



7.6 Grievance Policy

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Aims

In some instances, parents or staff may make demands which cannot be fully met or which seem unreasonable given the need to balance the rights of all families and staff involved in the **Cootamundra Preschool**. Parents and staff may sometimes need to accept, compromise and understand that their personal preferences cannot always be met. Acceptance of such an outcome however can only occur if respect and positive attitudes are shown towards the grievance at the time when it is first raised. Genuine consideration should be given to any grievance in light of available, practicable and affordable options for the centre. To this end the **Cootamundra Preschool** aims to:

1. Ensure each parent and staff member feels empowered to raise concerns about any aspect of the operation of the centre without concern that their comments may lead to victimisation or prejudice against themselves or their child
2. Ensure that any grievances raised by a parent or staff member will be considered fairly and in depth because of the centre's desire to always improve its service. Grievances will also be treated with confidentiality
3. Ensure that there are different levels of grievance access available should a complainant remain unsatisfied

Legislative Requirements

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Children (Education and Care National Law Application) Act 2010

NSW Industrial Act 1996

Who Is Affected By This Policy?

Child

Families

Staff

Management

Relevant Early Childhood Professional Standards

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|--|--|
| Early Childhood Code of Ethics: | I-1, I-2, I-5, I-7, I-10, II-1 to II-10, III-1 to III-3, IV-1, VI-1, VI-3, |
| Early Years Learning Framework: | Principles: 1, 2 & 4 |
| Education & Care Services Australian National Regulations: | 168 |
| National Quality Framework: | 4.2, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2 |

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Sources/References

Early Years Learning Framework, Belonging, Being and Becoming, Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments, 2009.

National Quality Framework, Australians Children's Education and Care Quality Authority 2017

Early Childhood Code of Ethics

Equal Opportunity & Discrimination Act 1986

Procedures

1. Submitting a complaint or grievance

It needs to be noted that this centre's approach is a preventative one, therefore it is hoped that the grievance process will not need to be activated. To this end the Director will:

1.1 Acquaint parents and staff with the centre's grievance policy at the initial interview, in a positive and constructive manner (see the centre's Enrolment Interview and staff induction checklists)

1.2 Encourage all staff or families to identify any concerns to the Director who will ensure such concerns are addressed at the earliest opportunity

1.3 Encourage families and staff to feel comfortable about raising concerns by establishing and continuing to build good relationships with them. This will include learning about each family's individual circumstances, thus enabling a more sensitive awareness of their needs

1.4 Establish unbiased centre procedures that reduce any potential power inequities between families and the centre's service. The philosophy underlying this practice can be found throughout this centre's policies but particularly in the centre's 'Anti-Bias & Equity Policy,' its 'Parental Involvement Policy' and its 'Philosophical Statement'

In the unfortunate event of a parent or staff member wishing to make a formal complaint, the Director will undertake the following actions:

1.5 Initially have a private discussion with the parent/s or staff member about the issue and try to negotiate a fair and objective resolution

1.6 If the above is not successful, the Director will give the complainant a copy of the centre's Grievance Policy and also explain the process involved if they wish to formalise their complaint

1.7 After this interview the Director will document the discussion and sign and date it

1.8 If the Director considers the grievance may be difficult to resolve, she/he will immediately inform the centre's Committee of Management. Thus she/he will notify an Executive member of this committee and they will decide if it is necessary to either call an extraordinary committee meeting or arrange for a sub-committee of the management committee to meet as soon as possible

1.9 Where a conflict of interest is identified, an alternative mediation arrangement will be sought. In the case of a conflict of interest regarding the Director, consideration will be given to two Committee of Management members to

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undertake the negotiation process. It is expected that these committee members will have the necessary skills for the task and therefore will have been selected carefully. In the case of a conflict of interest regarding a parent who is also a member of the Committee of Management, the parent would be required to absent themselves from any discussion regarding the issue when it is being considered by that Committee

1.10 All grievances will be dealt with by the Director and Committee of Management as quickly as possible

2. The centre's grievance structure

2.1 The ongoing process for a grievance notification will be:

- The parent/s or staff member making the complaint will be asked to put their complaint in writing, email or verbally to the director, if verbal the director will need to write the notes of the discussion and get the parent/s or staff member to sign and date the document, confirming they are correct.
- An initial meeting between the Director and Committee of Management or its representatives as per Point 1.8 above will be called where the Director will provide them with all information pertaining to the complaint in a professional and objective manner, plus a copy of the complaint. The Director will also avail them of the procedures for taking a grievance to higher levels as per this policy and they will check these in relation to the procedures outlined in the Committee of Management's constitution regarding grievance procedures
- A meeting with the Director, the parent or staff member making the complaint and the Committee of Management or its representatives will take place. The aim of this meeting will be to use impartial discussion to negotiate a resolution that will be fair to all. Detailed minutes will be taken at this meeting by someone other than the Director. In preparation for this meeting the Director and committee members will have used the parent/s written complaint to investigate the allegations and will have made their individual findings specifically and solely in relation to these allegations. They will not have met previously to discuss their findings. A chairperson for the meeting will be appointed to ensure the complainant's allegations do not digress from those originally stated by the parent concerned in writing
- In the unfortunate event that the grievance cannot be resolved at this meeting, the Director will inform the parent/s that it is their right to take their concerns to the ACECQA for guidance around the Education and Care Law and Regulations. If they would like to forward their grievance further they are to contact the Regulatory Authority.
- The director and approved provider are obliged to notify any complaints alleging serious incidences under the National Law within 24 hours to the Regulatory Authority. Serious Injuries, such as; Death of a child, child needing urgent medical attention, illness while in care and having to attend hospital, if an emergency service has had to attend the service, child has been locked in or out of the service or any complaint alleging serious injury to a child.

The Director will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times.

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