

## SWISH Education

### Background

---

Feedback from families, educators, staff and the wider community is fundamental in creating a Service that meets regulations, meets the needs of enrolled children and their families, and continues to improve the quality of education and care it provides to children.

It is inevitable that feedback will include differing opinions, occasionally resulting in complaints.

### Policy statement

---

This Policy details the Service's procedures for receiving and managing informal and formal complaints. Parents and staff therefore can lodge a legitimate grievance in the knowledge that it will be managed diligently and confidentially.

### Strategies and practices

---

- The Service's processes for airing concerns/complaints are communicated to families at enrolment.
- The email address and telephone number of the Service's Approved Provider and, if relevant, Management Company, together with the contact details of the Regulatory Authority are displayed in the entrance of the Service, and are also listed in the Parent Handbook.
- The Service prioritises open, respectful and confidential exchange of information between the Service and its families. Parents are provided with many avenues for verbal and written communication about the Service's operations. Parents are informed when any of their feedback has led to improvements in the way the Service operates. Refer to the Service's *Interacting with Families Policy*.
- The Nominated Supervisor models respect and a problem-solving approach to the receipt of grievances and complaints, and engenders this across the Service.
- Staff/educators, students and volunteers are informed of the Service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* before commencing at the Service and are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement to strictly adhere to that Policy.
- At all times the parents' right to air a grievance will be respected and no discrimination will be applied to either the family or child/ren as the result of the grievance.
- Parents are encouraged to raise informally with the child's primary educator or the Nominated Supervisor any concerns they have about the daily care of their child.
- Formal complaints can be raised verbally with the Nominated Supervisor who will document the complaint clearly and objectively on the Service's Grievance and Complaint Form. If the grievance is about the Nominated Supervisor, the matter can be directed to the Approved Provider.

# Grievance and Complaint

## Procedure for formal written complaint

- Complaints are to be submitted in writing using the Service's Grievance and Complaint Form. Information requested on the form includes the:
  - Name of the person making the complaint
  - Postal address and/or telephone number of the person making the complaint
  - Details of the complaint
  - Details of any witnesses.
- The complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. The Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider or delegated staff member involved in investigating the complaint will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint. If information specific to the complaint needs to be disclosed to others during its resolution, the complainant will be informed prior to this occurring.
- The complaint will be entered into the Service's Grievance and Complaint Register, and written acknowledgment that the complaint has been received sent to the complainant.
- The Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider will investigate the complaint in an equitable, transparent and fair manner, and document the findings. Investigations involve consulting with the relevant stakeholders (including any person who may be the subject of the complaint) and reviewing documentation such as attendance records, accident reports and the Service's Policies.
- Actions to address the complaint will be determined, and the complainant notified in writing of those actions.
- Should the complaint made to the Service allege that the relevant legislation has been contravened or that the safety, health or wellbeing of a child or children was or is compromised while that child or children is or are being educated and cared for at the Service, the Regulatory Authority will be notified within 24 hours of the complaint being lodged.
- When an issue cannot be resolved at the Service, the complainant can contact the Regulatory Authority.
- The same processes as those set out above apply to educators and staff in submitting formal complaints about any aspect of the Service's operations. However, staff grievances are dealt with under its Staff Grievance and Complaint processes.

## Responsibilities of parents

---

- To raise issues and concerns in a timely manner using the processes outlined in this Policy.

## Procedure and forms

---

- Confidentiality Agreement
- Grievance and Complaint Form
- Grievance and Complaint Register

# Grievance and Complaint

## Links to other policies

---

- Educators Professional and Ethics Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Policy and Procedures Review Policy

## Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

---

Regs	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
	173	Prescribed information to be displayed
	176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

QA	4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
	6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
	6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
	6.1.3	Current information about the service is available to families
	7.1.1	Appropriate governance is in place to manage the service
	7.1.2	The induction of educators is, co-ordinators and staff members is comprehensive
	7.1.3	Every effort is made to promote continuity of educators and co-ordinators at the service
	7.2.3	An effective self-assessment and quality improvement process is in place
	7.3.1	Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements
	7.3.3	The Regulatory Authority is notified of any relevant changes to the operation of the service, of any serious incidents and of any complaints which allege a breach of legislation
	7.3.4	Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner
	7.3.5	Services practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and are reviewed regularly

## Sources, further reading and useful websites

---

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011

## Sources, further reading and useful websites

---

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority – <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/> accessed 26 December 2017
- Bhatthela, M., Dunn, L., Tregillgas, T. (2008) *Ask a child care adviser (sic): Managing challenging issues with families*. [http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/ACCA\\_Managing\\_Challenging\\_Issues\\_Sep08.pdf](http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/ACCA_Managing_Challenging_Issues_Sep08.pdf) accessed 26 December 2017
- Department of Education and Training (Victorian State Government). (2017). *Parent Complaints - Child Care or Children's Services* <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complaineec.aspx> accessed 26 December 2017
- Owens, A. (n.d.). *Managing complaints*. [http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/factsheets/qias\\_factsheet\\_5.pdf](http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/factsheets/qias_factsheet_5.pdf) accessed 26 December 2017
- ACECQA. (2017). *Reporting requirements about children*. <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/reporting-requirements-about-children> accessed 26 December 2017

# Grievance and Complaint

## Policy Review

---

The Service encourages staff and parents to be involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

## Version Control

---

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018. Service to modify policies to its specific needs.	
2	1 May 2018	Rebecca Evans	Updated to support SWISH procedures.	1 May 2019