

I – GRIEVANCE, COMPLAINTS & FEEDBACK

Effective from: September 4, 2018
Contact officer: Coordinator of Children's Services
Next review date: 2 - 4 years / as required
File Reference: 1825/29.5
Related Policies/Local Laws/Legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. CI 168
- National Quality Standard: QA 7

Related Documents:

- ACECQA – Guide to the National Quality Framework – updated 2018
- ECA Code of Ethics (2016)
- Wingecarribee Children's Services Policy and Procedures
- Wingecarribee Shire Council's Code of Conduct
- Wingecarribee Shire Council's Statement of Business Ethics
- Wingecarribee Shire Council Complaints Handling Policy. Accessed 18 May 2018
<http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/uploads/3266/1.8-complaint-handling-policy-jan-2014.pdf>
- Wingecarribee Shire Council Complaints Handling Procedure. Accessed 18 May 2018
<http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/uploads/3266/1.8-complaint-handling-procedure-jan-2014.pdf>

PURPOSE

Wingecarribee Children's Services values the feedback of educators, staff, families and the wider community and uses this information to support the development and improvement of our service provision. We encourage open communication through a range of opportunities to express, respond and provide feedback on the service and the programs we provide.

A component of this feedback is the ability to put forward a grievance or complaint. Wingecarribee Children's Services acknowledges everyone's right to a positive and sympathetic response to their concerns. Solutions are sought to resolve all disputes, issues or concerns in a prompt and positive manner that recognises the importance of:

- Procedural fairness and natural justice



- Ethical conduct
- A services culture free from discrimination and harassment and
- The opportunity for review and further investigation.

Wingecarribee Children's Services is committed to:

- Providing opportunities for consultation, evaluation and review of the service operation and the delivery of the education and care program
- A process for making and managing a grievance /complaint
- Communicate the option and process of making a complaint
- Handling complaints diligently and confidentially

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

Wingecarribee Children's Services Staff employed by Wingecarribee Shire Council

Wingecarribee Family Day Care Educators as Agents of the Approved Provider – Wingecarribee Shire Council

All children and families accessing care with Council's Children's Services

All volunteers and students engaged with Wingecarribee Children's Services.

DEFINITIONS

- Wingecarribee Shire Council Defines a Complaint as:
 - Complaint – an expression of dissatisfaction with Council's decisions, actions or inaction, policies, procedures, employees, agents or the quality of the services it provides.
 - A complaint may relate to a specific incident or issue involving Council, to matters of a more philosophical or general nature regarding council's processes and/or procedures.
- A complaint is an "expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required." (AS/NZS 10002-2014)
- For the purposes of this Procedure: A **formal complaint** is determined when the complaint has the expectation of a response or resolution to the issue or matter and the actions in the flow chart (3) are implemented.

PROCEDURE

1.1 Feedback

Communications will aim to at all times to be open and honest and as required confidential.



Our Services will offer a variety of ways to communicate and provide feedback including:

- Daily program – which offers the opportunity for comments and feedback on the program and activities
- Interactions
- Formal feedback and comments
- Surveys
- Educator/ Staff/team meetings

Families are provided the services contact information including email, postal and phone number/s upon enrolment and on the Wingecarribee Shire Council's Website.

Families are encouraged to converse with educators and staff at suitable times such as pick up and drop off times, by email or phone calls throughout the day.

Feedback from families is encouraged and educators and staff will take this feedback into account in ongoing planning and quality improvement.

2. Complaints and Grievances

- 2.1** Every family, educator and staff member will be provided with clear written guidelines for dealing with a formal complaint. This will be available in the service handbook and available under Children Services on the Council Website.
- 2.2** The Service encourages persons with a grievance /compliant in the first instance to initially discuss the matter with the other person concerned.
- 2.3** If the complaint is unresolved or where the complaint relates to a breach in the National Regulations or affects the health, safety or well-being of a child the complaint should be received by the Nominated Supervisor or delegate at the Coordination Unit
- 2.4** Where a compliant/grievance is received by the Nominated Supervisor or delegate at the person receiving the compliant/grievance will determine with the complainant whether the matter is:
- A formal Compliant
 - A comment or feedback
 - A question/query which requires clarification
- 2.5** Anonymous formal complaints or grievances are accepted. However, the Services ability to investigate anonymous complaints/grievances will be dependent upon the substance of the information supplied. In addition, due to the anonymity the Service will be unable to provide reasons for any decisions or actions taken.
- 2.6** Complaints will be dealt with the strictest confidentiality. Any educator or staff member involved in handling a compliant will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint. It may be applicable for complaints/grievances made to the coordination unit regarding an Educator or Staff member to be discussed with the associated Educator/Staff member in order to:



Children's Services Procedures

- Clarify
- gather more information
- inform
- and where applicable resolve the issue.

At no time will the safety or wellbeing of the children in care be jeopardised or compromised.

2.7 The Department of Education and Communities will be notified of any formal complaint made to the service alleging a breach of a 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.

3. Formal Complaint Flow Chart

3.1 Determine whether it is a formal complaint, query, question or comment.

3.2 The following flow chart will be followed for all formal complaints:



Approved By:



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