

ST JOSEPH'S PRESCHOOL

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS POLICY



St Joseph's School
PORT LINCOLN
In all things love

Policy Statement

We recognise that families, staff, and the community need to feel confident that any concerns or issues they may raise will be handled promptly and professionally. This policy ensures that all grievances (complaints) are investigated in a timely, transparent, thorough and impartial manner, and that affected parties are advised of the outcome and their rights of appeal.

Background

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints. Our dealing with complaints policy means our staff, management, families and carers can be confident that complaints and grievances are taken seriously and addressed effectively.

NQS

6.1.1	Engagement with the service - Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
7.1.2	Management systems - Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
7.2.1	Continuous improvement - There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.

National Law

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

National Regulations

Regs	12	Meaning of serious incident
	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
	173	Prescribed information to be displayed
	175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
	176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority



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Related Policies

- Educator and Management Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Managing Breaches and Complaints/Grievances

All breaches of our Code of Conduct (including corruption, mal-administration and waste of resources) and complaints or grievances from educators, staff, children, visitors and volunteers associated with the workplace will be managed in line with St Joseph's School Grievance Policy. This includes incidents of bullying, discrimination and harassment at the Service. Our Service takes any incident of (alleged) bullying, discrimination or harassment very seriously because it can cause significant health and wellbeing issues for employees.

Educators and staff will also be attuned to complaints from children and will support them, and where appropriate their parents/guardians, to access and navigate our grievance/complaint process where this is reasonable. This includes for all complaints where a child alleges directly or indirectly their safety and wellbeing has been or could be harmed, including through the inappropriate behaviour of an adult or another child at the service, if not already implementing the procedures in the Child Protection Policy.

Grievances can occur in all workplaces and handling them properly is important for maintaining a safe, healthy, harmonious and productive work environment. Documented grievance procedures are important because:

- staff and visitors need to know a process exists for receiving and managing grievances and complaints fairly, impartially, promptly and thoroughly.
- they help to ensure small issues or problems do not escalate.
- supervisors and managers need to be aware of issues causing conflict.
- documentation provides evidence and a record of the grievance and the outcome.
- complaints facilitate continuous improvement of Service operations.

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure all complaints are investigated in line with this Policy and Procedure, and that the name of the Complaints Officer is clearly displayed near the front entrance. The Complaints Officers are the Nominated Supervisor, Director or Work Health and Safety Co-ordinator.



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Privacy and Confidentiality

Where possible and safe to do so, the identity of the complainant will be kept confidential as will the identity of any employee or volunteer who is subject to a complaint. Where it's not possible to properly investigate a complaint without identifying the complainant, the Complaints Officer will advise the complainant of this and will not proceed if the complainant does not wish to be identified unless not investigating the complaint may pose a serious risk to the safety or wellbeing of children or adults at the Service, or a resolution to the complaint is necessary to ensure an effective and harmonious working environment.

Likewise, the identity of any employee or volunteer who is the subject of a complaint will not be revealed unless this is absolutely necessary to properly investigate the complaint, or to ensure a safe, harmonious environment for adults and children at the service. Where complaints are made against employees or volunteers, the Director or Nominated Supervisor will provide support which is appropriate in the circumstances.

Outcomes may include:

- an apology and a commitment that certain behaviour will not be repeated (monitoring this over time)
- education and training in relevant laws, policies or procedures (such as bullying awareness, leadership skills)
- assistance in locating relevant counselling services
- disciplinary procedures including a verbal or written warning, termination of employment or transfer to a different position at the Service
- ensuring any inequality or inequity is remedied
- providing closer supervision
- modifying Service policies and procedures
- developing new policies and procedures.

Outcomes will take into consideration relevant industrial relations principles and guidelines and make provision for procedural fairness. The Director or Nominated Supervisor will consider:

- the number of complaints (or breaches)
- the opportunities given to adhere to a policy or procedure and/or change behaviour.
- the opportunities given to respond to the allegations.
- the seriousness of the complaint (or breach), and whether it impacted the safety and welfare of children, other employees, volunteers or visitors.
- whether a policy, procedure or complaint is reasonable.



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Complaints that must be notified to Regulatory Authority

The Director or Nominated Supervisor will notify the regulatory authority through the online NQA ITS:

- within 24 hours of any complaints alleging that a serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child was or is at the service
- within 24 hours of any complaints that the National Law has been breached
- within 7 days of any allegation that physical or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is at the service.

Sources

Education and Care Services National Regulations

National Quality Standard

Early Years Learning Framework

Dealing with Employee Work-related Concerns and Grievances Policy and Guidelines: NSW DPC

Review

The policy and our code of conduct will be reviewed annually by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties