



Complaints Procedures For Families

Introduction

Sydney Catholic Early Childhood Services (SCECS) is committed to providing a learning and working environment in which complaints are responded to promptly, professionally, and with minimum distress and maximum protection to all parties. As part of its commitment to creating a child focused, supportive, and open organisational culture, SCECS is committed to a transparent and fair complaints process.

SCECS views family and child complaints as providing an opportunity to review and improve its policies and practices, and to gain insight into children's levels of satisfaction.

To assist children in expressing their concern, they can refer to the *Child Friendly Complaints Flowchart*.

Initial Steps

In the first instance, complaints should be directed to the Centre Director/Coordinator who will arrange for a time to discuss the concern and come to a resolution to address the issue. Complaints can be made in person, in writing addressed to the service email or via the service phone.

All confidential conversations with parents/children will take place in a quiet place away from other children, parents, or staff.

To Escalate a Complaint

If parents/carers would like to address their complaint to a member of the SCECS management team, they should contact:

Email: scecs.customerservice@syd.catholic.edu.au

Phone: 02 9568 8628

Complaints Procedure

The following complaints procedure will apply.

Step 1: Acknowledge

All complaints should be acknowledged promptly. Consideration will be given to the most appropriate communication channel, for example, by phone or email. A contact point for the complainant, key timeframes and the likely next steps should be included.

Step 2: Assess

The complaint is assessed. The initial assessment may consider:

- Involvement of other organisations
- Feasibility of the complainant's suggestions
- Severity, urgency and complexity
- Health and safety implications
- Impact on the individual, key stakeholders, and the organisation
- Potential to escalate

At this point it will be identified whether the Regulatory Authority should be notified, and priority will be given.

In instances where a complaint alleges a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour, the procedure will include the use of 'Identifying Levels of Concern - Flag System' and may include consulting the Sydney Catholic Schools Child Safety Team. Reports will be made to the Department of Community and Justice, the Regulatory Authority and possibly also the police.

Step 3: Plan and Investigate

The complaint handler will plan what evidence may need to be collected and what the method of collection will be. The investigation of the complaint will commence. The person investigating may need to contact the complainant to gather more information before investigating at the service level.

Step 4: Respond

A response will be given to the complainant explaining what was found, what was done and any revisions to policies or procedures that will be implemented to address the issue in the future.

Step 5: Follow Up

Concerns will be followed up with the complainant. Records will be kept about how the complaint was managed, the outcome, recommendations and any actions that need to be followed up.

Throughout the procedure, regular communication with the complainant should be maintained. If the complaint is taking longer to address than initially anticipated, it is especially crucial to keep the complainant updated.

Step 6: Reflect

Areas for improvement will be critically reflected upon.

Complaints Register

Complaints that are escalated to SCECS management will be logged for reporting, tracking and analytical purposes.

Additional Contact Details

Complaints related to the management of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and reports of fraud or non-compliance:

Childcare Tip-off line

Phone: 1800 664 231

Email: tipoffline@dese.gov.au

Serious issues such as child abuse/neglect, leaving children unsupervised or exposing children to danger should be raised with SCECS Head Office and/or the state regulatory authority:

Head Office

Sydney Catholic Early Childhood
Services (SCECS)

38 Renwick St

Leichhardt NSW 2040

Head Office Phone: (02) 9568 8628

Email: scecs@syd.catholic.edu.au

Regulatory Authority

The Early Childhood Education
Directorate

NSW Department of Education

Locked Bag 5107

Parramatta NSW 2124

Phone: 1800 619 113

Email: ecec@det.nsw.edu.au