



# Gallopng Gumnut Mobile Children's Services Van Incorporated

## Dealing with Complaints Policy

### Statement

Gallopng Gumnut takes all complaints and grievances seriously and will manage them in an equitable, confidential, timely, transparent, and meaningful way. The Education and Care Services National Regulations require Approved Providers to ensure their Service has policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints. Our policy ensures the feedback of children, educators, staff, families, and the wider community is a mechanism to support the continuous improvement of our Service.

### Scope

This policy is a guide for staff, students, volunteers, and families to initiate or receive feedback, a complaint or grievance related to the Organisation. All feedback, complaints and grievances will be documented with respect for confidentiality and privacy and responded to by following the sequential steps outlined in this policy.

**NOTE:** This policy is not applicable to staff performance-based issues. A separate Staff Grievance Policy is used.

### Aims

- To maintaining the confidentiality of all parties in line with policy and legislative requirements.
- To support an individuals' right to complain and assist them to make their complaints and grievances clear, acknowledging that the common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties.
- To show respect and understanding for each other's point of view and value difference.
- To handle complaints objectively and ensure complainants do not suffer any reprisals from making a complaint.

### Implementation

Complaint procedures are available in the Service's information brochures and are on display at each venue.

- All confidential conversations with individuals who have a complaint or grievance will take place away from children, other families or staff that are not involved, and will be documented.
- Families may make a complaint directly to the child's educator or one of the Directors (also the Nominated Supervisors). Where an educator or Director believe they need to share in confidence with another person to resolve an issue, or if the nature of a complaint requires that a third party has to be informed in order to meet legislative requirements, they will inform the family of this prior to any further discussions on the matter take place.
- Complaints can be made in person, via telephone or email. NOTE: Facebook and/or Messenger ARE NOT considered to be suitable as a means of communicating complaints or grievances.
- All complaints will be acknowledged and responded to as soon as practicable. Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and complainants will be kept informed about the progress of their complaint and anticipated timeframes.

- If possible, the problem will be resolved immediately. If this is not possible, the complainant will be advised that the issue will be given high priority and dealt with as soon as possible, and a suitable time and place will be organised to discuss the issue.
- If the issues are complex the complainant will be asked to put their concerns in writing.
- If the complaint is not handled or resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, or the complainant does not wish to discuss the matter with the person concerned, they will be referred to discuss the issue with one of the Directors. The issue will then be discussed with the relevant person/s to develop a strategy for resolving the problem and, if necessary, a meeting will be organised with all stakeholders to resolve the problem.
- The Director/s will inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaint. Staff will also be informed of any relevant issues that they need to address or be aware of. This may be done verbally or, if the issue has been dealt with on a more formal basis, then a written response (which can be via email) will be provided to the individual making the complaint.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied, then they will be referred to the President or another executive member of the Management Committee who will then arrange to further discuss the matter to achieve a satisfactory resolution. Where mediation is required, all parties will have the right to agree to the appointment of the mediator.
- If the complaint is against one of the Directors, the complainant should be encouraged to contact the Director to discuss the problem. If this is not possible, or if the complainant does not want to discuss the matter with the Director, then, if appropriate, the issue may be discussed with the other Director who will contact the President of the Management Committee. The Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the service. Action against the Director's decision should only be taken if the matter raised indicates misconduct, is an offence or a crisis.
- If the complaint made to the Service concerns a child's health, safety or wellbeing being compromised, or the National law or Regulations not being met, the Service must notify the regulatory Authority within 24 hours of the complaint being lodged.
- All complaints and grievances will be documented and will include evidence that complaints are investigated within satisfactory timeframes and have led to amendments to any relevant policies and procedures where required and/or changes in practices and procedures.
- If the complaint hasn't been resolved or if the matter isn't appropriate to raise with the Service, contact the department. To make a complaint call **1800 619 113** or email [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au)

## Other types of complaints

To make a complaint about service fees or business practices, the NSW Department of Fair Trading on **13 32 20** or visit [fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://fairtrading.nsw.gov.au)

To make a complaint about the Child Care Subsidy or other Australian Government programs please contact the Australian Government's Department of Education, Skills and Employment on **1300 667 276** or visit [dese.gov.au](http://dese.gov.au)

## Roles and Responsibilities

| Role                      | Authority/Responsibility for:   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Approved Provider         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When a complaint or grievance has been assessed as 'notifiable', the Approved Provider must notify Regulatory Authority within 24 hours.</li> <li>➤ 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.</li> </ul>   |
| Nominated Supervisor      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Responding to and resolving issues as they arise where practicable.</li> <li>➤ Discussing minor complaints directly with the party involved as a first step towards resolution.</li> <li>➤ Identifying, preventing, and addressing potential concerns before they become formal complaints/grievances.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that the name and telephone number of the person to who complaints and grievances may be addressed are displayed at each venue.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that the email address and telephone number of the Regulatory Authority is displayed at each venue.</li> <li>➤ Advising parents/carers of the complaints and grievances policy and procedures upon enrolment.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring that this policy is always available for inspection at the service.</li> <li>➤ Informing complainants of the service's complaints and grievances policy.</li> <li>➤ Notifying the Approved Provider if the complaint escalates or is unable to be resolved appropriately in a timely manner.</li> <li>➤ 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 always maintaining confidentiality.</li> <li>➤ Working co-operatively with the Approved Provider, in any investigations related to a complaint made.</li> </ul> |
| Early Childhood Educators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensuring that grievances and complaints are dealt with in accordance with this Policy.</li> <li>➤ Listening to and aim to resolve complaints and grievances in a positive way.</li> <li>➤ Reporting any grievances and complaints to the Nominated Supervisor and maintain all relevant documentation.</li> <li>➤ As requested, supporting the Nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider in the above roles.</li> </ul>   |
| Families                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Raising a complaint directly with the person involved, to resolve the matter.</li> <li>➤ Communicating any concerns relating to the management or operation of the Service as soon as is practicable.</li> <li>➤ Raising any unresolved issues or serious concerns directly with the Approved Provider, via the Nominated Supervisor or staff.</li> <li>➤ Always maintaining complete confidentiality.</li> <li>➤ Co-operating with requests to provide relevant information when requested in relation to complaints and grievances.</li> </ul>   |

## Related Policies and Documents

- Child Protection Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Families, Carers and Visitors Code of Conduct Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Information Brochures

## Links to National Quality Standards

|             |   |  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>QA 4</b> | <b>Staffing Arrangements</b>                                    |  |
| 4.2         | Professionalism   | Management, educators, and staff are collaborative, respectful, and ethical.   |
| 4.2.2       | Professional standards  | Professional standards guide practice, interactions, and relationships.  |
| <b>QA 6</b> | <b>Collaborative partnerships with families and communities</b> |  |
| 6.1         | Supportive relationships with families                          | Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.                                  |
| 6.1.2       | Parent views are respected                                      | The expertise, culture, values, and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing. |
| <b>QA 7</b> | <b>Governance and Leadership</b>                                |  |
| 7.1         | Governance  | Governance supports the operation of a quality service.  |
| 7.1.2       | Management systems  | Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.  |
| 7.1.3       | Roles and Responsibilities                                      | Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service.                        |

## Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and care services National Regulations, 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, a family's ability to utilise the service, the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

## References

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)  
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard>

- Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) 2023
- NSW Department of Education - Raising Concerns about early childhood education and outside school hours services flyer for families.
- NSW Government Education and Care Services National Regulations  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653>

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|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Version: 5</b>                               |   | <b>Previous Versions Dated:</b> 2005, 2008, 2011, 2018 |  |
| <b>This version prepared by:</b> Carol Drummond |   |  |  |
| <b>Date Reviewed:</b> March 2024                |   | <b>Projected Review Date:</b> March 2026               |  |
| <b>Modifications:</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated using new Policy format.</li> <li>• Revision of and additional aims included.</li> <li>• Removal of references to Play Sessions and Assistant Director as no longer relevant.</li> <li>• Inclusion of section on other types of complaints.</li> </ul> |  |  |
| <b>Policy adopted by Management Committee</b>   |   |  |  |
| <b>Name:</b> .....                              |   | <b>Signed:</b> .....                                   |  |
| <b>Title:</b> .....                             |   | <b>Date:</b> / /2024                                   |  |
| <b>Name:</b> .....                              |   | <b>Signed:</b> .....                                   |  |
| <b>Title:</b> .....                             |   | <b>Date:</b> / /2024                                   |  |