

COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES (EXTERNAL) POLICY

CONTENTS	
Clause	Title
1	Policy Brief and Purpose
2	Variation
3	Scope
4	Definitions
5	Detail
6	Communicating the External Complaint Handling Policy
7	External Complaint Handling Timeframe
8	Principles of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness
9	Unresolved Complaints
10	Breach of the Complaints or Grievances (External) Policy
11	Complaints or Grievances (Internal)

Roles referred to in this document	
HR Rep	BUSINESS OWNER
Complaints Officer	BUSINESS OWNER

1. Policy Brief and Purpose

1.1. Child Centred Play Therapy (“**the Company**”) is committed to providing a fair and transparent complaint handling process for complaints received from all sources external to the Company. The Company understands there may be times when external complaints arise and the Company strives to handle and solve these complaints in a timely and professional manner. This policy outlines the process for all workers to follow if confronted with an external complaint.

2. Variation

2.1. This policy does not form part of any worker’s contract of employment. The Company may vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all workers of the Company.

3.2. This policy does not replace any legislation or any terms under an applicable modern award or agreement. If any part of this policy is in conflict with the applicable legislation, modern award or agreement, the legislation, modern award or agreement will take precedence.

4. Definitions

4.1 “*Worker or workers*” (Please refer to Appendix A for further clarification).

4.2 “*Authorised Company Representative*” is the person or persons within the Company authorised to deal with matters in accordance with this policy.

4.2.1 HR Rep

COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES (EXTERNAL) POLICY

The Authorised Company Representative for matters relating to Human Resources, including all staff related issues.

4.2.2 Complaints Officer

The Authorised Company Representative with the responsibility for dealing with external complaints and making the final decision as to how a complaint or complaints will be determined.

The Company may, from time to time, designate a different person or persons to fulfil this role.

4.3 “*External Complaint*” means any negative feedback received by the Company from an External Source about the services provided by the Company or a worker or workers of the Company.

4.4 “*External Source*” includes but is not limited to contractors, visitors, volunteers, clients/customers and members of the public.

5 Detail

5.1 In all cases, issues which are the source of frustration or are in dispute should, if possible be resolved at the time they occur between the persons involved. Often, formal external complaints can be avoided by proper communication and respect between the persons involved at the time of occurrence.

5.2 An external complaint may be received by the Company in any form and does not need to be formally documented by the complainant in order to be acted on. Complaints may be made by any person at any time.

5.3 Subject to 5.2 above, to make a complaint, the complainant should be encouraged to complete a Complaint Form which is available via the Company website or from the Business Owner who can be contacted Monday to Friday between the hours of 0900 - 1700 as follows.

5.3.3 Email

In the event the complainant elects not to complete a Complaint Form the HR Rep should make every effort to contact the complainant in person to discuss the complaint and put in place the complaint resolution process.

5.4 Completed Complaint Forms should be submitted to the HR Rep either in hard copy at the above address or electronically via the above email address.

5.5 A written record of all complaints will be kept by the Company including all details of lodgement, response and resolution. The record will maintain a chronological journal of events during the complaint handling process. Records relating to complaints handling must be stored securely to prevent access to unauthorised personnel.

COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES (EXTERNAL) POLICY

5.6 All complaints must be referred to the Complaints Officer by the HR Rep to allow the Complaints Officer, in consultation with the HR Rep, to review the complaint and determine how the matter should be handled and/or resolved.

5.7 Complaints are to be handled in the strictest confidence. No Company representative is to disclose information to any person without the permission of the Complaints Officer. A decision to release information to third parties can be made only after the complainant has given permission for this to occur. This permission should be given using an Information Release Form.

6 Communicating the External Complaint Handling Policy

6.1 This policy must be:

6.1.1 Publicly available on the Company website, if applicable; and

6.1.2 Referred to in the Company Worker Handbook.

7 External Complaint Handling Timeframe

7.1 It is important the Company has in place a timeframe for the handling of external complaints to ensure all complaints are dealt with and resolved within a reasonable time.

7.2 The approved timeframe to be adhered to when handling external complaints can be found in the Company Timeframe Procedure for the Handling of External Complaints.

8 Principles of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness

8.1 The principles of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness must be incorporated into the External Complaint handling process to ensure the decision-making is fair and reasonable. Natural justice must be observed when it affects the rights, interests or legitimate expectations of individuals.

8.2 In accordance with Clause 8.1 above, the procedure to be followed when dealing with external complaints can be found in the Company Procedure for the Investigation and Resolution of External Complaints.

9 Unresolved Complaints

9.1 Once the complaint handling process has concluded and the person making a complaint remains not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint handling procedure, the person is to be advised they have the right to refer the matter to any external authority/agency which may be relevant to the person's complaint.

9.1.1 The following external agencies are nominated in the first instance as relevant points of referral the person may consider:

- In relation to consumer issues, the person may refer the complaint to the **Office of Fair Trading**.

COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES (EXTERNAL) POLICY

- In relation to matters of privacy, the person may refer the complaint to the **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner** via the following details:
<https://www.oaic.gov.au/individuals/how-do-i-make-a-privacy-complaint> or call on 1300 363 992

10 Breach of the Complaints or Grievances (External) Policy

10.1 Any worker who is found to have breached this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Company Counselling and Disciplinary Policy, up to and including termination of employment or engagement.

10.2 Any worker who becomes aware of any actual or potential breach or breaches of this policy must report this information to the HR Rep as soon as the worker becomes aware of the actual or potential breach. Failing to report an actual or potential breach may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Company Counselling and Disciplinary Policy.

11. Internal Complaints or Grievances

11.1 Should a worker have doubts about any aspect of this policy, the worker must seek clarification from the HR Rep.

11.2 Any worker, who in good faith raises a complaint or discloses an alleged breach of this policy, will not be victimized. All reports will be dealt with in a timely and confidential manner (where possible), and in line with the Company Complaints or Grievances (Internal) Policy.

11.3 If a situation arises where a worker feels it may not be possible to adhere to the expectations outlined in this policy, the worker must contact the HR Rep immediately for advice.

Production of this policy was authorised by Millie Evans on 18/09/2023