

COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Complaints	3
Receiving Complaints From Children	5
Reporting a Complaint to the Regulatory Authority	6
Safeguarding Concerns and Complaints	7
Staff Grievances and Complaints	8
Feedback	9
Policy Review Cycle	10
Roles and Responsibilities	11
Approved Providers	12
Nominated Supervisors and Responsible Persons	14
Educators	16
Families	17
Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	17

POLICY AND PHILOSOPHY

Our **Complaints and Feedback Management Policy** is child-focused and ensures our children, educators, management, other staff, families/carers, and the community can be confident that complaints and grievances are taken seriously and addressed effectively. We value the importance of open communication and receiving and responding to all forms of feedback as part of our commitment to continuous improvement and quality service provision for children. We are committed to resolving concerns promptly and collaboratively to ensure the best outcomes for those involved. We are committed to ensuring that our Complaints and Feedback Management Procedure aligns with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2). This procedure reflects our dedication to maintaining a child-focused, trauma-informed, accessible, and responsive complaints management system that prioritises the rights, dignity and safety of children, adults at risk, families and our community.

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COMPLAINTS

1.1 ON RECEIPT OF A COMPLAINT, EDUCATORS WILL:

- ☐ Acknowledge the receipt of the complaint, e.g. tell the complainant that you will write down their concern and will inform the Responsible Person in Charge.
- ☐ Provide the complainant the opportunity to email their complaint.
- ☐ Inform the Responsible Person in Charge.
- ☐ Where a conflict of interest is identified in the management of a complaint (for example, if the complaint involves the Responsible Person in Charge or a direct supervisor), the matter will be escalated to an independent senior leader or external advisor to ensure fairness, transparency and impartiality.

1.2 THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON IN CHARGE WILL:

- ☐ Contact the complaint by phone or face to face to discuss the concern.
- ☐ Document the complaint using a Confidential File Note, and make a register of the complaint on the service **CEEC Complaints and Feedback Register** including the:
 - time,
 - date,
 - and to who the complaint was raised.
- ☐ Upon receipt of a complaint involving allegations of harm to a child or adult at risk, we will immediately complete a preliminary risk assessment. This risk assessment will determine whether interim protective measures are needed to ensure the ongoing safety and wellbeing of all parties involved.
- ☐ Notify the:
 - Nominated Supervisor
 - Portfolio Manager,

1.3 THE PORTFOLIO MANAGER WILL:

- ☐ Receive the confidential file note via email.
- ☐ Liaise with the Compliance Team to determine if an investigation is required, or if the threshold to report to the Regulatory Authority is met,
- ☐ Support the Nominated Supervisor in responding and resolving the complaint.

1.4 IF DETERMINED TO MEET THE REPORTING THRESHOLD:

- ☐ The Portfolio Manager will:
 - Notify the Head of OSHC / Head of Early Years.
 - Support the Nominated supervisor to ensure appropriate action has been taken and the complaint is resolved in a timely manner.
- ☐ The Compliance Officer will:
 - Report in line with reporting a complaint to the **Regulatory Authority** below.

1.5 WHERE A COMPLAINANT FEELS THAT THEIR COMPLAINT HAS NOT BEEN DEALT WITH APPROPRIATELY, THEY ARE WITHIN THEIR RIGHTS TO REQUEST AN ESCALATION OF THEIR COMPLAINT THROUGH THE LEVELS BELOW:

- ☐ Nominated Supervisor
- ☐ Portfolio Manager
- ☐ Head of Roles
- ☐ General Manager
- ☐ Director, Catholic Early EdCare
- ☐ Executive Director, Centacare

RECEIVING COMPLAINTS FROM CHILDREN

We are committed to handling all complaints, particularly safeguarding matters, using a trauma-informed and victim-centred approach. We ensure that complainants are treated with sensitivity, respect, and confidentiality at all stages of the process. All individuals accessing our services have the right to express their feedback, concerns, and complaints, including children.

2.1 EDUCATORS WILL:

- ☐ Follow the complaints process specified within this document.
- ☐ Follow the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures if the child makes a disclosure.
- ☐ Provide trauma-informed, victim-centred support to complainants throughout the complaints process.
- ☐ We will also provide support, pastoral care, and appropriate supervision for respondents during the course of an investigation. Our approach will prioritise safety, fairness and dignity for all parties.

2.2 IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE, THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON IN CHARGE WILL:

- ☐ Support the child to feel safe and comfortable when making a complaint.
- ☐ Inform the child that they will need to tell another person to help resolve their concern, this may include:
 - The child's Parent/Carers
 - The Service Leader
 - The Portfolio Manager

REPORTING A COMPLAINT TO THE REGULATORY AUTHORITY

3.1 IF A COMPLAINT IS DETERMINED TO MEET THE REPORTING THRESHOLD, THE PORTFOLIO MANAGER WILL:

- ☐ Compile all relevant information relating to the complaint and provide via email to ***ceec.compliance@catholicearlyedcare.qld.edu.au*** for lodgement.

3.2 THE COMPLIANCE OFFICER WILL:

- ☐ Prepare the complaint submission and report as a C01 via the National Quality Agenda IT System.
- ☐ Receive any correspondence relating to the C01 submission.

- ☐ Receive receipt of the notification and forward to:

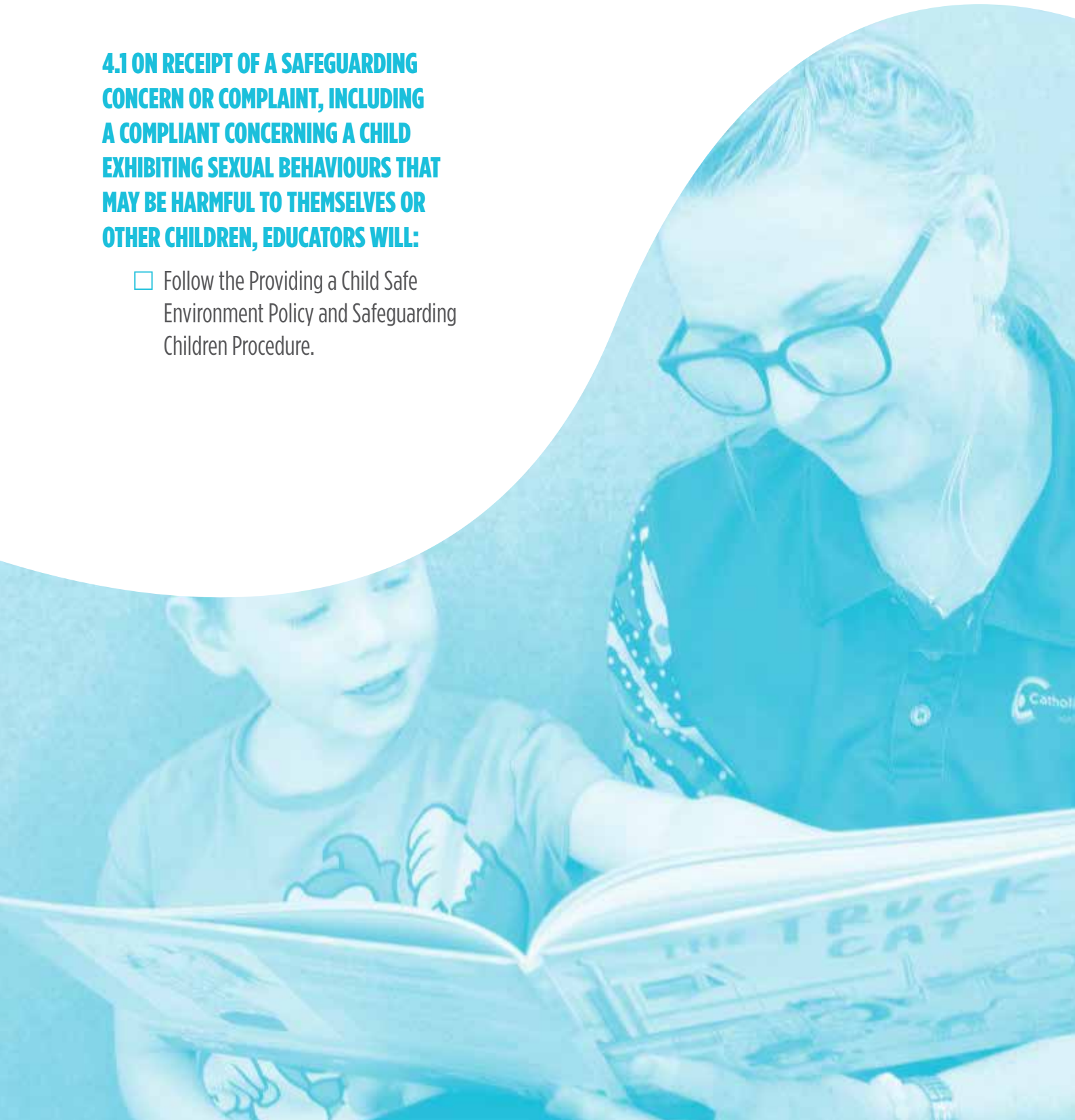
- The Portfolio Manager;
- The Service Leader (if appropriate);
- Records relating to safeguarding complaints, including all associated documentation, will be securely stored and retained for a minimum of 50 years, in accordance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and relevant privacy legislation.



SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

4.1 ON RECEIPT OF A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN OR COMPLAINT, INCLUDING A COMPLAINT CONCERNING A CHILD EXHIBITING SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS THAT MAY BE HARMFUL TO THEMSELVES OR OTHER CHILDREN, EDUCATORS WILL:

- ☐ Follow the Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy and Safeguarding Children Procedure.



STAFF GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

5.1 THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE PROVIDES GUIDANCE FOR STAFF GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS THROUGH:

- ☐ [Grievance Complaints Resolution Policy](#)
- ☐ [Grievance Complaints Resolution Procedure](#)
- ☐ [Whistle Blower Policy](#)
- ☐ [Whistle Blower Procedures](#)

WHEN RAISING GRIEVANCES OR COMPLAINTS, AS PER THE GRIEVANCE COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION PROCEDURE, STAFF ARE ENCOURAGED TO FOLLOW THE STEPS BELOW:

☐ **STEP 1 — Face to Face Dialogue:**

- Discussion should identify the problem exists and proactively attempts to resolve it with other party (Respondent).

☐ **STEP 2 — Informal Escalation of Matter:**

- Where unable to resolve matter through face-to-face dialogue, meet with the appropriate person/ immediate supervisor to discuss resolution.
- If the matter involves the immediate supervisor, then arrange meeting with the next senior manager.

☐ **STEP 3 — Lodge Written Complaint:**

- If resolution is not achieved, then the details of the grievance must be documented and submitted to the appropriate Manager, whereby a meeting is held to attempt resolution.

☐ **STEP 4 — Escalate Written Complaint:**

- If resolution is not achieved, then the matter may be escalated through the next level of management.

☐ **STEP 5 — Final Determination:**

- If matter is still unresolved, a formal meeting with the next level of management/Director for a final decision is held.
- Depending on the matter, a formal investigation by a third party may be warranted and advice can be obtained from your local HR contact. The decision will be communicated in writing to all parties.

- ☐ Staff are encouraged to raise concerns in good faith. Staff who make complaints or disclosures will be supported and protected under our Whistle-blower Policy, which provides protections for individuals making a report in line with legislative and organisational requirements.

FEEDBACK

6.1 FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND EDUCATORS ARE PROVIDED WITH A VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE. SERVICE LEADERS WILL CONSIDER:

- ☐ Establishing a service advisory group (with approval of the Portfolio Manager).
- ☐ Placement of a feedback box.
- ☐ The use of questionnaires and surveys.
- ☐ Communication via Xplor Comms Centre.
- ☐ Communication via email correspondence.
- ☐ Verbal communications.
- ☐ Service newsletters.
- ☐ Face to face meetings.
- ☐ We will ensure that complaints information and related materials are available in accessible formats to support all members of our community. This includes offering easy-read versions and communication support as needed to ensure inclusion.

6.2 WHEN MANAGING FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS, SERVICE LEADERS WILL ENSURE:

- ☐ An active listening, non-judgmental and solution focused approach is undertaken.
- ☐ Where possible conversations will be conducted in a private and confidential space away from children.
- ☐ Seek to understand all perspectives to reach a desired outcome.
- ☐ Respond in a timely manner.
- ☐ Document the feedback and actions in the QIP.
- ☐ Children are viewed as successful, competent, capable, and their rights and best interests are paramount.
- ☐ Consideration of equity, inclusion and diversity underpin decision making.
- ☐ The voice of Australia's First Nations Peoples is considered.
- ☐ The role of families is respected and supported.
- ☐ Best practice is expected in the provision of our education and care services.

POLICY REVIEW CYCLE

7.1 CATHOLIC EARLY EDCARE PROVIDES FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS REGULAR OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES. WE DO THIS BY:

- ☐ Communicating to all staff and services the existing policies and procedures due for review within the cycle and invite feedback.
- ☐ Providing templated communications to Service Leaders to email all families and invite feedback concurrently.
- ☐ Collating feedback, draft updates, and consult with regional partners.
- ☐ Providing drafts for internal governance review.
- ☐ Seeking feedback on the draft documents from the consultation group.
- ☐ Communicating to all staff and services the release of approved policies and procedures.
- ☐ Providing templated communications to Service Leaders to inform all families of the release concurrently.

ROLES AND **RESPONSIBILITIES**

APPROVED PROVIDERS

(Including Leadership and Management Teams)

- ☐ Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- ☐ Ensure the name and contact number of the person to whom complaints can be made is clearly displayed at the service.
- ☐ Ensure that the regulatory authority is notified in writing within 24 hours of any complaints alleging that a serious incident has occurred at the service or that the Education and Care Services National Law has been breached.
- ☐ Discuss the complaint with the complainant and make notes from the meeting or discussion.
- ☐ Ensure the inclusion of policies and procedures for managing complaints alleging that a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours.
- ☐ Ensure policies and procedures dealing with complaints include matters relating to the provision of a complaint handling system that is child focused.
- ☐ Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators and staff follow the Complaints and Feedback Management policy and procedure.
- ☐ Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators and staff, and available for inspection.
- ☐ Ensure educators, staff, volunteers and students are well informed about their individual child protection responsibilities, reporting and privacy obligations and processes for responding to disclosures.
- ☐ Provide induction training for educators and regular updates and reviews at team meetings on complaints management and the procedures.

- ☐ Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:
 - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected; or
 - Significantly impact the service's education and care of the children; or
 - Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.
- ☐ Regularly review the policy and procedures to ensure serious incidents and complaints are investigated promptly, fairly and thoroughly.
- ☐ Ensure that complaints result in consideration for relevant policies, procedures and practices.
- ☐ Ensure compliance with the Family Assistance Law and the requirements set out in the Child Care Provider Handbook.



NOMINATED SUPERVISORS AND RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

- ☐ Ensure that regulatory obligations are met in relation to dealing with complaints.
- ☐ Ensure that the complaints policy and procedures are discussed with families as part of enrolment and orientation and are made available if required.
- ☐ Ensure a private, safe and comfortable space is available for anyone wishing to raise a concern.
- ☐ Implement procedures for dealing with complaints and ensure all staff understand the process for managing complaints,
- ☐ Inform families and the broader service community of the Complaints and Feedback Management policies and procedures through newsletters and signage available at the front of the service.
- ☐ Discuss the complaint with the complainant including dates and actions taken to resolve the concern.
- ☐ Ensure complainants are provided a referral for Pastoral care if they would like to speak with the Parish Priest.
- ☐ Work co-operatively with the approved provider, educators, staff and/or the complainant during the investigation or resolution of a complaint.
- ☐ Ensure educators, staff, volunteers and students are well informed about their child protection responsibilities and reporting and privacy obligations.
- ☐ Ensure educators, staff, volunteers and students are well informed about the different ways children express concerns or distress and disclose harm, as well as processes for responding to disclosures from children.
- ☐ Regularly review the policy and procedures to ensure serious incidents and complaints are investigated promptly, fairly and thoroughly.

- ☐ Ensure that complaints result in reviews of relevant policies, procedures and practices.
- ☐ Respect the rights of families and children to provide feedback and register complaints in a confidential and safe manner.
- ☐ Respect the dignity and privacy of all parties involved in the complaint resolution process.
- ☐ Include feedback received, the outcomes of complaints and any changes that may have resulted from a concern raised as an agenda item during staff meetings.
- ☐ Collaborate with educators to identify goals and strategies for inclusion in the Quality Improvement Plan from feedback received, the outcomes of complaints and any changes that may have resulted ensuring the privacy and anonymity of individuals.
- ☐ Ensure alleging that the safety, health or wellbeing of a child was, or is, being compromised, or that the law has been breached require to be lodgement to ACECQA within 24 hours of the complaint.

EDUCATORS

- ☐ Understand and implement the Complaints and Feedback Management policy and procedures.
- ☐ Report all complaints received to the nominated supervisor and/or approved provider promptly so time frames can be adhered to.
- ☐ Support the nominated supervisor and approved provider in the investigation and/or resolution of complaints.
- ☐ Understand and are aware of child protection law and their individual responsibilities.
- ☐ Are aware of the different ways children express concerns or distress and disclose harm, as well as the processes for responding to disclosures from children.
- ☐ Support children to know who to talk to if they are feeling unsafe and understand the complaint handling processes.
- ☐ Respect the right of families to provide feedback and initiate complaints.
- ☐ Do not engage in, encourage, or accept acts of unlawful discrimination against a child or family as a result of a complaint.
- ☐ Respond to feedback and complaints by families concerning discrimination sympathetically and professionally.
- ☐ Participate in reflecting on feedback received, the outcomes of complaints and any changes that may have resulted during staff meetings.
- ☐ Collaborate to identify goals and strategies for inclusion in the Quality Improvement Plan from feedback received, the outcomes of complaints and any changes that may have resulted.
- ☐ Provide a safe and comfortable space for children to raise concerns.
- ☐ Ensure children understand the process for raising complaints or concerns on matters important to them.
- ☐ Document all concerns raised by children including any action taken.
- ☐ Maintain the child's confidentiality if raising a concern.

FAMILIES

- ☐ Understand the Department of Education, Skills and Employment provides a Child Care Tip-off Line to raise concerns about practices relating to the management of subsidies.
 - **Phone:** 1800 664 231
 - **Email:** tipoffline@dese.gov.au
- ☐ Follow the Complaints and Feedback Management policy and procedures.
- ☐ Provide feedback or complaints in line with the policy and procedures.
- ☐ Respectfully engage with service representatives managing feedback and complaints.
- ☐ Engage with educators at pick up and drop off times, and email or call throughout the day as required.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- ☐ Centacare will place this policy on Archdiocesan Intranet (AI). Service Leaders and Managers are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate communication of policies and supporting documents to staff has occurred.
- ☐ All staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy.
- ☐ Summary information about fees and related procedures will be included in the CEEC information handbooks.
- ☐ Educators and families will be invited to participate in the review of this procedure.
- ☐ Changes to this document will be shared with families and educators.
- ☐ Ongoing training opportunities for Service Leaders and Responsible Persons in Charge will be provided using a range of learning platforms. Videos of some Xplor processes are available on AI.
- ☐ Contact the Policy Sponsor for further interpretation of this policy.

