



## Dealing with complaints

Associated National Quality Standard	Education and Care Services National Law or Regulation	Associated department policy, procedure or guideline
<p>7. Governance and Leadership</p> <p>7.1 Governance</p> <p>7.2 Leadership</p>	<p>Regulation <a href="#">173</a> Prescribed information to be displayed</p> <p>Regulation <a href="#">176</a> Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority</p> <p>Regulation <a href="#">177</a> Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider</p> <p>Regulation <a href="#">181</a> Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider</p> <p>Regulation <a href="#">183</a> Storage of records and other documents</p> <p><a href="#">Division 2 Policies and Procedures</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Leading and Operating Department Preschool Guidelines</a></p> <p><a href="#">Leading and Managing the School</a></p> <p><a href="#">Information Security Policy</a></p> <p><a href="#">Code of Conduct Policy</a></p> <p><a href="#">Complaints Handling</a></p> <p><a href="#">Preschool Notification Fact Sheet</a></p> <p><a href="#">Preschool Notification Guideline</a></p>

### Pre-reading and reference documents

[ACECQA Information Sheet: The role of the educational leader](#)

[ACECQA Information Sheet: Educational leadership and team building](#)

[National Quality Framework Information sheet: Nominated Supervisors](#)

[ACECOA - record keeping](#)

## Relevant Preschool Procedures

- Governance and management of the service
- Interactions with children
- Providing a child safe environment
- Staffing

## Introduction

While most complaints should be resolved informally with the relevant staff member, there are provisions for the use of formal procedures depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint. All staff need to be aware of their responsibility to comply with the DoE Code of Conduct Procedures.

Our preschool values the feedback of educators, staff, families and the wider community in helping to create a service that meets regulations and the needs of enrolled children and their families.

We encourage open communication through opportunities to respond and give feedback on the program. A component of this feedback is the ability to put forward a complaint and have this managed appropriately with due consideration for accountability and quality improvement.

## Staff roles and responsibilities

### School principal

The principal as Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader and Responsible Person holds primary responsibility for the preschool.

The principal is responsible for ensuring:

- the preschool is compliant with legislative standard related to this procedure at all times
- all staff involved in the preschool are familiar with and implement this procedure
- all procedures are current and reviewed as part of a continuous cycle of self-assessment

### Preschool supervisor

The preschool supervisor supports the principal in their role and is responsible for leading the review of this procedure through a process of self-assessment and critical reflection. This involves:

- analysing complaints, incidents or issues and what the implications are for the updates to this procedure
- reflecting on how this procedure is informed by relevant recognised authorities
- planning and discussing ways to engage with families and communities, including how changes are communicated
- developing strategies to induct all staff when procedures are updated to ensure practice is embedded

### Preschool educators

The preschool educators are responsible for working with leadership to ensure:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all staff in the preschool and daily practices comply with this procedure. This includes all staff; casuals, lunch cover, volunteers and anyone else who works in the preschool</li> <li>• this procedure is stored in the preschool and made accessible to all staff, families, visitors and volunteers. The procedure is stored in the preschool foyer and office in a folder and on the school's website</li> <li>• they are actively involved in the review of this procedure, as required, or at least annually</li> <li>• the details of the procedure's review are documented at the end of the procedure.</li> <li>• all staff involved in the preschool are familiar with and implement this procedure.</li> </ul>
<b>Procedure</b>	
<b>Making a complaint</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal or minor complaints by a parent or caregiver will be dealt with by the relevant preschool staff at the time of complaint or as soon as practically possible.</li> <li>• Informal or minor complaints that cannot be resolved by the preschool staff will be directed to the Preschool Nominated Supervisor (School Principal).</li> <li>• Formal or serious complaints alleging that the safety, health or wellbeing of a child was or is being compromised, or that the law has been breached, are to be directed to the Preschool Nominated Supervisor (School Principal).</li> <li>• The Principal will then make all relevant notifications within the prescribed time frames.</li> <li>• If a complaint relates to a breach of a regulation or a serious incident, Early Learning must be notified within 24 hours of the complaint being received.</li> </ul>
<b>Dealing with Complaints</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints are dealt with in an open, respectful and confidential manner.</li> <li>• Families who seek to make a complaint are requested to make an appointment with the preschool teacher.</li> <li>• Initially, the preschool teacher will seek to address and resolve complaints respectfully and informally, as soon as possible. This process may involve a period of investigation.</li> <li>• If a complaint cannot be resolved by the teacher, is considered a serious complaint or related to child protection, it will be referred to the principal immediately.</li> <li>• Families are requested to make an appointment with the principal, if the complaint is related to child protection or is considered serious in nature.</li> <li>• Any complaints made to a SLSO (School Learning Support Officer) or an AEO (Aboriginal Education Officer) will be referred to the early childhood teacher or principal.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints will be dealt with in a confidential and professional manner, as per the NSW Department of Education Complaints Handling Policy.</li> <li>• Complaints of a child protection nature should be referred promptly to the principal and the Department of Justice and Community Services (DJC).</li> <li>• If a staff member has concerns related to the behaviour or actions of another employee, contractor or volunteer, they should speak to the principal who will follow the relevant DoE policy.</li> <li>• Complaints about the school principal can be made to the relevant Director Educational Leadership and EPAC.</li> <li>• Documentation of any complaints, investigations, resolutions or outcomes are stored in the students file and/or with the school principal</li> <li>• Families are informed in the preschool handbook, on the information board at the front entrance foyer of the preschool and via this procedure, that they are able to make a complaint if necessary.</li> <li>• Displayed in the entrance is a statement advising families that if their complaint is of a more serious nature, or relates to the breach of a regulation, they may choose to contact our regulator, by email or telephone;</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"> <i>NSW Early Childhood Education Directorate,</i>  <i>Department of Education <a href="mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au">ececd@det.nsw.edu.au</a></i>  Contact Early Learning at <a href="mailto:earlylearning@det.nsw.edu.au">earlylearning@det.nsw.edu.au</a>  Ph: 1800 619 113 </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a complaint relates to a breach of a regulation by the preschool, <i>DoE Early Learning</i> will be notified within 24 hours.</li> </ul>
<b>Notification of a serious complaint</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a formal complaint is made alleging that the law has been contravened or that a serious incident has occurred or is occurring, notification must be made to Early Learning (phone 1300 083 698) within 24 hours of the complaint being received.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>Approved Provider</i> of all department preschools is the <i>NSW Department of Education</i>.</li> <li>• The school principal has overriding responsibility for the supervision of the preschool and holds three roles in relation to it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Nominated Supervisor</li> <li>o Educational Leader</li> <li>o Responsible Person</li> </ul> </li> <li>• This information is noted on the <i>Approved Provider</i> notice, along with the principal's name and photo. This is clearly displayed in the preschool entrance.</li> <li>• If the principal is not on the school site, the school executive</li> </ul>

	<p>member who is relieving for him / her assumes the three roles mentioned above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● While the principal maintains responsibility for the preschool, some of the tasks of the educational leader may be performed by a preschool supervisor.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Confidentiality and retention of records</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Any record which contains personal information about a child is considered confidential and kept secure. These are stored in the strong room in the school office.</li> <li>● The preschool teacher has access to each child's individual record, as well as their parent or carer on request.</li> <li>● Detailed and current records are maintained for each individual child attending the preschool. Much of this information is obtained from the <i>Application to enrol in a NSW Government preschool</i>.</li> <li>● Records are stored securely and confidentially on the preschool or school site for three years after the child last attended preschool. These are collected at the end of the year by the teacher, secured in a labelled box and stored in the strong room in the school office. These records include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ participation in the educational program</li> <li>○ assessments of learning</li> <li>○ enrolment and attendance information</li> <li>○ daily arrival and departure register</li> <li>○ information about any cultural or religious practices that need to be observed</li> <li>○ records of the administration of first aid or medication</li> <li>○ health care plans</li> <li>○ acceptance or refusal of authorisations not collected in the enrolment form (application of sunscreen, consent to attend an excursion, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Completed <i>Incident, injury, trauma and illness records</i> are stored securely until the child is 25 years old.</li> <li>● The department requires education programs be retained by the school for seven years.</li> </ul>

## Record of procedure's review

### Date of review and who was involved

5th May, 2022

Sarah Beesley, Kellie Urszulak

### Key changes made and reason/s why

Added additional supervision details as a result of changes to the preschool cohort.

Changed format to align with Department guidelines

Annual update

### Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders

Notified Responsible person in charge for review - 28/7/2022

Posted on Kinderloop for parents/carers to review - 02/08/2022