

# COMPLAINTS HANDLING

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### 1. 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 and ensure the wellbeing of the children in our care.
- Acting in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner.
- Showing respect and understanding of each other's point of view and valuing difference, rather than judging and blaming others.
- Recognising that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.
- Handling complaints objectively and ensuring that complainants do not suffer any reprisals from making a complaint.

### 2. BACKGROUND

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require all Approved Providers to have policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints. Our Complaints Handling policy is child focused and means our children, educators, management, staff, families / carers, and the community can be confident that complaints are taken seriously and addressed effectively.

### 3. GOALS

Our service values the feedback of educators, staff, families / carers and the wider community as a mechanism to support the continuous improvement of our service. Our Complaints Handling policy and procedure are child-focused, in accordance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. All members of our community, including children, have the right to make a complaint in line with this policy.

### 4. STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

#### 3.1 Making a Complaint

- Appendix A describes our process for making complaints.
- The complaint will be documented and a Complaint form will be completed by the complainant where required.
- Children, families, staff and any member of our community may make a complaint directly to their child's educator, the Nominated Supervisor, or the Approved Provider.
- Complaints may be verbal, in person or by telephone, or in writing. The Centre can arrange an interpreter if a member of our community needs one. Complaints can also be made anonymously.

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- All complaints will be documented by the educator or staff member who receives the complaint, by filling in the Complaint Form (Appendix B) and registering the complaint in the Complaints and Allegations Register.
- Educators will discuss how to make a complaint with children and encourage them to raise any issues they have.
- Ensure a Complaints and Allegations Record is completed for any complaints disclosed by children and families are notified of the complaint or allegation being made.

### 3.2 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. Refer to Child Protection Policy for further details and ACECQA for relevant timeframes:  
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications/notification-types-and-timeframes>.

### 3.3 Managing a Complaint

- Where possible, complaints from families 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, the educator will advise the complainant they will pass on the complaint to the Nominate Supervisor and suggest they also raise their complaint with the Nominated Supervisor directly.
- Complaints from staff, will be dealt with in line with the procedures outlined in the complaints and grievances section in the staff handbook.
- If a family does not wish to raise a complaint with their child's educator, they may raise it directly with the Nominated Supervisor.
- Educators or other staff members managing complaints will advise the complainant beforehand if they need to confidentially share information about the complaint with another person to resolve it, or if the nature of the complaint means that a third party needs to be informed in order to meet legislative requirements..
- All complaints will be documented and recorded in the Complaints and Allegations Register.
- For all complaints, our Centre will always:
  - Document the complaint.
  - Consider any legal requirements in relation to the complaint, such as the need to notify regulatory authorities..
  - Ask the complainant if they have any strategies or solutions that they feel could resolve their complaint.
  - Ask the complainant to put their concerns in writing if the issues are complex.
  - Resolve the complaint immediately, if possible. If this is not possible, advise the complainant that the complaint will be given high priority and will be dealt with as soon as possible and a suitable time and place will be organised to discuss the issue.
  - If the issues are complex the complainant will be asked to put their concerns in writing.
  - Seek the agreement of all parties if we need to appoint a mediator.

### 3.4 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)).

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Refer to the Centre's Child Protection Policy.

Complaints, incidents and serious incidents must be notified by the Centre to the Regulatory Authority through the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA IT System). This requires the Nominated Supervisor to log in to access the portal where you can select the incident or complaint type and enter the required information.

Approved Providers are required to notify the Regulatory Authority of a complaint that alleges:

- A serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by a service.
- The National Law and/or National Regulations have been contravened.

A serious incident can include:

- Any incident where you reasonably believe that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the service.
- Any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the service.
- The death of a child while that child is being educated and cared for at the service or following an incident while that child was being cared for by the service.
- A serious injury or trauma while the child is being educated and cared for, which:
  - Required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or
  - The child attended or should have attended a hospital.
- Any incident involving serious illness at the service, where the child attended, or should have attended a hospital (e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis).
- Any circumstance where a child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for.
- Any circumstance where a child appears to have been taken or removed from the service premises by someone not authorised to do this.
- Any circumstance where a child is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the service premises or any part of the premises.
- Any emergency for which emergency services attended. NOTE: It does not mean an incident where emergency services attended as a precaution.

A serious injury, illness or trauma includes but is not limited to:

- Amputation
- Anaphylactic reaction requiring hospitalisation
- Asthma requiring hospitalisation
- Broken bone/Fractures
- Bronchiolitis
- Burns
- Diarrhoea requiring hospitalisation
- Epileptic seizures
- Head injuries
- Measles
- Meningococcal infection
- Sexual assault
- Witnessing violence or a frightening event

### 3.5 Direct Complaints

Families can make a complaint directly to the Regulatory Authority where the complaint alleges that: safety, health or wellbeing of a child or children was or is being compromised



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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 displayed in our foyer.

### 3.6 Follow-Up and Review

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

- Analyse the complaint to determine if any policy or procedural changes need to be implemented.
- Follow through to determine that complaints have been successfully resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Families will be contacted to determine if they were satisfied with the way the complaint was resolved, and educators will be consulted about the outcome from an operational viewpoint.
- If a complainant is still dissatisfied with the way a complaint was managed or its resolution, they can ask for the complaint to be reviewed by the Approved Provider.

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### 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<b>Role</b>	<b>Authority / Responsibility For</b>
<b>Approved Provider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that our Centre meets its obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Notifying the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of any complaint that is 'notifiable'.</li> <li>• When needed, supporting the Nominated supervisor in investigating and dealing with complaints in line with this policy and cooperating with any investigation by the Regulatory Authority in instances where the complainant reports directly to the Regulatory Authority.</li> <li>• Supporting the Nominated Supervisor in identifying, preventing and addressing potential concerns before they become formal complaints.</li> <li>• Ensuring that this policy and our Centre's processes and activities for managing complaints are child focused.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Nominated Supervisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to and resolving issues as they arise where practicable.</li> <li>• Identifying, preventing, and addressing potential concerns before they become formal complaints.</li> <li>• Investigating and resolving complaints in line with this policy.</li> <li>• Informing complainants of the Centre's Complaints Handling policy.</li> <li>• Recording all complaints in the Complaints Handling Register.</li> <li>• Implementing procedures for managing complaints and ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities under this policy.</li> <li>• Notifying the Approved Provider if the complaint escalates or is unable to be resolved appropriately in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Providing information as requested by the Approved Provider e.g. Written reports relating to the complaint.</li> <li>• Complying with the Centre's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and always maintaining confidentiality.</li> <li>• Working cooperatively with the Approved Provider, in any investigations related to a complaint made.</li> <li>• Ensuring that the address and telephone number of the Regulatory Authority is displayed prominently at the main entrance of our Centre.</li> <li>• Ensuring that the name and telephone number of the person to contact to make a complaint are displayed prominently at the main entrance of our Centre.</li> <li>• Advising parents / carers and any other members of our community of the Complaints Handling policy and procedures upon enrolment.</li> <li>• Ensuring that this policy is available to read at the service at all times.</li> <li>• Providing a Complaints and Allegations Register.</li> </ul>
<b>Early Childhood Educators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with complaints in line with this policy.</li> <li>• Listening to complainants respectfully and attempting to resolve complaints positively.</li> <li>• Reporting any complaints to the Nominated Supervisor and maintaining all relevant documentation.</li> <li>• Supporting the Nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider in the above roles as requested.</li> </ul>
<b>Families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where appropriate, raising a complaint directly with the person involved, in an attempt to resolve the matter without recourse to the Complaints Handling Policy.</li> <li>• Communicating any concerns relating to the management or operation of the service as soon as is practicable.</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If their child/ren has made a complaint, supporting their child throughout the complaint resolution process.</li> <li>• Raising any unresolved issues or serious concerns directly with the Approved Provider, via the Nominated Supervisor or staff.</li> <li>• Always maintaining complete confidentiality.</li> <li>• If asked, providing relevant information about complaints where required.</li> </ul>
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### 6. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements. The Centre will review this Policy every two years unless we identify practice gaps that means we need to review it earlier.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be able to, and encouraged to, be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, our Centre 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.

### 7. LEGISLATION AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care 2011
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
- Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002
- Privacy Regulation 2013
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1
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### 8. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

- Community Early Learning Australia – [www.cela.org.au](http://www.cela.org.au)
- ACECQA – [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- ACECQA: Using Complaints to Support Continuous Improvement - [QA7\\_UsingComplaintsToSupportContinuousImprovement.pdf \(acecqa.gov.au\)](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/qa7_using_complaints_to_support_continuous_improvement.pdf)
- Australian and New Zealand Standard Guidelines for complaint management in organisations – AS/NZS 10002:2014
- Staffing handbook
- Commonwealth Ombudsman: Better practice complaint handling guide - [Better-Practice-Complaint-Handling-Guide-February-2023.pdf \(ombudsman.gov.au\)](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/better-practice-complaint-handling-guide-february-2023.pdf)
- Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people [Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people \(childsafety.gov.au\)](http://www.childsafety.gov.au/complaint-handling-guide-upholding-the-rights-of-children-and-young-people)
- ACECQA: Dealing with Complaints Policy Guidelines - [www.acecqa.gov.au/media/31941](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/media/31941)



STYLES STREET  
Children's Community Long Day Care

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- NSW Ombudsman: Effective complaint handling guidelines - [https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/131096/Effective-complaint-handling-guidelines-Third-edition.pdf](https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/131096/Effective-complaint-handling-guidelines-Third-edition.pdf)

Policy adopted: 10 November 2023

For review: November 2025

## COMPLAINTS HANDLING

### APPENDIX A: PROCESS FOR MANAGING COMPLAINTS

1. Children, families, educators, staff or any other members of our community may make a complaint about aspects of our service. No one will be disadvantaged in any way as a result making a complaint.
2. Complaints may be written or verbal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, complaints can be sent to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.  
Send written complaints to:  
*Styles Street Children's Community Long Day Care Centre Incorporated*  
*62-64 Styles Street*  
*Leichhardt, NSW 2040*
3. Verbal complaints may be made to an educator, teacher or the Nominated Supervisor or any other member of staff, in person or over the phone.
4. The Styles Street educator or other staff member who receives the complaint will document it by filling in the Complaint form and adding it to the Complaints and Allegations Register.
5. Simple complaints are investigated and resolved by the person who receives the complaint. More complex complaints will be forwarded to the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint. This can include the Nominated Supervisor and/or the Approved Provider.
6. Styles Street may request information from other members of our community as part of investigating and resolving a complaint. If we need to involve children as part of investigating and resolving a complaint, we will always do so in line with the *Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people*.
7. Styles Street will arrange a mediator if parties to a complaint cannot agree on an acceptable outcome. All parties must agree to the appointment of a mediator.
8. All complaints are managed confidentially. Any educator or staff member involved in handling complaints will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to know. Complainants will be advised beforehand if any information about the complaint needs to be disclosed to others.
9. Once the outcomes or resolutions have been decided on, everyone involved in the original complaint will be advised of the outcome. This will include any improvement actions or activities Styles Street will do as a result.
10. Complainants may ask for a review if they are unhappy with how a complaint was managed or the outcome. Complainants can ask for a review by the Approved Provider.
11. All actions Styles Street takes to resolve a complaint, and the outcome of each complaint, will be documented in the Complaints and Allegations Register.
12. Styles Street will notify the Regulatory Authority of any complaint made to us that alleges a breach of regulation within 24 hours.