ADVENTURE OSHC

Complaints Policy

National Quality Standard

Area 6 - Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
Standard 6.1	Supportive relationships with families
Element 6.1.1	Engagement with the service: Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
Element 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.
Element 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
Element 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
Element 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)

Section 172	Offence to fail to display prescribed information
Section 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
Reg. 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Reg. 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Reg. 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Reg. 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
Reg. 173	Prescribed information to be displayed - education and care service other than a family day care service
Reg. 176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

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Links to the Child Safe Standards

Standard 1 - Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.	Our complaints process is embedded in leadership practices, ensuring safety, respect, and transparency guide all responses to concerns.
Standard 2 - Children participate in decisions affecting them	Children are encouraged to express concerns. Their voices are heard, and their complaints are acted on appropriately.
Standard 3 - Families and communities are informed and involved	Families are made aware of the complaints process and their rights, and are actively invited to participate in reviews and feedback.
Standard 4 - Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account	Complaints processes are inclusive, culturally safe, and accessible to all families and children, including those with additional needs.
Standard 6 - Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused	Complaints involving abuse are managed in a way that places the child's safety, dignity and wellbeing at the centre of all decisions.
Standard 8 - Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur	Complaints about environmental safety or online conduct are responded to promptly and environments are regularly assessed for risk.
Standard 10 - Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe	This policy outlines clear, documented procedures for responding to complaints, safeguarding children, and complying with legislation.

Related Policies

- Governance, management and record keeping
- Child protection
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Providing a Child Safe Environment
- Interactions with Children
- Enrolment and Orientation

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Policy Statement:

Adventure OSHC values feedback from children, families, and community members. We are committed to managing complaints in a respectful, inclusive, and child-focused manner that complies with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, the National Quality Standard (NQS), the Child Safe Standards, and our service's Parent/Carer Code of Conduct.

This policy, along with information about complaints (how and who to lodge them to) as well as our Parent/Carer Code of Conduct **will always be available in the foyer of our services. Families will be notified of any updates to this policy.**

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor is responsible for ensuring all complaints are managed according to this policy.

Purpose:

This policy aims to provide a clear, fair, and timely process for managing complaints at our service. It ensures that all complaints are addressed respectfully, confidentially, and in a way that promotes trust and transparency. The policy empowers children and families to raise concerns without fear of negative consequences, reinforcing our commitment to safety, accountability, and respect. In doing so, the policy also supports ongoing quality improvement across the service by using feedback constructively to strengthen our practices and relationships.

Scope:

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

Implementation:

Child-Focused Complaint Handling System

In line with ACECQA's guidance, we ensure:

- **Child safety and wellbeing** are prioritised in every complaint decision.
- **Children are listened to, believed, and supported** when they raise concerns.
- **Age-appropriate strategies** are used to explain how to make a complaint.
- Staff are trained to **recognise indicators of harm or distress** in children.
- **Feedback from children** is actively sought and responded to meaningfully.
- Complaints made by children are **handled with discretion.** 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.
- Children may raise concerns or complaints with any educator, Responsible Person, Nominated Supervisor, Area Manager or other trusted adult associated with the service.

How to Raise a Complaint

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 alleges that a serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by the service, or alleges a breach of the Education and Care Services National Law or Regulations, the Approved Provider will notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours as required by legislation.

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Management of Complaints Involving Allegations of Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The safety, wellbeing and best interests of all children involved will be the paramount consideration when responding to complaints alleging 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.

Record Keeping and Reporting

All complaints and resolutions are:

- **Documented** in the complaints register
- **Kept confidentially** and stored securely
- **Reviewed regularly** to identify trends or areas for improvement
- **Reported to the Regulatory Authority** where mandated (Regulations 174 & 175)

Breaches of This Policy or the Parent/Carer Code of Conduct

Where a parent or carer breaches this policy or the Code of Conduct:

Step-by-Step Response

1. **Initial Reminder:** A staff member or the Nominated Supervisor reminds the parent/carer of the expected behaviour and refers them to the Code of Conduct.

2. **Verbal Warning:** If inappropriate behaviour continues, a verbal warning will be issued, noting the specific concern and expectations moving forward.

3. **Written Warning:** If further breaches occur, a formal written warning will be issued by the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor, outlining potential consequences.

4. **Restricted Communication:** The service may limit interactions to scheduled meetings, written communication only, or communication through a third party.

5. **Suspension of Access:** In serious or repeated cases, temporary suspension of the parent/carer's access to the service may be enacted.

6. **Termination of Enrolment:** As a last resort, enrolment may be terminated, especially where the safety of staff or children is at risk.

7. **Notification of Authorities:** If the behaviour includes threats, intimidation, or breaches of law, relevant authorities (e.g., police or Department of Education) will be contacted.

All actions taken must be fair, transparent, documented, and consistent with procedural fairness and privacy laws.

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.

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Sources:

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

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