

Complaint, Concern, Grievance

Policy Statement

Customer service and satisfaction is a cornerstone of Meerilinga's commitment to children, families and customers. This policy and process covers all children and family services provided by Meerilinga and confirms to Educators, Directors, staff members, families and the community that complaints and grievances are taken seriously and investigated promptly and thoroughly.

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide all Meerilinga parents/carers and customers, with clear information about Meerilinga's intentions when addressing concerns, grievances, complaints.

Scope

This policy applies to all parents/carers and customers who wish to lodge a complaint or concern about a matter pertaining to a service provided by Meerilinga.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to:

How Educators, Nominated Supervisors, Directors and staff members listen to, document and follow up issues raised by children. Please refer to Child Safe Organisation Statement and Relationships and Interactions with Children Policy.

Worker complaint, concern or grievance matters. Please refer to Human Resources Section.

Student appeal, complaint, concern or grievance in relation to services of Meerilinga Training College. Please refer to the relevant policy in Meerilinga Training College Section.

Complaint, concern or grievance implicating Meerilinga or any persons associated with Meerilinga of a civil or criminal matter not relating directly to services provided by Meerilinga or actions or conduct of any individual occurring outside of contracted hours, duties or terms of employment.

Policy Review

At least annually or from time to time the organisation may make changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operation.

Implementation

Complaint, concern or grievance have the potential to impact significantly on Meerilinga's commitment to children, families and community as well as the public image and therefore Meerilinga undertakes to address a complaint, concern or grievance with due diligence and in a timely manner.

Disputes may arise when a party is not satisfied with an aspect of Meerilinga's services and requests action to be taken to resolve a matter. Parents/carers, and customers may wish to lodge a complaint, concern or grievance in some of the following areas:

- The conduct of educators, students or volunteers
- Centre staff and users groups
- Another parent / carer or child
- Facilities and resources
- Fees and charges
- Children's curriculum

A complaint, concern or grievance must be made within 10 days of an occurrence or matter of dissatisfaction. When implementing this policy and procedure, Meerilinga endeavours to follow the principles of fairness and justice. Meerilinga will aim to prevent victimisation of any individual wishing to lodge a complaint and will not discriminate against any individual wanting to pursue the lodgment of a complaint.

All Meerilinga staff are made aware of the complaint, concern or grievance process through the staff induction resources and training.

All complainants have the right to be accompanied and assisted by a third party in all relevant meetings and consultations.

All documentation and records relating to a complaint, concern or grievance are held and retained at Meerilinga head office in West Leederville.

While parents/carers and customers are encouraged to resolve any concerns or complaints that may arise directly with Meerilinga, nothing in this policy detracts from the right of a complainant to access any other appeal or complaint mechanism available as legislated in Western Australia. If any external process is initiated, the internal complaint process will be terminated. The complainant must advise Meerilinga of intent to access a third party within 10 days of receiving

No costs are associated with lodging a complaint that is resolved internally by Meerilinga staff.

Where a complaint is forwarded on to an external appeal or complaint mechanism for review, any external cost will be shared equally by the complainant and Meerilinga. Meerilinga will advise costs associated with archival and records search and retrieval and administrative costs applicable at that time.

Complaint, Concern, Grievance Process

Process Owner	CEO
Effective Date	27 July 2018
Date of Last Revision	1 July 2017

Process	Responsible Worker	Supporting Resources
1. Complaint, concern or grievance reported by parent / carer or customer verbally or in writing to Meerilinga staff within 10 days of occurrence. Matter may resolve at local level within staff authority / procedure before entering into the formal process. All complaint, concern or grievances and resolutions are reportable to the CEO through the incident form.	Meerilinga Staff Member	Meeting Notes Early Learning documents / correspondence Complaint, concern or grievance report Centre Records Incident Form CIL
2. Whereby an unresolved complaint, concern or grievance occurs the parent / carer, customer or Advisor provides this in writing to Executive. Formal process commences and matter investigated. Acknowledgment to complainant within 10 working days.	Advisor Executive Manager Complainant	Meeting Notes Work documents / correspondence / evidence Investigation / Advisory records
3. Evidence and identification of substance of complaint, concern or grievance and options available undertaken and reported to the CEO within 10 working days.	Executive Manager CEO	Documents Correspondence CI Log Feedback log
4. Convene matter to resolution by mediation, referral to third party, consensus with direction and approval of CEO. Response to Complainant.	Executive Manager CEO	Intervention records Disciplinary records Performance records Personnel / client records CI / Incident Log Letter of outcome Regulatory records
5. Where disciplinary / mediation action, criminal investigation, safety endangered or organisation reputation at risk report to President of Board.	CEO	Related Documents / correspondence Personnel / client records Action Plan CI / Incident Log Legal documentation Complaint Settlement
6. Matter unresolved, appeal for resolution by independent body. Independent bodies are identified in policy detail.	President of Board Independent Body	CEO Report Board Minutes Third Party records Complaint Settlement

Process Details

	Description
1.	Parents/carers, clients and customers are encouraged to first approach the Meerilinga service staff and discuss the issue that is concerning them to see if the matter can be resolved informally. At this point the Meerilinga representative may take action to resolve the matter within their authority or refer the matter to Executive Manager who may either resolve the issue or request that the party lodge a formal written complaint.
2.	<p>Where that the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved through informal means, the Parents/carers and customers may themselves wish to submit their complaint in writing for review by the CEO. The parents/carers and customer may be accompanied by a representative to any meetings.</p> <p>Allow for 10 working days for the matter to be processed. During the review, the nominated and responsible staff member (generally Executive Manager) may implement some of the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviewing persons involved in the matter;• Reviewing all documentation associated with the matter. <p>The Chief Executive Officer will assess the situation and put forward a resolution within 10 working days of being notified.</p>
3.	Should the parents/carers, and customers remain dissatisfied with the results, they will be provided with the option of having their case heard by a suitable, independent body who will review the case. This body, where possible, will be asked to formally declare its independence to both parties and both parties will be asked to agree to it acting in the nominated capacity of case manager and incur the applicable fee.
4.	<p>Principles outlined in Meerilinga's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</p> <p>The parents/carer, clients and customers is to be informed regularly of the progress of their application. Should it appear likely that the application will take more than 60 days to process, the parents/carer, clients and customers will informed in writing stating the reasons for the delay.</p> <p>Records of all complaints/grievances processes and outcomes will be recorded by the continuous improvement register and retained according Records Management Policy.</p>
5.	All Complaints/Grievances outcomes will be reported to the Board of Governors the Executive Report.

Associated Documents

Meerilinga Policy Manual

- Preface - Section 1 - Strategic and Business Planning Policies (Code of Ethics & Conduct)
 - Section 2 - Human Resources Policies
 - Section 5 – Merrilinga Training College
 - Section 6 - Children’s Program Policies
 - Section 7 - Workplace Health and Safety Policies
 - Section 8 - Guidelines
-
- Continuous Improvement Policy
 - Reporting Documents
 - Client/Complainant Records
 - Continuous Improvement Plan

Records Management

Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Incident Report	Incident Log	CEO	7yrs
Formal Complaint	Incident Log	CEO	7yrs
Complaint Settlement Form	Client File	CEO	7yrs
Action Plan Template	CI Log	CEO	5yrs
Continuous Improvement Form	CI Log	CEO	5yrs

Reference

- Education and Care Services National Law Act (WA) 2012 - *October 2018*
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012 - *October 2018*
- ACECQA - National Quality Standards - *February 2018*
- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Privacy Act 1988
- Code of Ethics - *Meerilinga*
- Code of Conduct - *Meerilinga*

Definitions

Term	Definition
Concern	A concern is a sense or feeling of anxiety, fear or uneasiness about an incident or situation
Grievance	A grievance is a real or imagined belief that you have been treated unjustly. A Grievance may lead to a complaint or an appeal
Complaint	A complaint is an expression of regret, censure, or discontent with outcomes.

Mapping Policy and Processes

Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012	
Section	174 (2)(b)

Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012	
Regulations	12, 168(2)(o), 170, 171, 173, 176(2)(a)(b),181,183

Policy Area	Standards for RTOs 2015	National Quality Standards Early Childhood	National Standards for Volunteering Involvement 2015	Standards to Community Services	Standards to Family Support
Children's Programs	S1.5 – 1.6 S1.7 S1.13 S1.19 S2.1-2.4 S4.1 S5.1-5.4 S6.1-6.5 S7.3	QA 6 - 6.1, 6.1.2, 6.2. QA 7 - 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.2.1.	S5.3	S 4.1.1	S5 S14