Early Education and Care Services

7.05. MANAGING COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

QUALITY AREA 7 | VERSION 6.0

Regulatory Policy & Procedure

Statement of Commitment

Wyndham City Council is committed to safeguarding children younger than 18 and ensuring their active participation as valued members of our community, while fostering a child-safe environment. We focus on early identification of risks to protect children from harm, whether caused by adults, harmful behaviours between children, exposure to family violence, or concerns like grooming, cumulative harm, or neglect.

We encourage the reporting of any concerns or suspicions of child abuse or harm. The Reportable Conduct Scheme improves how organisations respond to allegations of abuse, harm, neglect, and risk to children. Under this scheme, the CEO, or their delegate, must report any allegations of child-related misconduct to the Commission for Children and Young People within a specific timeframe.

All allegations are taken seriously, and reporting does not require agreement on the conduct. Concerns can be reported to a line manager or directly to the Senior Child Safe Advisor. Investigations will be conducted by an external party under the oversight of relevant authorities, including Victoria Police, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, and Child Protection.

Furthermore, Wyndham City Council has also publicly declared its commitment to being a Child Safe Organisation on our external website and recognises the importance of Child Safety in the provision of quality community services. All children and young people who attend services, programs, events, and community spaces have a right to feel safe, be safe, and be heard. We are committed to maintain a child safe environment, and value a culture of safety within council and its operations.

There are also behavioural expectations to recognise the importance of an inclusive and welcoming environment to all children & young people of the wider community including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally and/or linguistically diverse, those with a disability and promoting an environment with no tolerance for racism.

Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines for:

- receiving and managing compliments and complaints at Wyndham Early Education and Care Services (EECS).
- procedures to be followed in investigating complaints.

Policy Statement

EECS is dedicated to:

- fostering respect and open communication.
- recognising excellence and showing gratitude.
- following all laws and regulations.
- handling disputes fairly and equally.
- addressing complaints quickly.
- keeping complaint information confidential.

Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of EECS, including during offsite excursions and activities.

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Responsibilities	Approved Provider and EECS Unit	Nominated Supervisors/ Team Leaders	Early Childhood Teacher, Educators, and other staff	Family, parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers, and students
Ensure compliance with all obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.	✓	✓	✓		
Ensure compliance with all obligations under other relevant laws governing the management of the service.	✓	✓	✓		
Consistently document **compliments** and ensure all relevant parties are recognised for their service delivery.	✓	✓			
Document all compliments and **complaints** and use them to continuously improve the quality of our service.	✓	✓	✓		
Ensure the complaints process: • Is understood by all stakeholders. • Is culturally safe. • Is child focused. • Complies with privacy laws, employment laws, and reporting obligations.	✓	✓	✓		
If a complaint alleges harmful sexual behaviour from or against a child, ensure the management of the complaint: • Is child focused. • Is culturally safe. • Is trauma informed. • Complies with privacy laws, employment laws, and reporting obligations. • Adheres to the *Notification to Regulatory Authority Policy*.	✓	✓	✓		
Provide parents/guardians and authorised nominees with the Managing Compliments and Complaints policy and procedures upon enrolment.	✓	✓	✓		
Ensure the name and phone number of the person responsible for handling complaints are clearly displayed at the main entrance of the service. *(Appendix 7.5.1. Notice of Complaints Procedure)*	✓	✓	✓		
Ensure the address and phone number of the Authorised Officer at the Department of Education's regional office are clearly displayed at the main entrance of the service. *(Appendix 7.5.1. Notice of Complaints Procedure)*	✓	✓	✓		
Promptly and appropriately respond to all complaints.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Identify, prevent, and resolve potential issues before they turn into formal complaints.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Provide staff with information, guidance, and support in managing complaints when required.	✓	✓			
Ensure this policy is always available for inspection at the service.	✓	✓			
Treat all complainants with respect, fairness, and equity.	✓	✓	✓		
Promptly address minor complaints by discussing them directly with the involved parties, encouraging professional and open communication to achieve a mutually agreeable resolution.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Understand and uphold principles for communicating and sharing information with service staff and volunteers.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Notify the Department of Education (DE) in writing within 24 hours of any complaints alleging a **serious incident** at the service or a breach of legislation *(refer to Notification to Regulatory Authority Policy).*	✓	✓	✓		
Always adhere to the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Always maintain professionalism and integrity *(refer to Code of Conduct Policy).*	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure children have access to age-appropriate information, support, and complaints processes that are culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Understand the complaints process. If unclear, seek clarification when lodging the complaint.				✓	
Discuss initial complaints directly with the child's teacher to work towards a mutually agreeable resolution.				✓	
Understand your personal information may be disclosed to the relevant regulatory authority or relevant Wyndham City staff who are involved in addressing the issues raised.		✓	✓	✓	✓
Understand details regarding your complaint and its management will be documented in writing by EECS, kept confidentially, and stored securely with limited access granted to relevant staff and authorities.		✓	✓	✓	✓
Parents/guardians may report their complaint to the relevant regulatory authority.				✓	

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy:

***Complaint*:** (In relation to this policy) a complaint is defined as an issue of a minor nature that can be resolved promptly or within 24 hours and does not require a detailed investigation. Complaints include an expression of displeasure, such as poor service, and any verbal or written complaint directly related to the service.

Compliment: a compliment is an expression of praise, encouragement, or gratitude. It may relate to an individual staff member, a team, the program, or the service.

Notifiable complaint: Complaints regarding any of the following:

- Any complaint alleging that a serious incident has occurred or is occurring at an education and care service, or the National Law has been contravened.
- Any circumstance at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the service.
- Any incident where the approved provider reasonably believes that physical or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred while the child is being educated and cared for by the service.
- Allegations that physical or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the service.

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Legislation and Standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 (Cth)
- Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017 (Cth)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Privacy Regulations 2013(Cth)

Related Appendices & Documents

- Appendix 7.5.1. Notice of Complaints Procedure
- Appendix 7.5.2: Wyndham City Customer Compliant Handling Policy
- Appendix 7.6.1: NQA IT System - Quick Reference Guide
- Process 7.5.1: Managing Complaints received at Service.

Related Policies

- Notification to Regulatory Authority
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Code of Conduct

Authorisation and Version Control

Version	Objective ID	Action	Date	Endorsement date	Next Review Date
3	A2340462	Intermediate changes, reflective of updated legislation	3/12/18	KK - 22/01/2019	April, 2020
4	A4005755	Addition – Wyndham City's Statement of Commitment – Child Safe Standards.	9/06/2022	TP	2024
5	A4673814	Policy updated to new format. Statement of Commitment reviewed and updated. Minor wording changes.	July, 2023	TP	July, 2025
6	A4673814	Updated Wyndham City's Statement of Commitment to a Child Safe Organisation – as per Wyndham City's Child Safe Management page	23/06/2025	TP	July, 2025