



## Compliment and Complaint Handling

### Children's Services Policy No 1.4

**Date issued:** June 2007

**Replaces issue:** N/A

**Date effective:** June 2007

**Date revised and updated:** April 2009; June 2010; January 2012; April 2015; November 2015, August 2018, October 2020; and December 2022

#### Aim:

- To ensure that families and community members are able to provide formal feedback including compliments and complaints regarding the service; and
- To ensure that children, parents/carers and staff will be free to raise and have resolved any grievance that they may have regarding the service without fear of retribution.

#### Background Information:

Council operated services will receive compliments and complaints as part of our ongoing service to the community. To ensure ongoing customer and staff satisfaction, it is vital that compliments and complaints are dealt with professionally.

#### Relevant Legislation:

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)
- [Children \(Education and Care Services National Law Application\) Act 2010](#)

#### Resources:

- [SAFE series resources](#), NSW Office of the Children's Guardian
- Willoughby City Council's Grievance Procedure 9.03
- [Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority - National Quality Standard](#)
  - **Quality Area 7:**
  - Standard 7.1 - Element 7.2

**Note:** In this policy "staff" and "educators" refers to staff employed within Children's Services by Willoughby City Council.

#### Practices:

##### Compliments

Where a parent/carer or community member wishes to provide positive feedback or compliments regarding the Council, the education and care service, they will be given a Children's Services Customer/Staff feedback form to complete.

Occasionally staff may be offered rewards or gifts of appreciation from parents/carers. Staff are to be made aware of the implication of accepting gifts. Council's Code of Conduct states that staff are not to accept an offer of money at any time.

During times of celebration, such as Christmas, parents/carers and children often offer gifts to staff. These gifts may be accepted by staff as long as they are of a token nature. Staff are

to refer to Council's Code of Conduct or contact the Children & Youth Services Team Leader for guidance if they are unsure if they can accept a particular gift.

### **Complaints**

- Where a parent/carer or community member has a complaint or grievance regarding the education and care service, it should be reported immediately to the Nominated Supervisor either verbally or in writing.
- Where there is a complaint or grievance made by a parent/carer in relation to a staff member's conduct or child protection issues, this complaint must be reported immediately to the Children & Youth Services Team Leader and Community Life Manager, who will then follow procedures as outlined in the Human Resources Child Protection Policy 2.09.
- Where feasible, the complaint/grievance should initially be discussed with the person concerned (this includes the Nominated Supervisor).
- Every effort will be made to resolve the grievance at this level. The Nominated Supervisor should adopt a mediating problem-solving approach, with efforts made to encourage constructive communication between the parties involved.
- Staff are to record any complaint/grievance taken in person or over the phone, ensuring that all relevant information is obtained.
- Staff are to provide the parent/carer or community member with details of the anticipated time it may take to follow up the grievance.
- The parent/carer or community member is to be requested to complete the Children's Services Customer/Staff feedback form at this time.
- Any complaint that has been discussed between the Nominated Supervisor and the person(s) involved and is still unresolved is to be referred to the Children & Youth Services Team Leader or Community Life Manager.
- If after this process the complaint remains unresolved, the Community Life Manager, in consultation with the parties involved, will determine the next course of action. This may necessitate the involvement of senior management, agencies or mediators.
- At this point, the Community Life Manager will determine if the complaint is serious and, if so determined, will adopt Council's Grievance Policy.
- Where the grievance/complaint relates to the operation of the service or a perceived breach of the Education and Care Services National Regulations or the Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010, a service is required to contact Department of Education and notify them of the complaint.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

- Whilst a complainant may choose to make an anonymous complaint about a service, it is often difficult for the Nominated Supervisor, Children & Youth Services Team Leader or Community Life Manager to raise the issue for resolution. We encourage parents/carers and community members to provide their details to ensure that their concerns are acted upon in an effective and timely manner.

### **Complaints by Children**

- Staff are required to record any concerns or complaints that are held by children.
- Where a child has a concern regarding the service, staff are required to discuss the concern with the child.
- Where a child has a concern or grievance in relation to the conduct of a staff member, this complaint **must** be reported immediately to the Nominated Supervisor and depending on the seriousness of the concern or grievance the Children & Youth Services Team Leader and Community Life Manager. The Manager will then follow procedures as outlined in the Human Resources Child Protection Policy 2.09.

- Where appropriate this concern is to be addressed by the Nominated Supervisor, the parents/carers, and if required, with the Children & Youth Services Team Leader and Community Life Manager.
- The attached form is to be used to identify any patterns of concerns held by children.
- A new form is to be used for each concern to ensure confidentiality is maintained.



## **Children's Services**

### **Complaints from Children**

### **Recording Form**

Children should be encouraged to write their compliments and suggestions on a separate sheet of paper and post it in the suggestion box, or record this on the program format.

Child's name: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Service the concern relates to: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of the child's concern:

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How was the concern addressed:

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Was this concern addressed with the parent/carer?

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Was the concern addressed with the Children & Youth Services Team Leader or Community Life Manager?

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