

Complaints Management Policy

1 Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This policy provides a transparent, fair, and child-focused complaint handling system for Ashgrove West Pre-School Centre Incorporated (**AWPS** or **the Centre**).
 - 1.2 This policy ensures compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations (together, the **National Law**), in particular Regulations 168(2)(o) and 173.
 - 1.3 This policy applies to all complaints received from families, staff, community members, or any other person in relation to the Centre's operations, programs, or personnel.
 - 1.4 The paramount consideration in the management of any complaint is the safety, health, and wellbeing of children.
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2 Child-Focused Approach

- 2.1 The Centre adopts a child-focused approach to complaint handling. The safety and wellbeing of children is the paramount consideration in all decisions made in response to a complaint.
 - 2.2 Where a complaint raises concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child, the Centre will take immediate steps to ensure the child is safe, regardless of the status of the complaint investigation.
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3 How to Make a Complaint

- 3.1 Complaints may be made verbally (in person or by telephone) or in writing (by letter, email, or other written form) to:
 - (1) the Director;
 - (2) the Nominated Supervisor; or
 - (3) the President of the Management Committee (for complaints about the Director).
 - 3.2 The name and telephone number of the person to whom complaints may be addressed must be displayed prominently at the Centre, in accordance with Regulation 173.
 - 3.3 Complaints may be made anonymously, however this may limit the Centre's ability to investigate and respond to the complaint.
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4 Complaint Handling Process

- 4.1 All complaints will be acknowledged within two business days of receipt.

- 4.2 The person receiving the complaint will assess the complaint and determine the appropriate course of action, which may include informal resolution, formal investigation, or referral to the Management Committee or an external authority.
 - 4.3 The complaint will be investigated in a fair, impartial, and timely manner. All parties involved will be given an opportunity to provide their account of events.
 - 4.4 The complainant will be informed of the outcome of the complaint, including any actions taken, within a reasonable timeframe (generally within 14 days of the complaint being lodged, or as soon as practicable for complex matters).
 - 4.5 Where the complaint cannot be resolved within 14 days, the complainant will be kept informed of progress.
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5 Confidentiality

- 5.1 All complaints will be handled with discretion and in confidence, to the extent permitted by law and the principles of procedural fairness.
 - 5.2 Information relating to a complaint will only be disclosed to persons who need to know in order to investigate or resolve the complaint, or as required by law.
 - 5.3 All parties involved in a complaint are expected to maintain confidentiality and must not discuss the matter with persons who are not directly involved.
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6 Complaints Alleging Harmful Sexual Behaviours by a Child

- 6.1 Where a complaint is received alleging harmful sexual behaviours by a child towards another child, the Centre will follow its child protection procedures and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all children involved.
 - 6.2 The Centre will seek guidance from appropriate external agencies (including Child Safety, Queensland Police Service, and specialist support services) in managing such complaints.
 - 6.3 The Centre will ensure that all children involved are supported and that responses are developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, and consistent with current best practice guidance.
 - 6.4 The Centre will notify the regulatory authority as required.
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7 Escalation

- 7.1 Where a complaint cannot be resolved at the operational level, it will be escalated to the Management Committee for consideration and determination.
- 7.2 Where a complaint involves a serious allegation (including an allegation of harm to a child, a serious breach of the National Law or Regulations, or an allegation of criminal conduct), the Director must notify the President of the Management Committee and consider whether a report to the regulatory authority, Queensland Police Service, or other appropriate body is required.
- 7.3 Complaints alleging a breach of the National Law or Regulations must be notified to the regulatory authority in accordance with the prescribed timeframes.

8 Record Keeping

- 8.1 A written record must be made of all complaints received, including the date, the nature of the complaint, the steps taken to investigate and resolve the complaint, and the outcome.
- 8.2 Complaint records must be stored securely and retained in accordance with the Centre's record-keeping obligations.
- 8.3 Complaint records must be made available to authorised officers of the regulatory authority upon request.

9 Right to Complain to the Regulatory Authority

- 9.1 Families, staff, and community members have the right to make a complaint directly to the regulatory authority (Department of Education, Queensland) at any time.
- 9.2 Contact details for the regulatory authority must be displayed at the Centre and will be provided to complainants upon request.
- 9.3 Making a complaint to the Centre does not preclude a person from also making a complaint to the regulatory authority.

10 Continuous Improvement

- 10.1 The Centre will use information from complaints to identify opportunities for improvement in its policies, procedures, and practices.
- 10.2 The Management Committee and Director will review complaint trends and themes at least annually and incorporate learnings into the Centre's Quality Improvement Plan.

11 Protection from Victimisation

- 11.1 No person will be disadvantaged, victimised, or subjected to detrimental action as a result of making a complaint in good faith.
- 11.2 Any allegation of victimisation will be treated as a serious matter and investigated accordingly.
- 11.3 Vexatious or knowingly false complaints may be subject to appropriate action.

12 Policy Review

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Director and Management Committee annually, or earlier if significant changes occur in legislation, regulatory guidance, or organisational requirements.
- 12.2 Any updates to this policy will be communicated to staff, and families as appropriate.

Date of adoption: 21/07/2026

Date of next review: 21/07/2027