

Related Policies and Procedures

CE Child protection policy
Confidentiality policy
Fees and Payment Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes procedures to provide a process for the speedy resolution of grievances and disputes between employee/s, children and families.

This policy enables complaints to be effectively managed whilst protecting the rights of all involved.

Definitions

Complaint: an expression of negative feedback or dissatisfaction with the services provided by the Early Learning Centre.

Policy

Families are encouraged to talk to their child's teacher or the ELC director about any concern or issues they may have. If the issue is unable to be resolved at this point then the family is asked to put their concern in writing and send it to the school principal. If a parent is unsatisfied with the response from the Principal, they may wish to lodge a complaint with the Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (CE). Complaints may be lodged with CE by contacting the Head of Directorate Services. If dissatisfied with CE's response, the complainant may also be given the contact details for the Commissioner of Children and Young People. This information is given to families when they begin at the ELC in the Parent and Family Handbook.

Families have the right to provide feedback on services, ask for explanations or make complaints.

Families can expect to:

- Be treated respectfully and fairly;
- Have the matter dealt with as soon as possible;
- Be included in resolving the problem;
- Be informed of progress;
- Be told of the outcome.

Procedure

1. When a family approaches a staff member with a complaint or grievance, staff must have knowledge of the below procedures to ensure a speedy resolution.

- 1.1. Minor issues may be able to be addressed by the staff member that the issue was raised with. Staff members must inform the group Teacher or BSC/ASC coordinator that an issue was raised and how it was dealt with. The teacher or Educator may make note of this in evaluation.
 - 1.2. If the issue is unable to be addressed at the time of the incident then the matter needs to be directed to the Teacher / Coordinator in charge.
 - 1.3. The Teacher / Coordinator will discuss the issue with the family and together decide on a plan of action to deal with the issue. If the issue can be resolved at this point then the staff member will document the discussion, action plan and make a note of it in the child's file. The Teacher / Coordinator must inform the director of the issue.
 - 1.4. If unable to be resolved with Teacher or Co-coordinator staff will advise families to put their complaint or grievance in writing and address it to the Director or School Principal. Educators will document conversations so far and also share knowledge of circumstances with the appropriate person i.e. director/principal.
2. Whilst dealing with complaints staff will;
- **Listen.** Understand exactly what the problem is and show the Parent / guardian that they have your full attention.
 - **Acknowledge the problem.** Complaining can be difficult. Being sympathetic and calm will help alleviate the Parent or guardian's stress.
 - **Address the parent/guardians needs.** Tell the parent you want to help improve the situation. Ask how they would like to proceed.
 - **Communicate honestly.** Decide what can be done to fix the problem and tell them.
 - **Document the issue.** Make some notes – date, issue, plan of action etc. down in writing and put it in the child's file.
 - **Follow-up.** Contact the parent / guardian within an agreed time-frame to ensure the problem was resolved.
- 2.1. Any complaints alleging that the safety, health, or wellbeing of a child was or is being compromised or that the law has been breached must be reported to the Regulatory Authority by the approved provider within 24 hours of the complaint.

Sources and Further Reading

- NSW Government Fair Trading
http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Businesses/Dealing_with_customers/Complaints.html
- National Quality Framework Resource Kit
- ACT Human rights commission – ACT Children and Young People

Links to National Quality Standards

National Law and National Regulation 168(2)(0)

National Quality Standard 7.3

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