

ARIAH PARK PRESCHOOL

Grievance Policy

Aim

In some instances, parents or staff may make demands which cannot be fully met or which seem unreasonable given the need to balance the rights of all families and staff involved in the **Ariah Park Preschool**. Parents and staff may sometimes need to accept a compromise and understand that their personal preferences cannot always be met. Acceptance of such an outcome however can only occur if respect and positive attitudes are shown towards the grievance at the time when it is first raised. Genuine consideration should be given to any grievance in light of available, practicable and affordable options for the centre. To this end the **Ariah Park Preschool** aims to:

1. Ensure each parent and staff member feels empowered to raise concerns about any aspect of the operation of the centre without concern that their comments may lead to victimisation or prejudice against themselves or their child
2. Ensure that any grievances raised by a parent or staff member will be considered fairly and in depth because of the centre's desire to always improve its service. Grievances will also be treated with confidentiality
3. Ensure that there are different levels of grievance access available should a complainant remain unsatisfied

Legislative Requirements

Education and Care Services Australian National Regulations 2011

NSW Industrial Act 1996

Who is affected by this policy?

Child

Families

Staff

Management

Relevant Early Childhood Professional Standards

Early Childhood Code of Ethics:	I-1, I-2, I-5, I-7, I-10, II-1 to II-10, III-1 to III-3, IV-1, VI-1, VI-3,
Early Years Learning Framework:	Principles: 1, 2 & 4
Education & Care Services Australian National Regulations:	168(2,o)
National Quality Framework:	4.2.1, 4.3.1-4.3.4, 6.1-6.2, 7.5, 7.6

Sources/References

Early Childhood Code of Ethics

Equal Opportunity & Discrimination Act 1986

Procedures re:	1. Submitting a complaint or grievance	(p2)
	2. The centre's grievance structure	(p3)

1. Submitting a complaint or grievance

It needs to be noted that this centre's approach is a preventative one, therefore it is hoped that the grievance process will not need to be activated. To this end the Director will:

1.1 Acquaint parents with the centre's grievance policy at the initial enrolment interview, in a positive and constructive manner (see the centre's 'Initial Enrolment Interview Checklist.'

1.2 Encourage all staff to identify family concerns to the Director who will ensure such concerns are addressed at the earliest opportunity

1.3 Encourage families to feel comfortable about raising concerns by establishing and continuing to build good relationships with them. This will include learning about each family's individual circumstances, thus enabling a more sensitive awareness of their needs

1.4 Establish unbiased centre procedures that reduce any potential power inequities between families and the centre's service. The philosophy underlying this practice can be found throughout this centre's policies but particularly in the centre's 'Anti-Bias & Equity Policy,' its 'Parental Involvement Policy' and its 'Philosophical Statement'

In the unfortunate event of a parent or staff member wishing to make a formal complaint, the Director will undertake the following actions:

1.5 Initially have a private discussion with the parents/staff about the issue and try to negotiate a fair and objective resolution

1.6 If the above is not successful, the Director will give the complainant a copy of the centre's Grievance Policy and also explain the process involved if they wish to formalise their complaint

1.7 After this interview the Director will document the discussion and sign and date it

1.8 If the Director considers the grievance may be difficult to resolve, she/he will immediately inform the centre's Committee of Management. Thus she/he will notify the secretary of this committee and they will decide if it is necessary to either call an extraordinary committee meeting or arrange for a sub-committee of the management committee to meet as soon as possible

1.9 Where a conflict of interest is identified, an alternative mediation arrangement will be sought. In the case of a conflict of interest regarding the Director, consideration will be given to two Committee of Management members to undertake the negotiation process. It is expected that these committee members will have the necessary skills for the task and therefore will have been selected carefully. In the case of a conflict of interest regarding a parent who is also a member of the Committee of Management, the parent would be required to absent themselves from any discussion regarding the issue when it is being considered by that Committee

1.10 All grievances will be dealt with by the Director and Committee of Management as quickly as possible

2. The centre's grievance structure

2.1 The ongoing process for a grievance notification will be:

- The parent/s making the complaint will be asked to put their complaint in writing
- An initial meeting between the Director and Committee of Management or its representatives as per Point 1.8 above will be called where the Director will provide them with all information pertaining to the complaint in a professional and objective manner, plus a copy of the complaint. The Director will also avail them of the procedures for taking a grievance to higher levels as per this policy and they will check these in relation to the procedures outlined in the Committee of Management's constitution regarding grievance procedures

- A meeting with the Director, the parent or staff member making the complaint and the Committee of Management or its representatives will take place. The aim of this meeting will be to use impartial discussion to negotiate a resolution that will be fair to all. Detailed minutes will be taken at this meeting by someone other than the Director. In preparation for this meeting the Director and committee members will have used the parent/s written complaint to investigate the allegations and will have made their individual findings specifically and solely in relation to these allegations. They will not have met previously to discuss their findings. A chairperson for the meeting will be appointed to ensure the complainant's allegations do not digress from those originally stated by the parent concerned in writing
- In the unfortunate event that the grievance cannot be resolved at this meeting, the Director will inform the parent/s that it is their right to take their grievance to the Department of Community Services

The Director & Committee of Management will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times.

Review

The rationale and procedures for reviewing this policy are twofold. They are as follows:

(1) This policy will be formally reviewed after three years. All formal reviews will be conducted by the Committee of Management, the Director, parents, and interested community members if the Director feels it is necessary. For example the Director might decide that a health and hygiene policy should be considered by a local doctor or nurse as part of the formal review process. All formal reviews will be recorded as per the 'Centre Review Sheet – Formal Three Yearly Review Form' attached to each policy. Given the large number of policies that early childhood centres are now required to develop, it is considered that a formal review does not need to be taken more frequently because (1) each policy needs time for staff to adapt to and time to run so as to enable a well informed evaluation/review during the third year and (2) the formal, three year review process will be a demanding one for the preschool Committee of Management which is composed of voluntary members. Therefore it is considered that a formal review should occur regularly but not excessively so.

(2) Within this three year period however the policy will still be monitored, evaluated and minor adjustments can be made in line with daily occurrences or needs at the centre. This will occur as part of an ongoing process of review undertaken by the centre Director and staff during each calendar

year. These reviews will be recorded and dated as per the 'Director's Annual Review Form' and these will also be attached to each policy, along with the formal, three yearly reviews.

The Director's annual review will occur on an ongoing basis and will thus ensure this policy is continually updated. For example if updates are received from a government department that warrant immediate change of some policy procedures, or if implementing a policy has resulted in agreement by staff that minor modifications are necessary before the policy is enacted upon again, these improvements can be made immediately through the Director's annual review process and then be presented to the Committee of Management for ratification at the next formal, three yearly review.

Reviewed on 21st March 2014.

Next Review on 21st March 2017