



## Complaints Policy

### National Quality Standards:

**Area 6** - Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

**Standard 6.1** - Supportive relationships with families

**Elements:**

*6.1.1: Engagement with the service*

Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.

*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.

*6.1.3: Families are supported*

Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

**Area 7** - Governance and leadership

**Standard 7.1** - Governance

**Elements:**

*7.1.2: Management systems*

Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

**Standard 7.2** - Leadership

**Elements:**

*7.2.1: Continuous improvement*

There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.

### Children (Education and Care Services) National Regulations (2011 SI 653):

Reg. 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
s 172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information
s 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
Reg. 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Reg. 173	Prescribed information to be displayed
Reg. 176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority



## Related Policies:

- Governance, management and record keeping
- Child protection

## Policy Statement:

At Adventure OSHC we strive to form personal, trusting and connected relationships with each family and child that attends our Service. These relationships are fostered through mutual consistent communication that is open and honest between us as a provider and families. We endeavour to handle any complaint or grievance in a way that will ensure positive outcomes for all parties. We will handle all complaints within 48 hours and in a confidential manner. Once a grievance or complaint is resolved, we will then implement this feedback into our daily practices to alter them for the better of every child and family.

We encourage families to provide us with feedback on all aspects of our Service, including negative feedback and constructive criticism to ensure that we consistently build on and improve on all areas of Service.

We will notify the State Regulatory Body if necessary, in line with the requirements of any complaint.

## Purpose:

This policy will allow families to provide us with feedback on our practices and procedures in our OSHC Services through open channels of communication.

## Scope:

This policy applies to children, families, Adventure OSHC staff, school staff and the wider community involved.

## Implementation:

- Information to make complaints will always be displayed at the service as per Reg. 173.
- Adventure OSHC Educators will interact and communicate with families on a daily basis through verbal communication at the Service and written communication periodically.
- Adventure OSHC Educators will inform the Approved Provider of families' feedback (positive or negative), in order for the OSHC Manager to facilitate a meeting with the Educators to ensure how we can incorporate that feedback into our Service operations.



- The Approved Provider and OSHC Manager will follow up any comments made by families and will communicate to families regarding the ways in which their comments and feedback have been implemented into our Service operations.

## Child-Focused Complaint Handling System

At Adventure OSHC, we are committed to creating an environment where children feel safe, supported, and heard. Our complaint handling system is designed to be child-focused and ensures that complaints, particularly those raised by children, are addressed with the utmost care, confidentiality, and respect. The procedure includes the following steps:

- **Accessibility:** We make sure that all children are aware of their right to express concerns or make a complaint. Information about how to report a complaint is communicated in a way that is age-appropriate and easily understood by children.
- **Support:** Children are encouraged to speak with a trusted adult within the service, such as their educator or a senior staff member, to help them voice their concerns. Support is provided to children in understanding the complaint process and in expressing their feelings.
- **Confidentiality and Safety:** Complaints made by children are handled with discretion, ensuring that the child's identity and the details of the complaint are protected. No child will face any form of retribution for making a complaint.

Complaints made by families and the community are also handled with the best interests of the child in mind.

## Management of Complaints Involving Allegations of Harmful Sexual Behaviour

In the event that a complaint is made alleging that a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours, the following procedures will be followed to ensure a thorough, sensitive, and child-focused response:

**Immediate Response:** The safety and well-being of the child who has made the complaint, as well as any other children involved, is the priority. If the complaint indicates that a child may be at risk of harm or engaging in harmful sexual behaviour, staff will immediately follow the safeguarding and child protection protocols.

**Investigation:** A careful, impartial, and sensitive investigation will be conducted to understand the circumstances surrounding the complaint. This may involve gathering information from the child, staff, and any witnesses, and consulting relevant authorities, including child protection agencies, if necessary.

**Support for the Child Alleged to Be Involved:** Any child who is identified as exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour will receive appropriate support. This includes access to professional counselling and therapeutic services, as well as tailored educational strategies to address and modify the behaviour.



**Reporting and Documentation:** All complaints alleging harmful sexual behaviour will be documented, with records maintained in accordance with our confidentiality policy and child protection procedures. Any concerns will be reported to the relevant authorities, including child protection services, as required by law.

**Collaboration with Parents and Guardians:** Where appropriate, parents and guardians will be informed and involved in the process. They will be kept updated on the steps taken to address the issue while ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved.

## **Complaint Procedure:**

- 1. Initial Step – Centre Co-Ordinator:** If the complaint relates to the direct care of their child, the family member should first approach the Centre Co-Ordinator, who is responsible for their child's care. The Centre Co-Ordinator may invite an additional Educator to be present as a witness or support person during the discussion.
- 2. Escalation to Area Manager/Approved Provider:** If the family member is not satisfied with the outcome of their discussion with the Centre Co-Ordinator, they will be referred to the Area Manager and/or Approved Provider.
- 3. Meeting with the Area Manager/Approved Provider:** The Area Manager/Approved Provider will meet with the family to:
  - Identify and clarify their concern,
  - Fully understand the family's needs and current situation,
  - Explore the family's perspective on the issue,
  - Work with the family and Educators to determine appropriate next steps.
- 4. Complaints Register:** The Area Manager/Approved Provider will document the complaint in the Complaints Register, noting:
  - The issue and surrounding circumstances,
  - The actions taken,
  - The outcomes of those actions.
- 5.** This information will be added to the family's account in Xplor and the child's file.
- 6. Further Escalation – Dispute Resolution:** If the family remains dissatisfied with the outcome after meeting with the Approved Provider, dispute resolution may be offered at the discretion of the Approved Provider. In cases where significant issues impact the quality and safety of care, and the issue cannot be resolved, alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation or third-party facilitation, may be considered.
- 7. Release of Information:** The Service reserves the right to release the family's information to a third party if it is reasonably required to facilitate a successful dispute resolution process.
- 8. Regulatory Body Involvement:** If a complaint involving regulatory requirements is not satisfactorily resolved, families can contact the state Regulatory Body. Additionally, if the complaint is of a serious nature, the Approved Provider is required to report it to the Regulatory Body within 24 hours.



## Continuous Review

We recognise the importance of continually reviewing our approach to handling complaints. Feedback from children, parents, and staff will be used to assess the effectiveness of our complaint handling processes and to make improvements where necessary. The aim is to ensure that the system remains child-centred, responsive, and in line with best practice.

## Sources:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653)
- National Quality Standards
- ACECQA Dealing with complaints policy guidelines

<b>Version control created</b>	24 March 2021
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