

Making a Complaint against the Child Care Unit or a staff member

October 2007

The Child Care Unit (CCU) is committed to operating in a professional manner at all times. However, there may sometimes be concern about CCU policy and practice, the way personal information is handled, or about individual staff members. It is essential for both the public and the CCU that there are clear processes in place to handle these concerns or complaints, ensuring that they are dealt with sensitively and effectively.

What if I have a concern?

We suggest you have an initial discussion with a Team Leader or other member of the Unit, about any concern, or to seek clarification of the Licensing Standards or policies/procedures implemented by the CCU. The phone numbers of relevant personnel are provided over the page.

This may be sufficient to address your concern. You may, however, decide that you should proceed to lodge a complaint.

Does a complaint have to be in writing?

A **formal** complaint needs to be in writing. It **will not** be followed up by the Department of Education unless it is in writing. Please feel free, however, to discuss any concerns with a Team Leader in the first instance.

Is there a particular form that I should use?

You are not required to complete a form. Your written complaint needs to specify clearly the nature of the complaint, detailing who the complaint is against and the relevant circumstances. Please ensure that you include

your contact details so that your complaint can be followed up. Please address your written complaint to the relevant Team Leader (where applicable) or the Director, Early Years (see addresses over the page).

Can I send in an anonymous complaint?

It is the Department of Education's policy *not* to follow up anonymous complaints. This is because further details cannot be sought from the complainant if necessary.

Will my complaint be kept confidential?

Subject to any relevant provisions of the Freedom of Information legislation, the complaint will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Please also note that your personal information is protected under the provisions of the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*.

Where a Team Leader follows up the issue you've raised, the Team Leader will discuss with you what information will be released. However, a formal, written complaint can only be properly investigated when the nature of the allegation is discussed with the person being complained about. This ensures that the person who is complained about is given 'right of reply' which is essential to due process. It is the Department of Education's practice that the name of the complainant is not withheld from the respondent.

Other principles governing the Department's process are: fairness, impartiality, professional conduct, transparency and consistency. If you would like further information on any of these,

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please feel free to ask a Team Leader within the CCU.

What are my rights as a complainant?

You have:

- a *right* to be heard in a confidential manner by an impartial person and to be treated with dignity and respect.
- a *right* for your allegation to be followed up through a fair process.
- a *right* to be informed whether the allegation will be followed up by the CCU and to receive an outline of the findings of the investigations.

Team Leaders in the Child Care Unit

- Team Leader, Licensing – East
- Team Leader, Licensing – West
- Team Leader, Policy & Projects

Phone number: 1300 135 513

Email: childcare.comment@education.tas.gov.au

Postal address: Child Care Unit
GPO Box 169
HOBART TAS 7001

Director, Early Years

Phone number: 03 6233 3893

Email: childcare.comment@education.tas.gov.au

Postal address: Early Years
GPO Box 169
HOBART TAS 7001

What happens when I make a complaint?

The person dealing with the complaint will try to resolve the complaint in discussion with you and will also seek information from the person against whom you have made the complaint.

If the complaint is about a particular process, then this process will be discussed at the

necessary level for resolution, eg through a Team Leader meeting, consultation with child care sector, or liaison with the Department's legal adviser.

The complaint may need to be taken to a higher level of management due to its seriousness or complexity. If this is the case, you will be advised as soon as possible.

What do I do if I believe that the complaint has not been adequately addressed?

You may wish to contact the Conduct & Investigations Unit or a higher level of management: contact details are provided below.

Conduct and Investigations Unit

Postal address: Department of Education
GPO Box 169
HOBART TAS 7001

Secretary of the Department of Education

Postal address: Department of Education
GPO Box 169
HOBART TAS 7001

Ombudsman's Office

Phone number: 1300 766 725

Email: ombudsman@justice.tas.gov.au

For further information, please request the document 'Further Information regarding Complaints Against the Child Care Unit' or download it from the website

www.childcare.tas.gov.au

CONTACT DETAILS

Child Care Unit, GPO Box 169, Hobart, Tas, 7001.

Phone 1300 135 513

