

Complaints Handling Policy

1. Purpose

Y Whittlesea is committed to investigating all complaints and grievances with fairness, equity, and transparency. Anyone making a complaint will be treated with respect and guided by the following values:

- Procedural fairness and natural justice
- Adherence to our Code of Ethics and Conduct
- A culture free from discrimination and harassment
- Transparent policies and processes
- Opportunities for further investigation and resolution
- Alignment with our Service philosophy and commitment to child safety

2. Scope

This policy applies to all operations and services of Y Whittlesea, including management, educators, volunteers, students, families, contractors, and visitors.

3. Policy Statement

Y Whittlesea recognises the right of all families, staff, and community members to have their concerns and complaints addressed promptly and respectfully, with a focus on continuous quality improvement and the safety and wellbeing of children.

Complaints or grievances may be received from anyone who interacts with our services, including parents/guardians, volunteers, students, local community members, and agencies. All complaints will be assessed to determine whether they are general or notifiable. **Notifiable complaints** include allegations that the health, safety, or wellbeing of a child has been compromised or breaches of the National Law or Regulations. These must be reported to the Department of Education and Training (DET) within 24 hours, and Y Whittlesea will cooperate fully with any investigation by DET.

Complaints relating to serious incidents, including physical or sexual abuse, or where a child requires urgent medical attention, will be reported to DET within 24 hours.

4. Principles for Handling Complaints

- Complaints are addressed **promptly, confidentially, and impartially**.
- Complainants are informed of how their complaint will be handled, including expected timelines.
- Complaints are recorded in the **Complaints and Grievances Management Register**, securely stored and accessible only to management and regulatory authorities.
- The wellbeing and safety of children remain paramount at all times.
- All complaints are viewed as opportunities for service improvement and reflection.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor will:

- Assess and manage complaints in line with this policy and procedure.
- Notify DET, CCYP, SOCIT within 24 hours of any notifiable complaint.
- Ensure complainants are informed of processes and outcomes.
- Maintain a secure Complaints and Grievances Management Register.
- Cooperate with any investigation by DET or other statutory authorities.
- Ensure staff receive training in complaints handling, child safety obligations, and mandatory reporting requirements.
- Regularly review complaints to identify systemic issues or improvements.

Educators and Staff will:

- Report complaints to the nominated supervisor or approved provider promptly.
- Listen carefully to the complainant and clarify the issue, documenting all details.

- Support the complainant to understand the issue and discuss possible solutions, including external supports.
- Help determine a preferred resolution approach.
- Record meetings accurately and confirm details with the complainant.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Refer to relevant Y Whittlesea policies to assist resolution.
- Be aware of ways children express concerns and their responsibilities as mandatory reporters.
- Ensure children know who to talk to if they feel unsafe and understand the support process.

6. Complaints Resolution Process

1. Informal Resolution

- Where appropriate, concerns should be resolved informally through respectful discussion with the relevant educator or Nominated Supervisor.

2. Formal Complaint

- If unresolved, a formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider. The complaint will be acknowledged within **two business days**.

3. Investigation

- All formal complaints will be investigated thoroughly, with outcomes communicated to the complainant within **14 days**, or an update provided if additional time is required.

4. External Referral

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may contact **DET or other relevant external bodies** for further investigation.

7. Reporting to DET

Notifiable complaints must be reported within **24 hours** via the ACECQA forms and logged using NQA ITS. This includes:

- Complaints alleging physical or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring
- Complaints relating to the health, safety, or wellbeing of a child

Written notifications must include:

- Details of the event or incident
- Name of the person who made the complaint
- Name and condition of the child concerned, where relevant
- Contact details of a nominated management member
- Any other relevant information

8. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled with strict confidentiality to protect the privacy of children, families, educators, and staff. Records will be securely stored in the Complaints and Grievances Management Register.

9. Related Documents and Resources

- Providing a Child Safe Environment
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Governance and Management
- Code of Conduct
- Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting
- Reportable Conduct Scheme

10. Legislative and Industry Requirements: [Link here](#) to Legislative Compliance Register

11. **Consequences of breaching this policy:** All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).
12. **Policy owner:** The General Manager of Early Years is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required, and regular reviews as scheduled.
13. **Document Control:** Review of this policy will be undertaken every two years, or prior as required by law, in consultation with appropriate Y People.

Version:	Description of Amendment	Amended by	Date	Release Date
4.0	Review	M Rowse	10/7/25	July 2025
3.0	Separated policy and procedure	F Burrill	3/10/2024	
2.0	Reviewed and added	F Miller	23/2/2022	March 2022
1.0	Created		1/6/2014	23/6/14