



Communication - 2.6

Family Grievance Policy

<i>Legislation:</i>	Anti-discrimination Act Child Care Act and Regulations 2003 Industrial Relations Regulation 1990 Privacy Act 1988 Sexual Harassment Act
<i>Sources:</i>	CCYPCG Workbook-Safe Environments for young people, " <i>Child Protection-Managing the Risks</i> " NCAC Newsletter-"Putting Children First"- <i>Inclusion and Professional Support</i> - Issue 17, 03/2006 NCAC Newsletter-"Putting Children first"- <i>Enrolment & Orientation</i> - Issue 15,09/2005 NCAC Newsletter-"Putting Children First"- <i>Protecting Children:Strategies for Creating Safe Environments</i> - Issue 21, 03/2007 NCAC Factsheet #5- <i>Managing Complaints</i> (2006) NCAC (2005) <i>Tips for Raising Concerns with a Child Care Service.</i>

POLICY STATEMENT: Village Kids will facilitate the timely and effective resolution of complaints/ disputes from families through an active and ongoing system of recording, reviewing and investigating and resolving information from families.

RATIONALE: In industries of such high stress and close contact between families, staff and children, there will be occasions when grievances will occur. Families will be more encouraged to address concerns if they are able to use a formal framework for lodgement of a grievance or concern, so it can easily be seen to be addressed in a fair and equitable way, without bias or retaliation. Full documentation will be kept of the process followed.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Families will be informed of the Grievance Process in their orientation process, through displayed policies and regularly through monthly newsletters.
- Families will be actively encouraged to ask verbally about areas of concern as a first point of address so it can be resolved immediately and easily.
- Families can then lodge their concern in writing.
- All staff involved must maintain confidentiality and privacy of all concerns and investigations.
- A prompt resolution will be sought through consultation, co-operation and effective investigation.
- Families will be asked what outcome they are seeking.
- Families should be reassured that no retaliation action will be taken against them.
- Discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated.

- **STEP ONE: Open Communication**
 - Families are encouraged to use open communication to speak with staff or management as soon as a concern is raised. Staff will endeavour to encourage use "I" messages to explain how a situation makes them feel.
- **STEP TWO: Written Grievance**
 - Families can lodge a written grievance, explaining the reason they feel aggrieved, to the Group Leader/ Centre Director.
 - Initial discussions are to take place within three days with resolution within seven days.
- **STEP THREE: Grievance Unresolved**
 - When the grievance remains unresolved at the end of the seven days or the family remains unsatisfied with the outcome, the Director may take the issue to the next level of management and refer the grievance to the Licensee.
 - Consultation with all parties will be arranged to try to resolve the problem, within seven days.
- **STEP FOUR: Written Grievance to Company's Office**
 - The employee may lodge the ongoing Grievance, in writing, to the Licensee who will review all the documentation of steps one to three and re-interview staff, as necessary. Legal opinion may be sought.
 - A meeting of all parties will be organised to discuss and record the issues, document the expected outcomes of all parties involved and try to resolve the dispute through negotiation and conciliation.
 - If the dispute cannot be resolved, a plan for future work expectations of all parties will be drawn up and signed.
 - All parties involved will be given a copy of the documentation from this meeting.

Conflict Resolution

- At all steps, the aim is for an effective resolution to the concern within a short time frame.
- A discussion with all parties and a facilitator can be useful finding the cause of the concern/grievance and bringing this out in the open for investigation.
- Often, a staff member has not realised that his/her actions have had a negative effect. Open communication can bring understanding and enlightenment,
- The discussion must be documented and added to the personnel or family enrolment file of involved parties by the Director or facilitator.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW:

This policy will be reviewed at least annually. Family and staff and other relevant community feedback will be considered in the review process. The effectiveness of the practices and strategies used within this policy will be evaluated through a process involving direct verbal and written feedback from families and staff obtained through surveys, communication books, feedback sheets, parent committee meetings and informal daily exchange. Changes in legislation, regulations, QIAS and standards will also be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and staff verbally, and in writing through centre display boards and newsletters.