

## Complaints and Feedback

**NQS 4.2.3** Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.

**NQS 7.3** Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service.

**NQS 7.3.3** The Regulatory Authority is notified of any relevant changes to the operation of the service, of serious incidents and of any complaints which allege a breach of legislation.

**NQS 7.3.4** Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner.

### Introduction

Gleneaon Rudolf Steiner Preschool values the **feedback** of educators, staff, families and the wider community in helping to create a service that meets Regulation and the needs of enrolled children and their families. We encourage open communication through opportunities to respond and feedback on the program.

A component of this feedback is the ability to put forward a **complaint** and have this managed appropriately with due consideration for accountability and quality improvement.

### Aims

We will:

- 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.

### Procedures

#### Feedback

Communication will aim at all times to be open, honest and confidential.

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

- Day books
- Daily Program – parents are welcome to write comments on the program directly.
- Interactions
- Formal feedback and comments
- Surveys
- Family meetings

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 service'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.

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

Families will be informed as to how their feedback has contributed to improvements in the service through information notice board displays, emails, and/or newsletters.

## **Complaints**

The Approved Provider will:

- Develop a process for managing complaints. This process includes:
  - Receiving complaints;
  - Addressing and investigating complaints;
  - Documenting complaints.

The Director will:

- Communicate information on the process to families through the enrolment and orientation processes and information.
- Provide contact details for putting forward a complaint.
- Ensure every complaint is managed in accordance with the process listed below and is an opportunity for quality improvement.
- Discuss the process for managing complaints with the staff team.
- Provide or arrange training on serious complaints management if required.

## **Notifiable complaint**

A **notifiable complaint** is one that alleges a breach of the Regulation and Law, National Quality Standards or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised. Any complaint of this nature must be reported by the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor to the Early Childhood Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)).

If the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or Director is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact The Early Childhood Education Directorate for confirmation.

Written notification of complaints must be submitted using the appropriate forms, which can be found on the ACECQA website: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au) and logged using NQA ITS (National Quality Agenda IT System).

## **Serious incident**

A **serious incident** is an incident, situation or event where there is an imminent risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person at the Service, resulting in the death of a child, or an injury, trauma or illness for which the attention of a registered medical practitioner, emergency services or hospital is sought, or should have been sought, as a result of an emergency and not, for example, as a precautionary measure. This also includes an incident in which a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, is removed from the Centre in contravention of the Regulations or is mistakenly locked in/out of the Centre premises (Regulation 12).

A serious incident should be documented in an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. The Regulatory Authority must be

notified within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the Centre (Regulation 176(2)(a)). Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in Regulation 183

### **Sample process (Information for families)**

1. Families make a formal complaint about aspects of our service and no person will be disadvantaged in any way as a result of that complaint.
2. Complaints should be forwarded to:
  - Name of Service (Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner Preschool)
  - Name of Approved Provider (Andrew Hill)
  - Name of Nominated Supervisor / Director (Sue McCudden / Peggy Day)
  - Address and Phone (118 Sydney Street, Willoughby 2068 / 9412 4457)
3. Your complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. 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.
4. A serious incident or notifiable complaint will be documented by an educator or staff member, and placed on the Serious incidents and Notifiable Complaints Register (J:\2018\QA7 Leadership). 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.
5. 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.
6. The Early Childhood Education Directorate will be notified of any complaint made to the service alleging a breach of regulation within 24 hours of the complaint being made.
7. Complaints relating to a licensing or compliance issue may also be followed up directly with the Early Childhood Education Directorate on 1800 619 113 or [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au)

### **Sample process (Information for educators and staff)**

*Please note - this is not a grievance procedure. Matters of staff grievance should be dealt with under a grievance policy relating to staff.*

1. 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.
2. Complaints should be forwarded to:
  - Name of Service (Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner Preschool)
  - Name of Approved Provider (Andrew Hill)
  - Name of Nominated Supervisor / Director (Sue McCudden / Peggy Day)
  - Address and Phone (118 Sydney St, Willoughby 2068 / 9417 4457)
3. Your complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. 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.

4. A serious incident or notifiable complaint will be documented, and placed on the Serious Incidents and Notifiable Complaints register (J:\2018\QA7 Leadership). 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.
5. 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.
6. The Early Childhood Education Directorate 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.
7. Complaints relating to a licensing or compliance issue may also be followed up directly with the Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate on 1800 619 113 or [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au)

### **Statutory Legislation & Considerations**

- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

### **Sources**

- NSW Ombudsman (2004) 'Effective Complaint Handling'. NSW Ombudsman
- NSW Ombudsman (2009) "Complaint Handling Kit". NSW Ombudsman
- Dept of Education <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/>

### **Evaluation**

Continuous improvement of our service occurs where there is reflection and constructive feedback given from the Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner Preschool 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.

### **Review**

<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>Modifications</b>	<b>Next Policy Review Due</b>
<b>Feb 2013</b> <b>Oct 2014</b> <b>Feb 2016</b>	Definition of Serious incident reconsidered	
<b>Aug 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard.</li> </ul>	Aug 2018

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explanation of Notifiable Complaint and serious Incident</li></ul>	
<b>Sept 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review reference to the complaints register and include link to this document.</li></ul>	Sept 2019