

Complaint Policy & Grievance Procedure

Date: Created on 10/06/04, Revised 10/08/05, 13/06/08, 25/11/11, 23/06/16, 15/04/21

Approved By Management Committee _____ **Date** _____

Aim:

The aim of this Grievance Policy is to provide a mechanism that encourages families/carers of children attending University Preschool & Child Care Centre Inc (UPCCC) and our staff to access grievance procedures whenever appropriate and to provide a fair and just conflict resolution process.

Principles:

This procedure supports the improved and secure delivery of education and care services, and strengthens interpersonal relationships, by providing for a fair and just conflict resolution process.

The Complaints and Grievance Procedure is therefore based on the following Principles:

- That all staff and families of UPCCC have the right to make a grievance and have it handled in accordance with this procedure.
- Value the opportunity to be heard;
- Promote conflict resolution;
- All complaints will be treated seriously and as far as practicable in accordance with this procedure.
- All parties to a complaint will undertake the process outlined in this procedure in good faith.
- All families and staff of UPCCC have the right to make a grievance without fear of victimisation.
- The parties to a complaint must treat the matter confidentially, however, UPCCC may disclose personal information where it considers it appropriate to do so for the effective resolution of a complaint.
- The parties to a complaint will work together to achieve a fair and reasonable outcome.

Related Policy Staff Grievance Policy

Practice:

1) UPCCC will inform families and staff of this policy.

At the time of enrolment, families should be provided with a copy of our Centre Handbook

When they commence employment new staff, either permanent or casual, will be provided with a Staff Handbook.

Both Handbooks contain the following information:

- We welcome complaints and comments because they help us to provide a better service;
- Families and staff have the right to complain if they are unhappy about any part of our service;
- Families and staff are able to bring the complaint or grievance to the attention of whichever staff member of the Centre that they feel most comfortable with. A complaint may be raised with a staff member in any manner, including by using the complaint form in this policy;
- The nature of a grievance can be either organisation / program based (those grievances relating to how a service is accessed and delivered, by whom services are delivered and who has access to those decisions) or, individual / personal (those grievances relating to interpersonal relationships between child, parents and staff or the individual experiences of a child) and / or family within the program.

2) How complaints will be addressed

As each complaint will differ, the staff member with responsibility for resolving the complaint will determine the most appropriate method of dealing with the complaint. This may vary depending on the nature of the specific complaint and a number of other factors.

Following receipt of a complaint, the staff member may:

- determine the best method of handling the complaint (which may include, for example, informal or facilitated discussions, mediation, an internal investigation or an external investigation);
- inform the person making the complaint of the likely steps that will be taken in relation to their complaint, including the anticipated time frames;
- inform the person(s) about whom the complaint was made about the existence of the complaint and give them an opportunity to respond to the complaint;
- inform the person making the complaint, the person(s) about whom the complaint was made and, if the matter is to be investigated, all witnesses, of the confidentiality obligations in relation to the complaint;
- collect any additional information required to properly assess the complaint;
- inform the person making the complaint, and the person(s) against whom the complaint was made, of the outcome and, if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

In appropriate cases, an external party may be appointed to make inquiries in relation to or to investigate the complaint.

Where appropriate, a complaint may be referred to a regulator, government agency or the police.

As far as reasonably practicable, investigations of complaints will be conducted confidentially. UPCCC may discuss the complaint with third parties, if it considers it appropriate to do so.

If allegations raised in a complaint are sustained, UPCCC will take any action that it considers appropriate in the circumstances, which may include disciplining or dismissing a staff member or withdrawing the child's enrolment with UPCCC.

Complaints should not be made in bad faith or vexatiously. UPCCC views such complaints as a very serious matter and will take appropriate action against the complainant. This may result in disciplinary action against a staff member, including dismissing the staff member, or withdrawing a child's enrolment from UPCCC. As above.

Should a conflict of interest arise during a grievance or complaints procedure a nominated alternative mediator will be used.

3) Victimisation

A person must not be victimised because they:

- have made, or propose to make, a complaint;
- witnessed an incident; or
- provided information in relation to a complaint.

If a person feels that they are being victimised, they should raise it as soon as possible with the Centre Director or a member of the Management Committee.

4) Maintaining Documentation and Confidentiality

Staff members dealing with a complaint should maintain confidential records of conversations relating to a complaint.

A person making a complaint must maintain the confidentiality of the complaint (refer Privacy Policy) and must not discuss any information about the initiation of the process, the process itself or action taken with anyone else, without first discussing this with the staff member dealing with the complaint.

If committee members are made of aware of a complaint they must maintain the confidentiality of the complaint (refer Privacy Policy) and must not discuss any information about the initiation of the process, the process itself or action taken with anyone else.

Any breach of confidentiality by staff members will be regarded as serious and may result in disciplinary action.

5) Monitoring & Follow Up of Complaints

After a complaint has been made and steps have been taken to reach a resolution, it will be routinely monitored and followed up to ensure that the complainant is satisfied with the way in which the complaint was handled and is informed of any changes in procedures as a result of this complaint. (See attached Complaint Performance Monitoring Form)

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome they may take the matter to the ACT Children's Education and Care Assurance or to the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner.

6) Staff Training

The Management Committee will ensure funds are set aside in the budget to cover the cost of providing for staff in-servicing in complaint handling and that this training is updated regularly

7) Who to contact about this policy

If you have any questions regarding this policy, your obligations or the grievance process outlined in this procedure, we encourage you to discuss this with the Centre Director or in their absence their delegate.

Sources

The Australian National University, Staff Grievance Policy, Retrieved from https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_000466 on 15/4/21

Australian government, Fairwork Ombudsman. Effective Depute resolution. Retrieved from: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/effective-dispute-resolution> on 31/03/2021

National Childcare Accreditation Council (2005) Quality Practices Guide First Edition

Department Education & Community Services, Children's Services (2000), ACT Centre Based Children's Services, Conditions for Approvals in Principle and Licences

Review by Date: April 2023

COMPLAINT FORM

Date: _____ Name of person making the complaint: _____

Address: _____

Phone _____ Email: _____

Staff member handling complaint: _____

Complaint When did the alleged event/s happen? _____

What happened? _____

Attach additional pages/supporting documents if required

Possible solutions negotiated with complainant

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Solution chosen: _____

ACTION PLAN

Action	Staff Member Responsible	Date completed
Include actions already taken to resolve matter		

Outcome/Resolution: _____

I acknowledge that the above has happened.

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____

COMPLAINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING FORM

Date complaint lodged:

Complaint allegation classification:

- Behaviour
- Decision
- Policy / procedure
- Other, specify _____

Brief description:

Contact method:

- Verbal Written

Complaint about (Specify section or team)

Complainant characteristics:

Disability: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Language: _____

Complainant informed of result:

Yes No Date: _____

Satisfaction of complainant:

Very satisfied satisfied

part satisfied unsatisfied

Outcome for complainant:

Referral to:

Recommended long term changes
for service:

Estimated cost of these
modifications:

Person responsible for handling this
resolution:
