

## Complaints and Grievance Policy

### NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS	
6.1	Supportive relationships with families Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.1.2	Parent views are respected The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.2	Collaborative partnerships Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP	
7.1.2	Management Systems Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality Service
7.2.1	Continuous Improvement There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.

### EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

168	Education and care service must have policies and procedure
173	Prescribed information to be displayed
176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

### RATIONALE

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction. Complaints provide opportunities to review current procedures and/or practices and can improve service quality.

KAZ Early Learning Centre educators, staff and management encourage the satisfactory resolution of complaints from families, educators/staff and other stakeholders or their advocates.

KAZ Early Learning Centre believes it is essential for families and other key stakeholders eg clients, carers or volunteers to be able to raise complaints and appeal decisions. No complainant will be victimised or discriminated against as a result of making a complaint.

Forming a partnership between the service and each child's family is central to providing effective care. These partnerships are characterised by open and extensive communication, which is respectful of, and sensitive to, cultural and other differences. In all cases where a parent/guardian might make a complaint or air a grievance, management and staff must adhere to the service's

Privacy Policy. Staff members are not to involve other staff members, parents or children in an individual concern. This is unethical.

**NOTE:** *This procedure is not designed to address complaints relating to alleged child abuse, or criminal activity. Complaints of this nature must be dealt with immediately - refer to KAZ Early Learning Centre's Child Protection Policy regarding such complaints.*

**AIM:**

- To ensure the satisfactory resolution of complaints from families, staff and other stakeholders.
- Provide opportunities for consultation, evaluation and review of the service operation and delivery of the education and care program;
- Develop a process for making and managing complaints;
- Communicate the option and process of making a complaint;
- Handle complaints diligently and confidentially.

**PROCEDURE**

Families and other key stakeholders will have access to and be made aware of KAZ Early Learning Centre's *Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedures*, via the Family Handbook. When a complaint is initially made the person making the complaint will be referred to this policy to assist them in understanding the steps and choices they have to resolve the issue.

Complaints can initially be made verbally or in writing and should be directed to the person who is the subject of the complaint. If the complainant is not comfortable with addressing their complaint to the person who is subject of the complaint then they can address it to the Nominated Supervisor. If the complaint is about the Nominated Supervisor, the complaint may be addressed in writing to the Approved Provider of KAZ Early Learning Centre.

Anonymous allegations need to be recorded and may require some action. The nature of that action will often depend on the amount of supporting information accompanying the allegation. Complainants should be notified that it may be impossible to investigate a complaint without specific information being supplied.

When complaints are received, the educator/staff member shall immediately inform the Nominated Supervisor.

**Complaint Documentation**

A *KAZ Early Learning Centre Complaints Record* must be completed, even if the complaint is made anonymously. The Nominated Supervisor will be responsible for investigating the complaint unless it involves them. In this case the Approved Provider will investigate the complaint.

**Notifiable Complaint**

The Nominated Supervisor will deem the complaint either 'Reportable' or 'not reportable'. If the complaint is deemed not reportable, the Nominated Supervisor will note the complaint, and the action taken, in the *Complaints Register* as soon as practicable after the action is taken.

If the complaint is deemed 'Reportable' the Nominated Supervisor must contact the Early Childhood Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education within 24 hours to inform them of the complaint by submitting an *ACECQA Notification Of Complaints form (CO1)* via the NQA IT System and complete the *Complaints Record*, which can be attached to the CO1 when it is submitted. 'Reportable' Complaints must also be entered in the *Complaints Register*.

Any complaint made to the service alleging a breach of regulation which alleges that the safety health or wellbeing of a child/children was or is affected, or that the service has broken the Education and Care Services National Law, then the Nominated Supervisor will notify the Regulatory Authority by email within 24 hours and complete the *ACECQA Notification Of Incident form (IO1)* (which is accessed via the website [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au) to ensure the most current version).

Whether a complaint is deemed 'Not reportable' or 'Reportable', the Nominated Supervisor will maintain a *Complaints Register* at the Service, attaching all relevant documentation to the Register.

### **Complaint Resolution**

When a complaint is received the Nominated Supervisor must ensure that:

- The complainant's view on their **desired outcome** of the complaint is sought
- The complainant is informed of the next steps in the resolution process
- The complainant is informed that the complaint will be discussed with the person(s) who are subject of the complaint
- The complainant is advised of their right to involve an advocate or support person
- The complainant will be informed of the outcome of the complainant as soon as practicable after action has been taken.

When the complaint has been received by the Nominated Supervisor, they have a responsibility to inform the educator/staff member concerned of the substance of the complaint except where the complainant requests that the complaint not be proceeded with or where the Nominated Supervisor believes it would serve no purpose for the employee. In this latter case it should be discussed first with the Approved Provider.

The Nominated Supervisor will discuss the complaint and resolution strategies with the person that is the subject of the complaint and offer them an opportunity of submitting a written account of the incident from their perspective. The complainant may be involved in these discussions to resolve the matter.

Where the complaint has been received in writing, the complainant will be informed in writing within a week that the complaint has been received.

All complainants will be informed of the outcome of the complaint as soon as practicable after the action is taken.

### **Unresolved Complaints**

If this process is not effective in resolving the complaint, or it takes longer than four weeks to resolve, then the Approved Provider will conduct a full investigation into the complaint and notify the complainant of the process.

If the complaint is still not resolved a meeting will be arranged to resolve the complaint, and a mediator may be brought in.

### **Direct Complaints**

If Parents/Guardians are not satisfied with the outcome a contact number for the Early Childhood Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education will be given to them.

Families can make a complaint directly to the Regulatory Authority where the complaint alleges that:

- The safety, health or wellbeing of a child or children was or is being compromised while that child/children is/are being educated and cared for by the approved education and care service
- The relevant legislation has been contravened

Or make a complaint to the Department of Fair Trading if the complaint is about service fees or business practices.

Early Childhood Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education contacts are displayed in the classroom.

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 others during its resolution, the complainant will be informed.

### **Follow-Up and Review**

Continuous improvement of our service occurs where there is reflection and constructive feedback given from the service community which results in positive change and improvement. Complaints are managed well, lead to quality improvement and are conducted in a safe manner in a secure environment.

Each complaint will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement. After the complaint or grievance has been dealt with, we will:

- Analyse the complaint to determine if any policy or procedural changes need to be implemented.
- The Approved Provider will follow through to determine that complaints and grievances have successfully resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Families will be contacted to determine if they were satisfied with the way the issue was resolved, and educators' will be consulted about the outcome from an operational viewpoint.

**The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times.**

**KAZ Early Learning Centre Related Policies and Procedures:**

N/A

**Appendices**

Complaints Register

Complaints Record

**Sources:**

**Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)**

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

**Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) No 104a**

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2010/104a/full>

**Education and Care Services National Regulations**

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

**Related Telephone Numbers**

Early Childhood Directorate - 1800 619 113

**REVIEW**

This policy will be updated to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements every year. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulation*, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.

**Date Issued:**

October 2019

**Review Date:**

October 2020

**Amendment**

Web links Updated

ACECQA form names updated, NQS included

Family, Educator and Staff Comments: