Queensland Lutheran
Early Childhood and School-Aged Care Services

GSM COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE FEEDBACK

V10.2023
Review by 10.2026

1. Policy Statement

To capture all compliments, comments, investigation, complaints and suggestions about the Service, to support the Service's continuing improvement and to clearly outline processes to ensure that any concerns are addressed fairly and documented, in a timely manner.

The Service will make available material that promotes inclusion and informs all staff, families, visitors, children and young people of the support and complaints processes available to them. The Service will endeavour to provide information and support in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand. Material provided will be in accessible language, for example people with visual impairments, lower reading levels, different language needs and also formats that are child-friendly where applicable.

2. Explanation

2.1 Our Service aims to ensure that all interactions, including grievance and complaints procedures, convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills. This is role modelled by management and educators alike. We value all feedback including concerns raised and use these to guide our continual improvement.

2.2 Our Policy values

- 2.2.1 Procedural fairness and natural justice.
- 2.2.2 Our code of ethics and conduct.
- 2.2.3 A service culture free from discrimination and harassment.
- 2.2.4 Transparent policies and procedures; and avenues for recourse and further investigation.

2.3 Our Policy ensures that all persons are presented with procedures that

- 2.3.1 Value the opportunity to be heard
- 2.3.2 Promote conflict resolution
- 2.3.3 Encourage the development of harmonious partnerships
- 2.3.4 Ensure that conflicts and grievances are mediated fairly; and are transparent and equitable.
- 2.3.5 Reflect our understanding that we have a duty of care to ensure that all persons are provided with a high level of equity and fairness in relation to grievances and complaints management and procedures.

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3. Definition

3.1 For the purposes of our policy, grievance and complaint are defined as:

3.1.1 Grievance – a real or perceived wrong which may be considered as grounds for a complaint.

3.1.2 Complaint – a formal action taken to address a perceived or real grievance.

4. Implementation

4.1 Each Service will have a system so that staff/educators, families, visitors and children can provide their feedback. This may include surveys, specific focus areas and/or general written feedback.

4.2 A response will be provided to any feedback given.

4.3 All responses and actions related to any grievance or complaint will be documented on the Service's Complaints register and filed accordingly.

4.4 Any complaints received, either verbal or written, will be investigated and documented using the GSM-Complaints Investigation form.

4.5 Compliments may be shared, ensuring that the writer's identity is kept confidential (unless permission has been given to disclose their name).

4.6 The procedure for complaints or grievances can be found in the Parent/Family and Educator Handbooks.

4.7 The following documents will be displayed at the Service:

- GSM Grievance and Complaints Flowchart
- GSM Grievance and Complaints Statement Families
- GSM Grievance and Complaints Statement Staff
- GSM Child Grievance and Complaints Poster

5. Complaints Management Process

5.1 If families, staff or others have a concern they should follow the steps on the Grievance and Complaints Flowchart, as displayed at the Service.

5.2 If a child has a concern, they should be supported to express their concern. An advocate for the child, (this may be staff/educator, parent/guardian or other adult) will support them to follow the Grievance and Complaints process.

5.3 We ask that all families and staff work through each stage on the flowchart when raising a grievance or complaint so that each person has an opportunity to address concerns prior to elevating it to the next level.

5.4 Any actions taken or complaints made, will remain confidential to the parties concerned.

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5.5 When a grievance or complaint is raised, the following steps must be followed in a fair and just manner:

5.5.1 Acknowledge the grievance/complaint.
5.5.2 Listen carefully to the complainant.
5.5.3 Advise the person who has raised the grievance/complaint that you will investigate fully and will advise them of the outcome in a timely manner.
5.5.4 Ensure the Service Leader/Nominated Supervisor and Management are advised of the grievance/complaint.

5.6 Fully investigate the alleged grievance/complaint following the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice:

5.6.1 The right to be heard fairly (the 'hearing' rule);
5.6.2 The right to an unbiased decision made by an objective decision maker (the rule against 'bias'; and
5.6.3 The right to have the decision based on relevant evidence (the 'no evidence' rule).

5.7 It is recommended that the following are considered when working together to resolve the grievance/complaint

5.7.1 Identify the issue.
5.7.2 Discuss the desired outcome/goal.
5.7.3 Discuss strategies that would meet each party's needs in achieving the desired outcome/goal.
5.7.4 Discuss barriers which may prevent this from happening.
5.7.5 Ensure all discussions are documented (using the GSM-Complaints Investigation form, GSM-Record of Discussion form).
5.7.6 Consider all information gathered and, in consultation with management, decide on an appropriate course of action.
5.7.7 Advise all relevant parties of the outcome of the investigation including the person who has raised the grievance or complaint.
5.7.8 Individually or as a team, reflect on concerns and grievances raised to consider relevant changes.
5.7.9 When addressing a grievance/complaint with staff/educators, it may be useful to use the following questions to prompt critical reflection:

5.7.9.1 What are the things that most concern you about the grievance/complaint?
5.7.9.2 Why do you think they concern you?
5.7.9.3 How do these affect the outcomes for children and delivery of the program?
5.7.9.4 How do these sit in relation to the Code of Ethics and the National Quality Standards?
5.7.9.5 What can you do to assist with this situation?
5.7.9.6 What can your colleagues do to assist with this situation?
5.7.9.7 What can your supervisor/manager do to assist with this situation?

5.7.10 Where a serious grievance/complaint is raised against an educator it may be appropriate to ask that educator to stand down from duties with children while the investigation is conducted.

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5.7.11 All concerns or complaints should be taken seriously, regardless of the perceived seriousness. Educators must advise their Nominated Supervisors or responsible person in charge of any concern raised so that it can be reflected upon and consideration given to any required changes or modifications. The Nominated Supervisor should always contact the person raising the concern to ensure them of our commitment to continual improvement and to seek further information for consideration.

5.7.12 The Nominated Supervisor must advise the Approved Provider of any grievances or complaints. The Approved Provider will ensure that the regulatory authority is notified where the complaint alleges a serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by a Service or the National Law and/or National Regulations have been contravened.

5.7.13 For the purpose of continuing Service improvement, the Service should monitor grievances for patterns, via the Complaints Register and use these to guide further improvements.

6 Compliance

All workers who have responsibilities under this policy are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy. Non-compliance with this policy and procedure may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

7 Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed and updated (if needed), at least every two years, by the Early Childhood Team, following input from all stakeholders.

8 Related Documents

PFC Partnerships with Families Policy

GSM Complaints Investigation form

GSM Enrolment and Orientation Policy

GSM Grievance and Complaints Flowchart

GSM Grievance and Complaints Statement Families

GSM Grievance and Complaints Statement Staff

GSM General Feedback Form

GSM Record of Discussion form

9 References and Websites

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011: Section 172, 174, 175

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2020: Regulation 157, 168 (2) (o), 173, 175-178

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