



DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE (M)

Quality Area 7

POLICY

Outlets Co-operative Neighbourhood House LTD will investigate all complaints and grievances fairly and document in a timely manner. Complaints or grievances may be received from anyone who comes in contact with Outlets Co-operative Neighbourhood House LTD parents/guardians, volunteers, students, members of the local community and other agencies.

Relevant Legislation

- Duty of Care
- Childrens Services (Vic) regulations 32/2020
- Childrens Services (Vic) Act 1996
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 174(2)(b)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 168(2)(o) and 176(2)(b)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint: (In relation to this policy) a complaint is defined as an issue of a minor nature that can be resolved promptly or within 24 hours and does not require a detailed investigation. Complaints include an expression of displeasure, such as poor service, and any verbal or written complaint directly related to the service (including general and notifiable complaints). Complaints do not include industrial or employment matters, occupational health and safety matters (unless related to the safety of the children) and issues related to the legal business entity. Complaints and Grievances Register: (In relation to this policy) records information about complaints and grievances received at the service, together with a record of the outcomes. This register will be kept in a secure file, accessible only to the Centre Director and Managers. The register can provide valuable information to the General Manager on meeting the needs of children and families at the service.

General complaint: A general complaint may address any aspect of the service eg. a lost clothing item or the service's fees. Services do not have to inform DEECD, but the complaint must be dealt with as soon as is practicable to avoid escalation of the issue. **Grievance:** A grievance is a formal statement of complaint that cannot be addressed immediately and involves matters of a more serious nature eg. the service is in breach of a policy or the service did not meet the care expectations of a family.

Notifiable complaint: A complaint that alleges a breach of the Act or Regulation, or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised. Any complaint of this nature must be reported by the Approved Provider to the:

The Department of Education Training (DET) – Quality and Assessment Regulation Division (QAR) within 48 hours after the occurrence of either of these incidents. AEID **phone 70051801**

DET - Quality and Assessment Regulation Division – wmr.qar@education.vic.gov.au

If the Approved Provider is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact DET for confirmation. Written reports to DET 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 reporting the notifiable complaint
- ❖ any other relevant information.

Written notification of complaints must be submitted using the appropriate forms (refer to Centre's Complaints and Grievance Register)



Serious incident: An incident resulting in the death of a child, or an injury, trauma or illness for which the attention of a registered medical practitioner, emergency services or hospital is sought or should have been sought. This also includes an incident in which a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, is removed from the service in contravention of the Regulations or is mistakenly locked in/out of the service premises (Regulation 119). A serious incident should be documented in an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident.

The Department of Education Training (DET) – Quality and Assessment Regulation Division (QAR) within 24 hours after the occurrence of either of these incidents. AEID **phone 70051801**

DET - Quality and Assessment Regulation Division – wmr.qar@education.vic.gov.au

Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in Regulation 123.

The Approved Provider (or delegate) is responsible for:

- ❖ being familiar with the Children's Services (Vic) regulations 32/2020 and Children's Services Act 1996 service policies and constitution, and complaints and grievances policy and procedures
- ❖ identifying, preventing and addressing potential concerns before they become formal complaints/grievances
- ❖ ensuring that the name and telephone number of the Responsible Person to whom complaints and grievances may be addressed are displayed prominently at the main entrance of the service (Regulation 112)
- ❖ ensuring that the address and telephone number of the Regulation Authorised Officer at the DET - QARs are displayed prominently at the main entrance of the service (Regulation 112)
- ❖ advising parents/guardians and any other new members of the complaints and grievances policy and procedures upon enrolment or employment
- ❖ ensuring that this policy is available for inspection at the service at all times (Regulation 112)
- ❖ being aware of, and committed to, the principles of communicating and sharing information with service employees, members and volunteers
- ❖ responding to all complaints and grievances in the most appropriate manner and at the earliest opportunity
- ❖ treating all complainants fairly and equitably
- ❖ providing a Complaints and Grievances Register (refer to Definitions) and ensuring that complaints and grievances are recorded along with outcomes
- ❖ maintaining confidentiality at all times
- ❖ referring notifiable complaints (refer to Definitions), grievances (refer to Definitions) or complaints that are unable to be resolved appropriately and in a timely manner to the Committee of Management
- ❖ informing DET in writing within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (refer to Definitions) (Regulation 119)
- ❖ receiving recommendations from the Committee of Management and taking appropriate action.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- ❖ raising a complaint directly with the person involved, in an attempt to resolve the matter without recourse to the complaints and grievances procedures
- ❖ communicating verbally or written any concerns relating to the management or operation of the service as soon as is practicable
- ❖ raising any unresolved issues or serious concerns directly with the Centre Director, Director or General Manager
- ❖ maintaining complete confidentiality at all times
- ❖ co-operating with requests to meet with the relevant Manager and/or provide relevant information when requested in relation to complaints and grievances.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

Procedures Centre Director who receives a general complaint or complaint:

- ❖ respond to and resolve issues as they arise where practicable
- ❖ maintaining professionalism and integrity at all times
- ❖ informing complainants of the service's Complaints Policy



- ❖ maintaining confidentiality at all times
- ❖ discussing minor complaints directly with the party involved as a first step towards resolution (the parties are encouraged to discuss the matter professionally and openly work together to achieve a desired outcome)
- ❖ inform the Director, Senior Manager or General Manager of the issue/s that have risen and the outcome
- ❖ recording all complaints and grievances in the Complaints and Grievances Register (refer to Definitions)
- ❖ notify the Committee of Management if the complaint escalates and becomes a grievance (refer to Definitions), is a notifiable complaint (refer to Definitions) or is unable to be resolved appropriately in a timely manner
- ❖ providing information as requested by the Committee of Management eg. written reports relating to the grievance
- ❖ working co-operatively with the Committee of Management and DET in any investigations related to Outlets Co-operative Neighbourhood House LTD, its programs or staff.

Centre Director (CEO/Approved Provider) who receives a grievance:

- ❖ listen to the person making the grievance ,maintaining professionalism and integrity at all times
- ❖ inform them you will pass this grievance onto the Committee of Management for investigation
- ❖ recording all complaints and grievances in the Complaints and Grievances Register (refer to Definitions)
- ❖ provide information as requested by the Committee of Management eg. written reports relating to the grievance
- ❖ working co-operatively with the Committee of Management and DET in any investigations related to Outlets Co-operative Neighbourhood House LTD, its programs or staff.

Educators who receive a general complaint or complaint:

- ❖ respond to and resolve issues as they arise where practicable
- ❖ maintaining professionalism and integrity at all times
- ❖ discussing minor complaints directly with the party involved as a first step towards resolution (the parties are encouraged to discuss the matter professionally and openly work together to achieve a desired outcome)
- ❖ inform the Educator – Qualified and the Centre Director of the issue/s that have risen and the outcome

Educators who receive a grievance:

- ❖ listen to the person making the grievance, maintaining professionalism and integrity at all times
 - ❖ inform them you will pass this grievance onto the Educator-Qualified and the Centre Director for investigation
- Educators – Qualified who receive a general complaint or complaint:
- ❖ respond to and resolve issues as they arise where practicable
 - ❖ maintaining professionalism and integrity at all times
 - ❖ discussing minor complaints directly with the party involved as a first step towards resolution (the parties are encouraged to discuss the matter professionally and openly work together to achieve a desired outcome)
 - ❖ inform the Centre Director of the issue/s that have risen and the outcome

Educators - Qualified who receive a grievance:

- ❖ listen to the person making the grievance ,maintaining professionalism and integrity at all times
- ❖ inform them you will pass this grievance onto the Centre Director for investigation

SOURCE

Outlets Co-operative Neighbourhood House LTD – Complaints and Grievance Register

Childrens Services (Vic) Regulations 32/2020

Childrens Services (Vic) Act 1996

Education and Care Services National Regulations National Quality Standard 7

Early Childhood Management Manual

ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au CCCFRestricted



This policy will be reviewed bi-annually unless there are any regulatory or legislative requirements and/or any feedback from staff, parents and the community.

ATTACHMENTS – REFER TO - COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE REGISTER

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Outlets Co-operative Neighbourhood House LTD on

REVIEW DATE: 23/05/2024