

ARMIDALE OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Complaints Handling Policy

Related documentation Policy/policies:	Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Protection & Child Safe Policy and Procedure, Codes of Conduct, Governance Policy, Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy, Policy for Guiding Positive Behaviour, Privacy.
Regulation/s/ Standards:	Regulations 143B, 168, - 176. National Quality Standards 7.1 & 7.2
Related procedures:	Workplace Health and Safety, Confidentiality, Procedure for the Management of a Complaint that Alleges a Child is Exhibiting Harmful Sexual Behaviours, Confidentiality, Supervision.
References:	ACECQA, Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act, 1998, Office of the Children's Guardian, Early Childhood Education & Care Directorate.
Date effective	October 2025
Date for review	October 2025
Purpose	To ensure that families, educators and 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 AFDC 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 time frames are unable to be met, the parties will be contacted and advised of this.

Responsibilities:

Approved Provider

- To ensure that obligations under *the Education and Care Services Law and National Regulation* are met.
- To ensure that the name and contact person to whom complaints can be made is clearly displayed at the service.
- To ensure that the Regulatory Authority is notified in writing within 24 hours of any complaints alleging that a serious incident has occurred at the service.
- To discuss the complaint with the complainant and make notes from the meeting or discussion.
- To ensure the inclusion of policies and procedures for managing complaints alleging that a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours.
- To ensure policies and procedures dealing with complaints include matters relating to the provision of a complaint handling system that is child focused.
- To take reasonable steps to ensure that management, nominated supervisors and educators follow *Dealing with Complaints Policy* and its procedures.
- To ensure that copies of the *Dealing with Complaints Policy* are readily accessible to nominated supervisors and educators and available for inspection.
- To ensure educators are well informed about their individual child protection responsibilities, reporting and privacy obligations and processes for responding to disclosures.
- To notify families at least 14 days before changing this policy if the changes will:
 - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected,
 - Significantly impact the service's education and care of children or
 - Significantly impact the family's ability to utilize the service.
- Regularly review policies and procedures to ensure serious incidents and complaints are investigated promptly, fairly and thoroughly.

Nominated Supervisor

- To ensure that regulatory obligations are met in relation to dealing with complaints.
- To implement procedures for dealing with complaints.
- To inform families and the service community of the *Dealing with Complaints Policy* and its procedures.
- To discuss the complaint with the complainant.
- To ensure the complaint is documented.

- To work cooperatively with the approved provider, educators and/or the complainant during the investigation or resolution of the complaint.
- To ensure educators are well informed about their child protection responsibilities and reporting and privacy obligations.
- To ensure educators are well informed about the different ways children express concerns or distress and disclose harm, as well as processes for responding to disclosures from children.
- To regularly review the policy to ensure serious incidents and complaints are investigated promptly, fairly and thoroughly.
- To ensure that complaints result in reviews of relevant policies, procedures and practices.

Educators

- To understand and implement the *Dealing with Complaints Policy* and its procedures.
- To report all complaints received to the nominated supervisor and/or approved provided promptly so time frames can be adhered to.
- To support the nominated supervisor and approved provider in the investigation and/or resolution of complaints.
- To understand and be aware of child protection law and their individual responsibilities.
- To be aware of the different ways children express concerns or distress and disclose harm, as well as the processes for responding to disclosures from children.
- To support children to know who to talk to if they are feeling unsafe and understand the complaint handling policy.

Families

- To be aware of and follow the *Dealing with Complaints Policy* and comply with its procedures.
- To raise any issues or complaints in line with the policy.
- To cooperate with service representatives dealing with complaints.

Procedures

AFDC will:

- Provide a complainant with a copy of AFDC's *Complaints Notification Form* and request that they provide their name, contact details and full details of the issue or complaint raised.
- Manage the Complaint in accordance with AFDC's Complaint Handling Flow Chart (*Attached Appendix A*) and timeframes outlined above.

Review of this Policy:

- This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it is compliant with the National Law and Regulation.
- Review will take into consideration the potential need for resources and training to support the implementation of this Policy.

Office of the Children's Guardian

- The Approved Provider, where necessary, will consult the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) National Decision Tree in deciding whether it is necessary to report a notification to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

Department of Education

- Stakeholders wishing to address a complaint to the Regulatory Authority should use the following contact:
Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate,
Locked bag 5107, Parramatta. NSW. 2124.
Ph: 1800 619 113
E: ecec@det.nsw.edu.au

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

AFDC maintains a secure Register of Complaints which 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.

Acknowledgement and Declaration

I declare that I have read, understand and agree to comply with this Complaints Handling Policy and to the outlined timeframes.

Signature

Date

Name

Role: Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor/Educator