



JUMBUNNA COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL AND EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRE INC.

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

COMPLAINTS HANDLING

Date Approved: 23/07/2024

Related Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 172, 174, 174A
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 143B, 168 – 173, 176
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Privacy Regulation 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

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

Sources

- ACECQA – www.acecqa.gov.au
- ACECQA: Using Complaints to Support Continuous Improvement – www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-10/QA7_UsingComplaintsToSupportContinuousImprovement%20-%20September.pdf
- Australian and New Zealand Standard Guidelines for complaint management in organisations – AS/NZS 10002:2014 – <https://store.standards.org.au/product/as-10002-2022>
- Commonwealth Ombudsman: Better practice complaint handling guide – www.ombudsman.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/112276/Better-Practice-Guide-FINAL-v6-A2111312.pdf
- ACECQA: Dealing with Complaints Policy Guidelines – www.acecqa.gov.au/media/31941
- NSW Ombudsman: Effective complaint handling guidelines – www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/guidance-for-agencies/effective-complaint-handling
- ACECQA: Reporting requirements about children: www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications/reporting#reporting%20requirements%20under%20other%20laws
- National Quality and Safeguarding Commission – www.ndiscommission.gov.au

Policy Statement

Jumbunna affirms that people have a right to question and influence decisions made and services provided. We take complaints seriously and manage them in a confidential, timely, transparent, and meaningful 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 point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame.
- Recognising that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.
- Handling complaints objectively and ensuring that complainants do not suffer any reprisals from making a complaint.

Background

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* and *National Disability Practice Standards* require Approved Providers to have policies and procedures about dealing with complaints which reflects a complaint handling system at the service that is child focused. This also includes the management of a complaint that alleges a child is exhibiting sexual behaviours that may be harmful to the child or another child.

Strategies - How will it be done?

Making a Complaint

- Written guidelines detailing complaint procedures are available in our services family handbook. This is also displayed in the foyer for easy reference.
- Families may make a complaint directly to the child's educator, the Approved Provider, or the Nominated Supervisor.
- The name and telephone number of the person to whom complaints can be made must be clearly visible at the service (Regulation 168(2)(o) and Regulation 173(2)(b)).
- Jumbunna staff will discuss complaints procedures with children and encourage them to raise any issues they have.
- The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure confidentiality procedures are maintained.

Responsiveness

All complaints will be acknowledged and responded to as soon as practicable. Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and complainants will be kept informed about the progress of their complaint and anticipated timeframes. Allegations of suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or possible victims of crime, will be actioned immediately by urgent referral or reporting to the relevant agency.

Refer to ACECQA for relevant timeframes: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications/notification-types-and-timeframes>

Refer to NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission for relevant timeframe: www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/making-complaint

Managing a complaint of sexualised behaviour

Providers and educators play an important role in making informed professional judgements regarding sexualised behaviour involving children. Not all sexual behaviour involving children poses a risk to their safety. It may be age-appropriate and expected sexualized behaviour.

Informed judgements regarding sexualized behaviour help to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of children by:

- supporting healthy sexual development (age-appropriate sexualized behaviour)
- protecting them from harm or abuse (inappropriate or problem sexualized behaviour).

Note that in some cases, sexualized behaviour involving children may fall within reporting requirements under other laws.

Managing a Complaint

Where possible, complaints will be dealt with immediately, by Jumbunna staff as this is usually the person with the closest relationship with the family. If the complaint is about an issue that Jumbunna staff considers to be outside their control, or the family does not feel they wish to share it with the Jumbunna staff member, the complainant will be directed to the appropriate person for their complaint to be resolved.

Where Jumbunna staff believe they will have to share in confidence with another person in order to resolve an issue, or if 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 and any legal requirements in relation to the complaint considered, such as the need to notify regulatory authorities.
- The Jumbunna staff member will attempt to diffuse emotions by acknowledging what they are feeling, and state positively that you wish to seek a solution to the issue that is causing concern.
 - a) ask questions to help identify or clarify their concerns. For example, the statement, “I never know what is happening with my child” may be further clarified by asking questions such as, “What things would you like our service to share with you about your child’s day?”
 - b) ask the complainant if they have any strategies or solutions that they feel could be put in place to resolve their issues.
- If possible, the problem 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 and a suitable time and place will be organised to discuss the issue.
- 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.
- Complaint – Quick Response. If a minor or non-confidential complaint is raised, it will be dealt with quickly and efficiently by senior management. A form will be completed and when resolved, will be kept on file, and entered into the complaints register.

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), Regulation 176(2)(b)).

Refer to the service Child Protection Policy and Procedure and Reportable Incidents.

Complaints, incidents, and serious incidents must be notified to the regulatory authority through the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA IT System). Log in to access the portal where you can select the incident or complaint type and enter the required information.

Approved Providers are required to notify the Regulatory Authority of a complaint that alleges:

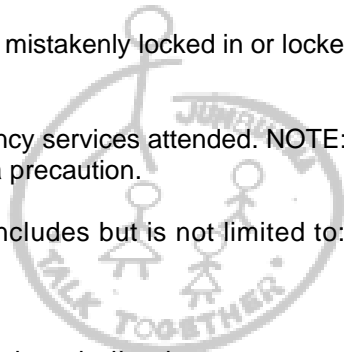
- A serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by a service.
- The National Law and/or National Regulations have been contravened.

A serious incident can include:

- Any incident where you reasonably believe that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the service.
- Any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the service.
- The death of a child while that child is being educated and cared for at the service or following an incident while that child was being cared for by the service.
- A serious injury or trauma while the child is being educated and cared for, which:
 - a) Required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or
 - b) The child attended or should have attended a hospital.
- Any incident involving serious illness at the service, where the child attended, or should have attended a hospital (e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis).
- Any circumstance where a child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for.
- Any circumstance where a child appears to have been taken or removed from the service premises by someone not authorised to do this.
- Any circumstance where a child is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the service premises or any part of the premises.
- Any emergency for which emergency services attended. NOTE: It does not mean an incident where emergency services attended as a precaution.

A serious injury, illness or trauma includes but is not limited to:

- Amputation
- Anaphylactic reaction requiring hospitalisation
- Asthma requiring hospitalisation
- Broken bone/Fractures
- Bronchiolitis
- Burns
- Diarrhea requiring hospitalisation
- Epileptic seizures
- Head injuries
- Measles
- Meningococcal infection
- Sexual assault
- Witnessing violence or a frightening event



Direct Complaints

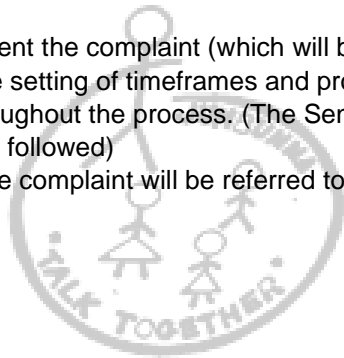
Families can make a complaint directly to the Regulatory Authority where the complaint alleges that:

- 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 family handbook and displayed in the foyer of the service.

Internal Complaints Handling Procedure

1. In the first instance an attempt to discuss and negotiate a solution with the person(s) concerned at an appropriate time and place away from the children. (If a resolution is met a verbal confirmation is to be made with senior management of the complaint and resolution)- QUICK RESPONSE COMPLAINT
2. If this negotiation attempt is not successful, request for mediation/intervention by senior management. Once a complaint reaches this step, senior management will investigate any complaint received.
3. A Complaint Form will be completed and submitted to senior management- FORMAL COMPLAINT
4. A senior manager will document the complaint (which will be updated and co-signed throughout the process). This will include setting of timeframes and provision of copies of all documents and agreements to all parties throughout the process. (The Senior Management and Board Complaints Procedure will be followed)
5. If resolution is not reached the complaint will be referred to the Board members for further investigation and action.



Follow-Up and Review

Each complaint will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement. After the complaint or grievance has been dealt with:

- We will analyse the complaint to determine if any policy or procedural changes need to be implemented.
- The Approved Provider will follow through to determine that complaints and grievances have been successfully resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Families will be contacted to determine if they were satisfied with the way the issue was resolved, and educators will be consulted about the outcome from an operational viewpoint.

Senior Management and Board Complaints Procedure Guide



Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a complaint or grievance has been assessed as 'notifiable', the Approved Provider must notify Regulatory Authority within 24 hours. • 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 co-operating 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. • Ensuring that the address and telephone number of the Regulatory Authority are displayed prominently at the main entrance of the service. • Advising parents/guardians and any other new members of the service of the complaints and grievances policy and procedures upon enrolment. • Ensuring that this policy is available for inspection at the service at all times. • Providing a Complaints and Grievances Register.
Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to and resolving issues as they arise where practicable. • Discussing minor complaints directly with the party involved as a first step towards resolution. • Informing complainants of the service's complaints and grievances policy 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. • Providing information as requested by the approved provider e.g. Written reports relating to the grievance. • Complying with the service's privacy and confidentiality policy and maintaining confidentiality at all times. • Working co-operatively with the Approved Provider, in any investigations related to a complaint made.
Early Childhood Educators/ NDIS staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that grievances and complaints are dealt with in accordance with this policy. • Listen to and aim to resolve complaints and grievances in a positive way. • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising a complaint directly with the person involved, in an attempt to resolve the matter without recourse to the complaints and grievances procedures. • Communicating any concerns relating to the management or operation of the service as soon as is practicable. • Raising any unresolved issues or serious concerns directly with the Approved Provider, via the Nominated Supervisor or staff. • Maintaining complete confidentiality at all times. • Co-operating with requests to provide relevant information when requested in relation to complaints and grievances.
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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 service 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 enrolled at the service 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 service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

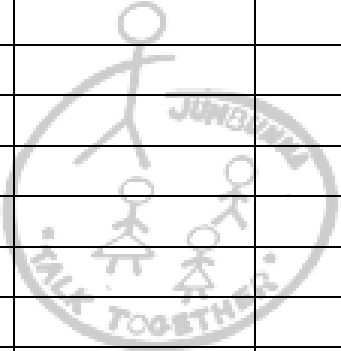
DOCUMENTATION

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	

Policy Name:	Complaints Handling & Feedback Policy	Policy Number:	
Date Approved:	23 rd July 2024	Approved By:	Senior Management
Date Issued:	23 July 2024	Review Date:	30 June 2026
Version 1.7	This version of the policy was approved 23 July 2024 and replaces the version approved 29 May 2024		

COMPLAINTS REGISTER

Date	Name	Feedback/Issue	Action	Outcome	Reportable/Non reportable	Entered by Staff





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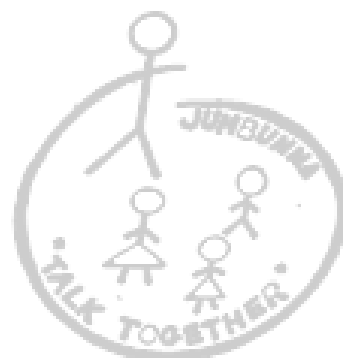
COMPLAINTS

Jumbunna staff are responsible to follow the Complaints Policy and Procedures. Complaints can be received by the service verbally, by telephone, email, text, or letters. All complaints received by Senior Management are to be reported to the Board Members and complaints made to Jumbunna Staff or Volunteers are to be reported to the Senior Management Team.

COMPLAINTS FLOWCHART

QUICK RESPONSE COMPLAINT	FORMAL COMPLAINT	EXTERNAL COMPLAINT AGENCY OR PERSON
Complaint received by Senior Management, staff member, or Volunteer from a Client or Staff Member	Complaint Form Offered/Provided to Client, their Advocate or Identified Representative Complaint received from Staff Member Verbally or in Writing	Complaint Not Resolved
Complaint quickly resolved by Senior Management, Jumbunna staff or Volunteer or Board Member	Senior Management contacts the Board Member representative regarding the complaint	Complaint Referred to External Agency or Person
Jumbunna Staff or Volunteer verbally confirm to Senior Management who made the complaint, what the complaint was about and how they resolved the complaint.	Complaint investigated by Board Members with information and feedback provided by the Senior Management	Identified Complaint provided in writing by External Agency or Identified Independent Person to the Board Members

Senior Management completes Complaint Quick Response Form and files in the Complaints Folder	Investigation completed, complaint resolved, letter provided/sent to person making the complaint.	Outcome of Resolution by External Agency or Independent Person provided to the Board Members
Senior Management records the complaint and resolution into the Complaints Register Form	Complaint and resolution held in clients' records or staff records and the Senior Management records complaint resolution in their report to the Board Members	Copy of Complaints Resolution held on client, volunteer, or staff members file
Senior Management enters data into Board Meeting report	Senior Management types in complaint and resolution into Complaints Register Form	Senior Management records the complaint and resolution into Complaints Register Form



COMPLAINT FORM

Date:

Name of person making the complaint: _____

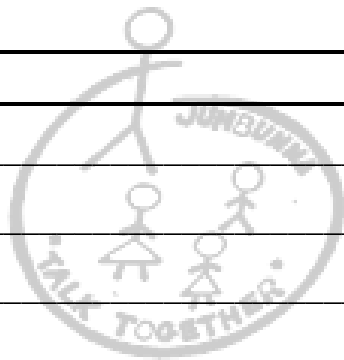
Address: _____

Phone: _____

Staff members handling complaint: _____

Complaint: Brief Description

Discussions and Solutions negotiated with complainant:



Issue resolved: Yes / No

If no, further action advised/taken:

General Manager: _____ (name) _____
(signature)



JUMBUNNA COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL AND EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRE INC.

COMPLAINT - QUICK RESPONSE FORM

This form must be completed by Senior Management when a minor or non-confidential complaint is raised and resolved quickly. When the complaint is resolved the completed form must be filed in the Complaints Folder and the completed form typed into the services Complaints Register

Person Making the Complaint – Tick Below

	Participant/family of the Service	Participant/family advocate	Participant/family representative
	Participant Family Member	Staff Member	Community Member
	Volunteer	Another Service or Organisation	Other (Specify)
Name of Person Making the Complaint:			
Date of Complaint:			
Manner in which the Complaint was made:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbally <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Text <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)			
Who was the Complaint made to or sent to:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Management <input type="checkbox"/> Staff member <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Board Member			
What was the Complaint About :			
The Quick Response (What was done to resolve the Complaint):			
Date Complaint Resolved:			
Signature of Senior Management:			
Date:			