

ARMIDALE OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Complaints Handling Policy

Related documentation Policy/policies:	Code of Conduct, Child Protection Policy, Governance Policy, Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
Regulation/s/ Standards:	Regulations 76, Part 4.2, 170, 182. National Quality Standards 7.1 & 7.2
Related procedures:	Workplace Health and Safety
References:	Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act, 1998, Ombudsman Amendment (Child Protection & Community Services) Act, 1998, Commission for Children and Young People Act, 1998, Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 & Regulation 2013.
Date effective	November 2023
Date for review	November 2025
Purpose	To ensure that families, Educators or other persons are able to raise, and have resolved, any complaint they may have regarding the service at any time, without fear of repercussion or victimisation.
Responsibility	AFDC' s Board of Directors takes ultimate responsibility for ensuring that complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently.

Key information:

Armidale & District Family Day Care Limited,, as sponsor of Armidale Out of School Hours care, aims to handle all complaints efficiently and effectively.

Our complaints management system aims to:

- Enable us to respond to issues raised by people in a timely manner;
- Handle all complaints confidentially and in an appropriate environment;
- Ensure that fair and just solutions are sought to resolve all disputes;
- Enhance community confidence in our service, and
- Provide information that assists the Company to deliver quality improvements in our service.

AFDC believes that everyone has the right to a positive and sympathetic response to their concerns.

Privacy:

All information collected by the Company will be maintained in accordance with the principles of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and accordingly will only be used for the purpose for which it is collected, or as otherwise required or authorised by law.

Time Frames:

- Upon receipt of a complaint, a member of our Management team will make contact with all parties within two working days;
- The procedures outlined in this Complaints Handling Policy will be implemented within seven working days of receipt of the complaint;
- Regular contact will be maintained with all parties to the complaint.
- If the time frames are unable to be met, the parties will be contacted and advised of this.

Policy:

Tier 1:

- A person wishing to raise a complaint will initially be encouraged to attempt to speak directly about their issues with the other party or parties the complaint.
- If the complaint is not resolved at that outset, the complainant will be requested to complete a Complaint Notification Form.
- Armidale Out of School Hours staff and management have clear delegation to resolve simple complaints as quickly as possible and to take remedial action to address issues.
- If the complaint can be resolved at this level, the issue will be recorded in the Company's Complaint Register, copies of the Complaint Notification Form will be provided to both parties, relevant documentation will be filed securely.

Tier 2:

- Complaints which are unable to be resolved at Tier 1 will be referred to the Company's Board of Directors, which will decide upon how the complaint will be handled. This may include:
 - interviews with both parties,
 - investigation, and/or
 - dispute resolution.
- The Board of Directors and management will review the results of all investigations having regard to Company policies, procedures and regulatory requirements and will decide upon a course of action to resolve the complaint. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - requesting the development of a risk minimisation plan between an educator and a family,
 - issuing a formal warning to an Educator, or
 - reporting a serious complaint to the Director General and or the Ombudsman,
 - terminating a family's care placement, or
 - determining the complaint is unfounded, and therefore resolved.
- A representative of the Board of Directors or Management will discuss the results of any investigations and decisions of the Board with all parties, giving them the opportunity to respond to the decision.
- Management will record all discussions and actions agreed upon and will provide a written report to all parties within five working days, providing all parties with the right of appeal.

Tier 3:

- Any Educator or Coordination Unit team member or family who believes a child is at significant risk of harm has a mandatory requirement to report their belief immediately (Refer to AFDC's Child Protection Policy). Families who approach management with similar concerns will be supported in raising their concerns by AFDC management;

- A person complaining about violence or threatening behaviour in an education and care residence must first direct the complaint to NSW Police and must then notify the Coordination Unit at the earliest possibility.

Right of Appeal:

- If either party seeks a review of the decisions of AFDC's Board of Directors they may refer the matter to:

The Administrative Decisions Tribunal,
Level 15, 111 Elizabeth Street, Sydney. NSW. 2000.
Telephone: (02)9223 4677 or 1800 060 410.

Complaints Register

A Register of Complaints is maintained in a secure location. The information recorded includes:

- The name and contact details of the complainant;
- The name and contact details of the person whom the complaint is about;
- The nature of the complaint, including times and dates;
- Actions and outcomes agreed upon, and
- Reporting requirements.

Monitoring of the Complaints Register

The Complaints Register will be monitored and evaluated annually by Management and reported upon to AFDC's Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting.