

Feedback Complaints Management Resolution Policy Statement

This policy provides guidance for AEIOU Foundation (AEIOU) clients and other interested parties on the key principles and concepts of our feedback and complaints management system.

This objective is intended to ensure that we handle all complaints and feedback fairly, efficiently and effectively to satisfactory resolution within a reasonable timeframe, and that appropriate actions are taken to improve our services, policies or processes where possible.

AEIOU Foundation aims to consistently provide services that meet the needs of clients and stakeholders and satisfy applicable statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements. We undertake a range of strategies to adopt a “Best Practice” approach to monitor, measure and respond to and improve customer experience and satisfaction.

The principles underpinning feedback and complaints management at AEIOU ensure the process is:

- **Person centred** – complaints management is respectful of and responsive to a person’s preferences, needs and values.
- **Outcome focussed** – complaints management should reveal the contributing factors to the complaint being made and seek to prevent matters giving rise to complaints from reoccurring.
- **Clear, simple and consistent** – the process for receiving and responding to complaints is easy to understand, accessible and consistently applied.
- **Accountable** – the response to complaints is appropriately managed. Everyone involved in the management of a complaint understands their role and responsibilities and will be accountable for decisions or actions taken in regard to a complaint.
- **Continual improvement** – the complaints process facilitates the ongoing identification of issues and implementation of changes to improve the quality and safety of supports and services.
- **Proportionate** – the nature of any actions following a complaint will be proportionate to the issue raised and any risk of harm to people.

We seek feedback from our clients in a planned, coordinated, and measurable way, using several methods:

- Surveys, where parents/carers or other stakeholders can give us feedback on a range of areas in relation to the service, child’s educational program, policy, event, project, satisfaction, or other topic
- Parent forums, information, or education sessions where topics can be presented and discussed
- Individual meetings with parents/carers about their child’s program and service plan reviews
- Annual parent satisfaction review with presentation to the Board to consider in their planning, with information and results shared with leadership, the organisation, and families as appropriate
- Third party audits and internal audit processes
- Analysis of compliments, complaints and feedback received.

We receive and respond to feedback, complaints and compliments directed to us:

- In person
- By phone, contact our local AEIOU centre, or Central Office - <https://aeiou.org.au/contact>
- Website Online form - <https://aeiou.org.au/feedback>
- Using the paper copy Compliments, Complaints and Feedback form available at our centres
- In writing addressed to the Designated Complaints Officer Email - info@aeiou.org.au , or
- Post - PO Box 107, Spring Hill Qld 4004
- By video or audio recording and sent to us.

Information for families about providing feedback to us and how we respond to a complaint is detailed in the **Feedback and Complaints Resolution – Client Procedure**.

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We are committed to support people in how to provide feedback, raise a concern, make a complaint to us, or to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commissioner (NDIS Commission), or to the relevant State/Territory early childhood education care regulator, or another relevant agency. Our culture provides for a safe environment for people to speak up so we can respond appropriately and acknowledge when our service has not met expectations or applicable standards. People should feel confident to tell us without any fear of adverse consequences, retribution, or loss of service as a result of making a complaint.

We will display signage that is clearly visible to anyone from the main entrance of each centre premises, the name and telephone number of the person to whom complaints can be addressed.

Workers are supported to report incidents and complaints with no negative consequences for doing so. All workers are advised that they can make a complaint on behalf of a person, parent/carer or child to us, or to the NDIS Commission or early childhood education care regulator. All workers are required to comply with the complaints and incident management system policies and processes and be aware of the roles and responsibilities in identifying, managing, and resolving complaints and incidents and in preventing complaints or incidents from occurring. Procedural fairness and natural justice principles are applied when resolving matters.

In addition, individuals eligible under the Corporations Act 2001 regarding eligible complaints raised in good faith are protected by whistle blower protections.

Designated Complaints Officers (DCOs) are appointed to deal with complaints over three levels.

Level 1

We aim to resolve complaints early at the first level, the frontline, with the staff involved and/or Centre Manager. Wherever possible any staff member will be adequately equipped to respond to complaints or concerns, including being given appropriate authority in their role, and provided with training and supervision.

Level 2

Where early resolution on the frontline is not possible and the matter is unresolved, we escalate the complaint to the next level senior leader or executive, or externally to an appropriate agency. This second level of complaint handling will provide for the following internal mechanisms to be undertaken:

- assessment and investigation of the complaint and decision/s already made, and/or
- facilitated resolution (where a person not connected with the complaint reviews the matter and attempts to find an outcome acceptable to the parties).

Level 3

Where a person making a complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint dealt with at Levels 1 or 2 and the matter still remains unresolved, they may request a reconsideration for an internal review of the decision where new information or evidence is presented within a reasonable timeframe, which is conducted by the next line up executive not previously involved, or another suitable executive, or may seek an external review of our decision by the appropriate agency (e.g., by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission for NDIS participants, or the local early childhood education and care regulator, or another agency as appropriate).

Note: a reasonable timeframe follows that of the NDIS Commission, currently six (6) weeks.

Our complaint handling process is modelled on a three-stage approach to ensure fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency and integration into organisational culture.

Step 1 – facilitate complaints.

Step 2 – acknowledge and respond to complaints.

Step 3 – manage parties to and resolve complaints.

Processes are in place to support the implementation of this policy with details in the **Feedback, Complaints Management Resolution Policy Framework, Feedback Complaint Resolution - Client Procedure, Implementing Procedural Fairness Guideline, Whistle-blower Policy, and Incidents and Reportable Incidents Policy and Plan.**

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