



Cheltenham Community Centre Early Learning Childcare

E11. Parental Complaints

1. Policy

- 1.1 This policy will outline guidelines for receiving and dealing with complaints and grievances at CCC and procedures to be followed in investigating complaints and grievances.
- 1.2 Cheltenham Community Centre (CCC) Children's Services is committed to:
 - a. Having a clear process to voice/lodge a concern or complaint about the service or individuals involved in the service
 - b. Providing an environment of mutual respect and open communication, where the expression of opinions is encouraged
 - c. Complying with all legislative and statutory requirements
 - d. Dealing with disputes, complaints and complainants with fairness and equity
 - e. Tracking and analysing grievances to help improve systems, procedures and policies within the Centre, and
 - f. Maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- 1.3 This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Early Childhood Educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enroll or have already enrolled at CCC.
- 1.4 In order to assess whether the values and purposes of this policy have been achieved, we will:
 - a. Welcome feedback from everyone affected by this policy regarding its effectiveness
 - b. Monitor the implementations, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
 - c. Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
 - d. Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required, and
 - e. Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

2 Procedure

- 2.1 Staff will deal with all complaints/concerns in a confidential manner, in compliance with the service's Confidentiality Policy and Guidelines.
- 2.2 Complaints relating to parents or staff may be made verbally or by email to the Early Years Coordinator. This will be recorded in the Customer Feedback Report.
- 2.3 Complaints lodged in writing must be signed and directed to the Early Years Coordinator.
- 2.4 Educators have the right to seek assistance from a support person when responding to a complaint.

- 2.5 All Educator-related complaints will be handled by two authorised personnel and a record of interview completed. If requested by either party an independent person may be used to act as a mediator.
- 2.6 The Educator must sign the interview, and both the complainant and staff member are informed of the outcome in writing.
- 2.7 Every 6 months complaints are analysed to identify trends and determine actions to be taken.
- 2.8 The Parental Complaints Policy will be displayed for public viewing, including the name and telephone number of the Responsible Person to whom complaints and grievances may be addressed, along with the address and telephone number of the Authorised Officer at the DET regional office.
- 2.9 Parents/guardians and any other new members of CCC will be advised of the complaints and grievances policy and procedures upon enrolment/commencement of employment.
- 2.10 Where possible the Early Years Coordinator and Educators will identify, prevent and address potential concerns before they become formal complaints/grievances. For general complaints, parties are encouraged to discuss the matter openly and work together to achieve a desired outcome.

3 Legislation and regulations

- 3.1 Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:
 - *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*
 - *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
 - *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 174(2)(b)*
 - *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 168(2)(o) and 176(2)(b)*
 - *Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)*
 - *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management*
 - *Standard 7.3: Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service*
 - *Element 7.3.4: Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner.*
 - *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
 - *Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 (Cth)*
 - *Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017 (Cth)*
 - *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*
 - *Privacy Regulations 2013(Cth)*
- 3.2 The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:
 - Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
 - Commonwealth Legislation - Federal Register of Legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.au>

4 Definitions

- 4.1 **Complaint:** An expression of displeasure, which includes any verbal or written complaint directly related to the children's service (includes general and notifiable). This excludes complaints relating to staff industrial or employment matters, occupational health and safety matters (unless related to the safety of the children) and issues related to the legal business entity, such as the incorporated association or cooperative.

- 4.2 **Dispute resolution procedure:** The method used to resolve complaints, disputes or matters of concern through an agreed resolution process.
- 4.3 **General complaint:** A general complaint may address any aspect of the service e.g. a lost clothing item or the service's fees. Services do not have to inform DET, but the complaint must be dealt with as soon as is practicable to avoid escalation of the issue.
- 4.4 **Grievance:** A grievance is a formal statement of complaint that cannot be addressed immediately and involves matters of a more serious nature e.g. the service is in breach of a policy, or the service did not meet the care expectations of a family.
- 4.5 **Mediator:** A person (neutral party) who attempts to reconcile differences between disputants.
- 4.6 **Notifiable complaint:** A complaint that alleges a breach of the Act or Regulation, or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised. Any complaint of this nature must be reported by the Approved Provider to the secretary of DET within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)). If the Approved Provider is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact DET for confirmation. Written reports to DET must include:
- details of the event or incident
 - the name of the person who initially made the complaint
 - if appropriate, the name of the child concerned and the condition of the child, including a medical or incident report (where relevant)
 - contact details of a nominated representative of the Approved Provider/Board of Management
 - any other relevant information.

Written notification of complaints must be submitted via ACECQA's online portal NQA-ITS using the appropriate forms, which can be found on the ACECQA website: www.acecqa.gov.au

- 4.7 **Serious incident:** An incident resulting in the death of a child, or an injury, trauma or illness for which the attention of a registered medical practitioner, emergency services or hospital is sought or should have been sought. This also includes an incident in which a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, is removed from the service in contravention of the Regulations or is mistakenly locked in/out of the service premises (Regulation 12). A serious incident should be documented in an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record (sample form available on the ACECQA website) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. The Regulatory Authority (DET) must be notified within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Regulation 176(2)(a)). Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in Regulation 183.

5 Sources, related policies and records

5.1 Sources

- ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Department of Education and Training (DET) – Regional Office details are available under 'Contact Us' on the DET website: www.education.vic.gov.au
- ELAA Early Childhood Management Manual: www.elaa.org.au
- National Quality Framework
- National Quality Standard
- Victorian Early Years Learning Framework

5.2 Services policies

- Behaviour Guidance

- Childcare Code of conduct
- Child Safe and Wellbeing
- Dropping and picking up of children
- Fees
- Governance and Management
- Interactions with Children
- Workplace health and safety
- Confidentiality policy and guidelines
- Inclusion and Equity
- Child safe environment
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness

Related Documents

- CCC Childcare Services Parent Information Booklet
- CCC Complaints Procedure (also displayed in the childcare room)

5.3 Records

- Customer Feedback Report
- Formal letter of complaint
- Record of interview (for formal complaints)
- Letter stating the outcome of the interview

Revision History

Date	Revision	Revised by
10/10/2013	Created	Tammy Rowed
20/10/2020	Updated	Leanne Lee-Ack
25/10/2020	Reviewed for consistency with CCC Policy & Procedure Manual	Catriona O'Neill
11/11/2024	Reviewed & Updated	Leanne Lee-Ack
29/08/2025	Reviewed and updated	Leanne Lee-Ack