



## Complaints

### Rationale

Adventure Patch Family Day Care aims for high quality in all aspects of service delivery. An effective complaints management system is integral to providing quality service. It helps to measure satisfaction with the service and is an important source of information and feedback for continuously improving our practice.

APFDC views complaints as opportunities for improvement. The service welcomes complaints about its service delivery and is committed to taking action to resolve them. We recognise that often it may be the recipients of our service who are the first to identify when things are not working appropriately.

Complaints together with comments, compliments, concerns and suggestions help us to monitor and improve our service, and assist us in meeting the needs and expectations of all stakeholders.

Children have the right to respectful and warm relationships between families and educators. They require an ongoing, positive, harmonious care environment. School age children need channels to raise their concerns about their care.

Families must feel confident that their role as the main influence in their children's lives is respected and supported. Families need to voice concerns in a positive and confidential manner, and be assured that any concerns or issues are taken seriously and acted upon. They must be given opportunities to influence decisions about their child's experiences in care and to be kept informed of any issues or incidents that affect their child.

Educators rely on regular and open two-way communication with families. They require time to speak with families about any concerns. Educators must have confidence in the processes that will ensure complaints are dealt with in a positive and open manner.

The scheme expects families to approach the co-ordination unit to raise problems or concerns. The scheme agrees to manage concerns or complaints promptly and effectively.

### NQF Links

<b>Law</b>	Section 3(3)(a)&(e); 174(2)(b)&(4)
<b>Regulations</b>	75; 76; 80; 88(2); 93(2); 93(5)(b); 94(2); 99; 157
<b>NQF</b>	1.3.3; 6.1;

### POLICY

APFDC welcomes each complaint as a means of improving its services and upholding positive relationships between the service and all stakeholders. Everyone has a right to a positive and sympathetic response to concerns they have raised. 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 scheme culture free from discrimination and harassment;
- The opportunity for review and further investigation.

## **PROCEDURE**

### *Making a complaint*

All families are provided with clear written guidelines detailing complains procedure. This is included in the parent information handbook provided to all families on registration with the service.

Families may raise their complaint directly with their child’s educator, with scheme staff or with appropriate staff in Blackmans Bay Childrens Services.

Families and children will be surveyed regularly to provide an opportunity to identify areas of concern, or ways in which the service could be improved along with areas of strength.

The scheme will provide various means for input such as direct feedback to educators, email surveys, invitations to special or social events, advisory committees etc.

Educators will discuss complaints procedures with school aged children and encourage them to raise any issues they have. Children’s complaints will be taken seriously and resolutions will be sought.

The parent information handbook will include up-to-date contact details of the regulatory authority. These are also displayed in the reception area of the scheme office.

All educators must have a copy (hard or digital) of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Education and Care National Regulations available to families to read at any time.

### *Dealing with Complaints*

All complaints or grievances will be dealt with promptly and confidentially in a manner that:

- Values the opportunity to be heard;
- Promotes conflict resolution;
- Encourages the development of harmonious partnerships;
- Ensures that conflicts and grievances are mediated fairly; and
- Is transparent and equitable.

Where possible the complaints will be dealt with on the spot by the child’s educator as this person has the closest relationship with the family. If the complaint is an issue that the educator considers outside his or control or the family does not wish to share with the educator, the family can raise their concerns with the scheme co-ordination unit to be resolved.

Educators and co-ordination unit staff will always support a family that raises and issue of concern, and explain why they appreciate the opportunity to improve the service or to rectify a mistake.

All confidential conversations and discussions with families will take place away from children, other families and educators or staff who are not involved.

Where a family wishes their concerns to remain confidential this will be honoured. Families will be advised that issues cannot always be resolved if they choose to remain anonymous.

Where an educator and or staff member feels they have to share a confidence with another person in order to resolve an issue, or the nature of the complaint requires a third party to be informed, the family will be advised of this need prior to any further discussions on the matter.

### *Steps to Managing Complaints*

The complaint will be welcomed and appreciated.

The complaint will be documented and any legal requirements in relation to the complaint will be considered. This will include the need to notify regulatory authorities.

The complainant will be asked to provide information regarding how the situation could be rectified to their satisfaction.

The person receiving the complaint will clarify issues and question the complainant to further understand the issues.

If possible the problem will be resolved immediately. If this is not possible, the complainant will be advised that the issue will be given a high priority and dealt with as soon as possible.

If the issues are complex the complainant will be asked to put their concerns in writing.

Where mediation is required all parties will have the right to agree to the appointment of the mediator.

If the problem is an issue outside the control of the service, the person receiving the complaint should explain this to the complainant and advise them who they should contact if they wish to take the matter further.

The service will always follow up with the complainant to find out if they are happy with the way the problem has been resolved.

Each complaint will be evaluated to determine how the service responded and whether further action is required.

## **SOURCES**

Lets Discuss Managing Complaints Cross C and Morton S Consultancy 2011

Childcare Service Handbook 2017-208 (DEEWR)

Privacy Law (2011) from [www.privacy.gov.au/law](http://www.privacy.gov.au/law)

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