



7.7 Complaints and Feedback Policy

QUALITY AREA 7: Leadership and Service Management

Aim

To provide opportunities for consultation, evaluation and review of the service operation and delivery of the education and care program and deal with complaints diligently and confidentially.

Relevant Legislation

- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 168,173, 176

Links to National Quality Standard:

- 7.1 Governance supports the operation of a quality service

Key Resources:

- NSW Ombudsman (2004) 'Effective Complaint Handling'
- NSW Ombudsman (2005) 'Natural Justice, Procedural fairness'
- NSW Ombudsman (2009) 'Complaint Handling Kit'

Practices:

Educators and staff will be familiar with the legislation and statutory documents that apply to their role with the children, families and other staff in the preschool.

1. **Feedback**

- Communications will aim at all times to be open, honest and confidential. Bellinghen Preschool Inc. will offer a variety of ways to communicate and provide feedback including:
 - ~ Daily interactions
 - ~ Formal feedback and comments
 - ~ Surveys
 - ~ Family meetings
 - ~ Communication Plan
- With permission, educators may write comments on behalf of families to help with evaluations of the program and encourage further family input.
- Families are provided the preschool's email address and phone details at orientation. Families will be encouraged to converse with educators at pick up and drop off times, and may email or call throughout the day.
- Families will be informed as to how their feedback has contributed to improvements in the service through information notice board displays, and /or newsletters.

2. **Complaints**

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Develop a process for managing complaints. This process includes:
 - ~ Receiving complaints;
 - ~ Addressing and investigating complaints;
 - ~ Documenting complaints.
- Communicate information on the process to families through enrolment and orientation processes and information.
- Provide contact details for putting forward a complaint;

- Ensure every complaint is managed and is an opportunity for quality improvement;
 - Discuss the process for managing complaints with all staff; and
 - Provide training on complaints management through staff meetings, staff orientation training and in-service training.
- 3. Information for families**
- Families can make a formal complaint about aspects of our service and no person will be disadvantaged in anyway as a result of that complaint.
 - Inform families of the preschool about how they can register a concern or complaint and the correct procedures to follow by:-
 - ~ Providing information about Complaints and Feedback Procedure in the Parent Information Book provided to all families on enrolment.
 - ~ Having poster displayed on notice boards.
 - Encourage compliments and suggestions as well as complaints.
 - Endeavour to have interpreters available or other parents/ friends of people of same cultural background, to interpret concerns of families on Non English Speaking background.
- 4. Complaints should be forwarded to:**
- Bellingen Preschool Inc. – The Nominated Supervisor and/or
 - President of the Management Committee - PO Box 269 Bellingen NSW 2454 Phone: 6655 1804

Complaints will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality. Any educator or staff member involved in handling complaints will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint. If information specific to the complaint needs to be disclosed to other during its resolution, the complainant will be informed.

Complaints will be documented by an educator or staff member, and placed on the complaints register. The complaint will then be forwarded on to the most appropriated person to investigate the complaint. This will include the Nominated Supervisor and the President of the Management Committee.

Actions to address the complaint will be determined. Once the outcomes or resolutions are agreed on, all persons involved in the original complaint will be notified and informed of any actions for improvement that will take place as a result of the complaint.

The Department of Education and Communities will be notified of any complaint made to the service alleging a breach of regulation within 24 hours of the complaint being made.

Information for Educators and Staff

Educators and staff may make a formal complaint about aspects of our service and no person will be disadvantaged in any way as a result of that complaint.

Complaints should be forwarded to:

- Bellingen Preschool Inc. – the Nominated Supervisor and/or
- President – Management Committee , PO Box 269 Bellingen NSW 2454 Phone: 6655 1804

Your complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality. Any educator or staff member involved in handling complaints will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint. If information specific to the complaint needs to be disclosed to others during its resolution the complainant will be informed.

Your complaint will be documented, and placed on the complaints register. The complaint will then be forwarded on to the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint. This will include the Nominated Supervisor and the approved provider.

Actions to address the complaint will be determined. Once the outcomes or resolutions are agreed on, all persons involved in the original complaint will be notified and informed of any actions for improvement that will take place as a result of the complaint.

The Department of Education and Communities will be notified of any complaint made to the service alleging a breach of regulation which alleges that the safety health or wellbeing of a child was or is affected, or that the service has broken the Education and Care Services National Law within 24 hours of the complaint being made.

Accept all complaints whether verbal or written.

People should be able to comment or complain about anything they think is unfair. By listening and communicating we can help to resolve many complaints.

Steps in the resolving a grievance

- Step 1. Get a clear picture of what is each person's issue
- Step 2. Clarify the issue to be resolved
- Step 3. Seek possible solutions, from all parties
- Step 4. Negotiate action/s to be undertaken
- Step 5. Reach an agreement
- Step 6. Undertake the action
- Step 7. Review the issue/grievance once it has been resolved

Keep people informed

People will receive regular up-dates on the progress of their complaints, so grievances can be resolved as quickly as possible.

Record complaints & comments

A simple record system will be set up to capture comments, suggestions or complaints received. This will assist the staff and Management Committee in improving the centre's program.

Recording 'Thank You' comments will be encouraged, as this is important in building morale.

Levels of Complaint Handling

A tiered level of Complaints Handling will be organised.

Informal 1

This will be for simple straightforward complaints, usually verbal.

Complainant will be encouraged to approach any of the staff members to try and resolve these complaints.

Informal 2

These may be more complex matters which need to be referred to the Director/Nominated Supervisor.

Formal 3

When complaints cannot be resolved at the staffing level or are more serious, they may need to be referred to the Management Committee, where a group of Parent representatives can discuss the matter.

Do you have a problem with our service?

While we are striving to provide a quality service for your child, problems do happen. If you are not happy with any part of our service, you have a right to complain to us. We welcome any complaints or suggestions because it helps us provide a better service.

How do I make a complaint?

Talk to a staff member.
Often problems can be sorted out by talking to a member of staff at this service.
Any complaints are treated with respect and kept confidential.

What if the problem is not solved?

If the problem is not solved, the next step is to speak to the Director.

What if I am not happy with the Director's decision?

If you are not happy with the decision, Bellingen Preschool Inc. has a Management Committee which deals with problems which are harder to solve.
The complaint should be put in writing on a Grievance Form and addressed to the Management Committee.

How long will it take to get an answer?

The Management Committee will try to solve the problem as soon as possible; the longest it should take is 2-3 weeks.

What if I am still not happy?

If we have not been able to solve the problem contact:-

The Department Education and Communities

Postal address: Central Licensing, Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Communities
Locked Bag 5107, PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
Phone: 1800 619 113 (toll free)
Email: ececd@det.nsw.edu.au

Contact Details for Complaint Handling: Robyn Watt (Director)
Phone: 66551804 or Mobile:0412 298 501

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