

Policy and Procedures

Concern & Complaint

Acacia values the feedback of educators, staff, families and the wider community in helping to create a service that meets regulations and the needs of children and their families. We encourage open communication and the opportunity to respond to 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.

Acacia acknowledges that:

- Continuous improvement of our service occurs where there is reflection and constructive feedback given from the service community, which results in positive change and improvement.
- When complaints are managed well, this leads to quality improvement and must be conducted in a safe and respectful manner in a secure environment.

Acacia's Management Committee, educators and staff 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 options and process of making a complaint;
- Handle complaints diligently and confidentially.

FEEDBACK

Communication will aim at all times to be open, honest and confidential. Our centres will offer a variety of ways to communicate and provide feedback including:

- Daily program - has a section dedicated to comments or feedback on the program and activities;
- Daily 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 enrolment. 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

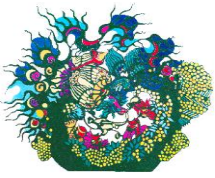
The Director will:

- Follow the process for managing complaints. This process includes:
 - Receiving complaints;
 - Addressing and investigating complaints;
 - Documenting complaints.
- Communicate information on the complaints process to families through enrolment and orientation processes and supplementary information.
- Provide contact details for putting forward a complaint.
- Ensure every complaint is managed and is used as an opportunity for quality improvement.
- Discuss the process for managing complaints with the educators and staff.
- Provide training on complaints management through staff meetings, staff orientation training and in-service training.

Information for Families

- Families can make a formal complaint about aspects of Acacia's service and no person will be disadvantaged in anyway as a result of that complaint.
- Acacia will inform families about how they can register a concern or complaint and the correct procedures to follow by:
 - Providing information about the Complaints and Feedback Procedure in the Parent Information Book provided to all families on enrolment.
 - Having posters displayed on notice boards.
- Acacia encourages compliments and suggestions.
- Opportunities to raise concerns or compliments are also provided via regular surveys conducted by each Centre.
- Acacia will endeavour to have interpreters available or other parents/friends of people of the same cultural background, to interpret concerns of families of Non English Speaking background.
- Complaints should be forwarded to:

Acacia Children's Centre - Richmond Director 13 Belgium Avenue Richmond – VIC 3121 Tel: 9429 6150 Email: acc@acacia.org.au	Acacia Fitzroy Crèche Director 187 Napier Street Fitzroy – VIC 3065 Tel: 9419 1142 E: afc@acacia.org.au	Acacia Children's Centre - St Albans Director 159 Taylors Road St Albans – VIC 3021 Tel: 9356 9731 Email: accsta@acacia.org.au
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- Complaints will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality. Any educator or staff member involved in handling complaints must 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.
- Complaints will be documented by an educator or staff member, and placed on the complaints register. The complaint will then be forwarded on to the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint. This will include the Managing Director and the President of the Management Committee.
- 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.
- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will be notified of any complaint made to the service alleging a breach of regulation within 24 hours of the complaint being made.

Information for Educators and Staff

- This *is not a grievance procedure. Please see Staff Grievance and Complaint Policy*
- Educators and staff may make a formal complaint about aspects of the service and no person will be disadvantaged in any way as a result of that complaint.
- Complaints should be forwarded to the respective Centre Director.
- All complaints must be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality. 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.
- The complaint will be documented, and placed on the complaints register. The complaint will then be forwarded on to the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint. This will include the Director and the Managing Director.
- 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.
- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 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.

Accept all Complaints

- Whether verbal or written.
- People should be able to comment or complain about anything they think is unfair. By listening and communicating we can help to resolve many complaints.



Steps in resolving a grievance

- Get a clear picture of each person's issue
- Clarify the issue to be resolved
- Seek possible solutions, from all parties
- Negotiate action/s to be undertaken
- Reach an agreement
- Undertake the action
- Review the issue/grievance once it has been resolved

Keep People Informed

- People will receive regular up-dates on the progress of their complaints, so grievances can be resolved as quickly as possible.

Record Complaints & Comments

- A simple record system will be set up to capture comments, suggestions or complaints received. This will assist the staff and Management Committee in improving the centre's program.
- Recording 'Thank You' comments will be encouraged, as this is important in building morale.

Levels of Complaint Handling

A tiered level of Complaints Handling exists.

❖ Informal

This will be for simple straightforward complaints, usually verbal. Claimant will be encouraged to approach any of the staff members, to try and resolve these complaints. These may also include more complex matters, which then need to be referred to the Director/ Managing Director.

❖ Formal

When complaints cannot be resolved at the staffing level or are more serious, they may need to be referred to the Management Committee, where a group of Parent representatives can discuss the matter.

If the complaints cannot be resolved after the meeting with the Management Committee, the claimant can take the complaint to:

North Western Victoria Region

Authorised officer

Department of Education & Training,

Postal address: PO Box 2141, Footscray, Victoria 3011

Location: 900/1 McNab Avenue, Footscray, Victoria 3011

Phone: (03) 8397 0300 or 8397 0246

Fax: (03) 8397 030



Guidelines

Do you have a problem with our service?

While we are striving to provide a quality service for your child, problems do happen. If you are not happy with any part of our service, you have a right to complain to us. We welcome any complaints or suggestions because it helps us provide a better service.

How do I make a complaint?

Speak to the person in-charge of the room, activity or program i.e. room leader or educator. Often problems can be sorted out by talking to a staff member at the centre. Any complaints are treated with respect and kept confidential.

What if the problem is not solved?

If the problem is not solved, the next step is to speak to the Centre Director.

What if I am not happy with the Director's decision?

If you are not happy with the decision, please speak to the Managing Director.

What if I am not satisfied with the Managing Director's decision?

If you are still not satisfied, Acacia's centres have a Management Committee which deals with problems that are harder to solve. The complaint should be put in writing and addressed to the Management Committee.

How long will it take to get an answer?

The Management Committee will try to solve the problem as soon as possible; the longest it should take is 2 - 3 weeks.

What if I am still not happy?

If we have not been able to solve the problem contact:

Authorised officer: See above for the local Department of Education & Training.

BREACH OF THIS POLICY

Any educator or staff found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

References

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority,

- *National Quality Framework Resource Kit*, 2011

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* Commonwealth of Australia 2009

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