



Outside School Hours Care Dealing with Complaints Procedures

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File:

Responsibility of: Director

Effective Date: 01/02/2022

Outside School Hours Care

Target Audience: Staff, Families and
Community

Next Review Date: 01/02/2024

1. BUSINESS NEED

We recognise that families, educators, staff and the community need to feel confident that any concerns or issues they may raise will be handled promptly and professionally. These procedures enable us to provide effective complaints management which meets the needs of our families, staff and the Leanyer OSHC team. They also provide service leaders with a valuable opportunity to improve the quality of the services we provide to the children in our care.

2. SCOPE

These procedures apply to all families, staff and visitors in the OSHC community.

3. PROCEDURES

4.1 Preparing for and dealing with complaints

- It is important to resolve issues as they arise.
- Where possible, concerns and complaints should be managed directly with the person involved, in a non-threatening way and at an appropriate time. Both parties should try to resolve the issue and develop solutions to make sure the problem does not happen again.
- You can discuss day-to-day care issues with the educator caring for your child or the Director, if you think it is more appropriate.
- You should report serious issues concerning management, staff and the safety and wellbeing of children to the Director (or the Nominated Supervisor). If necessary, these concerns can be escalated to the Leanyer School Principal. The Director and the School Principal may ask you to put your concern or complaint in writing.
- Your concerns and complaints will be addressed seriously and as a priority.
- Your concerns and complaints will remain confidential. Any staff member involved in receiving a complaint will ensure that the information about the complaint is kept only to those who genuinely need to know in order to deal with the complaint.
- The Director and/or School Principal, will discuss your concern or complaint with you within 24 hours of receiving it.

4.2 Steps in the investigation process

- The circumstances and facts of your complaint will be reviewed and all affected people will be invited to provide information or respond, where appropriate.
- All those involved will be able to have a support person present during any discussions.
- You will be kept up-to-date with the progress of your concern or complaint.
- You will be sent a letter about the outcome of your concern or complaint within seven working days of receiving the complaint. Other people involved will also receive a letter within seven working days advising them of the outcome.
- If the Director decides not to proceed with an investigation of your complaint, after initial enquiries, a letter outlining the reasons for their decision will be given to you within seven working days of receiving your complaint. The Leanyer School Principal will be provided a copy of this correspondence.
- Records of the investigation, including records of meetings and any written statements by any of the people involved, and the outcome of the investigation, will be kept in the Complaints Register. This register is kept in a secure file, accessible only to educators, the Director, the School Principal and Quality Education and Care NT (QECNT).
- For complex matters, where a conflict of interest exists or if no one at the service has the skills required to investigate the matter, the Director, in consultation with the School Principal, and the written approval of the Leanyer School Board, may engage an external investigator to investigate your complaint.
- Aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Police will be called for assistance if there is any aggressive behaviour towards staff or other families.
- Educators, staff, volunteers and visitors will not become involved in complaints that do not concern them.

4.3 Resolving complaints

- If you are unhappy with the Director's proposed resolution of your complaint, you may escalate your complaint to the School Principal.
- If you are still unable to resolve your issue with Leanyer OSHC, you can contact Quality Education and Care NT (QECNT). This is the independent regulatory authority that helps Territorians resolve concerns or complaints. You can contact QECNT either by phone on (08) 8999 3561, or email at qualityecnt.DET@nt.gov.au.
- QECNT will contact you within five days to confirm that your complaint has been received. Your concern or complaint will be addressed promptly and your personal information will be kept confidential, unless you give consent for QECNT to disclose the information.
- You will be kept up-to-date with the progress of your concern or complaint.
- QECNT will send you a letter about the outcome of your concern or complaint.

Note: the regulatory authority must be notified within 24 hours of any complaints alleging a serious incident has occurred or that the *Education and Care Services National Law* has been breached.

4.4 Complaints by staff

- Staff members should raise any concerns they have with their immediate supervisor, who will report the concern or complaint to the Director and/or the School Principal.

- The immediate supervisor will act as a mediator.
- If a staff member does not feel comfortable approaching their supervisor, or if the conflict is with their immediate supervisor, they can raise their concerns with the next level of management, who will act as a mediator.
- An external mediator will only be appointed with the written approval of the Leanyer School Board.
- The mediator and/or Principal will interview the people involved and determine the facts, work out whether advice is needed from other sources, discuss options available and help to develop a plan of action.
- If an acceptable resolution does not occur at this meeting the mediator must provide a written report to the next level of management describing:
 - the complaint;
 - the actions taken;
 - the solution(s) requested.
- If an agreement is reached the mediator must provide a written report to the next level of management describing:
 - the complaint;
 - the actions taken;
 - the agreed solution(s);
 - the plan of action to reach the solution, and any review time.
- A copy of this report must be provided to all people involved in the complaint, and a copy must be kept in the Complaints Register at Leanyer OSHC.
- The mediator will meet with the staff member who raised the concern as necessary and appropriate throughout the process.
- Mediators will maintain confidentiality; however, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if someone is in danger, if disciplinary action or a criminal investigation might be necessary; or if employer liability might be involved.
- No action will be taken against a staff member about whom a complaint is lodged until they are made aware of any allegations, so that they may respond.
- Staff members are able to nominate a support person to attend meetings with them. This person may be a union representative.

4.5 Putting Feedback into practice

- The Director and educators will regularly track complaints to identify any issues or areas for improvement for Leanyer OSHC, and must provide a written report to the Leanyer School Board under confidential matters.
- Outcomes of complaints will be incorporated into planning processes and a record will be kept to show how this contributes to improving the education and care of children at Leanyer OSHC.
- Copies of the ***Dealing with Complaints Policy and Procedures*** are available for staff, families, visitors and volunteers to access within the OSHC room.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that obligations under the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> and National Regulations are met.
Director (Nominated Supervisor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that regulatory obligations are met in relation to dealing with complaints. • Ensure the Principal is informed of any concerns, complaints and/or potential issues amongst students, staff and/or families. • Ensure the name and contact number of the person to whom complaints can be made is clearly displayed at the service. • Ensure that the regulatory authority is notified in writing within 24 hours of any complaints alleging that a serious incident has occurred at the service or that the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> has been breached. • Implement procedures for dealing with complaints. • Discuss the complaint with the complainant, within 24 hours, and make notes from the meeting or discussion. • Ensure the approved provider is aware of the complaint, if it is a notifiable complaint, or if a complaint cannot be resolved. • Ensure the complaint is documented. • Work co-operatively with the approved provider, staff and/or the complainant during the investigation or resolution of a complaint. • Take reasonable steps to ensure that staff follow the <i>Dealing with Complaints Policy and Procedures</i>. • Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to staff, and available for inspection. • Inform families and the broader service community of the <i>Dealing with Complaints Policy and Procedures</i>. • Regularly review the policy and procedures to ensure serious incidents and complaints are investigated promptly, fairly and thoroughly. • Ensure that complaints result in reviews of relevant policies, procedures and practices.
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and implement the <i>Dealing with Complaints Policy and Procedures</i>. • Report all complaints received to the nominated supervisor and/or approved provider promptly so timeframes can be adhered to. • Support the nominated supervisor and approved provider in the investigation and/or resolution of complaints.
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be familiar with and follow the <i>Dealing with Complaints Policy and Procedures</i>. • Raise any issues or complaints in line with the policy and procedures. • Cooperate with service representatives dealing with complaints.