



Woodend Children's Centre Complaint Management & Resolution Procedure

Ref. Document: 1 | DfE Consumer Complaints Management and Resolution Procedure | Aug. 2015

Summary

The procedure articulates the steps that will be undertaken to manage and resolve complaints received by Woodend Children's Centre

Purpose

The purpose of the Complaints Management & Resolution Procedure is to ensure that Woodend Children's Centre manages complaints in a fair, efficient and effective manner. The procedure outlines the steps that must be taken to manage complaints, and complement the Department for Education's Consumer Complaints Management and Resolution Policy.

Scope

The Complaints Management & Resolution Procedure applies to complaints about decisions and actions undertaken in the provision of education and care services to the Woodend Children's Centre community.

1. The complaint must be acknowledged promptly

Complaints are acknowledged within two working days of their receipt. Generally, acknowledgement of the complaint may be in the same mode as the complaint was received (e.g. complaints received verbally may be acknowledged verbally). Where complaints are serious or complex, written acknowledgement should occur.

2. The acknowledgement should outline:

- The nature of the complaint received
- The complaint process that will be undertaken (including approximate time frames)
- The name and details of a contact person for the complaint
- When the complainant is likely to be next contacted

Where a complaint can be quickly resolved, it may be possible to provide the acknowledgement and resolution of a complaint in the same interaction (verbally or in writing).

Where responses are provided in writing to vulnerable complainants, consideration should be given to calling the complainant and going through the contents of the written response to ensure that it is understood.

If the complaint requires further investigation or enquiries, the complainant must be advised in a clear and informative way how their complaint was investigated / followed up, and the outcomes.

3. Complaints are investigated in a planned, logical and consistent manner. This includes determining:

- What are the substantive issues of concern?
- What are the relevant requirements about these issues (legal, policy or procedural requirements)?
- Where are the available sources of information about these issues (parties directly involved, witnesses, documentation, in some situations CCTV footage) and how can these be obtained?

4. Once this information has been obtained, the staff member managing the complaint will consider:

- What are the facts that can be determined?
- What issues remain in dispute?
- What conclusion can be drawn based on the application of the legislation / policy/ procedures to the facts?
- What options are available to resolve the issue?

This information will be provided to the complainant to the maximum extent possible, within the requirements of legislative and other requirements regarding privacy and confidentiality.

At this stage, where a matter can be quickly resolved, it may be possible to provide the outcomes of the investigation at the same interaction as receiving and acknowledging the complaint.

The outcomes of a complaint process should be provided within a month of receiving the complaint, and no more than six weeks for complex and contentious issues. If a matter is complex and contentious, or there has been some unexpected delay, the complainant should be kept updated as to the progress of their complaint, the reasons for the delay, and the likely timeframe for resolution. As a guide, these updates should be provided every two weeks.

Where the outcomes of the complaint are detailed, or where the issue is complex and contentious, it is appropriate to provide the outcomes to the complaint in writing (either singularly, or in addition to verbal feedback). **Where a complainant requests a response in writing, it should be provided in this form.**

- Complaints and the actions undertaken to manage and respond to complaints are documented and accessed
- The staff member logging the complaint will, in consultation with the preschool director, identify the person/team identified to manage the complaint.
- Significant issues of complaint will also be assessed for logging on the Department *Incident and Response Management System*.

5. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Woodend Children's Centre 'Complaints Management Procedure' external review options must be offered e.g.:

- The Department for Education Complaints Unit for central resolution, or
- Externally through Ombudsman SA or the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (Department for Child Protection matters only).

Any systemic issues that arise as a result of a complaint will be considered and acted upon for a broader response across the site (e.g. training and development for staff, changes to local policies). Complaints data will be considered on an annual basis by the Site Leadership (e.g. Management team, Governing Council) to identify themes, trends and issues that may assist in business planning and service development.