



Complaints Handling Policy

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1. Aim

Gymea Community Preschool 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.
- Gymea Preschool recognises that feedback is a mechanism to support the continuous improvement of our service.

2. Visibility

- Information about how and where to complain is publicized through a variety of service delivery points including enrolment information, handbooks, website, and in the front foyer.
- Staff are made aware of complaint handling processes and the procedure to escalate these when necessary.
- The information about how to complain identifies appropriate alternative external parties the complainant can go to with their complaint, such as:-
 - The regulatory authority via
 - Complete a [complaint form](#)
 - Call 1800 619 113
 - Email ececd@det.nsw.edu.au
 - Approved provider.
 - NSW Ombudsman

3. Accessibility



- Information about the complaints process is available in a variety of forms of communication and formats to meet the needs of the families. This includes the parent handbook, signage, on our website and through digital communication.
- 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.
- The address and telephone number of the Regulatory Authority is displayed prominently at the main entrance of the service.
- Parents/guardians and any other new members of Gymea Community Preschool are advised of the complaints and grievances policy and procedures upon enrolment.
- This policy is available for inspection at the service at all times.
- Complaints and all supporting documents provided during a complaint resolution or investigation process are accepted in a number of different ways including in person, over the phone, and in writing via email and letter, and, where appropriate, access to translating and interpreting services for non-English speaking people will be provided.
- Complaint handling systems will be accessible to members of the public who may require additional assistance such as First Nations Peoples, children and young people, people with disabilities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Educators will discuss complaints procedures with children and encourage them to raise any issues they have.

4. Responsiveness

- Guidance is provided to staff on how to respond to and prioritise complaints so that they are dealt with in a timely manner. Opportunities for this are available through policies and procedures, mentoring sessions and staff appraisals.
- Staff are encouraged to identify, prevent and address potential concerns before they become formal complaints/grievances.
- Staff are made aware of internal complaint handling processes through staff induction during initial employment and through policies and procedures.
- Complaints are acknowledged promptly. Complainants and, if applicable, the person who is the subject of the complaint, are kept informed of progress and the outcome of the complaint.
- Complaints are addressed promptly in order of urgency and parties involved are made aware of any target timelines for resolving complaints.
- When complaints are made directly to an educator, and they are within the educator's capacity to be solved immediately, educators are empowered to do so. Educators are also aware of, and have access to, the nominated supervisor who has the authority to resolve complaints.
- When responses to complaints require approaches outside of the staff skill set, professional advice and support will be attained. This may be required for people with disabilities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Staff are trained to identify matters that may require escalation to appropriate



agencies, such as the office of the Regulatory Authority, Office of the Children's Guardian and the police.

5. Objectivity and Fairness

- The Nominated Supervisor and Approved provider will deal with all complaints on their merit in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. They will ensure that any conflicts of interest are declared.
- The Nominated Supervisor and Approved provider will ensure the complainant and, if applicable, the person who is the subject of the complaint, is given sufficient opportunity to present their position, to comment on any adverse findings and is provided with reasons for decisions on the outcome of the complaint.
- Any complaint relating to a circumstance at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the service will be immediately reported to the Approved Provider who is responsible for notifying the regulatory department within 7 days of the complaint. This is done through the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA IT System).
- Any complaint alleging that a serious incident has occurred or is occurring at the education and care service, or the National Law has been contravened (refer to Serious Incidents, regulation 12), are immediately reported to the Approved Provider who is responsible for notifying the regulatory departments within 24 hours of the complaint. This is done through the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA IT System).
- 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.
- The nominated supervisor and administration officer will appropriate guidance or training, including for dealing with unreasonable conduct by the complainant or the subject of the complaint.

6. Confidentiality

The personal information of the complainant and any people who are the subject of a complaint will be kept confidential and only used for the purposes of addressing the complaint and any follow up actions. The service's privacy policy is adhered to at all times.

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.



7. Remedy

If a complaint is upheld, the preschool will be responsible for providing a remedy. The complainant will be provided reasons for decisions relating to remedies. Educators will be empowered to provide these remedies at the appropriate level.

8. 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
- Educators' will be consulted about the outcome from an operational viewpoint.

Unresolved complaints can be appealed through the Approved Provider.

9. Accountability

Complaints are documented using *Attachment 2: Complaint Action Plan* and stored in the Complaints and Grievances Register. This register is kept in a secure and confidential file. Depending on the nature of the complaint, they will be kept for the required time under the National Regulations.

10. Complaints investigation and resolution process

The essential steps in investigating and resolving a complaint are outlined in *Attachment One: "Dealing with complaints procedure"*. *Attachment 2: Complaint Action Plan*, ensures that correct procedures are followed and recorded throughout the resolution process.

11. Links to Relevant Standards and Frameworks

QA 6	.1.1	families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
QA7	.1	governance supports the operation of a quality service.

12. Links to Regulations, Law and Legislation

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011): 168(2)(o) and 176(2)(b)

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 174 (2)(b)

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)

Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Privacy Regulation 2013

13. Sources

[ACECQA](#)

NSW Ombudsman (2004) 'Effective Complaint Handling'. NSW Ombudsman 3rd Edition 28 February 2017

[WA Ombudsman – Effective handling of complains made to your organisation](#)

[Complaints Management Framework June 2015](#)

[Complaint Handling Toolkit for Community Services Organisations](#)

[Using Complaints to Support Continuous Improvement](#)

CELA-Community Early Learning Australia.

14. 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 24 months.

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.

15. Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Next review	Approved By	Amendment
	Feb 2018	Feb 2020	Riccia Brown	
	May 2020	May 2022	Riccia Brown	Attachment one created New formatting with information distributed below new headings. Sources and standards updated Training and guidance to be provided to front facing staff. Accessibility added for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
	MARCH 2023	March 2025	ROCHELLE HEWETT	Added information regarding external complaint parties.