

Complaints and Feedback Procedure

Knox Early Years Services

Purpose

Knox City Council (KCC) has a responsibility to ensure that all employees maintain high standards of conduct and performance. Knox City Council is committed to a professional workforce and to providing safe and supportive work environments where excellence is pursued, diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity.

Council is committed to encouraging and listening to customer feedback so that we enhance our understanding of customer needs and expectations. Managing complaints/concerns is about listening and responding to and recording feedback from customers. This can assist in continuous improvement opportunities.

The purpose of this procedure is to provide KCC educators and staff with the 'tools' for managing customer grievances successfully.

Procedure

Knox City Council's complaint handling procedures include a positive attitude towards customers and a commitment to resolving issues/complaints.

This is based on the premise that:

- Customers have a right to raise concerns.
- Customers will be provided with information on the complaint handling process.
- Educators, Maternal Child Health Nurses (MCHN) and staff are passionate about service excellence and will encourage family feedback about service experiences and communication.
- Educators, MCHN's and staff acknowledge every complaint as an opportunity to build on the confidence and trust with families in Council's processes, people, communication and services.

Grievances will be managed confidentially in accordance with Privacy Legislation, and in a fair and open manner for all involved parties.

Grievances regarding educators, MCHN's and staff will be managed fairly and sensitively. Educators, MCHN's and staff will be reminded about the ongoing availability of the Employee Assistance Program.

The following 'tools' for managing complaints successfully have been developed by Knox City Council:

- Guidelines for resolving complaints at first point of contact.
- Reporting protocols for managing complaints received by letter or email, and managing complaints received in person or by telephone.

Guidelines for Resolving Complaints (First point of Contact)

Listen Without Interrupting

- Listening without interruption will support the customer to communicate the issue.
- Listen for vital information and take notes.
- Let the customer conclude their explanation then ask questions to clarify the situation but avoid denying or arguing just listen.

Welcome the Feedback & Express Empathy Where Appropriate

- Inform the customer that feedback is welcome – *“I appreciate you bringing this to our attention”*.
- If the person is upset it may help to calm the person by communicating your understanding of the situation and empathizing with the situation.

Confirm Understanding

- Once the person has finished speaking summarise the information you have obtained, ask any additional questions and confirm your understanding of the issue.
- Record the notes so that you are able to relay the accurate information to your Coordinator or Team Leader or Nominated Supervisor.

Inform Customer

Inform customer of the process from here on including how the service will follow up the concern and contact details for the person to follow up further if they are unhappy with the outcome. This should include contact details for Knox City Council Family and Children’s Services and the Department of Education and Training.

Explain What You CAN DO and Explore Alternatives

- Reach an agreement on a course of action.
- Give the customer confidence that something will be done by explaining to them *who* will do *what*, by *when* and *how*, especially when you will meet with them again.

Take Action As Soon As Possible and Follow Up

- Take action as soon as practicable and contact your Team Leader or Coordinator.
- If there are any delays or changes to the information provided, keep the customer informed
- Keep your commitments to the customer
- If required, follow up with the person and express appreciation for bringing the issue to your attention

It is imperative that you communicate the customer’s concern as soon as practicable with your Team Leader or Coordinator.

If the concern or issue remains unresolved after consultation with the educator and staff, customers are encouraged to contact the Responsible Person of the relevant program e.g.: Child Care Centre Coordinator, Preschool or Maternal Child Health Team Leader. **Please contact KCC Customer Service on 9298 8000 for further contact details.**

If the concern or issue remains unresolved at this point individuals may meet with the Manager of Knox Council Family and Children’s Services Department.

For Preschool and Child Care Services Only:

Concerns or issues relating to any aspect of the operation of early years services, either staff or committee related may also be raised directly with the Department of Education and Training (DET).

- [Issues Resolution process](#) must be displayed at all Early Years Services.

Documenting and Investigating Complaints

Complaints will be recorded by the educator or Responsible Person and minutes from meetings will be kept confidentially in the child/family file.

Complaints from a child will be recorded in the child’s personal observation records and documented by the educator or staff or the Responsible Person.

A Complaint Notification will be completed by the Responsible Person and lodged to DET through the ACECQA National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) within 24 hours, when a complaint has been received by the KCC Early Years Service alleging that:

- Any complaint alleging that a serious incident has occurred or is occurring at an education and care service; or
- Any complaint that there has been a contravention of the *Education and Care Services National Law 2010* or *Education and Care Services Regulation. 2017*.

Supporting Educators/MCHN's/Staff During Complaint Procedures

Knox City Council will be supportive when educators and staff have experienced distressing customer behaviour and will also make the Employee Assistance Program service available. In situations where a customer has become abusive and has been requested more than once to cease the offensive behaviour educators and staff can confidently terminate the telephone call or request the person to leave the centre.

For Maternal Child Health Services Only:

Documenting and Investigating Complaints

- The Maternal Child Health Nurse will listen and acknowledge the concerns.
- The customer will be provided with a [feedback form](#) and reply paid envelope. (*Forms are available and displayed in all MCH Centre waiting rooms*)
- Once the complaint is received, it will be followed up by the MCH Team Leader or Coordinator.
- Contact details and discussion notes are recorded in the Child Development Information System (CDIS).

Definitions

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| Early Years Service | Refers to Long Day Care, Occasional Care, Preschool and Maternal Child Health Service unless otherwise specified. |
| Educator | These are staff employed to care and educate children enrolled in the Early Years Service. This may include but not limited to an Approved Provider, Responsible Person, Nominated Supervisor, Person in-day-to-day Charge and Educational Leader. |
| Approved Provider | Someone with management or control that will operate the education and care service; this can be an individual, an organisation or a company. |
| Customer | For the purpose of this procedure the term 'customer' will be used to describe any individual, child or adult enrolled in Knox Early Years Services. |
| MCHN | Maternal Child Health Nurse. |
| Responsible Person | Must be present at all times at a centre based services who is educating and caring for children. A responsible person can be one of the following (section 162). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approved provider or a person with management or control • The nominated supervisor of the service • A person who has been placed in day-to-day Charge of service. |
| Parent | The term 'parent' includes a child's legal guardian. It does not include a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child. |

Legislation and Standards

ACECQA 3 – Guide to the National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating Process 2018

ACECQA 4 – Operational Requirements Quality Areas 1 to 7 2018

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

References and Sources

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) 'Guide to the National Quality Standard'

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) 'Guide to the National Law and National Regulations'

Being, Belonging, and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

Related Policy and Procedure

A Guide to Service Requests and Complaint Handling

Knox City Council Customer Complaint Handling

Governance and Management of the Service including Confidentiality of Records Procedure

Staff Code of Conduct

Appendix One

Issues Resolution Process for Preschool and Child Care Services

Purpose

Educators and staff are passionate about service excellence and will encourage family feedback about service experiences and communication. Educators and staff acknowledge every complaint as an opportunity to build on the confidence and trust with families in Council's processes, people, communication and services.

Procedure

If families and children enrolled in KCC Early Years Services have any concerns related to education and care and would like to discuss this further, it is recommended that you first approach and discuss with your child/ren's main educator.

When educators and staff are made aware of a concern, they will arrange to meet with the family as soon as practicable. Grievances will be managed confidentially and in a fair and open manner for all concerned parties; educators, staff and family.

If the concern remains unresolved after consultation with the educator, you can discuss your concerns with a Preschool or Child Care Services Team Leader from our Knox Council Early Years Services by contacting the number provided below and asking for the appropriate service e.g. Preschool or Child Care.

Knox City Council
511 Burwood Hwy
Wantirna South, 3152
Customer Service Telephone: **9298 8000**

Concerns related to the operation of the centre may also be raised with the Preschool or Child Care Services Team Leader. Alternatively, concerns related to any aspect of the operation of the centre, either staff or committee related may also be raised directly with;

The Department of Education and Training

**Level 3,295 Springvale Rd
Glen Waverley
3150**

The contact phone number is 1300 651 940

Appendix Two

Maternal Child Health Feedback Form

Dear Service User,

We are seeking feedback regarding all aspects of the service. Your input will support the continuous improvement of your Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Service.

The Child Family Health & Wellbeing Coordinator may contact you to discuss your feedback should you provide your name and contact details.

Your Maternal & Child Health Centre:Date:

Your Name: (optional):

Email Address:Telephone/Mobile:

On the scale below please indicate your **level of satisfaction with the services** you have received.

Please tick: ☐ Very low ☐ Low ☐ Moderate ☐ High ☐ Very high

Comments about why you have chosen this level:

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Please provide further suggestions for improving the service:

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Please return this form by email to mchcoordination@knox.vic.gov.au or post Attention: Jennie Lindrea, Child Family Health & Wellbeing Coordinator, Knox City Council, 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South, Victoria 3155.



Privacy Statement: The person completing this form is authorised for the purpose of reviewing the quality of MCH services provided by Council and will be used solely for that primary purpose or directly related purposes. Council will not disclose personal information provided in this feedback form to any other party.