



Links

Education and Care Services National Regulations: 168, 175, 176

National Quality Standard: 6.1.1, 7.1.2; 7.2.1

Policy Statement

Tropics Early Learning aims to ensure that partnerships are developed with all of our families, to provide an environment where there is a strong emphasis on respectful and sensitive communication between families and the centre.

We believe that families should feel comfortable to air any concerns, and be assured that their issues are listened to, understood, and dealt with consistently in terms of equity and fairness. Grievances and complaints will be viewed as opportunities to understand other attitudes and views and will be used as a part of our self-evaluation processes, to help to improve the quality of the services we provide to our community, families and children.

Purpose

Our service believes in procedural fairness and natural justice that govern the strategies and practices, which include:

- The right to be heard fairly
- The right to an unbiased decision made by an objective decision maker
- The right to have the decision based on relevant evidence

Implementation

All complaints and grievances from family members will be managed in line with our Family Grievances Policy. This policy provides guidelines to explain the procedure for reporting and managing grievances.

If a family member has a concern or grievance, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Discuss the matter with the staff/committee member concerned at a mutually convenient time, the situation should not be discussed with people who are not involved, minimising gossip in the centre. Any discussions should take place away from the children.
- Avoid behaviour and language that might be interpreted as confrontational, judgemental or intimidating. Be open and honest, and try to remain positive, talk about only the facts that have caused the grievance, and do not personally insult the other person.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved by directly approaching the other person, or the complainant does not feel confident to approach the other person, the matter should be raised with the Senior Director.

If, after having followed the above steps, the family member is not satisfied that their concerns have been addressed the following steps will be taken:

- The family member should put their concerns in writing and forward it to the Senior Director, or if the concern is with the Senior Director, directly to the Management Committee.
- If the complaint or grievance alleges that a serious incident has occurred, or is occurring, or the safety, health or wellbeing of a child/ren was or is, being compromised while at the Centre,

or that the National Law has been contravened, the Approved Provider will notify the regulatory authority in writing within 24 hours of the complaint being received.

- The Senior Director/Management Committee representative will respond to the complainant within 24 hours of receiving the written complaint and organise a time within the next 5 working days to meet and discuss the issues raised.
- The Senior Director/Management Committee representative will thoroughly, fairly, confidentially and impartially investigate the issue raised. If interviews are necessary with any other person/s, these will be organised at the first available opportunity. All affected parties will be invited to provide information or respond where appropriate.
- The outcomes of these meetings will be documented by the Senior Director/ Management Committee representative, along with any action to be taken. If a resolution cannot be met, the grievance will be taken to the Management Committee.
- The Management Committee will come to a resolution, recommending any necessary action based on the information provided, and, if necessary, all parties will be reinterviewed by the management committee.
- All parties will be advised of the Management Committee’s decision in writing within 7 days of the final meeting.
- All records will be stored in accordance with our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. Unsubstantiated complaints against any staff member may be retained on file, if the person has given information that has been recorded.
- Ongoing behaviours will be monitored, and where necessary support provided where necessary. All parties will be protected from victimisation.
- Families will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the grievance processes, and all complaints will be tracked to help identify any recurring issues.

If the family member is not satisfied with the decision, they have the right to appeal the decision, or they can contact our regulatory authority:

Quality Education and Care Northern Territory (QECNT)

Department of Education

Ph: 8999 3561

Email: qualityecnt.det@nt.gov.au

Postal: GPO Box 4821

DARWIN NT 0801

Sources: Guide to the National Quality Standard; Privacy Act 1988; Toni Christie, The Essential ECE Handbook, 2006; Early Years Learning Framework, 2009

Policy Redeveloped August 2022 (see archived Policies for previous versions)

Date of review	Modifications made	Approved
August 2022	Redeveloped policy	27/09/2022