

CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION WAIKATO

Early Intervention and Habilitation Provider

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this operational procedure is to outline how parents, visitors and employees may make a complaint about any aspect of our service or the actions of members of our team.

Employees, parents, whānau, and visitors are made aware of information on our notice board, website, as part of your enrolment pack about who to contact if they have a concern or complaint about our service. This Complaints Procedure is available to anyone who wishes to make a complaint.

Complainants are advised that they can contact our local MoE office. However, all complaints should be directed to the Centre Manager in the first instance. The Centre Manager will receive all complaints, make a record and take any appropriate action as required.

Position Statement

We have centre-specific and established processes to engage with parents and whānau, which involves inviting and welcoming input and feedback.

We take concerns and complaints seriously and will investigate in a thorough and transparent manner, reporting back to the complainant our findings and the resulting actions and outcome.

We are committed to positive, supportive and low-key resolution of concerns and complaints.

Issue Outline

Feedback, consultation and review processes are an important part of ongoing service improvement. There is always room for improvement and there may be occasions where people feel they have cause for complaint. It is important to consider each complaint, engage in a fair process, and respond appropriately.

Definition

Concerns are low-level queries or statements by a parent, staff member or other individual, which relates to aspects, processes, or people within a centre. Concerns may very likely be dealt with and resolved by discussion, clarification or simple information. At our centre, we endeavour to resolve any concerns by engaging with the concerned person in the first instance, in a positive and supportive manner. It is important to us to distinguish between concerns and complaints, and we will ascertain that the person who feels upset or uncomfortable is clear whether a concern is raised or a complaint is being made.

A complaint is a more serious statement, where expectations have not been met or acceptable conduct may have been breached. This is more likely to require corrective measures or disciplinary action.

Alignment with Policies

This procedure aligns with the following Centre Policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Employment agreements
- other policies and procedures of our centre as may be relevant to the nature of the complaint.

Procedures

Step	Procedure
1.	<p>Receive a complaint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · If a parent / caregiver or whānau has questions or minor concerns, then they are encouraged to first approach the relevant Teacher or staff member involved. Sometimes seeking clarification is the best approach to resolve minor issues. If the issue is not resolved or further clarification is needed, the Centre Manager should be approached for a possible solution. · If an employee has questions or minor concerns, then they are encouraged to first approach the Centre Manager to resolve any issues. · Concerns and complaints should be raised with the Centre's Management in the first instance <p>If the complaint relates to management or governance of the centre or If the complaint is about the Centre Manager, the complaint may be made to the Trust Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · All concerns may be made verbally. However, all complaints must be in writing. If verbal complaints are received the complainant will be advised that the complaints process will be initiated when the complaint has been received in writing. · All complaints will be referred to the Centre Manager as soon as possible. The written documentation will be kept safe, as it may be referred to at a later stage. · Written complaints will be acknowledged in writing.
2.	<p>Confidentiality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible except where it would breach natural justice. · Maintaining the respect and dignity of employees and complainants is important.
3.	<p>Investigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The complainant will receive reassurance that the complaint will be considered and a response will be given upon conclusion of the investigation. · All complaints will be investigated by the Centre Manager. If the complaint concerns the Centre Manager, the Board / Executive / service provider will undertake the investigation. · If a complaint concerns the safety of children, immediate action is taken. · Some complaints, because of their nature, may involve external agencies (e.g. Teaching Council, Oranga Tamariki). Where this is necessary, the complainant will be informed as soon as possible that one or more external agencies have been involved. Where external agencies are involved (an accepted referral), the Ministry of Education will also be notified.

4.	<p>Inform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · If the complaint concerns a staff member, staff must be told of any likely investigation as soon as the complaint is received. · It is important to keep clear communication with parties involved. · For serious complaints involving staff, strict employment processes are followed. · Throughout all processes, a written record is kept.
5.	<p>Decisions Based on Fact</p> <p>Our investigation process will endeavour to gather all relevant facts before reaching a decision on the cause. We do not subscribe to investigations that focus solely on finding fault with others. We believe that some issues reflect a weakness in our processes, and some reflect the judgement and actions of individuals.</p>
6.	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>We will communicate the conclusion of any complaint investigation to the complainant and any external agency involved.</p>
7.	<p>Principles of Natural Justice</p> <p>Where the complaint concerns the actions of an individual, we will communicate the nature of that complaint to that individual, but we will not disclose the identity of the complainant. We believe in the right of all individuals to be treated with respect and to be given all reasonable opportunities to defend themselves against allegations.</p> <p>That being said, allegations / complaints of a serious nature involving child safety will include the immediate stand down as per the individual employment agreement for allegation/ complaint.</p>
8.	<p>Outcome</p> <p>We will act on the findings of any complaint, in particular where this involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · An improvement or change to our policies and procedures · The training and education of staff · Disciplinary action taken against a staff member, noting the obligations we have under relevant employment contracts and employment law. · Note that where disciplinary action has been taken or is in process with a teaching staff member, we will follow the mandatory reporting requirements of the Teaching Council <p>We will ensure the findings of the complaint investigation feed back into our quality improvement and service review processes.</p> <p>All documentation relating to the complaint will be retained by us for seven years. Any outcome involving disciplinary action against a staff member will be retained on their personnel file as per our Disciplinary Policies.</p>

Relevant Background (including Legislation/Regulation/Licensing references)

Regulation 47 of the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2008/0204/latest/DLM1412501.html>

and GMA1 of the Licensing Criteria for Centre-Based ECE Services

<https://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/licensing-and-regulations/the-regulatory-framework-for-ece/licensing-criteria/centre-based-ece-services/>

Implementation

This procedure is part of the centre's induction for new employees and forms part of the introduction information pack for parents. In addition, information on how to make a complaint is made available at our reception for parents and visitors. Staff are regularly reminded of the complaints procedure at staff meetings and we discuss any complaint trends on these occasions.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually or when there is a significant change in the area of the policy topic.

REVIEW DATE: November 2024

REVIEW DATE CYCLE: November 2027

Centre Manager: _____