

Procedure CO:05.01

Complaints management



Policy – Complaints management

Area – Governance

Document Control

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer	Procedure Number: CO:05.01
Contact Officer: Incidents and Complaints Advisor	Policy Area: CO:05
Effective Date: 3 October 2017	Review Date: October 2019

Scope

This procedure, when read with the Policy, provides a framework to guide all actions for the C&K Board, C&K staff, C&K Central, C&K branch services, children, parents / guardians, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

C&K affiliate and associate members are excluded from the scope of this Procedure. Affiliate services are encouraged to adapt this Procedure, responsive to the needs and governance of their service. This Procedure will be followed in instances where a complaint relating to the contractual relationship between C&K and an affiliate or associate service, is made.

This procedure does *not* cover employee grievances or privacy complaints. For matters regarding an employee grievance (e.g. work dispute, concern regarding the working environment or an employment relationship) please refer to *HR: 05 Policy Employee Grievances*.

For privacy complaints please refer to *CO: 06 Policy Privacy*.

Introduction

Effective complaint management is an important element of good customer service, accountability and continuous improvement. C&K supports the right to provide feedback and have complaints heard and actioned within acceptable timeframes. Complaints that are managed well, support improved operations and business processes. Therefore, time spent effectively handling complaints is an investment in improved services and outcomes.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for a flow chart summary of this procedure.

Definitions & acronyms

Complainant	Any person or organisation (or their representative) making a complaint
Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction made to, or about an organisation, related to their products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required
Feedback	Opinions, comments or expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly to, or about the organisation related to their products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint

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1.0 Lodgement, receipt and acknowledgement

1.1 Who can make a complaint?

- Any person who is dissatisfied with C&K services, service delivery or staff.

1.2 How can a complaint be made?

- Complaints can be received:

In writing by:	Verbally by:	In person by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completing the <i>C&K Online Feedback Form</i> located on the C&K website (preferred method) Emailing the relevant C&K service / site* or emailing feedback@candk.asn.au Completing a <i>CO:05.01.F1 Feedback Form</i> and forwarding to the relevant C&K service / site* or C&K Central (257 Gympie Road, Kedron Qld 4031) Post to the relevant C&K service / site or C&K Central (257 Gympie Road, Kedron Qld 4031) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telephoning the relevant C&K service / site* or C&K Central (07 3552 5300) Visiting the relevant C&K service / site* and speaking to the C&K Manager or Director. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visiting the relevant C&K service / site* and speaking to the C&K Manager or Director.

*Please refer to C&K website or internal C&K Intranet Contacts Page for service / site address, email and telephone details.

- Complaints can be made anonymously.
- Complainants who are hearing impaired are encouraged to utilise the [National Relay Service](#) to support the lodgement of their complaint.
- Non-English speaking complainants are encouraged to access the [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#) to support the lodgement of their complaint.

1.3 Records and acknowledgement

- C&K aim to acknowledge complaints within two (2) working days of receipt.
- All complaints assessed (using the [risk matrix](#)) as level 2 / medium risk or above should be lodged on the *C&K Online Feedback Form* within one (1) working day of receipt. If a complaint is made in writing, a copy of the complaint must be uploaded as an attachment on the *C&K Online Feedback Form*.
- Upon submission of the *C&K Online Feedback Form*, the complainant will receive an automated email acknowledgment, including a complaint reference number and a contact email address (i.e. feedback@candk.asn.au).
- Complainants will be advised that, while C&K will take all reasonable efforts to ensure confidentiality, it may be necessary for C&K to make disclosures in circumstances where it is reasonably required in order to conduct a proper investigation or where C&K is required to

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make disclosure to the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) regulatory office or any other relevant regulator.

- All centre-based services to maintain a complaint register via the *CO: 05.01.T1 Template Complaint Outcome Record*. This register (and related records) must be maintained in a 'Service Feedback' folder and made available for inspection at all times.
- Depending on complaint type and assessed risk level, external statutory bodies may need to be notified. The ECEC must be notified when the following complaints are received:
 - A complaint alleging a serious incident has occurred or is occurring at a service.
 - A complaint alleging the *Education and Care Services National Law / Regulations (2011)* has been contravened.
 - A complaint alleging physical or sexual abuse of a child / ren has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the service.

Please refer to *SO: 01.05 Procedure Child Incident Reporting*.

1.4 Initial assessment, classification and case management

- The C&K Quality and Regulation (Q&R) Team to assess complaints against the C&K Risk Matrix (appendix 2) as they are submitted on the *C&K Online Feedback Form*.
- As detailed in the table below, the risk level will determine the escalation pathway and who will be responsible for managing the complaint (i.e. case manager).
- At any stage during the management of a complaint, the case manager can change the risk level of a complaint (which may in turn change the escalation pathway).

Risk level	Example	Case Manager	Escalated to and managed by
Level 1 Low risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent has requested their child not to be allowed to sleep. Their child is asleep when they arrive to collect their child • Parent / guardian is unsatisfied with a fee increase • A staff member's pay details are left on the photocopier • An educator does not greet a parent on arrival after they defriend them on Facebook 	Service Director, site / departmental manager To be managed at a local level.	Service Director, site / departmental manager or approved / appointed delegate
Level 2 Medium risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child discloses to their parent that another child pulled down their shorts in the bathroom • Parent withdraws enrolment because of poor customer service regarding their fee account • Inadvertently an external photographer takes inappropriate pictures of a child at a photo shoot • A community member witnesses an educator smoking on C&K premises and in full view of children 	Children's Services Manager (CSM), Central Manager or approved / appointed delegate To be maintained on C&K Online Feedback Register.	Children's Services Manager (CSM), Central Manager or approved / appointed delegate

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Level 3 High risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A service has failed to address / report a faulty gate. Child is found in the carpark by a parent Child's enrolment is suspended because of a significant fee debt. Kidsoft notes did not indicate the child was at risk Parent email address is given inadvertently to another parent who is involved in a guardianship dispute No educators present with children when a parent arrives to collect their child. 	Regional Manager, Central Manager Decision brief to be prepared for RSP To be maintained on C&K Online Feedback Register.	Risk Manager convenes RSP
Level 4 Very high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A child discloses that an educator hurt their arm 	Regional Manager, General Manager Decision brief to be prepared for RSP To be maintained on C&K Online Feedback Register.	Risk Manager convenes RSP, C&K Board or approved / appointed internal or external delegate
Level 5 Catastrophic risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A child absconds from a service and is hit by a car An educator is arrested for allegedly possessing child pornography 	Regional Manager, General Manager, Decision brief to be prepared for RSP To be maintained on C&K Online Feedback Register.	Risk Manager convenes RSP, C&K Board or approved / appointed internal or external delegate

- Complaints to be classified as per the types listed below:
 - Building and Facilities
 - Children's health, safety and wellbeing
 - Education program
 - Employee conduct
 - Enrolment/orientation
 - Equipment and resources
 - Fees
 - Policies and procedures
 - Privacy
 - Regulatory compliance
 - Other health, safety and wellbeing
 - Other
- In most instances, the relevant Director or Manager will be the case manager for complaints assessed as level one (1) / low risk.
- When appropriate the RSP or the C&K Board may appoint an external case manager.

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2.0 Investigation / review

- Case manager to acknowledge complaints within two (2) working days of receipt.
- If a case manager identifies a conflict of interest, they must immediately cease the investigation / review and inform their line manager so that a new case manager can be appointed.
- The case manager to keep the complainant and relevant stakeholders informed of the investigation / review progress.
- Each complaint to be investigated aiming to ensure impartiality, confidentiality and transparency.
- Complainant to be informed that C&K will keep the matter as confidential as possible but may need to investigate the complaint and refer it to the Regulatory Authority, so confidentiality cannot be assured.
- When required, case managers may access the services of the [National Relay Service](#) and the [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#) when undertaking a complaint investigation / review.
- Case managers are required to consider and complete the following steps:

Step 1 Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will be investigated? • How will the complaint be investigated? • What resolution is being sought by the complainant? • What is the timeframe for resolution? • How will the expectations of the complainant be managed?
Step 2 Gather Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the complainant – identify the nature of the complaint • Keep written records of all conversations • Gather supporting documentation • Ensure complainants have a right of reply
Step 3 Analyse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your information reliable? • Is it possible to resolve the complaint?
Step 4 Determine response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the complainant will be informed of investigation findings or decision / s reached.

- The case manager of level 2 (two) / medium risk and above complaints must maintain a record of investigation / review progress on *C&K Online Feedback Register*.
- All investigation / review records to be uploaded as attachments on *the C&K Online Feedback Register*.
- When required the Incident and Complaints Advisor may provide regular reports regarding complaint investigation / review progress to relevant managers and the RSP.

3.0 Resolution and response

- When the investigation / review is complete the case manager will present their findings and proposed recommendations to their line manager as outlined on the *C&K Online Feedback*

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Register. Findings and proposed recommendations for complaints assessed as level 4 and 5 to be presented (via an information brief) to the RSP

- Once findings and recommendations have been approved by the line manager / RSP the case manager will contact the complainant to outline investigation findings and any decision / s reached.
- In most instances, a response / resolution to be provided verbally to the complainant,
- If the response / resolution is presented in writing, the case manager will, when appropriate / required, seek the advice of their line manager and the C&K Legal and Governance Team before providing the correspondence to the complainant.
- A response could include (but not be limited to):
 - An outline of the review / investigation process
 - An outline of the findings
 - Any action / s taken (e.g. a review of C&K policy or service / site protocol)
 - An outline of next steps / future actions
 - An apology.
- C&K will provide opportunities for an appeal if a resolution / response is not accepted by a complainant.
- The case manager to document the following on the *CO: 05.01.T1 Template Complaint Outcome Record* and / or *C&K Online Feedback Register*:
 - investigation / review findings
 - recommendations / actions, and
 - The complainant's level of satisfaction of resolution / response.

4.0 Appeal

- If the complainant requests an appeal, the matter is to be referred to the next level of management or the RSP.
- The relevant manager or RSP to conduct a review of the investigation process, findings and any recommendations / actions.
- If the relevant manager or RSP supports the investigation process, findings and recommendations / actions they will contact the complainant to outline their decision / s reached.
- If the relevant manager or RSP does not support the investigation process, findings and recommendations / actions the relevant manager or RSP will appoint a new / appropriate case manager to commence a new complaint investigation / review. The relevant manager or RSP will inform the complainant that a new complaint investigation / review will be completed.

5.0 Closure

- Providing a resolution / response is not the last step of the complaints management process
- The case manager to communicate (without breaching privacy / confidentiality) the following information to all relevant stakeholders:
 - investigation / review findings
 - recommendations / actions and the agreed timeframes for completion, and
 - the complainant's level of satisfaction of resolution / response.

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- It is the responsibility of the relevant Director / Manager to ensure any recommendations / actions are completed by the required timeframes.
- The case manager to follow-up at a later date to ascertain the complainant’s continued level of satisfaction with the resolution / response.
- Once completed, the case manager to ‘close’ the complaint outcome record on the C&K *Online Feedback Register*.

6.0 Organisational review and training

- Quarterly reports to be completed by the Incidents and Complaints Advisor to determine possible complaint trends and outline a summary and analysis of recommendations / actions.
- Reports to be presented to the Children’s Services team, Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and / or the C&K Board.
- All C&K employees to undertake annual compliance training regarding complaints management and this procedure (and related policy).

Links to associated documents

HR: 05	<i>Policy - Employee Grievances</i>
CO: 06	<i>Policy – Privacy</i>
SO:01.05	<i>Procedure – Child Incident Reporting</i>
Online form	<i>C&K Online Feedback Register</i>
CO: 05.01.T1	<i>Template - Complaint Outcome Record</i>
CO: 05.01.F1	<i>Feedback Form</i>

Acknowledgements and references

- Standards Australia (2014). *Australian Standard AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations*.
- The State of Queensland (Office of the Ombudsman) (2006). *Guide to Developing Effective Complaints Management Policies and Procedures*.

Revision Record

Version	Approval Date	Authorised by	Effective Date	Review Cycle	Next review date
1.0	19 May 2016	GM – Children’s Services	1 July 2016	Biannually	1 July 2018
2.0	6 December 2016	Kathryn Woods	6 December 2016	Biannually	December 2018
3.0	3 October 2017	Kathryn Woods	3 October 2017	Biannually	October 2019

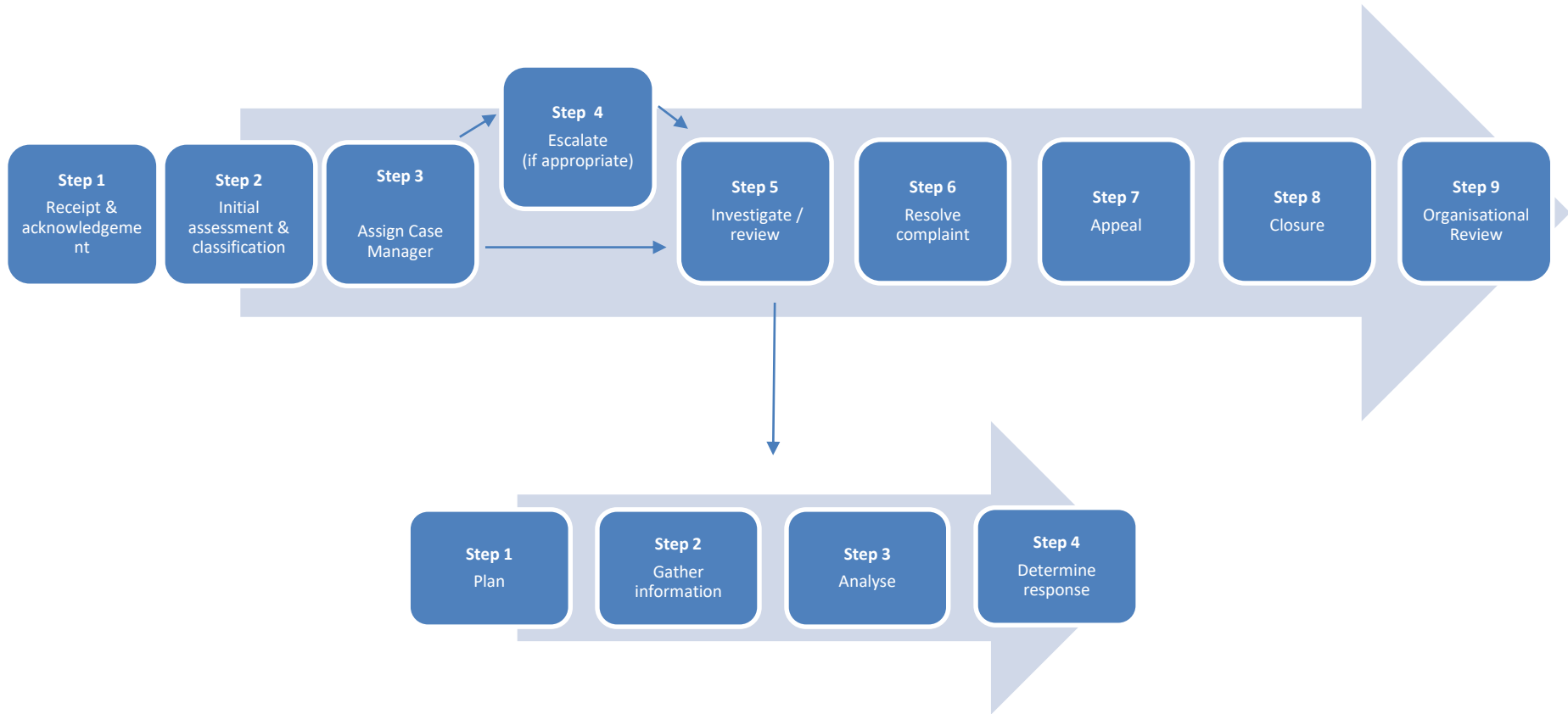
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Appendix 1



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Appendix 2

									Likelihood/Probability					
									1	2	3	4	5	
									Highly Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Probable	Almost Certain	
		Social/Community	Performance	Service Delivery	Health and Wellbeing	Reputation	Financial	Legal/Regulatory	Mag only occur in exceptional circumstances. 1 x 5 years or more. 0% - 5%	Unlikely but could occur at some time in exceptional circumstances 1 x 5 years. 5% - 30%	Likely to occur. 1 x 12 months. 30% - 50%	Will occur at some time. 1 x month. 51% - 90%	Could occur in most circumstance at any time. 1 x week. >90%	
Consequence	5	Catastrophic	Widespread social problems causing multiple impacts. Serious long term environmental and health issues.	Unable to achieve corporate objectives and/or corporate obligations	Loss of service delivery for more than seven days affecting multiple services	Loss of life	Extensive coverage in national media leading to significant reputational damage	>\$5M	Non-compliance results in criminal charges or loss of required accreditation	5 Low	10 Medium	15 High	20 Very High	25 Very High
	4	Major	Long delays in service delivery leads to State wide impacts socially, economically and financially. Emerging environment and/or health issue.	Unable to achieve corporate objectives and/or statutory obligations resulting in significant visible impact on service provision such as closure of a service.	Major disruption to C&K - serious damage affecting multiple services. Loss of service for more than 48 hours but less than seven days	Life threatening or extensive multiple injuries/claims	Coverage in national media with moderate reputational damage	>\$0.5M - \$5M	Non-compliance results in termination of service or imposed penalties	4 Low	8 Medium	12 High	16 High	20 Very High
	3	Moderate	Community backlash, social and community rejection	Additional costs required and or time delays to achieve objectives - adverse impact on Key Performance Indicators and targets.	Noticeable disruption to C&K services. Loss of service for more than 48 hours.	Violence or threat or serious injury/claims (notification of injury to a regulating body i.e. WHSR or OECEC)	Sustained coverage in local or state media. Intra-industry knowledge	\$0.1M - <\$0.5M	Short term non compliance but with significant regulatory requirements imposed	3 Low	6 Low	3 Medium	12 High	15 High
	2	Minor	Minor delay impacting on ability to meet social/community expectations	Partial achievement of objectives with compensating action taken or reallocation of resources.	Noticeable disruption to C&K services. Loss of service for no more than 48 hours.	Minor injury/claim (no permanent disability)	Concern raised by clients. Minimal coverage in local or state media.	>\$25K - \$0.1M	Some temporary non compliances	2 Low	4 Low	6 Low	8 Medium	10 Medium
	1	Very Minor	Low localized event with no broader impacts	Objectives still achieved with minimum extra cost or inconvenience	Insignificant disruption to services, no loss of service	No injury/claims	No reputational damage. Internal knowledge only	<\$25K	No noticeable regulatory or statutory impact	1 Low	2 Low	3 Low	4 Low	5 Low

Risk Matrix Result	Risk Rating	Minimum Management Response	Management & Review
>20	Very High	Immediate escalation of risk to Board for prioritised response and treatment plan execution.	Corporate Risk Register - Board Risk and Safety Panel
12 to 20	High	The risk requires active management and monitoring. It could pose an immediate threat and its impact would be significant.	Corporate Risk Register - ELT Risk and Safety Panel
8 to 10	Medium	The risk has the potential to move to red. It needs management and close monitoring but there is no immediate threat which would have significant impact.	Department Risk Register ICAG Local Resolution
1 to 6	Low Risk	The risk can be controlled at a local level and represents no immediate threat or impact. Ensure control measures are in place and continue to monitor . Periodic re-evaluation of risk required .	Department Risk Register ICAG Local Resolution
Consequence = Catastrophic		Immediate and on-going intervention is required from Senior management to ensure control measures are adequate, irrespective of Probability/Likelihood	