



Policy: Complaints & Grievance Management

Rev Feb 15

PURPOSE

The complaints and grievances management policy of Prom Coast Centres for Children Inc (PCCC) details the method by which PCCC will investigate and resolve complaints and grievances when they arise.

Rationale

PCCC is committed to create and maintain an environment in which children, families, staff, other community members are encouraged and enabled to provide feedback and complaints about our services.

Complaints are an expression of concern, dissatisfaction or frustration made by an external person such as a family member, or community member. Complaints will generally relate to the quality or delivery of service or the conduct of an employee.

Grievances can relate to the concerns of employees of PCCC Inc. (Staff Grievances) or can relate to the concerns of members of PCCC Inc (Member Grievances).

- The procedure for dealing with staff grievances is described in the Staff Grievances policy.
- The procedure for dealing with member grievances is described in the Association Rules of Prom Coast Centres for Children Inc.

This policy details the formal complaints resolution procedure, however in many cases good communication and management strategies can prevent an issue becoming a complaint or grievance.

For example:

- Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues that consistently arise or that cause conflicts of opinion with each other, throughout the day or at staff/room meetings.
- Staff members have opportunities to address issues or conflicts with families during delivery and collection times. If this time is not adequate a time will be made for staff to meet with family.
- Implementing the *Behaviour Management* policy when dealing with challenging behavior in children.
- Staff acting as role models will assist children to learn how to manage conflict appropriately.
- Staff will be given appropriate training in handling negative feedback and complaints.

PCCC is committed to treating complaints and grievances confidentially, seriously, consistently, promptly and with sensitivity to all parties.

This Complaints and Grievances Management Policy ensures that all persons are presented with procedures that:

- value the opportunity to be heard;
- promote conflict resolution;
- encourage the development of harmonious partnerships;
- ensure that conflicts and grievances are mediated fairly; and
- are transparent and equitable.

PCCC has a duty of care to ensure that all persons are provided with a high level of equity and fairness in relation to grievances and complaints management and procedures.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act Victoria states that employers have a duty of care to their employees to ensure that the working environment supports emotional and mental wellbeing.

PCCC deals positively with complaints and views them as important feedback and an opportunity to learn and improve the centers and their operations.

In dealing with complaints, PCCC recognise that the three core principles of natural justice for procedural fairness apply. These are:

- The right to be heard fairly
- The right to an unbiased decision made by an objective decision maker
- The right to have the decision based on relevant evidence

Conflicts of interest (or perceived conflicts of interest) may arise during grievances and complaints procedures ie., *if a parent voices a complaint against the Operations Director the complainant is unlikely to feel confident in being heard fairly by the Operations Director (who normally mediates complaints) or believing that an unbiased decision could be reached.* In this scenario it would be appropriate for another senior member of staff at PCCC or a member of the Committee of Management to mediate the grievance or complaint.

All complaints are treated confidentially and professionally, refer to the *Privacy and Confidentiality* policy. Complaints and Grievances will not be communicated through media unless media organisations have already been notified and the complaints /grievances have potentially been exposed to the wider population. Communication with the media will be undertaken by the Operations Director or Committee of Management only.

Procedure

- If a child makes a complaint towards a staff member, family member or other adult, the Educator receiving the child's complaint will investigate in consultation with the Operations Director; and if required, the Educator or Operations Director will contact child protection services. Refer to the *Child Protection* Policy.
- If a child or family member makes a complaint towards a child enrolled at the service, the complaint will be investigated and strategies specified in the *Behaviour Management* Policy implemented as appropriate.

- If a staff member, student, contractor or volunteer has a grievance the procedure specified in the Staff Grievances policy shall be followed.
- If the Operations Director wishes to make a complaint they can request that a senior member of staff or any member of the Committee of Management investigate the complaint and implement the resolution procedure.
- If any member of the association of PCCC has a grievance with the Prom Coast Centres for Children Incorporated Association, or a member of its Committee of Management, the Grievance disputes procedure specified in the Association Rules shall be followed.
- Any other complaints made by families and community members will be resolved through the steps in the Complaints Resolution Procedure

Resolution Procedure

Below are the steps that can be taken to have your complaint resolved.

Once resolved, the issue should not affect relationships between those involved. If there is a continuing tension between parties, debriefing or mediation may be considered.

Step 1 -

Discuss your complaint with a staff member and attempt to resolve the issue together.

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing. If you wish to put your complaint in writing the Feedback, Compliments and Complaints form is available for use (Appendix 1), although written complaints can be received in any form.

You are welcome to have an advocate to help you make your complaint, this may be a different member of staff, or a person from your community of interest (e.g aboriginal community or other cultural representative)

PCCC believes that complaints should be handled with immediacy and between those involved in the complaint. You should receive a response to your complaint within twenty-four hours.

If the staff member deems that they are unable to resolve your complaint they will assist you in escalating your complaint to Operations Director level (Step 2).

Step 2 -

If you feel that your complaint was not adequately dealt with by the staff member or if you are not comfortable discussing your complaint directly with a staff member you need to speak with the Operations Director.

Complaints that have reached Operations Director level are recorded on the Complaints Review Summary Form. The Committee of Management (CoM) of PCCC Inc. are informed of all complaints that have reached Operations Director level.

The Operations Director will arrange for a fair and objective investigation to be carried out. The Operations Director will plan and determine who will investigate the complaint, considering conflicts of interest, time, procedural fairness and skill etc. Complaints will be handled individually to suit the situation.

The investigation process may involve - clarification of the facts, meeting with those involved including potential witnesses, conducting file audits and examination of documents, records and discussing the matter with Management. records, .If the complaint has previously been unsuccessfully addressed by another member of staff the investigation may also include meeting with this staff member to establish what resolution measures have previously been suggested.

The person undertaking the investigation will maintain records of the investigation process.

You will receive a response to your complaint either verbally or in writing. This will include the action taken as a result of the investigation. This should happen within 10 days of the complaint being received where possible. If this is not possible you will be provided with timely updates about the handling of your complaint from the person assigned to investigate your complaint.

Step 3 -

If you feel that your complaint was not adequately dealt with by the Operations Director, you can email or write to the President of PCCC's Committee of Management, contact details can be found in the foyer.

The President will arrange for a new investigation to be carried out by an external investigator. This investigation may also include establishing what steps the Operations Director has attempted to make to resolve the complaint.

Step 4 -

If you feel your complaint has still not been adequately resolved you can contact -

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Quality Assessment and Regulation – Gippsland Regional Office
Corner of Kirk and Haigh Streets
MOE VIC 3844

(PO Box 381 MOE VIC 3825)

Phone: 5127 0400

gippsland.qar@edumail.vic.gov.au

Complaints Resolution Evaluation Process

The Operations Director analyses the occurrence, frequency and nature of grievances and complaints, by keeping written records of all complaints that reach Step 2 or above. The evaluation process of the records includes:

- are the complaints consistent
- is there a pattern to the complaints
- are the outcomes consistent
- If support agencies were involved, how effective were they? Does PCCC need to network with other agencies?

The CoM of PCCC Inc. are informed of the results of this evaluation by the Operations Director on a quarterly basis.

Related Policies

Behaviour Management
Privacy & Confidentiality
Staff Grievances

References

Prom Coast Centres for Children Inc. Association Rules

Appendices

Appendix 1

Form: Feedback, Compliments and Complaints

Appendix 2

Complaints Resolution Process Summary

Appendix 3

Form: Complaint Review Summary



Form: Feedback, Compliments and Complaints

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Your feedback and suggestions are valued and help us improve our services.

Prom Coast Centres for Children Inc. (PCCC) is committed to providing an environment where people feel comfortable to provide feedback, compliments and complaints about our services.

You can use this form, write your own letter/email or if you prefer speak directly with the Operations Director or a member of the Committee of Management.

Your privacy and confidentiality will be respected in this process, whilst you may remain anonymous, it is helpful for all feedback if contact names and details are provided in case PCCC wishes to seek further detail.

If you are registering a complaint we will aim to contact you within 24 hours to discuss the issue further.

Hand in completed form to any staff member, post to 30 Pioneer St, Foster, VIC 3960, or email either : Director@pccc.net.au or President@pccc.net.au

I wish to:

<input type="checkbox"/> Pass on a compliment	<input type="checkbox"/> Make a complaint	<input type="checkbox"/> give feedback	<input type="checkbox"/> suggest an improvement
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Does this relate to a particular staff member or person? (Name)

What would you like to tell us?

What would you like to see happen?

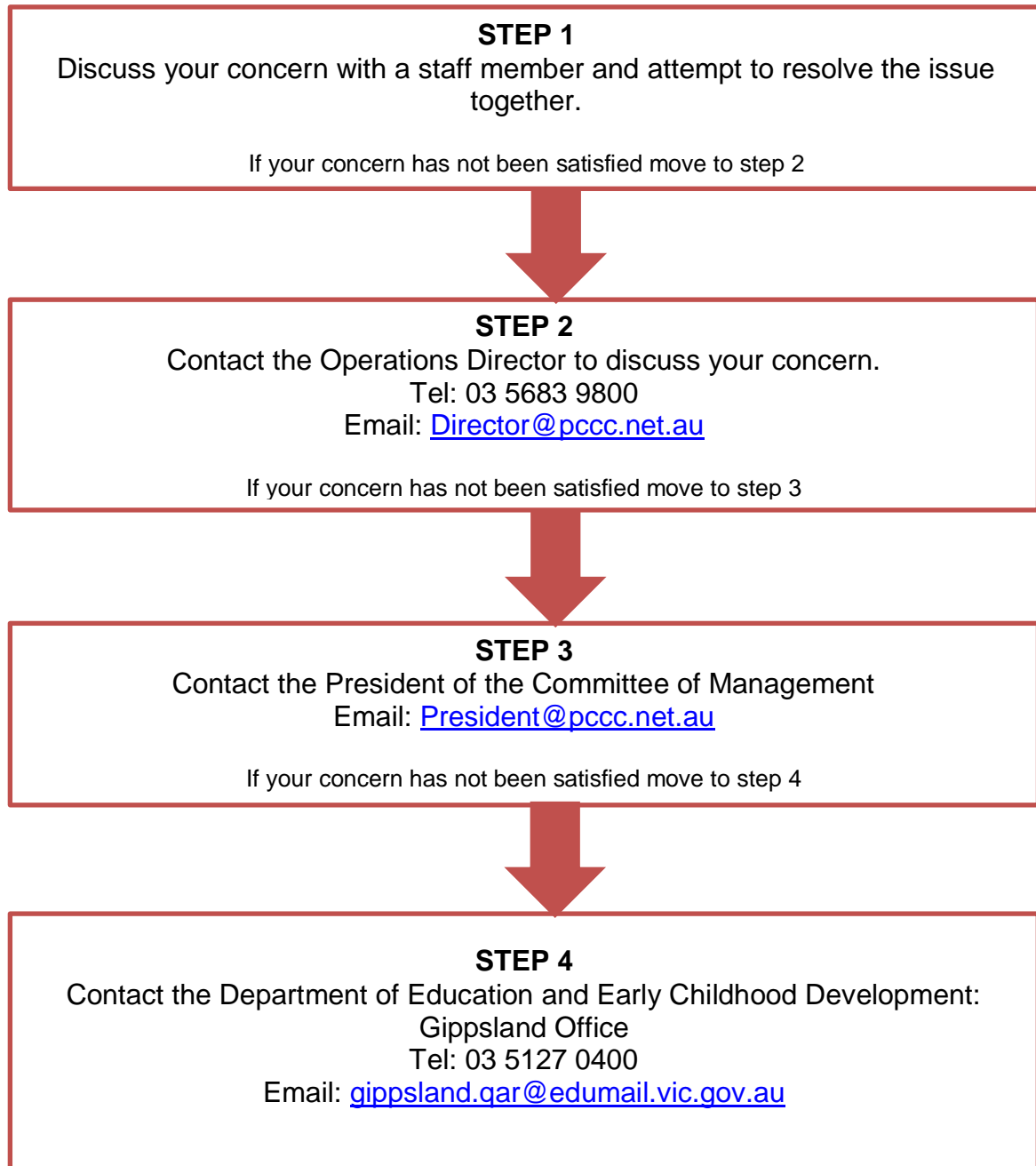
Your Name

Please contact me

I do not wish to be contacted

Preferred contact methods

Steps to take to resolve a complaint, grievance or concern:



For more detail on the complaints process, please refer to Prom Coast Centres for Children's policy *Complaints and Grievance Management*.



Form: Complaint Review Summary

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<Insert Date>

Parties Involved in Complaint:

List documents/evidence utilised/produced as part of Complaint Review:

Ensure these documents are attached.

Outcome of Complaint

Document and diarise any matters to be followed up/reviewed:

- (ie., report outcome to CoM)

Key Learnings:

Full Name and signatures of management team involved in this complaint resolution: