

Complaints and Feedback Procedure

Purpose

This procedure relates to the Complaints and Feedback Policy and should be read in conjunction with this.

Complaints Management Procedure

Past, present, and future service users or a third party acting on their behalf have the right to provide feedback or complain and be heard on any issue.

The ECMS Complaints Management Process is divided into five steps¹:

1. Receive
2. Record
3. Acknowledge
4. Resolve
5. Communicate.

1. Receive

- Listen openly to the concerns being raised by the person who is raising the complaint
- Ask the person who is making the complaint what outcome they are seeking
- Provide the person who has raised the complaint with clear advice about the complaints process, the time the process takes, and set clear expectations
- Be empathetic towards the affected person and action all commitments made
- Identify if the situation poses an immediate threat or danger and may require a specialised response (such as engagement with the Child Safety, Reportable Conduct, or Information Sharing Scheme Policies and Procedures)
- If the complaint alleges a contravention of the Education and Care Services legislation, it must be reported through the ECMS Compliance Desk where this is notified to the Regulatory Authority (DET). Please note this is not required for complaints based solely on the Child Information Sharing Scheme and the Family

¹ DHHS Compliment and complaint management policy for use by funded agencies)

Document Name: Complaints and Feedback Procedure	Next Review Date: March 2022	Dates Reviewed: May 2014, Feb 2018, Jan 2019, March 2021
Document Owner: Director ECE	File Location: Policies and Procedures on Thrive	Release Date: May 2016 Page 1 of 4

Violence Sharing Scheme. Further details can be found by accessing the Information Sharing Scheme Policy and Procedure.

2. Record

- Record all relevant information about the complaint
- Use the words of the person making the complaint

3. Acknowledge

- (Reportable complaints) Send an acknowledgment of feedback/complaint via email to the person who made a complaint. This assists with building a relationship of trust and confidence. This will be done within 24 hours
- The person who complains may wish to remain anonymous. This must be respected
- Provide realistic expectations and refer the matter to other organisations, if identified as being more suitable
- Avoid conflicts of interest and appoint a neutral person to investigate the complaint
- Provide realistic timeframes.

4. Resolve

- Keep the person who made the complaint informed of the progress of their complaint on a regular basis
- Request additional information where required and provide a timeframe for this to be completed
- Where timelines are not met, explain the reasons why to the person who made the complaint
- Continue to record all discussions and actions.
- Focus on the complaint matter only.

5. Communicate

- Where possible discuss the outcome verbally with the person who made the complaint before providing written advice and allow them an opportunity to make further contact following the receipt of the written outcome
- Always include what further action may be available to the person making the complaint, this may include them seeking support from an external agency
- Review the complaint investigation and take into account any new information available
- Provide learnings from the complaint to other areas of the organisation to improve service delivery
- Provide the opportunity for the person who made the complaint to feedback on the complaints process.

Parents/guardians are also able to discuss any issues of concern with the Department

Document Name: Complaints and Feedback Procedure	Next Review Date: March 2022	Dates Reviewed: May 2014, Feb 2018, Jan 2019, March 2021
Document Owner: Director ECE	File Location: Policies and Procedures on Thrive	Release Date: May 2016 Page 2 of 4

of Education and Training - Children's Services Authorised Officer on telephone number:

- Northern Region: (03) 7005 1989
- Southern Region: (03) 8765 5787
- Western Region: (03) 7005 1801
- Eastern Region: 1300 651 940
- Grampians Region: (03) 4334 0589

ECMS is required to inform the Department within 24 hours if a complaint alleges that:

- A child's health, safety, or wellbeing has been compromised
- The relevant legislation has been contravened.

Service users will not be adversely affected by raising and lodging complaints. During the resolution of a complaint, service provision continues for the child/ren. ECMS respects a parent/carers decision to withdraw their child/ren from the service.

Procedure – notifiable complaints to DET

1. When a complaint is received at a service level, the Area Manager/Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director notifies the Compliance Desk within 2 hours
2. All reportable complaints are completed on the relevant Compliance Desk template (Complaint) and sent to the Compliance Desk to ensure that they can be logged through the ACECQA/NQAITS online portal within 24 hours
3. The Area Manager/Centre Director makes contact with the person who lodged the complaint to discuss the next actions within 24 hours
4. The Area Manager ensures any additional reports and associated documents are sent to the Compliance Desk email
5. Where required, the Director, Early Childhood Education briefs the CEO of the nature of the complaint
6. The Compliance Desk enters the reportable complaint into the ECMS complaints register
7. Where follow up is required with DET, they will notify the service and this follow up is signed off by the Director, Early Childhood Education

Parents/Family/Carers can make a complaint directly to ECMS on (03) 8481 1100 at any time. Direct complaints can be made by service users to the Department 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

ECMS endeavours to resolve all complaints as quickly as practicable. It is acknowledged

Document Name: Complaints and Feedback Procedure	Next Review Date: March 2022	Dates Reviewed: May 2014, Feb 2018, Jan 2019, March 2021
Document Owner: Director ECE	File Location: Policies and Procedures on Thrive	Release Date: May 2016 Page 3 of 4

that where a serious complaint is made, often investigations into these complaints will take some time. Where an investigation is warranted, ECMS will commence this investigation within 24 hours of the complaint being received and will work quickly to have a response to the person who made the initial complaint within five business days.

We also acknowledge that DET may wish to investigate a complaint. ECMS will make all documentation available for the investigating officer.

Procedure - non-notifiable complaints

These are complaints managed at the service level. It is the Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director's responsibility to manage the complaints process and ensure a record of complaints is kept at service level using the Complaints/Feedback Process template. In addition, acknowledgment of the complaint or feedback is required (e.g. email) to document that the initial complaint/feedback has been received.

ECMS endeavours to have non-reportable complaints resolved within 24 to 48 hours.

Sources

Sources and Further Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECA Code of Ethics • Guide to the National Quality Framework • Parent Complaints - Childcare and children's services
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Document Name: Complaints and Feedback Procedure	Next Review Date: March 2022	Dates Reviewed: May 2014, Feb 2018, Jan 2019, March 2021
Document Owner: Director ECE	File Location: Policies and Procedures on Thrive	Release Date: May 2016 Page 4 of 4