

WCS Children's Services ADMINISTRATION – Dealing with complaints (families) Policy

Purpose

Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner.

Policy Statement

Feedback from families and the wider community is fundamental in creating a Service that meets regulations, meets the needs of children and their families, and continues to evolve towards the highest standard of care.

It is inevitable that feedback will include differing opinions, occasionally resulting in complaints. This Policy details the service's procedures for receiving and managing informal and formal complaints. A legitimate grievance can be lodged in the knowledge that it will be managed diligently and confidentially.

Strategies and practices

- The Service's processes for airing concerns/complaints are communicated to families at enrolment.
- Details of the Service's email address and telephone, the email address of Woden Community Service, and the full contact details of the Regulatory Authority are in the Parent Handbook and also displayed in the entrance of the Service.
- The Service prioritises open, respectful and confidential exchange of information between the Service and its families. Parents are provided with many avenues for verbal and written communication about the Service's operations. Parents are informed when any of their feedback has led to improvements in the way the Service operates.
- The Supervisor models respect and a problem-solving approach to the receipt of grievances and complaints, and encourages this across the Service.
- Educators are offered professional development on ways to receive parents'/guardians' concerns/complaints and to value the opportunity this feedback affords the Service for quality improvement.
- Educators, students and volunteers are informed of the Service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* before commencing at the Service and are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement to strictly adhere to that Policy.
- At all times the parents'/guardians' right to air a grievance will be respected and no discrimination will be applied to either the family or child/ren as the result of the grievance.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to raise informally with the child's primary educator or the Supervisor any concerns they have about the daily care of their child.

- Formal complaints can be raised verbally with the Supervisor/educator who will document the complaint clearly and objectively on the Woden Community Service Accident, Injury and Incident Form. If the grievance is about the Supervisor, the matter can be directed to the Approved Provider.
- The Service maintains a record of written complaints and actions taken in response to each complaint.

Procedure for formal written complaint

- Formal Complaints are to be submitted in writing including:
 - Name of the Service
 - Name of the Approved Provider/Supervisor
 - Name of the Complainant
 - Postal address and/or telephone number
- The complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. The Supervisor/ Approved Provider or delegated Educators' member involved in investigating the complaint will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint. If information specific to the complaint needs to be disclosed to others during its resolution, the complainant will be informed prior to this occurring and the circumstances explained to them.
- Written acknowledgment that the complaint has been received will be sent to the complainant.
- The Supervisor/Approved Provider will investigate the complaint in an equitable, transparent and fair manner, and document the findings. Investigations involve consulting with the relevant stakeholders (including any person who may be the subject of the complaint) and reviewing relevant documentation and Service Policies.
- Actions to address the complaint will be determined, and the complainant notified in writing of those actions.
- Should the complaint made to the Service concern a breach of regulations, the Regulatory Authority will be notified within 24 hours of the complaint being lodged.
- When an issue cannot be resolved at the Service, the complainant can contact the Regulatory Authority.

Responsibilities of parents/guardians

- To raise issues and concerns in a timely manner using the processes outlined in this Policy.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2018

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| Regs | 168 | Education and care service must have policies and procedures |
| | 173 | Prescribed information to be displayed |
| | 176 | Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority |

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| QA | 4.2.2 | Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships |
| | 6.1.1 | Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions. |
| | 6.1.2 | The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing. |
| | 6.1.3 | Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing. |
| | 6.2.3 | The service builds relationships and engages with its community. |
| | 7.1.1 | A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations. |
| | 7.1.2 | Systems are in place to manage risks and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service. |
| | 7.1.3 | Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service. |
| | 7.2.1 | There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place. |

Sources, further reading and useful websites

Sources

- Dr. B. Abbey and P. Maclean, NQS - the complete system of policies, procedures and forms, www.childcarebydesign.com.au.

Further reading

- Bhathela, M., Dunn, L., Tregillgas, T. (2008) *Ask a child care adviser (sic): Managing challenging issues with families*. http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/ACCA_Managing_Challenging_Issues_Sep08.pdf accessed 2 April 2012
- Owens, A. (n.d). *Managing complaints*. http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/factsheets/qias_factsheet_5.pdf accessed 2 April 2012

Useful websites

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority – www.acecqa.gov.au

Policy Review

This policy is a living document and will be monitored and reviewed as issues are identified. Proposed changes will be circulated and discussed by all programs and any external stakeholders for approval.

Person Responsible for Review:

Manager, Children's Services

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| Implementation Date: | 3 November 2014 | Review Date: | November 2020 |
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Modification History

| Date | Sections and/or Paragraphs | Source | Details |
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| 2016/09 | Whole document | | Format change |
| 2018/01 | Quality Areas | Revised National Quality Standard 2018 | |
| 2018/10 | Title and strategy update | Education and Care Services regulations | Consistent with regulation 168 title. |

Related Documents

Refer to HR Manual –cross reference to WCS documents such as: WCS Services Guide, WCS Values and Strategic Plan.

Approved by Susan Henderson, Manager Children's Services:



Date: 16 January 2017