

# Complaint Handling Procedure

## Preschool



<b>Introduction</b>	<p>Our Preschool affirms that people have a right to question and influence decisions made and services provided. We take complaints seriously and manage them in a confidential, timely, transparent and meaningful way.</p>
<b>Outcome Area</b>	<p>Quality Area 7 - Governance and Leadership</p>
<b>Eligibility</b>	<p>This Procedure applies to all staff employed by Learning Links. The term staff also applies to students, interns, and volunteers. This policy also applies to workers carrying out work on behalf of Learning Links (e.g., contractors).</p>
<b>Strategies</b>	<p><b><u>Making a Complaint</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preschool Complaint Handling Procedure is available on the Preschool website and in hard copy format located in the Preschool foyer.</li> <li>• Families may make a complaint directly to the child’s educator, the Approved Provider or the Nominated Supervisor.</li> <li>• Educators are required to educate children about complaints and processes to manage them and encourage them to raise any issues they have. Clients and other individuals take the following steps to raise a complaint:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discuss in person with a staff member</li> <li>○ Communicate the concern by email</li> <li>○ Communicate the complaint by email</li> <li>○ Communicate the complaint via the Contact Us option on Learning Links’ website</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Clients and parents/families can access the Feedback Form from the Customer Care Team representatives at Learning Links locations. Completed feedback forms are emailed to: <a href="mailto:feedback@learninglinks.org.au">feedback@learninglinks.org.au</a> and should include all relevant details.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Responsiveness</u></b></p> <p>All complaints must be acknowledged and responded to within 24 hours. Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and complainants will be kept informed about the progress of their complaint and anticipated timeframes. Allegations of suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or possible victims of crime, will be actioned immediately by urgent referral or reporting to the relevant agency.</p> <p>Refer to ACECQA for relevant timeframes: <a href="https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications/notification-types-and-timeframes">https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications/notification-types-and-timeframes</a></p> <p><b><u>Managing a Complaint</u></b></p> <p>Complaints will be dealt with by the Nominated Supervisor or the Approved Provider.</p> <p>To lodge a formal complaint the process is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate the complaint by email or in writing to either the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.</li> <li>• Communicate the complaint via the Contact Us option on Learning Links’ website direct you to the Feedback and Complaints Tab or by completing to Feedback Form in person</li> <li>• The Nominated Supervisor must contact the General Manager of Service Quality and Risk and Compliance and the Chief Operations Officer once the Feedback Form has been received.</li> </ul>

- Complaints alleging that the safety, health or wellbeing of a child was or is being compromised, or that the law has been breached must be reported by the Approved Provider to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)).
- Refer to the service Child Protection procedures.
- Complaints, incidents and serious incidents must be notified to the Regulatory Authority through the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA IT System). Log in to access the portal where you can select the incident or complaint type and enter the required information.
- Children who are accessing NDIS services in the preschool - Complainant may lodge the complaint relating to NDIS to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission 1800 035 544
- The Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider once receiving the complaint will schedule a time to discuss the concern with the complainant. And document discussion and any agreed outcomes or strategies. Approved Providers are required to notify the Regulatory Authority of a complaint that alleges:
  - A serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by a service.
  - The National Law and/or National Regulations have been contravened.

For further information and procedures please refer to the Incident, Illness, Trauma and Injury Policy and Procedure.

Families can make a complaint directly to the Regulatory Authority where the complaint alleges that:

- The safety, health or wellbeing of a child or children was or is being compromised while that child or children is or are being educated and cared for by the approved education and care service.
- The relevant legislation has been contravened.

Contact details are available in the family handbook and displayed in the foyer of the service.

### Resolving the Complaint

Take the following steps to resolve the complaint within a fair and transparent manner:

- Conduct an investigation of the complaint that is proportionate to the nature of the complaint,
- Document the process and information obtained,
- Support the client / person to contribute additional information as required,
- Forward any additional information to the General Manager, Service Quality, Risk and Compliance.
- The Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider will complete documentation of the matter in Salesforce. Recommendations for future strategies or actions to mitigate potential future risks will be included.

### Finalising the Complaint Process

Take the following steps to respond to the client/ person who lodged the formal complaint:

- Provide a written response and phone call that addresses all issues raised within a clear, objective and accurate manner
- If required provide a written response that is signed by the CEO
- Send the written response within 14 working days of the complaint being acknowledged
- Ensure that the written response includes information on what the complainant can do if they are not satisfied with the response to the Regulator Authority.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Approved Provider

- When a complaint or grievance has been assessed as 'notifiable', the Approved Provider must notify Regulatory Authority within 24 hours.
- In instances where the complainant reports directly to the Regulatory Authority, the Approved Provider will still have responsibility for investigating and dealing with the complaint or grievance as outlined in this policy, in addition to co-operating with any investigation by the Regulatory Authority.
- Identifying, preventing and addressing potential concerns before they become formal complaints/grievances.
- Ensuring that the name and telephone number of the person to whom complaints and grievances may be addressed are displayed prominently at the main entrance of the service.
- Ensuring that the address and telephone number of the Regulatory Authority displayed prominently at the main entrance of the service.
- Advising parents/guardians and any other members of the service community of the complaints and grievances policy and procedures upon enrolment.
- Ensuring that this policy is available for inspection at the service at all times.
- Providing a Complaints and Grievances Register.

### Nominated Supervisor

- Responding to and resolving issues as they arise where practicable.
- Discussing minor complaints directly with the party involved as a first step towards resolution.
- Informing complainants of the service's complaints and grievances policy recording all complaints and grievances in the Complaints and Grievances Register.
- Notifying the Approved Provider if the complaint escalates or is unable to be resolved appropriately in a timely manner.
- Providing information as requested by the Approved Provider e.g. Written reports relating to the grievance.
- Complying with the service's privacy and confidentiality policy and maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Working co-operatively with the Approved Provider, in any investigations related to a complaint made.

### Early Childhood Educators

- Ensure that grievances and complaints are dealt with in accordance with this policy.
- Listen to and aim to resolve complaints and grievances in a positive way.
- Report any grievances and complaints to the Nominated Supervisor and maintain all relevant documentation.
- As requested, support the Nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider in the above roles.

### Families

- Raising a complaint directly with the person involved, in an attempt to resolve the matter without recourse to the complaints and grievances procedures.
- Communicating any concerns relating to the management or operation of the service as soon as is practicable.
- Raising any unresolved issues or serious concerns directly with the Approved Provider, via the Nominated Supervisor or staff.
- Maintaining complete confidentiality at all times.
- Co-operating with requests to provide relevant information when requested in relation to complaints and grievances.

## Related Policy and Legislation

### Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 172, 174, 174A
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 143B, 168 - 173, 176

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</li> <li>• Privacy Regulation 2013</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Related Policies</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Review</b>	<p>This policy and guidelines will be reviewed every two years and will incorporate current information, legislation and feedback as required.</p> <p>The service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service.</p> <p>This policy is owned by: Preschool</p> <p>Policy updated on: 23 August 2023  Policy updated by: Director, Preschool  Version number: 1.0  This version approved by: GM, Service Quality, Risk and Compliance  This document can be viewed on: Learning Links Intranet. Learning Links Preschool Website, Story Park.</p> <p>Policy due for review: 23 August 2025</p>