

Other Policies and Procedures

Complaints and Feedback Policy

Commitment to Child safety

Dunlea Centre is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This is the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Dunlea Centre is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular Attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability and those who identify as LGBTQIA+.

Every person involved in Dunlea Centre has a responsibility to understand the importance of their role both individually and collectively to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do.

Purpose

Dunlea Centre is committed to implementing a systematic approach to complaints and feedback to ensure our young people, families and community members are heard and taken seriously. DunleaCentre's approach to complaints and feedback includes:

- A supportive, efficient and accessible system for all stakeholders to submit complaints, provide feedback and receive a response, without fear of retribution.
- Ensuring all processes are culturally safe and accessible for ATSI children and young people.
- Processes are child focussed.
- Understanding the individual needs of all vulnerable groups



- A culture throughout the agency that recognises feedback and complaints are important and a valuable sources of information and supports users to give feedback, make complaints and advocate for themselves.
- An efficient system for receiving, tracking, responding to, reporting and evaluating feedback and complaints.
- Using feedback and complaints data to inform service quality improvement

Scope

This policy applies to official complaints made in respect of services provided by the agency or against staff members, which includes employees, contractors, volunteers or tertiary placement students. It also includes lower level grievances from students.

This policy does not apply to:

- Personal grievances between parents/carers or other members of the Dunlea Centre Community.
- Whistleblowing disclosures ***Refer to Whistleblower Policy***

Complaints in relation to Reportable Conduct are addressed in accordance with Dunlea Centre's ***Child Safeguarding Policy***

Complaints regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters are addressed in accordance with Dunlea Centre's ***Grievance Resolution Policy***

Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between staff are generally addressed in accordance with Dunlea Centre's ***Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy***

Providing Information on Complaints Policy



The Youth and Family Program Manager or their delegate will advise all young people and parents/carers of the Complaints Policy at orientation to the program.

The Complaints Policy is available in hard copy format in reception or on request and on the DunleaCentre website.

If a parent/carer or student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise their concern with the agency in accordance with the Raising a Complaint section of this policy. If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a staff member may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with Dunlea Centre's ***Child Safeguarding Policy and Reportable Conduct Policy***. Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child's wellbeing may be reported under this policy.

Policy

- Dunlea Centre will have an accessible feedback and complaints system, which will include various options to provide feedback including email, phone, face-to-face discussion, QR code accessible and paper surveys and feedback boxes.
- Dunlea Centre will create an organisational culture that values feedback and complaints. All complaints and feedback will be forwarded to the Executive Director and Youth and Family Program Manager for assessment and response.
- Dunlea Centre will ensure that complaints which require reporting to statutory authorities are done and when applicable Dunlea Centre will cooperate with law enforcement, whilst maintaining confidentiality of complainant.
- Complaints will be responded to efficiently, with the initial response within two business days. Further timelines for resolving the complaint should be determined based on each complaint.
- Procedural fairness will be a priority in managing complaints.
- Any conflicts of interest that arise from a complaint will be assessed and avoided.



- No-one will be subject to retribution as a result of making a complaint or providing feedback.
- Leadership and staff will actively ensure all service users are informed of pathways for providing feedback and complaints. This process must be child-focussed and understandable by children and young people.
- Information about feedback and complaints will be provided in culturally safe formats.
- Information such as leaflets and this policy will be displayed throughout Dunlea Centre.

Anonymous complaints are accepted and investigated where sufficient information is available.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All documentation related to a complaint will operate within the requirements specified within ***Dunlea Centre Privacy Policy*** and regular Dunlea Centre documentation practices.

Dunlea Centre is committed to ensuring the privacy of personal information and the identity of complainant will only be shared if required to facilitate an appropriate response.

Service improvement from complaints

Managers will identify complaints that require quality improvement actions. These actions will be recorded in the Feedback and Complaints Register.

Complaints and Feedback Systems Review

The Complaints and Feedback system will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is accessible, effective and meets all policy requirements.



Procedure

Any person of any age, or someone on their behalf, may provide Dunlea Centre with feedback or make a complaint regarding any aspect of its service, programs, operations, procedures or policy.

Feedback or complaints may be made verbally or in writing through the following methods:

- Speaking with a Dunlea Centre staff member face to face or over the phone
- Emailing Dunlea Centre
- Writing to Dunlea Centre
- Completing a complaints or feedback form and placing it in suggestion boxes in residential houses (students only)
- Any other viable communication method

Differentiating between a complaint and feedback

Complaints are generally negative and express a person's dissatisfaction. Complaints also require a response because it has either been explicitly requested or it is implicitly expected.

Feedback may be negative, neutral or positive and does not necessarily require a response although it is generally appreciated.

Receiving feedback

Any Dunlea Centre member of staff may receive feedback. When this occurs, the following steps must be followed:

1. Acknowledge and discuss to ensure the nature and intention of the information is understood - assess whether it is a complaint or feedback.



2. Feedback must be passed onto the Youth and Family Program Manager and the Executive Director to assess if a response is required. The feedback will be entered onto the Complaints and Feedback register by administration.
3. A response should be made if feasible.

Grievances from students

Lower level grievances from students will be managed effectively in time manner through an internal process. Students can raise concerns through the following methods:

- Talking directly the staff
- Talking directly to a member of the Leadership Team
- Using the QR code to complete feedback form
- Using a paper form and placing it into feedback boxes

The Youth and Family Program Manager will assess all grievances and respond appropriately, informing student of the process where possible. Any anonymous grievances will be assessed to inform service improvements where possible. Any grievance which is assessed as a complaint will be managed as a complaint as per this policy.

Receiving a Complaint

Any Dunlea Centre staff member receiving a complaint should obtain sufficient information and contact details and advise the complainant they are referring their complaint to the Youth and Family Program Manager for follow up. The details of the complaint should be passed on as soon as possible. Complaints received through QR codes or the website will be directed to the Youth and Family Program Manager for assessment. High level complaints will be immediately referred to the Executive Director.

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Executive Director the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board via email. Contact details are available by contacting Administration at Dunlea Centre. In this situation, the



references in this policy relating to the role of the Executive Director should be read as references to the Chair of the Board.

The Youth and Family Program Manager or Executive Director will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable

Assessing a Complaint

The Executive Director generally will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by the relevant policies; and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised;
- whether Dunlea Centre may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children's Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

Managing a Formal Complaint

The Executive Director or Youth and Family Program Manager will manage a formal complaint by:

- advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by Dunlea Centre in relation to the complaint;
- if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
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- collecting any additional information the agency considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved ("resolution decision"); and



- advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of Executive Director and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of Dunlea Centre about the complaint. However, Dunlea Centre maintains the right to determine whether the person's preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the School to be inappropriate.

The Executive Director will seek advice from external sources when and if required.

Resolution Decisions

Resolution decisions may include:

- providing an apology
- providing information
- Making a change to the person's service
- Changing a process, policy or system

Actions should be communicated to the complainant. If a complaint is anonymous any appropriate internal actions should be taken and recorded.

Internal appeals

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with Dunlea Centre's response an internal review of the process of the outcome is available for complainants
- A complainant may request a review within one month of the initial resolution
- The review will be undertaken by a person appointed by the Executive Director



- The review will be conducted as soon as possible and timelines will be communicated to the complainant
- A written review will be provided to the Executive Director

External appeals

Complainants have the option to assess external review systems such as the AISNSW, CSNSW and the NSW Ombudsman. Complainants should be directed to these services if they are dissatisfied with Dunlea Centre's response.

Reporting

Feedback and complaints will be recorded in the Feedback and Complaints register, which will be provided to the Board of Directors at regular intervals. Dunlea Centre Leadership Team and the Board Of Directors will regularly analyse all feedback and complaints to inform service improvement, policy/procedure updates and training requirements.

