

McKellar Stewart Kindergarten.

Maintaining Positive Relationships Policy. Raising a Concern or Complaint

This policy has been produced in consultation with staff and parents at McKellar Stewart Kindergarten with the understanding that good relationships between home and preschool give children the best chance of success. It provides information about avenues for communication, which strengthen the partnerships between parents and staff. It acknowledges the importance of the relationship between parents/caregivers and staff.

Our kindergarten is committed to ensuring that anyone with parental responsibilities for a child can raise a concern or complaint, with confidence that it will be heard and responded to in an appropriate and timely manner.

The Guiding Principles.

Everyone within the McKellar Stewart Kindergarten Community including children, parent(s)/guardian(s), staff and volunteers have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy in accordance with the kindergarten's values.

- Parents have the right to raise concerns, make enquiries or complaints about any aspect of the kindergarten.
- Information about how, where and to whom complaints can be made are fully accessible.
- Complaints will be acknowledged and addressed promptly within specified timelines. Wherever possible, complaints should be resolved at the kindergarten level.
- Individual complaints will be assessed objectively and without bias using principles of natural justice.
- The rights and responsibilities of all parties will be considered and balanced in attempting to find a mutually acceptable outcome to complaints.
- The confidentiality of all parties will be maintained wherever possible.

Procedure for Parent/Guardian Concern/Complaint

There may be times when you have information or concerns that relate to child/staff or parent/staff relationships, behaviours, kindergarten policies or curriculum. The following guidelines will assist you to resolve these matters:

In the 1st instance: Talk to the person who knows about the situation (ie the staff member involved)- Make an appointment to speak to this person and inform them what it is about so that they can gather any information and be fully informed to work with you to resolve the matter. Our staff will, following a direct complaint:

- Listen to the complaint.
- Identify actions to resolve the concern.
- Let you know what will or has been done.
- Get back to you to find out how things are going.
- Inform the Kindergarten Director.

In the 2nd Instance: If you are unable to resolve the matter at this meeting you should make a time to speak with the Director, again providing time and information prior to the meeting to allow the matter to reach the best possible resolution at the meeting. The Kindergarten Director will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as reasonably possible (within 5 school days).
- Listen to the issue and provide support to you if necessary while the complaint is being considered.
- Provide opportunity for all the parties involved to be treated fairly and equitably. To express their concerns, explain their point of view and clarify any misunderstandings.
- Investigate, consider and determine the most appropriate way to resolve the issue fairly and promptly.
- Where identified, an acknowledgement that the situation could have been better handled (this does not constitute an admission of negligence).
- Discussion with the parties about the steps that will be taken to ensure that the event complained about will not reoccur.
- An undertaking to review school policy, procedures or practices.
- Consider relevant legislation, DE policy and guidelines, preschool procedures.

- Ensure the complaint and the outcome is documented.
- Ensure that the outcome of the process is communicated to you verbally and, if appropriate, in writing including the right to refer the matter to the Department for Education; Complaints Unit.
- This may also involve a notification to the *Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board of South Australia (EECSB)*

In the 3rd Instance: If at the end of this meeting you have been unable to reach a resolution you may choose to contact the Complaints Unit of the Department for Education. Ph 1800 677 435. They may need to be sure that the above procedures have been followed before they become involved.

Please note. Any written or verbal complaints that contain personal abuse, inflammatory statements, and comments of a threatening nature or intended to intimidate will not be addressed and the parent will be advised accordingly.

Parents can call the DE Parent Complaint Unit Hotline at any stage on 1800 677 435 for information, advice and support.

Confidentiality It is important that your concerns are kept confidential, and although at times you may wish to seek support from friends or an advocate it is important to do this with care. When the matter is discussed within a child's hearing or with other parents it can undermine trust and confidence which does not support children's learning.

Similarly, staff are expected to maintain confidentiality and will not discuss issues in front of children or other parents.

While every effort will be made to comply with a request to keep the parent's identity confidential, Freedom of Information requirements may result in a parent's identity becoming known.

The extent to which an **anonymous complaint** can be investigated will be limited, as preschool staff cannot liaise with the parent about the complaint. Anonymous complaints also raise issues in relation to natural justice for those who have a complaint made about them as they have a right to know the particulars of the complaint.

The Kindergarten Director will determine upon receipt of an anonymous complaint to what extent the complaint will be investigated.

Additional Information

These procedures apply to parent concerns and complaints in relation to McKellar Stewart Kindergarten. These procedures do not apply to matters where there are legislated requirements or existing policies and processes of appeal, such as the following:

- Concerns and allegations of misconduct by staff, volunteers and service providers (criminal matters, child protection, corruption, etc.).
- Employee disputes and grievances. (Employees should refer to HR17 Complaints Resolution for Employees 2000 for these types of complaints).
- Duty of Care or Mandatory Reporting responsibilities.
- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare related issues.
- Health Support Planning.

References/ Sources : Adapted from the DE Parent Complaint Policy and the DE Parent Guide to raising a concern or complaint.

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- 7.3.4 Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner.

Regulations

- 173 (2) (b) Display and Reporting of Prescribed Information
- 176 (2) (b) Time to Notify Certain Information to Regulatory Authority

Last reviewed: 2020