

JUNEE PRESCHOOL POLICIES

Complaints Policy

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

Policy Statement

Our Education and Care Service affirms that people have a right to question and influence decisions made and services provided. We take complaints seriously and manage them in a confidential, timely, transparent and meaningful way. We achieve this by:

- ◁ Maintaining the confidentiality of all parties in line with policy and legislative requirements.
- ◁ Acknowledging that the common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties.
- ◁ Acting in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner.
- ◁ Showing respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame.
- ◁ Recognising that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.
- ◁ Complaints will be handled objectively and complainants will not suffer any reprisals from making a complaint.

Goals / What are we going to do?

Our service values the feedback of educators, staff, families and the wider community as a mechanism to support the continuous improvement of our service.

Strategies / How will it be done?

Making a Complaint

Written guidelines detailing complaint procedures are available in our services family handbook. This is also displayed in the foyer for easy reference.

- ◁ Families may make a complaint directly to the child's educator, the Approved Provider or the Nominated Supervisor.
- ◁ Educators will discuss complaints procedures with children and encourage them to raise any issues they have.

JUNEE PRESCHOOL POLICIES

Responsiveness

All complaints will be acknowledged and responded to as soon as practicable. Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and complainants will be kept informed about the progress of their complaint and anticipated timeframes. Allegations of suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or possible victims of crime, will be actioned immediately by urgent referral or reporting to the relevant agency.

Managing a Complaint

Where possible, complaints will be dealt with immediately, by the child's educator as this is usually the person with the closest relationship with the family. If the complaint is about an issue that the educator considers to be outside their control, or the family does not feel they wish to share it with the educator, the complainant will be directed to the appropriate person for their complaint to be resolved.

Where an educator believes they will have to share a confidence with another person in order to resolve an issue, or of the nature of a complaint requires that a third party has to be informed in order to meet legislative requirements, they will inform the family of the need prior to any further discussions on the matter.

- ◀ The complaint will be documented and any legal requirements in relation to the complaint considered, such as the need to notify regulatory authorities.
- ◀ The complainant will be asked to provide information regarding how the situation could be rectified to their satisfaction.
- ◀ If possible, the problem will be resolved immediately. If this is not possible, the complainant will be advised that the issue will be given high priority and dealt with as soon as possible.
- ◀ If the issues are complex the complainant will be asked to put their concerns in writing.
- ◀ Where mediation is required all parties will have the right to agree to the appointment of the mediator.

Notifiable Complaint

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 by the Approved Provider to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)). Written reports 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)

JUNEE PRESCHOOL POLICIES

◁ any other relevant information.

Written notification of complaints must be submitted using the appropriate forms, which can be found on the ACECQA website: www.cecqa.gov.au

Direct Complaints

Families can make a complaint directly to the Regulator Authority where the complaint alleges that:

- ◁ The safety, health or wellbeing of a child or children was or is being compromised while that child or children is or are being educated and cared for by the approved education and care service.
- ◁ The relevant legislation has been contravened.
- ◁ Contact details are available in the family hand book and displayed in the foyer of the service.

Follow-Up and Review

Each complaint will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement. After the complaint or grievance has been dealt with, we will:

- ◁ Analyse the complaint to determine if any policy or procedural changes need to be implemented.
- ◁ The Approved Provider will follow through to determine that complaints and grievances have been successfully resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Families will be contacted to determine if they were satisfied with the way the issue was resolved, and educators' will be consulted about the outcome from an operational viewpoint.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider

- ◁ When a complaint or grievance has been assessed as 'notifiable', the Approved Provider must notify Regulatory Authority within 24 hours.
- ◁ In instances where the complainant reports directly to the Regulatory Authority, the Approved Provider will still have responsibility for investigating and dealing with the complaint or grievance as outlined in this policy, in addition to co-operating with any investigation by the Regulatory Authority.
- ◁ Identifying, preventing and addressing potential concerns before they become formal complaints/grievances.

JUNEE PRESCHOOL POLICIES

- ◁ Ensuring that the name and telephone number of the person to whom complaints and grievances may be addressed are displayed prominently at the main entrance of the service.
- ◁ Ensuring that the address and telephone number of the Regulatory Authority displayed prominently at the main entrance of the service.
- ◁ Advising parents/guardians and any other new members of the Preschool of the complaints and grievances policy and procedures upon enrolment.
- ◁ Ensuring that this policy is available for inspection at the service at all times.
- ◁ Providing a Complaints and Grievances Register.

Nominated Supervisor

- ◁ Responding to and resolving issues as they arise where practicable.
- ◁ Discussing minor complaints directly with the party involved as a first step towards resolution.
- ◁ Informing complainants of the service's complaints and grievances policy recording all complaints and grievances in the complaints and grievances register.
- ◁ Notifying the approved provider if the complaint escalates or is unable to be resolved appropriately in a timely manner.
- ◁ Providing information as requested by the approved provider e.g. Written reports relating to the grievance.
- ◁ Complying with the service's privacy and confidentiality policy and maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- ◁ Working co-operatively with the approved provider, in any investigations related to a complaint made.

Early Childhood Educators

- ◁ Ensure that grievances and complaints are dealt with in accordance with this policy.
- ◁ Report any grievances and complaints to the Nominated Supervisor and maintain all relevant documentation.
- ◁ As requested, support the nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider in the above roles.

Families

- ◁ Raising a complaint directly with the person involved, in an attempt to resolve the matter without recourse to the complaints and grievances procedures.
- ◁ Communicating any concerns relating to the management or operation of the service as soon as is practicable.

JUNEE PRESCHOOL POLICIES

- ◁ Raising any unresolved issues or serious concerns directly with the approved provider, via the nominated supervisor or staff.
- ◁ Maintaining complete confidentiality at all times.
- ◁ Co-operating with requests to provide relevant information when requested in relation to complaints and grievances.

SOURCES

- ◁ ACECQA – www.acecqa.gov.au
- ◁ NSW Ombudsman (2004) 'Effective Complaint Handling'. NSW Ombudsman 3rd Edition 28 February 2017
- ◁ Complaints Management Framework June 2015 – www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/25375/Complaint-management-framework-June-2015.pdf
- ◁ Complaint Handling Tool kit for Community Services Organisations – www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/5813/BR_Complaint-Handling-Kit-CS-CRAMA-Brochure-2013-web.pdf

Related Legislation

- ◁ Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 174(2)(b)
- ◁ Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 168(2) (o) and 176(2)(b)
- ◁ Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
- ◁ Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002
- ◁ Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- ◁ Privacy Regulation 2013

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Policy Review Date May 2023