

Policy Document No: ELC18
Category: Early Learning
Topic: Grievances and complaints
Policy and Procedures



Date of Issue: August 2005
Last Review Date: December 2016

Considerations:

- Philosophy -** Mount Scopus Memorial College promotes the right for quality care; a harmonious, warm and positive environment; effective communication with parents.
- Children's needs -** Children require a harmonious, warm and positive environment; appropriate role models for positive interactions.
- Parent's needs -** Ability to voice concerns in a positive and confidential manner.
- Staff needs -** Open communication with parents; positive outcomes to parent concerns. A harmonious, warm and positive working environment. Staff require management to address all grievances promptly using positive team management strategies.
- Management - Needs** Effective grievance policy in place in order to make informed decisions, to deal with grievances in a positive manner.

Background and Legislation:

Education and Care Services National Regulations Part 4, regulation 168 (2.o), 170,172 (2h), 176(2b)
Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2011
Education and Care Services National Law Act, 2010, section 174
Guide to the National Quality Standard, elements 7.3.4, 7.3.5
Australian Government Child Care Service Handbook and website – www.facs.gov.au
National Privacy Principles – www.privacy.gov.au/act/index.html

Policy Statement:

The aim of this policy is to assist the staff and parents in working together in harmony. It is to be read in conjunction with the College's Human Resources policies on

1. Communication with Parents and
2. Dealing with Parental Complaints

The aim of this policy is to assist the staff and parents in working together in harmony. It gives the service a means of handling conflict, and provides parents with an appropriate channel for making a complaint. The service fosters positive relations between all parents and staff. Every parent has the right to a positive and sympathetic response to their concerns. Solutions are sought to resolve all disputes, issues or concerns that impact or affect the day to day well-being of the centre in a fair, prompt and positive manner.

How the Policy will be implemented - Specific Practices and Procedures:

The following principles apply to all disputes and complaints lodged:

- The process is accessible to all aggrieved parties and is underpinned by a commitment to cooperation on the part of the service staff.
- Resolution at the local level is preferred, wherever it is appropriate to do so, however, parents are aware that they can make a complaint directly to the Regulatory Authority.
- Procedural fairness is afforded to all parties.
- The subject of the complaint is informed of the substance of the complaint.
- Warranted investigation will be pursued with or without the active involvement of the complainant.
- Confidentiality is maintained, to the extent consistent with legislative requirements.
- Complaints and disputes are monitored and their management evaluated so as to reduce the occurrence of systemic and recurring problems.
- In all matters the well-being of the children is the first priority.
- All persons in the service including children, parents and staff, have a right to be treated with respect and courtesy.
- Complainants are able to make inquiries, raise concerns or lodge complaints about the provision of the program and the conduct of staff and have them dealt with efficiently, fairly and promptly.
- Information about the process for raising concerns and making inquiries or complaints is to be available to parents and members of the local community.
- Each parent is provided with clear written guidelines detailing the grievance procedures. The grievance procedure is included in the Parent Handbook and displayed on the noticeboard in the foyer.
- All confidential conversations/discussions with parents will take place in a quiet area away from children, other parents and staff who are not involved.
- Where a parent wishes their grievance to remain confidential this will be honoured. However parents will be advised that issues cannot always be resolved if the parent chooses to remain anonymous.
- Where a staff member believes they should share a confidence with a professional colleague in order to resolve an issue, they will inform the parent of this need prior to any further discussions on the matter.
- Whenever a complaint or grievance is received, once the matter is finalised, the process will be used to assist in future policy revision.
- Management follows through to determine that complaints and grievances have been successfully resolved to everyone's satisfaction.
- The name address and phone number of the Regulatory Authority is included in the Parent Handbook and displayed on the noticeboard in the foyer.

Parent grievances and complaints resolution procedure:

Centre level resolution

Parents contact the class teacher or other relevant staff member to discuss the complaint. Parents can make a formal appointment time to discuss any issues with the staff member. Pick-up and Drop-off time is not an appropriate time to discuss any complaints. The staff will work with the parent to resolve the problem. The discussion will be documented and a copy of the interview minutes will go to the Campus Coordinator.

Review of Investigation

If the parent is not satisfied, they can contact the Campus Coordinator – Fink Karp Ivany, Dana Rosenzweig email drosenzweig@scopus.vic.edu.au Telephone 85544700 or Campus Coordinator – Gandel Besen House, Monica Brivik mbrivik@scopus.vic.edu.au telephone 99004600 who will work with the parent and the staff member to resolve the problem. They may wish to formalise their complaint. To do this, they may write to the Campus Coordinator who will acknowledge the complaint with a written reply as soon as possible, even if a resolution is not available at this stage.

The Campus Coordinator will consider the issue and identify what action is to be taken and by when, and will clarify the process if a formal complaint is to proceed. This action and timeline will be confirmed with the parent in writing.

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached at this stage, the parent can contact the Principal of the College.

Parents should be aware that when a complaint is made in writing about the performance of an individual staff member, that staff member will receive documentation of the substance of the complaint.

Independent review

Complaints from any person can be made directly to the Regulatory Authority.

Parents can contact the Children's Services Adviser at the Regional Office of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for assistance in resolving the issue. This will involve an independent review of the situation and may include mediation.

The Children's Services Adviser can be contacted:

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Quality Assessment and Regulation Division
165-169 Thomas Street, Dandenong
PO Box 5, Dandenong Vic. 3175
Tel: 87655787
Email: smr.gar@edumail.vic.gov.au
Website: Southern Metropolitan Region

The Approved Provider will undertake to notify the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours if it is alleged that:

- The safety, health and wellbeing of a child was or is being compromised;
- The National Law or National Regulations has been contravened

Staff grievances and complaints resolution procedure:

This procedure is to be read in conjunction with the Disputes Resolution provisions within the College's certified agreements. These procedures will be made available to staff.

All complaints involving staff will be investigated immediately without bias and respecting the anonymity of the complainant. A satisfactory resolution will be sought.

The person making the complaint shall be informed of the outcome of any investigation.

- Every employee is provided with clear written guidelines detailing grievance procedures.

- All confidential conversations/discussions will take place in a quiet area away from children, parents and other staff.
- Staff names remain confidential. The option to remain anonymous will be at the discretion of each staff member.
- In the case of wrongful allegations, all records pertaining to these allegations will be taken from the staff member's file and destroyed.
- Whenever a grievance is addressed the process will be analysed to determine whether policy revision or development is required.

If a disputes or grievance arises, it shall be dealt with as follows:

- The matter should firstly be discussed informally by the aggrieved employee with the Campus Coordinator. Should the Campus Coordinator be a party to the dispute or grievance, the matter should be referred to the Human Resources Manager;
- if not settled, the employee may request a representative to be present and the matter should then be discussed with the Human Resource Manager and the Campus Coordinator.
- if the matter is not resolved the parties may agree for it to go to a mediator
- in the case that steps 1, 2 and 3 fail to resolve the matter, it must be referred to the Principal.

Approved by the College Principal:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Kerach". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J' and 'K'.

Dated: December 2016