



1. Policy Information

Policy title	OOSH Complaints Policy & Procedures
Policy version	O28.1
Classification	OOSH
Review cycle	1 year
Last review date	May 2024
Implementation date	May 2024
Next review date	May 2025
Approval Authority	Approved Provider (Principal), DPP, OOSH Coordinator
Person/s responsible for policy	OOSH Nominated Supervisor

2. Overview

Toongabbie Christian College (the 'College') Out of School Hours (OOSH/the 'Service') believe that families and their children play an important role in the Service and we value their comments. We aim to ensure that families and their children feel free to communicate any concerns they have in relation to the Service, educators, management, programs, safety or policies and procedures without fearing negative consequences, and that they are made fully aware of the procedures of how to do so.

3. Policy

3.1 General Principles

- 3.1.1 The Service will provide a safe space for a family or a child who wishes to raise concerns or make a complaint. All complaints and concerns will be treated with discretion and confidentiality with a view to resolving any concerns and improving the quality of the Service.
- 3.1.2 Where there is a legal requirement to do so, all reporting requirements will be fulfilled.
- 3.1.3 Complaints will be managed with consideration given to procedural fairness, paramountcy principle and the unique circumstances of individual families and staff members.

4. Procedures

4.1 General Complaints

- 4.1.1 The Service understands a persons' right to share any concerns they may have. We will work with the person to understand their complaint through effective communication and then work to resolve the complaint efficiently.
- 4.1.2 A complaint can be raised informally or formally. It can consist of anything which makes them unhappy with the Service.
- 4.1.3 All complaints and grievances are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly when required. The Service ensures all complaints and concerns in regard to the nature of the service are taken into account in relation to policy development and review.

4.2 Complaints Handling Procedures for Families

- 4.2.1 Information about complaints handling procedures will be provided to families upon enrolment and will be made available upon request. The name and telephone number of the person at the Service, to whom complaints may be addressed (ie

Nominated Supervisor for minor concerns, or Approved Provider for complaints of a more serious nature), will be on display as required under Regulation 173.

4.2.2 If a family has a minor complaint or comment about the Service, they are encouraged to discuss this with the Nominated Supervisor who will arrange a time to discuss their concern with the parent/carer aiming to resolve the issue at the time of discussion. Where a resolution is found, the complaint and resolution will be presented to management at the next Meeting. Where the complaint is of a more serious matter, or involves the Nominated Supervisor, the complaint should be directed in writing to the Approved Provider.

4.2.3 Educators will ensure that all confidential conversations with families will take place in a quiet area away from other children, other parents/carers, or educators not involved. Please refer to the College's *OOSH Privacy and Confidentiality Policy & Procedures*. The outdoor area may be used for these discussions.

4.3 Complaints Handling Procedures for Children

4.3.1 It is important that children have the opportunity to voice their concerns and that these are acknowledged, respected, and considered. The Service will ensure the complaints handling process is child focused, in order to help children and young people to feel comfortable and empowered to make a complaint or raise a concern.

4.3.2 Children will be provided with clear information as to whom they can raise concerns with, and what will happen when they do so.

4.3.3 Children will be encouraged to make suggestions and will be provided with opportunities to do so, through both written and verbal avenues to allow for their developmental abilities and skills.

4.3.4 If a child has a minor complaint or comment about the Service, they are encouraged to discuss this with the Nominated Supervisor in charge.

4.3.5 They are encouraged to bring their support person, if this will make them feel more comfortable. The Nominated Supervisor will discuss the concern with the child aiming to resolve the issue at the time of discussion. Where a resolution is found, the complaint and resolution will be presented to management at the next Meeting.

4.3.6 Where the complaint is of a more serious matter, or involves the Nominated Supervisor, the complaint should be directed to another Senior Staff member. The staff member will speak to the child about the hopeful outcomes, so they can accurately take the complaint to management on the child's behalf.

4.3.7 After this is discussed with management, the staff member will come back to the child with any potential resolution.

4.3.8 Educators will ensure that all confidential conversations with children will take place in a quiet area away from other children, other parents/carers, or educators not involved, as per the College's *OOSH Privacy & Confidentiality Policy & Procedures*, and that the support person is invited to attend. The outdoor area may be used for these discussions.

4.4 Complaints Alleging that the Health, Safety or Wellbeing of a child was, or is, being compromised

4.4.1 Complaints alleging that the safety, health or well-being of a child was, or is, being compromised, or that the law has been breached, must be notified to the Regulatory Authority within 24hrs of receipt, regardless of who raises the complaint. This notification must be made by the Approved Provider, using NQAITS. As employees of OOSH are classified as Mandatory Reporters, there may also be reporting obligations to the Department of Communities and Justice, NSW Police and the Office of the Children's Guardian.

4.5 Complaints Relating to Allegations of Conduct of a Staff Member Towards a Child

4.5.1 Complaints that relate to allegations of conduct of a staff member towards a child must be immediately reported to the Nominated Supervisor. The allegations must be assessed and consideration given to whether the alleged behaviour amounts to 'Reportable Conduct' under the Children's Guardian Act 2019. The Head of Relevant Entity, which is the Principal, must report this to the Office of the Children's

Guardian (within 7 days) and initiate an investigation. Please refer to the College's *Child Protection Policy & Procedures*.

4.6 Complaints Relating to a Child at Risk of Significant Harm or observed exhibiting harmful sexual Behaviours

4.6.1 Where a complaint involves a concern that a child may be at Risk of Significant Harm, or a child is observed exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours, and that concern was established during the course of their work, the educator is considered a Mandatory Reporter under the Children and Young Person (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and is legislated to report these concerns to the Department of Communities and Justice. Before reporting these concerns, the educator should immediately notify the Nominated Supervisor of these concerns and immediately consult the Mandatory Reporter Guide to determine the appropriate next steps, which may include making a report.

4.7 Recording of Complaints

4.7.1 All complaints will be recorded on a Suggestion Form, either by the child, family, or educator notified of the complaint. The complainant will be encouraged to make suggestions about strategies or solutions they feel would help to resolve their issue. The Nominated Supervisor must consider any risks that present based on the complaint brought forward and undertake a risk assessment if relevant. The form will record resolutions in addition to the complaint and a copy will be provided to the parent/carer or child, while the original will be kept at the Service. Where the complainant is a child, the outcomes will also be discussed with them, and their support person, to ensure they understand, and can ask any questions they may have.

4.8 Escalation of Complaints

4.8.1 If the complaint is not handled to the child's or family's satisfaction at this level, then the matter should be put to the Approved Provider, either in writing by the parent/carer, or verbally on the child's behalf, by the Nominated Supervisor.

4.8.2 Management will discuss the issue with the Nominated Supervisor and develop a strategy for resolving the problem. The complainant will receive a written response from the Nominated Supervisor of the OOSH. Where the complainant is a child, the outcomes will also be discussed with them, and their support person, to ensure they understand, and can ask any questions they may have.

4.8.3 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, a meeting will be organised with the Approved Provider, the Nominated Supervisor and the complainant (and support person, in the case of a child) to resolve the problem. Educators will be informed of any relevant issues they need to address or of which they need to be aware.

4.8.4 If any complaint cannot be resolved internally, external options will be offered such as resolution or mediation by an unbiased third party

5. References

- Prepared in consultation with Becklyn

6. Considerations

Education and Care Services National Regulations	National Quality Standard	Other service policies/documentation	Other
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<p>R168, R170, R171, R172, R173, R176</p>	<p>QA 5.2.2, QA 6.1, QA 6.1.1, QA 6.1.2, QA 6.1.3, QA 7.1.2, QA 7.1.3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OOSH Privacy & Confidentiality • Child Protection Policy & Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Time, Our Place V0.2 • Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 • Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 • Privacy Act 1988 • Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) • Children's Guardian Act 2019 • Children and Young Person (care and protection) Act 1998 • United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child • National Office for Child Safety: Speak up and make a complaint Resources
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