



## PARENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS Policies and Procedures

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**Effective Date:** September 2017

**Revised Date:**

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### Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents and guardians, the childcare licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues and concerns.

### Definitions:

*Licensee:* The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e. the operator).

*Staff:* Individual employed by the licensee (i.e. program room staff).

*Parent or Guardian:* An individual who is responsible for the caretaking of a child, whether attending or not attending the Centre.

### Policy

Faith Infant and Early Education Centre is committed to providing a childcare facility free of conflict, where employees and parents are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. Faith Infant and Early Education has instituted this policy to create a fair and transparent process for resolving issues, concerns and conflicts between the licensee, parents and staff. This policy establishes clear and consistent standards that apply to issues, concerns and conflicts between the licensee, parents and staff to ensure that they are addressed promptly and the result is given efficiently.

The guidelines in this policy may also apply to situations arising out of a serious occurrence. This policy is intended to supplement the Ontario Ministry of Education process related to reporting serious occurrences; the guidelines and procedures provided here are not to be used as a substitute for reporting.

### General

Parents and guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) is experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children,

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parents and guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents and guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents and guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues, concerns and complaints raised by parents and guardians are taken seriously by Faith Infant and Early Education Centre and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve them to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues, concerns or complaints may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent or guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue, concern or complaint will be provided to parents or guardians within 2 business days (s). The person who raised the issue, concern or complaint will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues, concerns or complaints will be fair, impartial and respectful to the parties involved.

## Complaint Resolution Procedure

### *Step 1: Discussion*

- Staff and parents are encouraged to discuss any issues, concerns or complaints with the involved parties as the situation dictates.
- Under ideal circumstances, the conflicting parties shall reach a reasonable resolution without the necessity of escalating the complaint.
- If a discussion is not feasible or fails to reach a reasonable resolution, a formal complaint may be made with the Supervisor/Administrator.

### *Step 2: Escalated Complaint*

- If a parent wishes to escalate a complaint, staff should provide the parent with the appropriate information to do so and should advise them of the proper procedure, including:
  - Whom to file the complaint with, and
  - Timelines for complaint filing, investigation and resolution.
- If a staff member wishes to escalate a complaint, the individual may do so with the Management Team.
- If a parent escalates a complaint, the associated staff members will be requested to submit documentation of the complaint to the Management Team.
- All complaint documentation provided by parents and staff must contain the following information:
  - The date and time of the incident or when this information was made available;
  - The details of the complaint;
  - The names of all involved parties and their role in the complaint;
  - Any witnesses; and

- Steps have been taken to date to resolve the complaint.

### *Step 3: Complaint Investigation*

- Escalated complaints shall be reviewed and investigated by the appropriate member of the Management Team or Board of Directors.
- These complaints must be submitted within seven (7) days from the date of the alleged incidents.
- In all cases where escalated complaints have been lodged, it is important to maintain a policy of strict confidentiality between the complainant and the respondent. For investigative purposes, the offending party may be notified.
- Investigations shall be completed within five (5) business days unless circumstances prevent the investigation from being completed within that timeframe.

## **Confidentiality**

Every issue, concern or complaint will be treated confidentially, and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (i.e. To the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society)

## **Conduct**

Faith Infant and Early Education Centre maintains high standards for positive interactions, communication and role-modelling for children. Harassment and discrimination will, therefore, not be tolerated by any party, especially when children are present.

Suppose at any point a parent or guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled. In that case, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the Supervisor or Administrator.

## **Expectations**

### *Staff*

- Must fully comply with the Parent Issues and Concerns Policy.
- Shall be treated fairly throughout the process as either a complainant or respondent.
- Shall be responsible for maintaining confidentiality regarding their involvement and the complaint itself.
- Shall co-operate with any investigations concerning escalated complaints.

### *Management Team*

- Shall be responsible for the communication of this policy and its procedures.
- Shall receive and address escalated complaints appropriately.
- Shall investigate any issues, concerns or complaints and supporting documentation promptly.

- Shall attempt to reach a reasonable resolution to the conflict between staff and the parent or the Centre and the parent.
- Shall inform the complainant and the offending party of possible resolutions available.

### *Parents*

- Shall treat staff with respect in all interactions.
- Shall direct issues, concerns and complaints to the appropriate staff member and communicate all maturely and respectfully.
- Shall participate in the resolution process as defined in this policy and other Faith Infant and Early Education Centre policies and procedures.

## Resolutions

- If an apology is made by the offending party and the complainant accepts the apology, this may be viewed as a reasonable resolution.
- All attempts shall be made to reach a reasonable resolution through the mediation of the complaint with both parties' involvement.

### *Where the complaint is substantiated:*

If a complaint is substantiated and a reasonable solution through mediation is not possible, the following actions may be taken for the offending party. Please note that the items in this list are not necessarily progressive, and steps may be skipped depending on the nature of the incident.

### *Where the respondent is a staff member:*

- Education and training.
- Verbal warning.
- Written warning.
- Suspension.
- Termination of employment.

### *Where the respondent is a parent:*

- A verbal warning will be given advising of changes that need to be made to actions, attitudes or behaviours.
- A written warning advising of changes that need to be made to actions, attitudes or behaviours.
- Termination of services offered by Faith Infant and Early Education Centre to the parent, including current and all future child care arrangements.

### *Where the complaint is not substantiated:*

If a complaint is not substantiated due to lack of evidence or other reasons, both parties shall be informed of the decision, along with the rationale used. Both parties should be reminded that an unsubstantiated complaint does not necessarily mean that it was filed under false or frivolous pretences.

A complainant may request that the investigation be re-opened if pertinent new evidence can be provided or reprisal due to the allegation has occurred.

## Records

- Faith Infant and Early Education Centre shall keep on file all formal complaints, the accompanying documentation and the findings of any investigation.
- Information from a previous investigation resulting in a substantiated complaint may be used for review and consideration purposes in the event of a new allegation.

## False or Frivolous Issues, Concerns or Complaints

- Staff and parents should be aware that a formal complaint against a parent or a staff member is a serious allegation with repercussions.
- Where a complaint is found to be either false or frivolous, or where supporting documentation for a complaint has been falsified, the complainant or witness may be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment or the immediate termination of child care arrangements.

## Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child:

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childremsaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

*Escalation of Issues or Concerns:* Where parents or guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern in writing to the President of the Board of Directors.

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers, etc.) where appropriate.

**Procedures:**

<b>Nature of Issue or Concern Related to:</b>	<b>Steps for Parent or Guardian to Report the Issue or Concern:</b>	<b>Steps for Staff or Management Team in Responding to Issue or Concern:</b>
<p><b>Program Room</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedules</li> <li>• Sleep arrangements</li> <li>• Toilet training</li> <li>• Indoor or outdoor program activities</li> <li>• Feeding arrangements, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the classroom staff directly.</p>	<p>Address the issue or concern at the time it is raised or arrange for a meeting with the parent or guardian within 2 business days.</p> <p>Document the issues or concerns in detail.</p>
<p><b>Centre or Operations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child care fees</li> <li>• Hours of operation</li> <li>• Staffing</li> <li>• Waiting lists</li> <li>• Menus, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the Supervisor or Administrator.</p>	<p>Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the date and time the issue or concern was received;</li> <li>• the name of the person who received the issue or concern;</li> <li>• the name of the person reporting the issue or concern;</li> <li>• the details of the issue or concern, and</li> <li>• Any steps are taken to resolve the issue or concern or information given to the parent or guardian regarding the next steps or referral.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staff, Supervisor, or Administrator</b></p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the individual directly.</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, etc., that put a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p>
<p><b>Student or Volunteer</b></p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the staff responsible for their supervision. In their absence, speak with the Supervisor or Administrator.</p> <p>All issues or concerns that put a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Supervisor as soon as parents or guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Ensure the investigation of the issue or concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 2 business days or as soon as reasonably possible after that. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p> <p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s) or guardian(s) who raised the issue or concern.</p>

**Contacts:**

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or [childcare\\_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca)

Board President: The current listing of all Board Members can be found on the Parent boards

Administrator: Upper office at the Centre - [info@faitheducation.ca](mailto:info@faitheducation.ca)

Supervisor: Main office at the Centre - [info@faitheducation.ca](mailto:info@faitheducation.ca)

York Region Public Health: 1-877-464-9675

College of Early Childhood Educators: 416-961-8558

**Parent issues and concerns**

**45.1 Every licensee shall ensure that there are written policies and procedures that set out how parents' issues and concerns will be addressed, including details regarding,**

- (a) the steps for parents to follow when they have an issue or concern to bring forward to the licensee;
- (b) the steps to be followed by a licensee and its employees in responding to an issue or concern brought forward by a parent; and
- (c) when an initial response to the issue or concern will be provided. O. Reg. 126/16, s. 31.

**Parent handbook**

**45. (1) Every licensee shall have a parent handbook for each child care centre or home child care agency it operates which shall include,**

- (a) information about,
- (a.2) a copy of the licensee's policies and procedures required under section 45.1 regarding how parents' issues and concerns will be addressed;