

Management of Complaints/Grievance Handling Policy:

POLICY STATEMENT:

Grays Point Activity Centre will maintain a complaints and grievance management procedure to ensure that all Educators, families and community members know that complaints and grievances will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and fairly. Complaints and grievances will be investigated and documented in a timely manner. Our complaints and grievance management procedural system will be promoted in the parent handbook, staff handbook and on our website. We will identify complaints and grievances as opportunities to improve the quality of our Service.

PROCEDURES:

Managing Breaches and Complaints/Grievances

All breaches of our Code of Conduct, Expectations Charter and complaints or grievances from Educators, staff members, families, visitors and volunteers associated with GPAC will be managed in line with our Management of Complaints Grievance Handling Policy. This includes incidents of bullying, discrimination and harassment at the Service. Our Service takes any incident of (alleged) bullying, discrimination or harassment very seriously because it can cause significant health and wellbeing issues for employees.

Grievances can occur in all workplaces and handling them properly is important for maintaining a safe, healthy, harmonious and productive work environment. Documented grievance procedures are important because:

- Staff and visitors need to know a process exists for receiving and managing grievances and complaints fairly, impartially, promptly and thoroughly.
- They help to ensure small issues or problems do not escalate
- Supervisors and managers need to be aware of issues causing conflict
- Documentation provides evidence and a record of the grievance and the outcome
- complaints facilitate continuous improvement of Service operations

Grievance Guidelines

These guidelines explain the procedure for reporting and managing grievances, the roles and responsibilities, of educators, staff and managers, and the potential consequences of breaching our policies, procedures and code of conduct.

Educators, staff, volunteers, families and visitors will:

- Raise the grievance/complaint directly with the person concerned. Both parties should try to resolve the issue and develop solutions to ensure the problem does not happen again.

- Discussions should remain private, confidential, respectful and open-minded, and will take place away from children.
- Be encouraged to submit their concern in writing.
- Raise any grievance involving suspected or actual unlawful activity (including bullying) with the approved provider or Nominated Supervisor immediately and privately
- Be confident that their concerns will be thoroughly investigated, but aware that the outcome may not result in the action requested.
- Union members may seek assistance or support from their trade union representative at any time.

Educators, staff, volunteers, families and visitors will not:

- Get involved in complaints/grievances that do not concern them. This is not ethical or helpful in managing the complaint.
- Raise complaints with an external complaints body such as a court or tribunal without using our grievance procedures and appeal process first.

Process for Communication:

Informal Complaints

- If an individual has an informal complaint or comment about the Centre, they will be encouraged to talk to the Centre Manager who will arrange a time to discuss their concern and come to a resolution to address the issue.
- If the complaint is not handled at this level to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint, they should then formalise the issue by communicating in writing with a member of the Committee.
- Management will discuss the issue with the Centre Manager and develop a strategy for resolving the problem, this would be discussed further with the individual or if necessary, a meeting will be organised with the Centre Manager and individual to resolve the problem.
- All complaints will be recorded and dated indicating the issue of concern and how it was resolved. All information on complaints and grievances will include evidence that complaints are investigated within satisfactory timeframes and have led to amendments to policies and procedures where required.
- The Centre Manager will inform the person making the complaint of what has been decided regarding the issue. Staff will also be informed of any relevant issues that they need to address or be aware of. This could be done verbally or if the issue has been dealt with on a more formal basis, then the Committee or Centre Manager will write personally to the individual making the complaint.

Formal Complaints

- Where the grievance/complaint is sent to the Centre Manager in writing, the Centre Manager will be responsible for providing the complaint to the Management Committee.

- If it is not appropriate to direct a complaint to the Centre Manager, the Nominated Supervisor (or another manager/supervisor if the Nominated Supervisor is involved) will be responsible for directing the complaint to the Management Committee.
- If the Centre Manager (or Nominated Supervisor) is unable to resolve the concern, or feels unable to discuss the matter directly with the person(s) involved, the Management Committee will be responsible for resolving the complaint. The complainant will be responsible for providing all relevant information.
- All written grievances, unless they cannot be directed to the Centre Manager, will be communicated to the GPAC email address.
- If the complaint is in regards to the Centre Manager, the Manager must provide the email address of the GPAC Secretary to the complainant.
- The Management Committee or delegate will discuss the issue with the complainant within 24 hours of receiving the verbal or written complaint
- For reasons of practicality, a representative of the Management Committee holding an executive role (President, Vice-President, Secretary or Treasurer) will communicate with the complainant. If deemed necessary, the representative of the Committee will communicate within 24 hours the need for a meeting between the complainant and Management.
- Management or a delegate will properly, fairly confidentially and impartially investigate the issue including:
 - Thoroughly investigating the circumstances and facts and inviting all affected parties to provide information or respond where appropriate. To encourage teamwork and respect, the issue may be discussed at an educator meeting if the privacy of the people involved can be protected.
 - Inviting the complainant to have a support person present during an interview (e.g. health and safety representative)
- Provide all affected parties with a clear written statement (letter, email) of the outcome of the investigation within seven working days of receiving the verbal or written complaint
 - If the resolution of the complaint involves a written agreement, all parties must agree with the wording etc.
 - If the approved provider or Nominated Supervisor decides not to proceed with the investigation after initial enquiries, the or she will give the complainant the reasons in writing.
- Keep appropriate records of the investigation and outcome, and store those records in accordance with our privacy and confidentiality policy, and record keeping and retention policy. Unsubstantiated complaints against educators/staff may be retained on file if the person has been given the opportunity to record a comment on the documentation.
- Monitor ongoing behaviour and provide support as required
- Ensure the parties are protected from victimisation
- Offer external review by a Tribunal or alternate organisation where employees, visitors and volunteers are unhappy with the outcome of the grievance procedure. Workplace bullying matters may be referred to the Fair Work Commission which can direct employers to take specific actions

against workplace bullies, or the Work Health and Safety Regulator which may investigate whether WHS duties have been contravened

- Track complaints to identify recurring issues within the Service
- Notify the regulatory within 24 hours if a complaint alleges the safety, health or wellbeing of a child is being compromised.

Outcomes may include:

- An apology and a commitment that certain behaviour will not be repeated (monitoring this over time)
- Education and training in relevant laws, policies or procedures (e.g. bullying awareness, leadership skills)
- Assistance in locating relevant counselling services
- Disciplinary procedures including a verbal or written warning, termination of employment or transfer to a different position at the Service
- Ensuring any inequality or inequity is remedied
- providing closer supervision
- Modifying Service policies and procedures
- Developing new policies and procedures

Outcomes will take into consideration relevant industrial relations principles and guidelines and make provision for procedural fairness.

The Management Committee or Centre Manager will consider:

- The number of complaints or breaches
- The opportunities given to adhere to a policy or procedure and/or change of behaviour
- The opportunities given to respond to allegations
- The seriousness of the complaint or breach, and whether it impacted the safety and welfare of other employees, volunteers or visitors
- Whether a policy or procedure or complaint is reasonable

Complaints that must be notified to the Regulatory Authority

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will notify the regulatory authority using form NL01 Notification of Complaints, Incidents and Additional Children in an Emergency:

- Within 24 hours of any complaints alleging that the safety, health or wellbeing of a child is being compromised at the Service
- Within 24 hours of any complaints that the national law has been breached

Additional Procedures:

- GPAC and the grievance procedure will support an individual’s right to complain and will help them to make their complaints clear and try to resolve them.
- Families will be provided with this grievance procedure, in the Parent Handbook.
- All confidential conversations with individuals who have a complaint or grievance will take place in a quiet place away from children, other families or Staff that are not involved.
- GPAC agrees to investigate and resolve matters to the best of their ability, in good faith, and in a timely manner recognising the constraints of the volunteer Management Committee.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Education and Care Grievance procedures National Regulations	National Quality Standard	Other Service procedures/ Policies/documentation	Other
r168, 175, 176 S174	Standards 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2 Elements 1.3.3, 2.1.1, 2.2.2, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.2.3, 7.1.2, 7.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy ● Excursion Policy ● Authorisations and Refusals Policy ● Confidentiality Policy ● Governance of Management Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Services - Complaints Appeals and Monitoring Act, 1994. - Parent Handbook - Staff Handbook - Enrolment form - Complaints records

ENDORSEMENT BY THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:

Approval date: _____ May 2020 _____
Date for review: _____ November 2021 _____

*Revised May 2019 KK and KG
Amended GQ NoCA April 2020 Approved by Committee 11 May 2020*