

Policy title	7.2 Grievances and Complaints
Policy type	Management
Group	Family and Children

Rationale

Moonee Valley City Council views complaints as an opportunity to understand families' attitudes and needs, and build strong relationships by responding to their concerns. Complaints can also provide insights into which areas of a service need improvement.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure Council has:

a Policy and Procedures in place for dealing with complaints in accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*, the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*

(Regulations 168 (2)(o)), 173 and 178), and *Children's Services Regulations 2009 (Victorian)* (Regulations 41 and 105)

- a clear complaint resolution process in place that provides detail on the assessment, investigation and evaluation required to respond to complaints made by service stakeholders

Policy statement

Moonee Valley City Council is committed to:

- supporting a culture of open communication where all complaints are accepted and where all stakeholders are able to comment on practices and management decisions
- confidentially, promptly and respectfully dealing with family concerns
- informing families how complaints can be made and resolved in a consistent manner

Group	Responsible Manager	Document	Document No	Approval Date	Review Date
Family and Children's Services	Michele Leonard	7.2 Grievances and Complaints Procedure	17/150818	August 2017	August 2019

A 'complaint' is an expression of a grievance, criticism or concern where the parent/guardian is seeking redress or justice. Council acknowledges that families may feel anxious about raising concerns fearing that they or their child may be disadvantaged in some way if they make a complaint. Our Complaints and Grievances Procedure is designed to alleviate that fear by being simple, clear, consistent and transparent.

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Procedure	7.2 Grievances and Complaints Procedure
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Action	Approved Provider	Responsible Person or Primary Nominee	Educator/contractor	Families	Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010	Children's Services Regulations 2009 & Children's Services Act 1996
Clearly display near the point of entry at a service-based Council education and care service, the name and phone number of the person who can be contacted to receive a complaint.	✓	✓			r.173	s.172	r.40-41 r.45-46
Report to the regulatory authority (Victorian Department of Education and Training) within 24 hours any complaints alleging that the safety, health or wellbeing of a child was or is being compromised, or that the law has been breached.	✓	✓			r.176	r.174	r.90 s.29C
Report any grievances and complaints to the Responsible Person or Primary Nominee, and/or Coordinator and monitor the process closely.	✓	✓	✓		r.168-172	r.161-162	r.105 s.29C
Inform the service of the circumstances of their complaint.				✓	r.168-172		r.105
Address, investigate and document all complaints in a fair, respectful and timely manner.	✓	✓			r.168-172		r.105
Allow for the complaint to be investigated and a response to be provided.				✓	r.168-172		r.105
Follow the internal complaints process outlined in this Policy and Procedures.	✓	✓	✓	✓	r.168-172	r.174	r.90 r.105 s.29C

Group Family and Children's Services	Responsible Manager Michele Leonard	Document 7.2 Grievances and Complaints Procedure	Document No 17/150818	Approval Date August 2017	Review Date August 2019
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Action	Approved Provider	Responsible Person or Primary Nominee	Educator/contractor	Families	Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010	Children's Services Regulations 2009 & Children's Services Act 1996
Ensure all documentation concerning a complaint is treated in a confidential manner.	✓	✓			r.168-172 r.181-184		r.105
Patterns of complaints and their outcomes are to be kept and analysed to inform revision and/or development of the service's Policies and Procedures.	✓	✓			r.168-172		r.105
Make available to families all Policies and Procedures, and ensure that a copy of the <i>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</i> , the <i>National Regulations</i> , the <i>Children's Services Regulations 2009</i> and the <i>Children's Services Act 1996</i> are available at the service at all times.	✓	✓	✓		r.168-172 r.185	s.172 s.175	r.106 r.40-41 r.45-46
Ensure that grievances and complaints are dealt with in accordance with the Procedures identified in the Internal complaints process section on pages 4-5.	✓	✓	✓		r.168-172		r.40-41 r.45-46 r.105 s.29C

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What to consider before making a complaint

Before approaching the service/family day care educator/contractor, it is recommended that parents/guardians:

- be clear about the topic or issue to be discussed
- focus on the things that are genuinely affecting the child
- think about what would be an acceptable outcome for you and your child
- always remain calm and remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss
- be informed. Check the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and the service's policies or procedures, where relevant

Internal complaints process

- families are encouraged to discuss any concerns in centre-based services with the Responsible Person or Primary Nominee or, in family day care residences, directly with the family day care educator/contractor.
- families who have concerns relating to the operation of a service, the program or staff/educators/contractors should follow these steps:

Step 1: Document and direct their concerns to the centre-based service's Responsible Person or Primary Nominee/family day care educator/contractor:

- the complaint will be reviewed by the Responsible Person or Primary Nominee of the service or family day care educator/contractor, and appropriate staff/educators/contractors will consult on their recollection of events
- relevant information will be collected, for example, sign-on sheets, attendance records, accident reports, and policies. Then documentation of procedure will commence
- the relevant staff/educator/contractor of the service and persons lodging the complaint will meet as soon as possible to work together to find a solution
- written complaints will be responded to in writing **within five** working business days

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Step 2: If the service/family day care educator/contractor fails to resolve the issue, or the family feels the issue has not been dealt with adequately or appropriately, then the parent/guardian should contact the Coordinator Kindergarten or Coordinator Childcare Services.

- On referral of a complaint that cannot be resolved by the internal resolution process detailed above, the Coordinator Kindergarten or Coordinator Childcare Services will conduct an investigation into the complaint which could include, but is not limited to, discussions with others and observations. All investigation procedures and processes are to be documented.



Step 3: If the Coordinator Kindergarten or Coordinator Childcare Services fails to resolve the issue, or if the family feels that the issue has not been dealt with adequately or appropriately, then the family should contact the Council's Manager of Family and Children's Services on 9243 8888.



Step 4: If the parent/guardian still has concerns, they can contact the Department of Education and Training Regional Children's Services Officer on 8397 0300.

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Link to Council Policies

This Policy and Procedures has been informed by Moonee Valley City Council's *Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Policy*, the *Excellence in Governance* booklet, and the *Internal Complaints Policy*.

Resources and useful websites

This Policy is linked to the following *National Quality Standard*

<http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard>

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