

Dealing with complaints

OSHC Policy & Procedure

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1. Policy

1.1 Policy Statement

This policy outlines the principles for submitting student feedback within and external to the Berry Street Yooralla OSHC Service (“OSHC Service”) and for seeking and handling student feedback within the OSHC Service. This will ensure that feedback helps the OSHC Service to understand and address risks and issues, recognise and share good practice, refine and improve how we deliver our services and ensure safety and wellbeing of students and staff.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide transparency about how student-related feedback is handled. Enable students, their support network and anyone else to provide feedback about any aspect of our services.

1.3 Background

The Education and Care Services National Regulations requires approved providers to ensure services have policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints.

Our Dealing with complaints policy is child focused and means our children, educators, management, coordinators, other staff, families / carers, and the community can be confident that complaints and grievances are taken seriously and addressed effectively. The Guide to the National Quality Framework describes how an effective system for dealing with complaints confirms to children, educators, staff, families, and the community that complaints and grievances are taken seriously and investigated promptly, fairly, and thoroughly.

Effective complaints management is an efficient way to consider and act on feedback from families and inform quality improvement (Element 7.1.2: Management systems). Complaints offer service leaders a valuable opportunity to improve the quality practices of their education and care. Each complaint can serve as a springboard for reflection on the service’s processes, procedures and practices, allowing for meaningful change.

1.4 Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor and visitors of the OSHC Service.

1.5 Legislation & Standards

QUALITY AREA 7 Governance and Leadership		
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service.
7.1.1	Service philosophy and purposes	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
7.1.3	Roles and Responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service.
7.2	Leadership	Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.
7.2.2	Educational leadership	The educational leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle.
7.2.3	Development of professionals	Educators, co-ordinations and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated, and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
Section 172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information
Section 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
Regulation 173	Prescribed information to be displayed - education and care service other than a family day care service
Regulation 175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
Regulation 176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

1.6 Key Terms

Term	Meaning	Source
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<p>ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority</p>	<p>The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.</p>	<p>www.acecqa.gov.au</p>
<p>Complaint</p>	<p>Complaint Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.</p>	<p>Australian and New Zealand Standard Guidelines for complaint management in organisations – AS/ NZS 10002:2014</p>
<p>Complaints handling</p>	<p>Complaints handling Effective resolution of a problem before it becomes worse and providing a remedy.</p>	<p>Commonwealth Ombudsman – Better practice complaint handling guide</p>
<p>Investigation</p>	<p>A formal and systematic inquiry to establish facts about a complaint by collecting, documenting, examining and evaluating evidence. An investigation is not an end. Throughout an investigation, the investigator should keep an open mind about the possible outcomes of the investigation, such as education, compliance action, or a decision not to pursue the matter.</p>	<p>Guide to the NQF (Regulatory Authority Powers – Monitoring, compliance and enforcement)</p>
<p>Personal information</p>	<p>Information or an opinion about an identified individual,</p>	<p>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</p>

	<p>or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. whether the information or opinion is true or not; b. and b. whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not. 	
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2. Procedure

2.1 Implementation

- The OSHC Service encourages anyone to speak up and welcomes and values feedback.
- The OSHC Service actively seeks feedback from students, families, and their support networks.
- The OSHC Service will take feedback seriously and is committed to listening and learning from the experience of students, their support networks, and others.
- No one should be blamed or punished for speaking up and providing feedback.
- All feedback is an opportunity to improve what we do and how we do it.
- The OSHC Service will provide a feedback handling process that is fully accessible, rights focused, person-centred, culturally safe, inclusive, trauma-informed, and respects dignity, will and preference.
- The OSHC Service will have a robust and transparent feedback management process and be flexible in its application to ensure procedural fairness, accessibility, empowerment and satisfaction with process and outcome.
- The OSHC Service will provide multiple channels for students, families, and their support networks to provide feedback, including options to provide feedback anonymously and through external agencies.
- There is no ‘wrong door’ or wrong avenue to provide feedback.
- The OSHC Service will provide any reasonable accommodations or necessary supports required to enable students to provide feedback.

Response

- The OSHC Service will confirm receipt of feedback and provide information to support the student, family, and their support network through the feedback process, including:
 - Information on what to expect once feedback has been submitted.
 - Information about external agencies that can provide further supports or advocacy as well as external reporting avenues.
 - Information to help understand and decide how to participate and engage and be communicated with during the feedback process.

- The OSHC Service aims to resolve all feedback within 21 business days.
- The OSHC Service will apologise for and support access to redress for any harm to students that has resulted from any aspect of our services.
- The OSHC Service reviews feedback patterns and trends to learn, improve safety and wellbeing of students and staff and improve the quality of services.

Review or investigate

- Where feedback contains an allegation of misconduct, a criminal act, violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation or an incident, the matter will be managed as an incident in line with the Incident, injury, trauma and illness policy and/or Disciplinary Workplace Investigations Guidelines with reporting requirements to external agencies such as the police and Department of Education.
- The OSHC Service will seek to understand and address underlying concerns and broader issues and identify opportunities for improvement from feedback; which may occur in parallel or after formal investigations have concluded.

Continuous improvement

- Any concerns with the feedback management process or outcome can be raised by contacting The OSHC Service at feedback@yooralla.com.au or external agencies such as the Department of Education.
- The OSHC Service will measure performance and report process and outcome measures.
- The OSHC Service will continue to improve feedback processes and systems.

1.7 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met • Ensure the name and contact number of the person to whom complaints can be made is clearly displayed at the service (and FDC residence or approved venue, if applicable) • Ensure that the regulatory authority is notified in writing within 24 hours of any complaints alleging that a serious incident has occurred at the service or that the Education and Care Services National Law has been breached. This includes any complaints about the physical or sexual abuse of a child while being educated or cared for by a service • Discuss the complaint with the complainant and make notes from the meeting or discussion • Ensure the inclusion of policies and procedures for managing complaints alleging that a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours • ensure policies and procedures dealing with complaints include matters relating to the provision of a complaint handling system that is child focused

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators and staff follow the Dealing with complaints policy and procedures • ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators and staff, and available for inspection • ensure educators, staff, volunteers and students are well informed about their individual child protection responsibilities, reporting and privacy obligations and processes for responding to disclosures • notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or » significantly impact the service’s education and care of children or • significantly impact the family’s ability to utilise the service • regularly review the policy and procedures to ensure serious incidents and complaints are investigated promptly, fairly and thoroughly • ensure that complaints result in reviews of relevant policies, procedures and practices. • Ensure appropriate processes for handling feedback are in place • Oversee and review handling of feedback, including performance • Identify process improvement actions • Oversee and review handling of feedback, including performance • Identify process improvement actions • Promote handling of feedback in line with policies and procedures • Ensure processes for and execution of handling feedback are in line with policies, procedures and legislative and government requirements • Allocate resources to effectively and efficiently handle feedback • Ensure their teams understand their responsibilities and processes related to handling feedback • Use learnings from feedback for strategic planning, service design and policy development
<p>Nominated Supervisor / Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that regulatory obligations are met in relation to dealing with complaints • implement procedures for dealing with complaints • inform families and the broader service community of the Dealing with complaints policy and procedures • discuss the complaint with the complainant

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the approved provider is aware of the complaint, if it is a notifiable complaint, or if a complaint cannot be resolved • ensure the complaint is documented in RiskMan • work co-operatively with the approved provider, educators, staff and/or the complainant during the investigation or resolution of a complaint • ensure educators, staff, volunteers and students are well informed about their child protection responsibilities and reporting and privacy obligations • ensure educators, staff, volunteers and students are well informed about the different ways children express concerns or distress and disclose harm, as well as processes for responding to disclosures from children • regularly review the policy and procedures to ensure serious incidents and complaints are investigated promptly, fairly and thoroughly • ensure that complaints result in reviews of relevant policies, procedures and practices. • Ensure staff are trained in handling feedback and aware of processes, policies and procedures • Ensure the process for handling feedback is implemented as outlined in the policy and procedure • Escalate as required • Review and implement learnings for handling feedback
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and implement the Dealing with complaints policy and procedures • report all complaints received to the nominated supervisor and/or approved provider promptly so timeframes can be adhered to • support the nominated supervisor and approved provider in the investigation and/or resolution of complaints • Communicate student rights in relation to feedback • Support students, families and support networks to provide feedback • If receiving feedback, provide initial response to feedback and inform line manager • Enter feedback in RiskMan
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be familiar with and follow the Dealing with complaints policy and procedures • raise any issues or complaints in line with the policy and procedures • cooperate with service representatives dealing with complaints. • Provide feedback to educators and/or nominated supervisor / manager • Support students to provide feedback
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support children to provide feedback to educators and/or nominated supervisor / manager

1.8 References & Resources

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
 Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2023).
 Federal Register of Legislation *Privacy Act 1988*.
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.

1.9 Related Policies and Procedures

Incident, injury, trauma, and illness Child Safety and Wellbeing policy Safe use of digital technologies and online environments Staffing	Interactions with children Enrolment and orientation Governance and management
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3. Policy & Procedure Review

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy and procedure have been achieved, the OSHC Service will:

- Regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy.
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice.
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service’s policy review cycle, or as required.
- Notify all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (Regulation 172 (2)).

The ongoing monitoring and compliance of this policy and procedure will be overseen by the OSHC Manager, Nominated Supervisor and Quality, Risk and Safeguarding team.

All OSHC Service OSHC policies and procedures will be reviewed every 12 months.

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