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(02) 9144 4769

Managing Complaints

Policy

We aim to provide the best quality care and believe a collaborative approach between staff, parents, school and children is the best way of achieving this. Everyone should feel comfortable communicating both positive feedback and concerns they may have regarding our practices. South Turramurra OOSH (OOSH/service) will make every effort to inform all who attend OOSH of the various avenues they can use to voice a concern. Any concern raised will be addressed promptly and confidentially.

Child safety is of paramount importance at OOSH. In accordance with the Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW), the service ensures the safety, rights and best interests of every child are the paramount consideration in all decisions, actions and operations. Where competing priorities arise, the child's best interests will prevail, and decision-making will clearly demonstrate how this principle has been applied.

Legislative Requirements

- Education and Care Services National Law – 172, 174 (2)(b)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations – 168(2)(o), 170, 171, 172, 173(2)(b), 176(2)(b)
- National Quality Standards 5.2.2, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 7.1.2, 7.1.3
- Privacy Act 1998 (Cth)
- Privacy Regulation 2013

Definitions

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.

Complaints Handling

- Effective resolution of a problem before it becomes worse and providing a remedy.

Investigation

- 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.

Personal Information

- Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:
 - a) whether the information or opinion is true or not; and
 - b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.

Implementation Strategies – how will it be done?

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will:

- ensure the **name and contact number of the person to whom complaints can be made** is clearly displayed at the service.
- 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 an Education and Care Services National Law has been breached.
- **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**.
- 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**.
- **inform families and the broader community** of the *Dealing with Complaints policy and procedures*.
- **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**.
- **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 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**.
- **apply the paramountcy principle** by ensuring children's safety, wellbeing and best interests take priority over all other considerations.

Educators and staff will:

- **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**.
- **understand and be aware of child protection law and their individual responsibilities**.
- **be aware of the different ways children express concerns or distress and disclose harm**, as well as the processes for responding to disclosures from children.
- **support children to know who to talk to if they are feeling unsafe and understand the complaint handling processes**.
- **apply the paramountcy principle** by ensuring children's safety, wellbeing and best interests take priority over all other considerations.

Procedures

Parent Complaints

- At South Turramurra OOSH we believe that feedback helps us to provide high quality care and educators support the rights of families to raise concerns.
- South Turramurra OOSH will take all reasonable steps to ensure that anyone making a complaint is not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.
- Any concern raised will be handled promptly and professionally with reference to relevant policies and procedures with the aim to resolve the matter in a timely manner.
- South Turramurra OOSH is a separate entity to Turramurra Public School and their P&C committee. Complaints about OOSH should therefore be expressed to the OOSH Management Committee or Coordinator/Nominated Supervisor.
- Upon enrollment, every family will have access to the Parent Handbook, which includes an outline of the process of making a complaint.
- The following steps are to be followed when raising an issue of concern:
 1. Raise the concern with the Coordinator/Assistant Coordinator.
 - The issue can be communicated verbally or in writing to the coordinator. If the issue is being raised verbally, the Coordinator/Assistant Coordinator will discuss the issue in an area away from children, staff and other parents.
 - The issue will be recorded including the date, details of the issue being raised and how the issue is resolved. The record of the issue will be kept digitally and filed in the OOSH records folder.
 2. If the parent remains concerned about the issue, or the complaint is about the coordinator, the issue may be submitted in writing via email to a member of the OOSH Management Committee.
 - A member of the committee will then meet with the coordinator to discuss strategies to resolve the issue, and the parent will then be notified in writing or verbally of the outcome. If required, a meeting will be set up with a member of the committee, the coordinator and parent to discuss the strategies to resolve the issue.
 - The issue will be recorded including the date, details of the issue being raised and how the issue was resolved. The record will be digitally filed in the OOSH records folder. Any physical copies of the report will be scanned if necessary, then shredded.
 - Educators will be made aware of any issues of relevance that they need to be addressed or be aware of. Educators will be supported in rectifying issues raised.
- If the issue of concern cannot be resolved internally, then an external third party will be offered, such as the School Principal, Department of Education (the Regulatory Authority) or the Ombudsman.
- If a complaint alleging that the safety and/or wellbeing of a child was, or is, being compromised or a law has been breached, a report to the Regulatory Authority will be made.
- Management will notify the Regulatory Authority (Department of Education) within 24 hours if a complaint alleges the safety, health or well-being of a child is being compromised.
- Parents may also provide anonymous feedback via our parent feedback box on the parent table. Anonymous feedback will be managed in the same way although the parent may not have the opportunity to expand on their concerns or provide suggested solutions.

Employee Complaints

- At South Turramurra OOSH we believe that feedback helps us to provide high quality care and we support the rights of educators to raise concerns. We are committed to providing a positive work environment where staff feel supported and respected.

- South Turramurra OOSH will take all reasonable steps to ensure that any employee making a complaint is not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.
 - Any concern raised will be handled promptly and professionally with reference to relevant policies and procedures with the aim to resolve the matter in a timely manner. Staff are encouraged to consider their desired outcome of the concerns and to discuss this as part of raising the issue.
 - All concerns will be received and managed in a confidential way. Where staff wish to remain anonymous, this will be accommodated as far as reasonably practicable.
 - South Turramurra OOSH is a separate entity to Turramurra Public School and their P&C committee. Complaints about OOSH should therefore be expressed to the OOSH Management Committee or Director/Nominated Supervisor.
 - Upon induction, every employee will have access to the Dealing with Complaints Policy, which includes an outline of the process of making a complaint.
 - The following steps are to be followed when raising an issue of concern:
1. Raise the concern with the Director/Coordinator.
 - The issue can be communicated verbally or in writing to the coordinator. If the issue is being raised verbally, the Director/Coordinator will discuss the issue in an area away from children, staff and other parents.
- The issue will be recorded including the date, details of the issue being raised and how the issue is resolved. The record of the issue will be kept digitally and filed in the OOSH records folder.
 - If the educator remains concerned about the issue, or the complaint is about the Director, or the employee feels more comfortable, the issue may be submitted in writing via email to a member of the OOSH Management Committee.
 - A member of the committee will then meet with the Director to discuss strategies to resolve the issue, and the employee will then be notified in writing or verbally of the outcome. If required, a meeting will be set up with a member of the committee, the Director and employee to discuss the strategies to resolve the issue.
 - The issue will be recorded including the date, details of the issue being raised and how the issue was resolved. The record will be digitally filed in the OOSH records folder. Any physical copies of the report will be scanned if necessary, then shredded.
 - Educators will be made aware of any issues of relevance that need to be addressed or be aware of. Educators will be supported in rectifying issues raised.
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 - If the issue of concern cannot be resolved internally, then an external third party will be offered, such as the School Principal, Department of Education (the Regulatory Authority) or the Ombudsman.
 - If a complaint alleging that the safety and/or wellbeing of a child was, or is, being compromised or a law has been breached, a report to the Regulatory Authority will be made.
 - Management will notify the Regulatory Authority (Department of Education) within 24 hours if a complaint alleges the safety, health or well-being of a child is being compromised.
 - Employees may also provide anonymous feedback via our staff feedback box in the staff room. Anonymous feedback will be managed in the same way although the employee may not have the opportunity to expand on their concerns or provide suggested solutions.

Child Complaints

- South Turramurra OOSH recognises the right of children to be heard and have a say in matters that affect them.
 - If children attending OOSH wish to raise an issue of concern, they can always approach any staff member who will help to resolve the issue, with the guidance of the Coordinator if necessary.
 - Children can provide feedback or make complaints via the suggestions box located in the OOSH room if they do not feel comfortable approaching staff directly.

Child Focused Complaint Handling System

- South Turramurra OOSH implements a complaint handling system that is child focused, which:
 - meets the child's right to participate in matters that affect them.
 - is clear and easy to use and in age-appropriate formats.
 - improves relationships and trust between children and their educators.
 - creates a safer environment for children and reduces incidents and issues for organisations and educators.
 - swiftly addresses and/or prevents issues.
 - uses language that is easy to understand and jargon free.
 - empowers children and young people to speak up.
 - is displayed in many locations and forms, including how the system works and who to speak with about any issues.
 - is culturally inclusive and ensures safety for those who speak up.
 - includes children and young people having input on the design, implementation, and ongoing improvement of the complaint handling system.
 - is linked to the Code of Conduct, and educators, staff, and volunteers feel supported to raise concerns about breaches.

Issues of concern involving both South Turramurra OOSH and the School Community

- If the concern being raised involves both OOSH and the school community, the concern should be communicated to the coordinator, school principal and any relevant members of the P&C committee or teachers.
- The coordinator will discuss the issue with the school principal to develop strategies to best resolve the issue.

Complaints alleging that a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours

- The term harmful sexual behaviours covers a broad spectrum of behaviours. They can range from those that are developmentally inappropriate and harm only the child exhibiting the behaviours to criminal behaviours such as sexual assault.
- When a child exhibits harmful sexual behaviours, these matters need to be managed sensitively. Educators should ensure the complainant's concerns are taken seriously and addressed following the complaints handling process.

Compliments

- Are expressions of praise, encouragement or gratitude about OOSH, staff, or management.
- Provide valuable feedback about the level of satisfaction with South Turramurra OOSH and are a valuable indicator of the effectiveness of our practices.
- Impart useful insights about the aspects of South Turramurra OOSH that are most meaningful to children, families, and stakeholders, and provide an opportunity to recognise the efforts of staff, foster a culture of excellence and boost morale.

Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- All complaints will be kept confidential, and meetings will be carried out away from other parents, staff and children.
- Records will state the date the issue was raised, details of the issue and the steps taken to resolve the issue.
- All records will be kept digitally in OOSH records.

Relevant contact details when raising an issue of concern

- Telephone – (02) 9144 4769
- Email – coordinator@tpsoosh.com.au
- Committee email – president@tpsoosh.com.au
- Regulatory Authority
 - Website: www.det.nsw.edu.au
 - Phone: 1800 619 113
 - Email: ececd@det.nsw.edu.au

References and Related Policies and Procedures

References

- ACECQA – www.acecqa.gov.au
- ACECQA: Using Complaints to Support Continuous Improvement - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/media/22986>
- Australian and New Zealand Standard Guidelines for complaint management in organisations – AS/NZS 10002:2014
- Commonwealth Ombudsman: Better practice complaint handling guide - https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0025/290365/Better-Practice-Complaint-Handling-Guide-February-2023.pdf
- NSW Ombudsman: Effective complaint handling guidelines - <https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/guidance-for-agencies/effective-complaint-handling>
- My Time, Our Place: Learning Outcomes 1, 5 - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/MTOP-V2.0.pdf>

Related Policies and Procedures

- Incident, injury, trauma, and illness
- Providing a Child Safe Environment
- Staffing
- Interactions with Children
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Governance and Management
- South Turramurra OOSH handbook – ‘A guide to life at OOSH.’

Approval and Revision History

Review Date	Reviewed By	Approved By	Next Review
15/07/2020	Amy Kitto	Scott Everard	July 2021
03/08/2021	Kate Pearson	Scott Everard	August 2022
14/07/2022	Scott Everard	Amy Kitto	July 2023
02/08/2023	Amy Kitto	Scott Everard	August 2024
25/07/2024	Amy Kitto	Scott Everard	July 2024
28/08/2024	CELA	Scott Everard	August 2025
01/05/2025	Scott Everard	Melanie Campbell	May 2026
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