

Policy Title:	Staff Grievance Policy
Effective Date:	14 th December 2010 and January 2013, 2014.
Review Date:	As necessary by the Policy and Procedure Development Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Limiting issues between employees and creating a positive work environment. This policy has been developed to ensure a simple, effective and efficient method of approaching, dealing with and rectifying potential and actual situations involving two or more members of staff with the aim of obtaining mutually beneficial solutions.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Child care is a stressful job in a stressful environment and as such, tension among employees is at a constant risk of building up and reaching boiling point. Inner City Care aims to be able to deal with grievances as quickly and positively as possible.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

A happy worker is a good worker. This includes having the staff members work well with each other and being able to deal with issues among themselves, for themselves. There needs to be a mature and controlled method of dealing with and rectifying any conflict or grievance issues.

Each employee has a different personality and as such, each has different methods of approaching and dealing with 'grievances'. An employee must feel as though, no matter who they are or 'how' they are, if they have an issue with another person, that issue can be handled without them feeling intimidated or as though their opinion/issue will not be heard or valued.

DEFINITIONS

- A staff grievance is any issue where two or more staff are having a dispute or conflict.
- A staff grievance may also pertain to a single staff member being unhappy about a situation or issue pertaining to the Centre environment.
- A "non-trivial" complaint is a complaint against or about something or someone that directly affects the common goal/s for the Centre as per the Centre Philosophy, Centre Goals, Centre Policies and Procedures and the ICC and ECA Codes of Ethics.

POLICY DETAIL/ BUSINESS RULES

As per the NSW Ombudsman in "Effective Complaint Handling" (Three Tiered) Method, ICC has adopted the recommended approach towards grievances:

1. Speak to the person in question about the issue at hand (at a time suitable i.e. not interfering with work)
 - a. Both sides of the issue are expressed to each other, taking the time to understand what the other person's issue is and what it means to them
 - b. If a point is misunderstood, the person listening is to ask questions so that a full understanding is acquired.
 - c. Any issue raise needs to be documented so that it can be referred to at a later date if required.
 - d. A mutually beneficial solution to the problem needs to be established, documented and followed so as to avoid further conflict.
2. If a face-to-face discussion is ineffective, seek mediation from an objective third party.

- a. Have the mediator read over the previous documentation to gain an understanding of the situation.
 - b. In addition, the mediator must hear both sides of the story from each person involved, separately to avoid arguments, in order to obtain an objective view of the situation.
 - c. Once heard, both parties are to be brought into a meeting by the mediator in order to assist in the breaking down of the problem with the parties involved as they discuss the issue and attempt to find a mutually beneficial solution.
 - d. The mediator is present as a third party observer used to listen to the issue from both sides, offering suggestions for solutions when required and calm any situation within the meeting that may arise due to escalating emotions, frustrations or anger.
3. If the use of the mediator is ineffective, and no viable solution option is offered, the Management Committee is required to get involved.
- a. The two (or more) parties involved in the dispute as well as the mediator, take the case and all the current gathered information, to the Staff Liaison Officer of the Management Committee for their input.
 - b. At this time, in conjunction with the mediator and the Staff Liaison Person of the Management Committee, a more viable solution option that is mutually beneficial for all involved will be sought.

AUTHORITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

- The mediator can be any independent person that both parties agree to fill the third-party position during the dispute between the two parties. They should have an objective view and agree to mediate and document the minutes of the discussion.
- If a non-trivial complaint is made, the Director or delegate of ICC will give written notice to Community Services within one week and as soon as the issue is resolved – as per the *Children's Services Regulation 2004*.
- If the dispute needs to be taken further, relevant Union officials and Industrial Relations personnel may be contacted.
- The Centre Director is responsible for ensuring all ICC staff have training in this policy.
- All ICC staff are accountable for the implementation of this policy.

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

Complaints Policy and Procedure
 Centre Philosophy
 Centre Goals
 ICC Code of Ethics
 NSW Ombudsman
 National Quality Framework

Children's Services Regulation 2004

Approved by Management Committee	
Signature:	
Date:	Title:
Meeting number and date:	14th December 2010
Policy Owner:	Inner City Care
Effective Date:	14th December 2010

Review Date:	December 2010
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