

**Little Sunbeams Christian Early Childhood Centre**

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| **Complaints Procedure** | |
| **Procedure Category:** Governance, Management  and Administration | **Date Created:** 19th March 2020 |

**The purpose of this operational procedure is to outline how parents, visitors and staff may make a complaint about some aspect of our service or the actions of members of our team.**

**Position Statement:**

**Little Sunbeams offers a high-quality early learning experience and environment for the children enrolled at our Centre. Our staff ensure children and families receive a high level of service. We invite and welcome receiving complaints and concerns from anyone. We take complaints seriously and will investigate in a thorough and transparent manner, reporting back to the complainant our findings and the outcome. We also encourage complainants to take up their complaint directly with the Ministry of Education it they are unhappy with the results of this procedure**

**Issue Outline:**

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Complaints are an important part of ongoing service improvement. We are not perfect and operate under the belief that we are a perpetual work-in progress.

**Alignment with Policies:**

This procedure aligns with the following Centre Policy:

* Child Protection Policy
* Disciplinary Policy
* Professional Boundaries Policy

**Procedure Detail:**

| **Step** | **Procedure** |
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|  | **Receive a verbal complaint**  All complaints may be made verbally. All complaints will be referred to the Centre Manager as soon as possible. Verbal complaints will be written down by the Manager and reflected back to the complainant to ensure accuracy and completeness. |
|  | **Investigation**  All complaints will be investigated by the Centre Manager. Some complaints, because of their nature, may involve external agencies. Where this is necessary, the complainant will be informed as soon as possible that one or more external agencies have been involved. |
|  | **Decisions Based on Fact**  Our investigation process will endeavour to gather all relevant facts before reaching a decision on the cause. We do not subscribe to investigations that focus solely on finding fault with others. We believe that some issues reflect a weakness in our processes and some reflect the judgement and actions of individuals. |
|  | **Conclusion**  We will communicate the conclusion of any complaint investigation to the complainant and any external agency involved. |
|  | **Principles of Natural Justice**  Where the complaint concerns the actions of an individual, we will communicate the nature of that complaint to that individual, but we will not disclose the identity of the complainant. We believe in the right of all individuals to be treated with respect and to be given all reasonable opportunities to defend themselves against allegations.  That being said, allegations/complaints of a serious nature involving child safety will include the immediate suspension on full pay of any staff member who is the subject of that allegation/complaint. |
|  | **Outcome**  We will act on the findings of any complaint, in particular where this involves:   * An improvement or change to our policies and procedures * The training and education of staff * Disciplinary action taken against a staff member, noting the obligations we have under relevant employment contracts and employment law. * Note that where disciplinary action has been taken or is in process with a teaching staff member, we will follow the mandatory reporting requirements of the Education Council   We will ensure the findings of the complaint investigation feed back into our quality improvement and service review processes.  All documentation relating to the complaint will be retained by us for seven years. Any outcome involving disciplinary action against a staff member will be retained on their personnel file as per our Disciplinary Policies. |

**Relevant Background (including Legislation/Regulation/Licensing references)**

Regulation 47 of the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 and GMA1 of the Licensing Criteria for Centre-Based ECE Services

**Implementation**

This procedure is part of the Little Sunbeams induction for new staff and forms part of the introduction information pack for parents. In addition, information on how to make a complaint is made available at our reception for parents and visitors. Staff are regularly reminded of the, complaints procedure at staff meetings and we discuss any complaint trends on these occasions.

**Review:**

This policy will be reviewed annually or when there is significant change in the area of the policy topic

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| Authorised: |  |
| Date: |  |
| Review Date: |  |
| Consultation Undertaken |  |