren at the service in conjunction with the Enrolment Policy, Dealing with Complaints Policy, Family Handbook and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics.

REVIEW OF PROCEDURE			
Date procedure created	04/07/2023	To be reviewed	December 2025
Approved by	Krystle Hills	Signature	
Procedure Reviewed Date	Modifications/Changes		
December 2024	Information added regarding a child focused complaint system and complaints that alleges a child is exhibiting sexual behaviours that may be harmful to the child or another child.		