

# A-14 Complaints

Epping Heights OSHC.

## NQS

QA. 5.2.2	Self-regulation
QA. 6.1	Supportive relationships with families
QA. 6.1.1	Engagement with the service
QA. 6.1.2	Parents views are respected
QA. 6.1.3	Families are supported
QA. 7.1.2	Management systems
QA. 7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities

## National Regulations

Reg. 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Reg. 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Reg. 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Reg. 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
Reg. 173	Prescribed information to be displayed
Reg. 176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

## My Time, Our Place

LO. 1	Children feel safe, secure, and supported
LO. 5	Children are effective communicators
	Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes

## Policy Statement

We believe that families and their children play an important role in the Centre and we value their comments. We aim to ensure that families and their children feel free to communicate any concerns they have in relation to the Centre, educators, Management, programs, safety or policies without fearing negative consequences, and that they are made fully aware of the procedures to do this. The Centre will provide a safe space for a family or a child who wishes to raise concerns or make a complaint. All complaints and concerns will be treated with discretion and confidentiality with a view to resolving any concerns and improving the quality of the service. Where there is a legal requirement to do so, all reporting requirements will be fulfilled. Complaints will be managed with consideration given to procedural fairness, paramountcy principle and the unique circumstances of individual families and staff members.

## Related Policies

- EPPING HEIGHTS OSHC Policy A-4: Enrolment
- EPPING HEIGHTS OSHC Policy A-11: Maintenance of Records
- EPPING HEIGHTS OSHC Policy A-12: Policy Development and Review

- EPPING HEIGHTS OSHC Policy A-15: Role of Management Committee
- EPPING HEIGHTS OSHC Policy A-17: Privacy and Confidentiality
- EPPING HEIGHTS OSHC Policy C-12: Communication
- EPPING HEIGHTS OSHC Policy D-14: Reportable Conduct
- EPPING HEIGHTS OSHC Policy D-22: Child Protection – Mandatory Reporting

### **Procedure**

We understand a family's right to share any concerns they may have. We will work with a family to understand their complaint through effective communication and then work to resolve the complaint efficiently.

A complaint can be raised informally or formally. It can consist of anything which makes them unhappy with the service provided by the centre.

All complaints and grievances are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly when required. The Centre ensures all complaints and concerns in regard to the nature of the service are taken into account in relation to policy development and review (see A-12 Policy Development and Review Policy).

Information about complaints handling procedures will be provided to families on enrolment as part of the Parent Handbook and will be made available upon request. The name and telephone number of the person at the Centre, to whom complaints may be addressed (i.e. Nominated Supervisor for minor concerns, or Parent Committee President for complaints of a more serious nature), will be on display as required under Regulation 173.

If a family has a minor complaint or comment about the service, they are encouraged to discuss this with the Nominated Supervisor in charge who will arrange a time to discuss their concern with the parent aiming to resolve the issue at the time of discussion. Where a resolution is found, the complaint and resolution will be presented to the Management Committee at the next Committee Meeting. Where the complaint is of a more serious matter, or involves the Nominated Supervisor, the complaint should be directed in writing to the Parent Committee President. Educators will ensure that all confidential conversations with families will take place in a quiet area away from other children, other parents, or educators not involved (see A-17 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy). The outdoor area may be used for these discussions.

Complaints alleging that the safety, health or well-being of a child was, or is, being compromised, or that the law has been breached, must be notified to the Regulatory Authority within 24hrs of receipt. This notification must be made by the Approved Provider, using NQAITS. As employees of EPPING HEIGHTS OSHC are classified as Mandatory Reporters, there may also be reporting obligations to Department of Communities and Justice, NSW Police and the Office of the Children's Guardian.

Complaints that relate to allegations of conduct of a staff member towards a child must be immediately reported to the Nominated Supervisor/Director or Assistant Director. The allegations must be assessed, and consideration given to whether the alleged behaviour amounts to 'Reportable Conduct' under the Children's Guardian Act 2019. The Head of Relevant Entity, which is the Director, must report this to the Office of the Children's Guardian (within 7 days) and initiate an investigation.  
(See Policy C-14: Reportable Conduct)

Where the complaint involved a concern that a child may be at Risk of Significant Harm, and that concern was established during the course of their work the staff member is considered a Mandatory Reporter under the Children and Young Person (care and protection) Act 1998 and is legislated to report these concerns to the Department of Communities and Justice. Before reporting these concerns the staff member should notify the Nominated Supervisor of these concerns and consult the Mandatory Reporter Guide to determine if a report is required.

All complaints will be recorded on a Parent Suggestion / Comment / Concern Form, either by the family, or staff member notified of the complaint. Parents will be encouraged to make suggestions about strategies or solutions they feel would help to resolve their issue. The Nominated Supervisor must consider any risks that present based on the complaint brought forward and undertake a risk assessment if relevant. The form will record resolutions in addition to the complaint, and a copy will be provided to the parent, while the original will be kept at the centre. If the complaint is not handled to the family's satisfaction at this level, then the matter should be put to the Management Committee in writing, addressed to the Parent Committee President.

The Management Committee will discuss the issue with the Nominated Supervisor and develop a strategy for resolving the problem. The family will receive a written response from the Nominated Supervisor of the EPPING HEIGHTS OSHC. If the family is not satisfied with the outcome, a meeting organised with delegated Committee Members, the Nominated Supervisor and parent to resolve the problem. Educators will be informed of any relevant issues they need to address or be aware of.

If any complaint cannot be resolved internally, external options will be offered such as resolution or mediation by an unbiased third party

### **Complaints Handling Procedures for Children**

It is important that children have the opportunity to voice their concerns and that these are acknowledged, respected, and considered.

Children will be provided with clear information as to whom they can raise concerns with, and what will happen when they do this. Children will be encouraged to make suggestions and will be provided with opportunities to do so, through both written and verbal avenues to allow for their developmental abilities and skills.

### **Sources**

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Privacy Act 1988
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
- Network of Community Activities Factsheet – 'Complaints/Grievance Procedures'
- Network of Community Activities Factsheet – 'Staying Calm'
- Children's Guardian Act 2019
- Children and Young Person (care and protection) Act 1998

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