



GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINTS POLICY



POLICY RATIONALE

TeamKids encourages children, parents, guardians and community members to provide feedback on our policies, procedures and services and welcomes each input as a means of improving its service delivery and upholding positive relationships between TeamKids and its stakeholders.

TeamKids provides guidelines on managing disputes and incidents fairly and equitably, and within a reasonable timeframe. TeamKids recognises the rights of all children, families and community members to have a clear, concise and transparent Grievance and Complaints procedure.

Where possible, complaints will be addressed by the Coordinator/Director of service (or Responsible Person) or the Person in Day-to-Day charge (Responsible Person) at the venue. If the complaint is about an issue that our team considers outside their control, or the individual does not feel they wish to share it with the educator. In that case, the individual may be directed to our Customer Service team to resolve their complaint.

TeamKids has an obligation to inform the relevant regulatory authority of complaints alleging 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 service.

POLICY PROCEDURES

EDUCATOR ROLE

Should an issue be brought to the attention of the Responsible Person of the service by a parent, child, educator or any other member of the community, the Responsible Person will follow the following procedures:

- Actively listen to the complaint, ask questions to clarify and improve the understanding of the complaint.
- 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.
- Ask the complainant if they have any strategies or solutions that they feel could be put in place to resolve their issues.
- Avoid responding immediately and defensively to the issues raised. If the problems are complex, or if several concerns are being presented at once, it may be beneficial to take notes or ask the complainant to write their concerns.
- Ensure at all stages when discussing the issues with educators and Area Manager that professionalism and confidentiality is maintained.
- Advise the Area Manager of the complaint
- Work with the Area Manager to manage the situation, investigate and report back to the complainant.
- Where necessary, the Area Manager will advise the Operations Manager of the nature of the complaint. The Operations Manager/Partnership Manager will notify the school and work in partnership for regular updates and communication.
- If the complaint is deemed notifiable (see below), the following steps will be taken to lodge a notification of complaint:
 - › Any circumstance that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child
 - › If the National Law or National Regulations are being or have been contravened.

CHILDREN

Families may need to assist their children in communicating with educators about issues at the service, and time to talk about these may be arranged at pick up or collection times.

If a child wishes to raise a complaint **against another child** at the service:

- They will be encouraged to talk to their preferred educators about the issue. Educators will support children to manage their relationships and behaviours at the service by following policies on "Interactions with children" and the procedure of guiding children's behaviour.

If a child wishes to raise a complaint **against an Educator** at the service:

- The child will be encouraged to talk to another educator or the Responsible Person. Children are supported to discuss their experiences at the service with their families.

If a child wishes to raise a complaint **against a Parent/Guardian** or **another adult**:

- The Responsible Person will assess the complaint and discuss any serious issue with their Area Manager, who will listen, support and report. For any serious allegations, refer to the 'Child Protection Policy'.
- If a child is concerned about anything or anyone at the service, they are encouraged to discuss the issue with the Educator or Responsible Person they know best.
- Educators will support children to talk about things they like and things they don't like with their families.

Although it is not a formal requirement, children are welcome to submit their complaints verbally or in writing. To help in the resolution of the complaint, if the complaint is in writing, TeamKids asks that the following information is provided by the child, with the assistance of a family member/guardian:

- › Date(s) and time(s) of the occurrence(s) causing the complaint
- › Where the problem occurred?
- › Who was involved?
- › What caused the problem?
- › Steps taken to date to try to resolve the problem.

COMPLAINTS MADE BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN

All families will be informed of complaints and grievances procedures through the availability of this policy on the service website, or a hard copy can be provided from the head office on request (R168).

If a Parent/Guardian wishes to raise a complaint against a child or other Parent/Guardian at the service, the Coordinator/Director of Service (or Responsible Person) or the Area Manager will discuss with the Parent/Guardian raising the complaint about the issue. The child or Parent/Guardian who the complaint is about will not be included in any conversation or confrontation by the Parent/Guardian that is the complainant, and in allegations of a serious nature, the Coordinator/Director of Service (or Responsible Person) and the Area Manager will use professional discretion when assessing the other child and their family's involvement.

If a Parent/Guardian wishes to raise a complaint against an educator at the service, this is to be communicated with the Coordinator/Director of Service (or Responsible Person), or by contacting the TeamKids Customer Service team, between 8:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday-Friday, on 1 300 035 000 or via email info@teamkids.com.au

If a Parent/Guardian wishes to raise a complaint against the Coordinator/Director of Service (or Responsible Person), the complaint must be communicated by contacting the TeamKids Customer Service team, between 8:00 am – 6:00 pm Monday-Friday, on 1 300 035 000 or via email info@teamkids.com.au

If families have any queries, concerns or issues regarding the care of the children or the management of the service, they are asked to address these concerns to the TeamKids Customer Service team. If this is deemed inappropriate, given the nature of the situation, or the Parent/Guardian feels their issue was not adequately addressed, the matter will be escalated to the Customer Service Manager and Chief Executive Officer.

It is preferable that all complaints are submitted in writing. If a written complaint is not possible, a verbal complaint is acceptable. To help in the resolution of the complaint, TeamKids asks that the following information is provided:

- Date(s) and time(s) of the occurrence(s) causing the complaint.
- Where did the problem happen?
- What caused the problem?
- Steps taken to date to try to resolve the problem.

Feedback will be sought regularly from families and children to provide them with an opportunity to provide feedback and ways to improve the service.

Family can also contact the relevant Regulatory Authority on:

- VICTORIA: 1 300 307 415
- NSW: 1 800 619 113 (toll free)
- QLD: (07) 3328 6780
- ACT: (02) 6207 1114

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/help/contact-your-regulatory-authority>

If they still feel their grievance has not been resolved. Further information for families can be found on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website:

www.acecqa.gov.au

Any complaints/grievances about the health and wellbeing of children, or an allegation that a section of the Education and Care Services Law Act (2010) or a regulation of the Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) may have been breached, will be notified to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours in writing, as required in the Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010) Section 174 and supported by the Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), Regulation 176.

COMPLAINTS MADE BY A SCHOOL

Schools will work with the Coordinator/Director of Service (or Responsible Person) and Operations Manager when working through any serious complaints to ensure that all processes have been followed and communicated effectively. The procedure will be managed in the same timely manner as when a child or family/guardian complaint is raised.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU MAKE A COMPLAINT?

TeamKids will ensure that all complaints about any aspect of the business are managed in a professional, respectful and diligent manner. Providing consistency within the process will allow all complaints to be treated with fairness and ensure that all complaints are taken seriously.

TeamKids will provide timelines to all key stakeholders involved in the complaint to provide confidence in the business dealing and to improve all areas as required.

Any complaints or reports of discrimination, harassment or bullying will be addressed quickly, seriously and empathetically.

Procedures:

- The complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly, with resolutions made effective within 48 hours of the time the complaint is received, where possible.
- All complaints will be investigated fairly and impartially.
- The complaint and investigation procedure will initially be kept entirely confidential. However, TeamKids are unable to guarantee confidentiality depending on the nature of the complaint.
- A complaint may be withdrawn at any stage.
- It is unlawful to disadvantage or victimise a person for making a complaint of discrimination. Under no circumstances will any person victimise or retaliate against another person who makes a complaint.
- Where the complaint is about a Team Member, the individual will be notified of the complaint, and its nature, as soon as possible. The Team Member will be given an opportunity to reply and be required not to communicate with the complainant about the complaint during this period.
- If the complaint is assessed to be substantiated, the resolutions will be discussed and agreed upon between all parties.
- If following the investigation, a complaint is assessed to have no foundation, both parties will be informed, and the reasons will be explained.
- All steps within the process, including findings, will be documented to further inform policy and procedures review, staff professional development opportunities and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) development.

“Continuous improvement is an essential practice for education and care services and an underpinning requirement of the National Quality Framework. Complaints and grievances can be used to identify a focus for critical reflection of practices, programs and team performance. Complaints can be used as a positive resource for self-assessment and can inform the service’s philosophy, quality improvement plan, policies and procedures. Services require the constant review of a changing environment to enable continuous improvement, and using the complaint or grievance as the basis could assist in achieving continuous improvement.”
(ACECQA – QA 7 factsheet)

REFERENCES:

- ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012)
- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health and Safety
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 168, S 174 Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 173, R 176

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