

## Grievances and Complaints Management Policy

**Policy Number:** 18  
**Date Updated:** 27/1/26

### Rationale and Policy Considerations

The education and care service is required to have a documented procedure for dealing with grievances and complaints, that is available at the service and to families, and has an obligation to inform the regulatory authority of complaints alleging 'that the safety, health or wellbeing of a child or children was or is being compromised while that child or children is or are being educated and cared for by the approved education and care service, or that the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2012 has been contravened'. The service also understands that negative feedback or issues may threaten the communication between families and the service, and how these issues are responded to will determine the service's ongoing relationship with families. This procedure will also help to inform improvements for the service.

### Scope

This Policy applies to Children, Families and Educators of Lifestreamers Early Learning

### Most relevant policies and procedures

- Educator Code of Ethics
- Interactions with Children
- Partnerships and Communication with Families

### Policy Statement

The education and care service welcomes each complaint as a means of improving its services and upholding positive relationships between the service and its stakeholders. Everyone has the right to a positive and sympathetic response to their concerns. Solutions are sought to resolve all disputes, issues or concerns in a prompt and positive manner that recognises the importance of:

- procedural fairness and natural justice;
- ethical conduct;
- a service culture free from discrimination and harassment; and
- the opportunity for review and further investigation.

### Policy Principles

#### Raising concerns

- Every family is provided with clear written guidelines detailing grievance procedures, included in the service's Family Handbook.
- Families may make a complaint directly to their child's Lead educator or Responsible Person when lead educator is not available. Junior, newly employed, students and volunteers are not permitted to address the concerns of families and if approached will direct families to an appropriate educator.
- Families are asked to speak to relevant educator in a calm, non-threatening manner, and in turn will be treated with the same level of respect.
- Families and children will be surveyed regularly to provide them with an opportunity to identify areas of concern, or ways in which the service could be improved along with areas of strength.
- The service will also provide other means for input such as daily contact with their child's educator; invitations to attend special or social events; email surveys; etc.
- Educators will discuss complaints procedures with children and encourage them to raise any issues they have with the service. Children's complaints will be taken seriously and resolutions will be sought.
- In order to assist families that wish to contact the regulatory authority the name, address and phone number of the regulatory authority will be included in the Family Handbook and displayed in the sign-in area.

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 Boorloo Campus  
 Level 7, 130 Stirling St  
 Perth  
 Ph. 6277 3889  
 Freecall 1800 199 383  
 ecru@communities.wa.gov.au

Locked Bag 5000  
 Fremantle WA 6959

**Types of Complaints/Issues/Concerns**

- Informal – things that are easy to talk about with your educator or manager:
  - Daily care concerns regarding your child
  - Account or fee issues
  - Development concerns
- Formal – things that are more difficult to address or areas that you are particularly upset about:
  - Serious care issues concerning your child
  - Breaches of confidentiality
  - Bullying or relational issues with other children, families or educators

<b>Dealing with a grievance</b> Should you have an issue you would like addressed, please follow the following procedure.
INFORMAL
Chat to the educator/ Lead Educator / Responsible Person/ Manager
FORMAL
Talk to, or email, Manager
IF OUTCOME IS NOT SATISFACTORY OR IF THE GRIEVANCE IS SIGNIFICANT
Complete a grievance form Make an appointment for a parent/educator meeting Follow up with the manager if you are struggling to connect with the educator or you are not seeing any progress or improvement
STILL UNHAPPY?
Education and Care Regulatory Unit Department for Communities Boorloo Campus Level 7, 130 Stirling St Perth Ph. 6277 3889 Freecall 1800 199 383 ecru@gov.au

**Dealing with complaints**

Lifestreamers Early Learning takes all grievances seriously. Once a complaint has been lodged, we will abide by the following principles.

- All complaints or grievances will be dealt with promptly and confidentially in a manner that:

- values the opportunity to be heard;
  - promotes conflict resolution;
  - encourages the development of harmonious partnerships;
  - ensures that conflicts and grievances are mediated fairly; and
  - is transparent and equitable.
- Where possible complaints will be dealt with on the spot by the child’s educator as this is usually the person with the closest relationship with the family. If the complaint is about an issue that the educator considers to be outside their control, or the family does not feel they wish to share it with the educator, the family may be directed to the nominated supervisor or manager, or other appropriate person for their complaint to be resolved.
  - Educators will always thank the complainant who raises a complaint or issue of concern, and explain why they appreciate the opportunity to improve the service or rectify a mistake.
  - All confidential conversations/discussions with parents/guardians will take place in a quiet area away from children, other families and educators who are not involved.
  - Where a family wishes their grievance to remain confidential this will be honoured as much as possible. However, families will be advised that issues cannot always be resolved if they choose to remain anonymous.
  - Where an educator believes they will have to share a confidence with another person in order to resolve an issue, or if the nature of a complaint requires that a third party has to be informed in order to meet legislative requirements, they will inform the family of this need prior to any further discussions on the matter.

#### Steps to managing complaints

- The complaint will be welcomed and appreciated.
- The complaint will be documented and any legal requirements in relation to the complaint considered, such as the need to notify regulatory authorities.
- The complainant will be asked to provide information regarding how the situation could be rectified to their satisfaction.
- The person receiving the complaint will clarify issues by actively listening and questioning the complainant to further understand the issues.
- If possible, the problem will be resolved immediately. If this is not possible, the complainant will be advised that the issue will be given high priority and dealt with as soon as possible.
- If the issues are complex, the complainant will be asked to put their concerns in writing
- Where mediation is required, all parties will have the right to agree to the appointment of the mediator.
- If the problem is about an issue that is outside the control of the service, the person receiving the complaint will explain this to the complainant and let them know who they should contact if they wish to take the matter further.
- Any promises made to the complainant in regard to addressing the issue will be followed up and the results given to the complainant as soon as possible.
- A few days after the incident the service will contact the complainant to find out if they are happy with the way the problem has been resolved.
- Each complaint will be evaluated to determine how the service responded and whether further action is required.

#### Follow-up and review

- Each complaint will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement. After the complaint or grievance has been dealt with it will be analysed to find out how the problem occurred and determine if the service should implement any changes to policy or operational procedures to avoid similar problems in the future.
- Management will follow through to determine that complaints and grievances have been successfully resolved to everyone’s satisfaction. Families will be contacted to determine if they are satisfied with the way the issue was resolved, and educators will be consulted about the outcome from an operational viewpoint.
- Grievances and Complaints Management Policy is reviewed and evaluated annually, or whenever an incident occurs to ensure the processes are clear and non-discriminatory.

Families will be informed by newsletter of policies being reviewed, and offered opportunity to give input.

- Any complaints that allege the service has contravened the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012, or compromised the health, safety or wellbeing of any child within the service, will be reported to the regulatory authority as required under the Act (see above). These allegations will be taken most seriously and an immediate resolution will be sought.

#### **Related Legislation and Documents**

- **Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012.**
- **Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012.**
- **National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care**

#### **Links to other policies**

The following policies may be linked to this policy:

- Community Involvement
- Educator Grievances and Disputes
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Equal Opportunity
- Establishing a Protective Environment
- Guiding Children's Behaviour
- Recruitment of Educators

#### **Document History**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date updated</b>
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