



PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE

3-7 Shields Lane, Pennant Hills NSW 2120. Telephone : 9484 1133
Postal Address : PO Box 537, Pennant Hills NSW 1715
Email: phwmcc@inet.com.au
ABN 85 129 536 459

PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE (PHWMCC) COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY & PROCEDURE

Introduction

Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre affirms that people have a right to question and influence decisions made and the service provided. We take complaints seriously and manage them in a confidential, timely and transparent way. We achieve this by:

- Maintaining the confidentiality of all parties in line with policy and legislative requirements.
- Acknowledging that the common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties.
- Acting in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner.
- Showing respect and understanding of each other's points of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame.
- Recognising that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.
- Complaints will be handled objectively and complainants will not suffer any reprisals from making a complaint.

Aim

Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre endeavours to provide parents and staff with a procedure which ensures that complaints and grievances are dealt with promptly using consultation, co-operation and resolution. We value the feedback of educators, staff, families and the wider community as a mechanism to support the continuous improvement of our service.

Procedure

Making a complaint

- Written guidelines detailing complaint procedures are available in our Parent and Family Information Handbook and on our website
- If a complaint is made, the Complaints Record Form will be filled out and placed in the Complaints and Grievances Register
- Families may make a complaint directly to an educator, the Nominated Supervisor or the Approved Provider. Any complaints made to the Approved Provider are to be made to:

Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre
Management Committee
PO Box 537
Pennant Hills 1715

Responsiveness

Receipt of a complaint will be acknowledged within 72 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.

Complaints containing allegations of suspected harm or risk of harm to a child will be actioned immediately by urgent referral or reporting to the relevant agency.

Managing and Investigating a Complaint

All complaints will be investigated and a formal response provided to the complainant within 60 days. Where possible, complaints will be addressed immediately by an educator or the Nominated Supervisor. If the complaint is about an issue that an educator considers to be outside their control, or the family does not feel they wish to share it with an educator, the complainant will be referred to the appropriate person/s for their complaint to be resolved.

Where an educator believes they will have to share a confidence with another person in order to resolve an issue, or of 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 the need prior to any further discussions on the matter.

- The complaint will be documented on a Complaints Record Form and placed in the Complaints and Grievances Register. Any legal requirements in relation to the complaint will be considered, such as the need to notify regulatory authorities
- The complainant will be asked to provide information regarding how the situation could be rectified to their satisfaction.
- If possible, the issue 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.
- If the issues are complex, the complainant will be asked to put their concerns in writing.
- Where mediation is required all parties will have the right to agree to the appointment of the mediator.

Any complaint that requires notification to the NSW Department of Education will be reported to the Approved Provider. Any other complaint that may impact the reputation of the preschool, or is considered to be significant, will also be reported to the Approved Provider.

Notifiable Complaint

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) of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* Regulation 176(2)(b) of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*). Written reports must include:

- details of the event or incident;
- the name of the person who initially made the complaint;
- if appropriate, the name of the child concerned and the condition of the child, including a medical or incident report (where relevant); and
- any other relevant information.

Written notification of complaints must be submitted using the appropriate forms, which can be found on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website: www.acecqa.gov.au

Direct Complaints

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 Parent and Family Information booklet and displayed in the window of the office.

Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate

Locked Bag 5107

Parramatta NSW 2124

ececd@det.nsw.edu.au

Follow-Up and Review

Each complaint will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement. As part of the preschool's continuous improvement processes all complaints or grievances will be analysed to determine if any policy or procedural changes need to be implemented.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider

- When a complaint or grievance has been assessed as 'notifiable', the Approved Provider must notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours. Where appropriate, the Nominated Supervisor will assist in this process.
- 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 cooperating 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.
- Advising parents/guardians and any other new members of the preschool of the Complaints Handling Policy and procedures upon enrolment.
- Ensuring that this policy is available for inspection at the service at all times.
- Ensuring that a Complaints and Grievances Register is held securely at the preschool.

Nominated Supervisor

- Responding to and resolving issues as they arise where practical.
- Discussing minor complaints directly with the party involved as a first step towards resolution.
- Informing complainants of the service's Complaints Handling Policy, and 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.
- Notifying the Approved Provider of any complaint that requires notification to the Department of Education. Any other complaint that may impact the reputation of the preschool, or is considered to be significant, will also be reported to the Approved Provider.
- Providing information as requested by the Approved Provider, for example written reports relating to the grievance.
- Complying with the preschool's Confidentiality and Privacy Policy and maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Working cooperatively with the Approved Provider, in any investigations related to a complaint made.

Early Childhood Educators and other staff

- Ensure that grievances and complaints are dealt with in accordance with this policy.
- 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

- Communicating any concerns relating to the management or operation of the service as soon as is practical.
- Raising any unresolved issues or serious concerns directly with the Approved Provider.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Co-operating with requests to provide relevant information when requested in relation to complaints and grievances.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the preschool 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 at the preschool 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 preschool; a family's ability to utilise the preschool; the fees charged or the ways in which fees are collected.

Definitions:

Regulatory Authority:	Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate
Approved Provider:	Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre Management Committee
Nominated Supervisor:	Director of Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre
Early Childhood Educators:	Teachers and Child Care Workers

Related legislation:

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 174(2)(b)
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 168 (2) (o) and 176 (2) (b)
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
Health Records and information Privacy Act 2002
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
Privacy Regulation 2013

Related Guidelines,

Standards, Frameworks:

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership Standard 7.1

Sources: Community Early Learning Australia – Complaints Handling Sample Policy

Relevant Documents: PHWMCC Complaints Record Form
Parent and Family Information Handbook
PHWMCC Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

Policy reviewed: June 2018

Next review date: June 2020



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**PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE (PHWMCC)
COMPLAINTS RECORD FORM**

Name of Person with the grievance or complaint:.....

Other People involved:

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Summary of the grievance or complaint:.....

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Plan of Action:

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Time Frame for Resolution:.....

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Review Date :

Signature :

(Complainant)

Signature

(Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor / Staff)

Date :

Date :

C.C.