

COMPLAINTS



This policy aims to:

This policy relates to any individual that has a concern about a service or interaction IOE has been involved in.

Complaints can be made by a participant, family member, staff member, volunteer or community member. Complaints play an important role in ensuring the quality of our services. IOE is committed to ensuring that making a complaint is regarded as a positive experience, with the best possible outcomes achieved for individuals and the agency. Complaints, and their resolution, are taken seriously by IOE; there will be no retribution for anyone who makes a complaint. IOE strives to make our complaints policy and procedure accessible to all people using the service and we encourage anyone to raise any concerns with our staff at any time.

IOE acknowledges that mistakes happen, and considers feedback and complaints to be an opportunity to improve the quality of services and processes

What is a complaint?

IOE considers a complaint to have occurred when a person tells us that they are unhappy or dissatisfied with:

- A decision made;
- The services provided;
- The environment in which a service has been provided;
- The way a service is provided;
- The staff/volunteers who work on an IOE program;
- The way in which you are treated in the workplace by your peers, participants and/or

families;

And

- The person wishes IOE to acknowledge and respond to their complaint

How to make a complaint:

Complaints can be made in a number of ways:

- On person;
- Over the phone;
- Via the feedback pathway found on staff emails and the website; or
- Using the complaints form available on the website (written or pictorial)

Complaints can be made at any time, but preferably as soon as possible after the issue has occurred. Complaints can be made directly to coordinators, a team leader, general manager or CEO. The preference is for a complaint to initially be made to the most relevant team

member, e.g. if the complaint is related to a support worker the complaint can be made to the coordinator who arranged the shift. If the complaint is related to a coordinator the concern can be

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raised with the supervising team leader. In the event of a conflict of interest, the complaint will be handled by a supervising staff member.

Interchange Outer East welcomes a person's right to involve an advocate or representative and will provide details of advocacy services most relevant to the situation when requested.

If a participant or family member is unhappy with IOE's management of a complaint contact should be made to the Department of Education for advice or assistance at any point in the process. Contact details can be found below under 'External complaint mechanisms'

What Happens Next:

IOE Response

Once a complaint has been received a staff member will make contact via email or phone with the person to confirm receipt of complaint within two working days.

Investigation

The relevant staff member will begin gathering information and documentation of the complaint. This may involve confirming information and speaking to other relevant parties.

Information, resolution & implementation

Using information gathered related to the complaint, a decision will be made regarding necessary action(s). If the resolution is agreed to it will be implemented as per the timeframes referred to in the report. When requested, a copy of the report will be provided detailing the complaint, investigation and resolutions.

Where possible, actions put in place should improve quality of services, processes and aim to minimise risk of reoccurrence. In instances where actions to improve quality are not possible, a clear explanation as to why and what is required should be noted. The person making the complaint must be provided with details as to why something the complainant asked to see happen has not been possible.

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the proposed resolution they can request to escalate the complaint to a higher level of management for review and/or take the complaint to an external party (details below). IOE will endeavour to resolve complaints within 10 working days. Where this is not possible, IOE will maintain contact with the person informing them of progress.

Depending on the nature of the complaint it may also be necessary for IOE to complete an incident report and/or to notify relevant authorities in line with purchasing agencies requirements and relevant legislation.

Quality Review

Each year a selection of complaints are randomly chosen for a quality audit. The purpose of the audit is to ensure complaints are being resolved in an equitable and timely manner. A review of actions

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implemented and their efficiency will be completed and recommendations to support improving processes for complaints considered.

Confidentiality

Where possible complaints and information pertaining to complaints is kept confidential. The general manager of IOE signs off on complaints once they have been resolved and complaints are entered onto a secure internal register by the quality coordinator. Complaints are securely stored at IOE and can only be accessed by the general manager and quality coordinator.

Retribution - What happens if it occurs?

IOE strives to resolve complaints in a genuine, fair and equitable manner. The Disability Amendment Act 2012 states that, 'all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that a person with a disability, the person who made the complaint and any person on whose behalf the complaint was made, is not adversely affected because a complaint has been made'. If you are concerned that you are being treated unfairly as a result of your complaint, you can contact IOE CEO Fred Brumhead, or one of the external organisations listed below.

External complaint mechanisms

IOE receives funds from various organisations and departments. Although IOE would encourage people to lodge a complaint directly with IOE, there are many external complaint mechanisms available if preferred

Department of Education: The department regulates the safety, health and wellbeing of children while being educated and cared for by staff at an early learning childhood service.

Dandenong office

Phone: 1300 338 738

Fax: 03 8765 5784

Postal address: PO Box 5, Dandenong, VIC 3175

Location: 165-169 Thomas Street, Dandenong 3175

References:

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 143B, 168– 173, 173A, 176

National Quality Standards 7.1.2, 7.2.1