



## STAFF GRIEVANCES POLICY

### Aim:

To provide a procedure in which concerns can be identified, discussed and resolved in a fair, sensitive, quick and confidential manner.

To acknowledge God's word as the foundation guiding our relationships.

To encourage personal growth in interpersonal relationships.

To meet requirements to notify appropriate authorities when allegations of child protection issues are raised.

To provide a safe working environment, free from discrimination, bullying or harassment.

### Explanation:

It is important that grievances can be raised so issues can be addressed and resolved.

Grievances are to be dealt with in a professional manner by Educators and Management.

It is our aim that grievances be settled initially between the people involved, and the process outlined below is given to facilitate this. The process is aimed at building skills in interpersonal relationships.

The Directors will provide coaching and support for staff who are attempting to work through issues between them.

If a staff member has a grievance with the Director they should apply the same process of going to the Director in the first instance and using the guidelines below. If their attempts to communicate fail, they should then approach the Owners/Approved Provider for assistance in the Grievance Process.

Open and professional communication will be used and encouraged.

All parties involved will be kept informed as the process or resolution is achieved.

All grievances will be handled in a timely manner.

Grievances raised to intentionally hurt others or of a petty nature may not receive the same attention as other matters.

### Implementation for personal situations between staff:

#### 1) Maintain confidentiality

Information about any issue is not to be shared with anybody else by direct communication or by implication. This is gossip! This includes other staff and families associated with the Rumpus Room Children's Centres.

#### 2) If legally required to notify because this is a child protection issue, then this must be done following appropriate procedures.- See Child Safe Environment Policy

Remember to intervene immediately if you see inappropriate behaviours happening, whether you are a trainee or a supervisor. Give your workmate support if they have "lost their cool".

Tell them "I'll take a turn" or "you take a break", or whatever is relevant to help release the pressure and separate the educator and the child. Help them avoid doing something they'll regret. If they are bordering on being inappropriate, save them from themselves. Be firm if



you need to or get another senior staff person immediately to ensure nothing inappropriate can happen. You do need to report your concerns to the Director if inappropriate behaviour has or has nearly occurred.

3) You may choose to pray about the situation.

Engage in deep personal reflection when feeling in conflict. Sometimes this will be so personal it will go into your diary/ journal at home not in the Centre's reflections. For those who journal their prayer life with God, this is a safe place to open your heart and allow him to help you see things from a different perspective. If God is not showing us something different then we are most likely still in the judging stage not the self-reflection and growth stage. God does not support us to judge our work mates. He supports us to judge ourselves and he allows us to get a better understanding of the people we work with. He will understand your frustration and He will walk with you but He'll encourage you to grow. If we don't grow... we can count on the fact that we will find ourselves in the same type of situation again and He'll give us another chance to grow by dealing with similar situations. This could be called 'going round the mountain again'. A suggested prayer would be, "God, help me to learn from this so I don't have to go round the mountain again".

4) Approach the person involved first and try to work out the dispute between you.

a) Choose the location and timing to raise the issue and perhaps make an appointment to discuss it. If you've thought about an issue and want to communicate your thoughts remember the other person may have had no warning, you can't just launch into it and expect them to "hear" you, so set a time for a future meeting to be able to talk and listen respectfully.

b) Ensure both people are ready and prepared to talk.

c) In communicating with others, consider

- your body language
- behavioural and personality styles (yours and theirs).

d) Use reflective listening techniques. Practice listening well and not letting an "offence" stop you from hearing what is being communicated. This is not easy, so be gentle with each other and realize it will take time. It can be helpful to try to repeat back to each other what you have heard. This is a skill we all need to learn and takes a lot of effort but our workmates deserve our respect in this. Think about writing down 2 lists. The list of what you think. The list of what you think the other person thinks. Are you brave enough to ask them how close that is to what they really think? Consider the 20 cent coin. In your mind, hold it between you and the person you are in conflict with, ask what does each see? You need to communicate until each of you can "see" what the other person sees, so it takes time to communicate the detail of how things look/feel to you.

e) Use conflict resolution techniques, including "I" statements e.g.: When you... I feel...

f) If you have tried to communicate and need some more skills, see one of the Directors for coaching in this area.



- g) After this initial discussion allow some processing and/or prayer time, maybe schedule a follow up meeting to allow processing by both parties. (N.B. This could be in 20 minutes or the next day).
- 5) We suggest continuing to pray for one another.
  - 6) Maintain confidentiality.
  - 7) Consider the issue of judgement. The only "judgement" we are able to undertake is judging ourselves against our own standards and values or for those of us who are Christians, judging ourselves against the standard to be like Jesus. It is not easy. Remember when you are pointing your finger at someone, 3 fingers are pointing back at you.
  - 8) If no resolution or settlement has been reached, go to the person to whom you are both accountable in the work place e.g. Room Leader – Nominated Supervisor/Director – Owner/Approved Provider. Make an appointment for a suitable time and place. Bringing a written summary may be helpful to allow clear communication of the issues.
  - 9) Mediation is a requirement of employment, not an option. A staff person who refuses to be involved in mediation will be dismissed. Definition of mediation. Mediation, as a minimum, means going with the other person to the Director to discuss the issue. The Director might require ongoing mediation or may decide that the issue is not affecting work performance and cannot be resolved any further at the time.
  - 10) If there is no resolution by this time, involve the Approved Provider or their representative who possesses mediation skills. A focus will be on helping to resolve the issues from a non-biased perspective. At this stage each party may need to have a support person attending.
  - 11) A professional attitude to work should be continuing as normal throughout this process. If a person feels emotionally unable to work, they may take personal leave or if the Director feels that their interactions with children are inappropriate they may be asked to take leave until they are able to resume professional duties.
  - 12) If resolution cannot be reached, the Director in consultation with the Approved Provider will make a decision about future arrangements which will be in the best interests of the children and the Centre. Both parties will have the opportunity to present their view of the situation.
  - 13) Staff who are unwilling to forgive and work toward a restored relationship are not fulfilling their job description and may be dismissed, based on failure to meet criteria of applying Christian values and participating in team approach.

**Related Policies. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Service's Confidentiality Policy. Child Safe Environment, Privacy and Confidentiality, Social Media**

This policy links to the following NQS:  
National Quality Standards, all areas of 7.1 and 7.2.  
National Law and National Regulations

