

Feedback, Complaints, and Appeals Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

Feedback and complaints are important to improve systems, services, and practices. We value feedback on what we do well and should continue and what we can do better.

Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre feedback and complaints management system is:

- Accessible and available to all clients and their legal representatives
- Procedurally fair and maintains confidentiality

We continue to provide high-quality services while complaints are managed.

If a complaint is related to a critical incident, the response must reflect the incident management process.

Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre as a whole.

HSQF Related Standards

- Human Services Quality Standard Indicator 5.1
- Human Services Quality Standard Indicator 5.2
- Human Services Quality Standard Indicator 5.3
- Human Services Quality Standard Indicator 5.4

(Available at https://www.families.qld.gov.au/_media/documents/hsqf/standards/standards.pdf)

Principles

The principles supporting unbiased feedback and complaints management processes are:

- Consistency - risk management applies to all parts of our organisation
- Continuous improvement - all clients are encouraged to make a complaint themselves or with the support of an independent advocate
- Outcomes - the focus is on achieving positive results for all clients
- Respect - all staff have the right to make a complaint and have it investigated and resolved fairly and respectfully.

Communication

- All staff and volunteers are trained in and comply with complaints management and resolution processes. Refer to the organisation's Staff Induction, Training, Supervision and Support Policy and Procedures.
- The Client Service Charter (which includes information about the Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre complaints process) is both displayed and available at front reception for all clients who attend the centre and made available on the Centre website. This document is also available in an Easy English version if required.
- A copy of the full Feedback, Complaints, and Appeals Policy and Procedure is available on the Centre's website and in hard copy at the Centre.
- A child friendly version of the complaints process is prominently displayed at multiple locations at the Centre. Refer to the end of the policy for this document.

Procedure

- Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre supports people to make a complaint or provide feedback
- People can provide their details when they make a complaint, appeal or provide feedback, or they can remain anonymous
- People can make a complaint or provide feedback by:
 - Completing Complaints and Feedback Form
 - Talking directly to a Staff member or Volunteer
 - Asking to speak to the Centre Manager
 - Contacting our Management Committee Chair or Secretary
- We respond to every complaint and feedback to ensure the safety of clients and others or to prevent harm to the clients and others
- We keep records of complaints and feedback. Records are confidential and able to be accessed only by the Centre Manager or, as required, the Chair or Secretary of the Heights Management Committee.
- Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre complaints investigation and resolution process encourage the participation of clients, their legal representatives, and if required, an independent advocate
- We conduct all investigations in a manner that protects the rights, confidentiality, fairness and equity of all parties
- We respond to complaints within five business days.
- In most cases, we resolve complaints to the complainants' satisfaction within fourteen days of the complaint being raised.

Internal Complaints Resolution Process

- If the complaint relates to staff or is a service issue, it is raised for resolution with the individual concerned
- If the complaint remains unresolved, the Centre Manager escalates the matter to the Heights Management Committee.

Escalation

We keep all complainants informed of any investigation resulting from the complaint, including actions taken to resolve the issue. If the complainant feels that the complaint is not resolved to their satisfaction, they can exercise the right to appeal by escalating their complaint to:

- Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety
- Queensland Ombudsman

Investigating and Responding to Child Abuse Concerns or Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre takes seriously all concerns, complaints and allegations of abuse or suspected abuse against any child or young person in the service. They will be handled sensitively, investigated in a timely manner, and with the safety of the child as the primary consideration. Refer to the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy and Child Safe Policy for further detail about ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, including providing a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

As the Contact Officer, the Centre Manager should be informed of any breach of the Risk Management Strategy or the Code of Conduct, or of suspicions relating to the safety of a child or young person attending the Centre. The Chair of the Heights Management Committee is the alternate contact if required.

Critical Incidents are to be reported to the Heights Management Committee and the Department by the Centre Manager as per the Incident Management Policy and Procedure and the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety's *Critical Incident Policy*.

Conducting investigations

All allegations and reports of incidences of abuse will be investigated.

Where the police or other external authorities have been contacted about a concern, allegation or incidence of child abuse, they may undertake an investigation.

The Heights Management Committee may have occasion to conduct an internal investigation. Internal investigations will be conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice and will remain confidential (however there may be a need to interview or consult other staff members during the investigation). Staff and Committee Members involved in conducting internal investigations will be trained in how to conduct investigations.

1. The Centre Coordinator will manage the process and report to the Chair of the Heights Management Committee and to the Department of Families, Senior, Disability Services and Child Safety (if required).

2. All people concerned will be advised of the process by the Centre Coordinator.
3. All people concerned will be able to provide their version of events to the Chair of the Heights Management Committee.
4. The details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded in Risk Management Register.
5. The Centre Coordinator will report to the Heights Management Committee with recommendations for courses of action the Committee should take;
6. An appropriate outcome will be decided by the Heights Management Committee.

All workers must fully cooperate with any internal or external investigation that takes place.

Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre will seek to determine what organisational processes allowed the incident to happen and undertake all possible measures to mitigate the risk of a similar incident occurring again. Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre will follow approved records management and incident recording procedures.

Disciplinary Action

While an investigation is in progress, the worker against whom an allegation is made may be stood down until a decision is made about whether an offence has been committed.

If the investigation concludes that an offence has been committed, or is likely to have been committed, disciplinary action will be taken proportionate to the severity of the offence including legal action.

Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

- emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the Code of Conduct;
- providing closer supervision;
- further education and training;
- mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate);
- disciplinary procedures if necessary; or
- reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.

Where a person is terminated from the organisation due to being found to have committed an offence, the Centre Manager has responsibility for notifying the relevant bodies for child protection and safety.

Supporting Affected Persons

Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre is responsive to the needs of all persons affected by a disclosure of child abuse. Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre will ensure workers are trained and aware of the processes for providing support to affected persons, including trauma-informed practice.

Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre will apply the following principles for supporting children when responding to reasonable belief that child abuse has occurred:

- The safety of the child is paramount to all procedures;
- Children will be treated with dignity and respect, and their views, feelings and experiences validated;
- Children understand their rights and are aware of how they can exercise them;
- Every allegation of abuse will be considered and taken seriously;
- Children have the right to determine the extent to which they are involved in the investigation and decision-making processes;
- Children, and their family, advocate or supporter where appropriate, will be given regular updates on the progress of the investigation and informed on all measures being taken;
- All procedures for addressing abuse are fairly considered, including legal action;
- Confidentiality is respected, however will not be a barrier to action; and
- Children, their family and advocates or supporters are involved in the resolution process where appropriate.

Immediately following a disclosure of abuse Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre will ensure affected persons are supported to access emergency services as required, including medical assistance, emergency psychological assistance, and the police if there is an allegation of criminal activity.

Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre will ensure the child is given any aids they require to assist them when communicating and giving their account of an allegation or incident of harm. Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre will ensure that children are offered an interpreter if they have difficulty communicating in English or have other requirements such as limited hearing. The Centre Manager will make the child comfortable by:

- Providing an inclusive and culturally safe environment;
- Ensuring a private, quiet and secure environment in which the child feels comfortable;
- Allowing the child to have control over who is present and facilitating the presence of a trusted supporter where appropriate;
- Allowing the child time and space to give their version of events as they remember it, including breaks when needed;
- Speaking clearly, calmly and without judgement, using language appropriate for the age of the child;
- Asking questions sensitively, including repeating or rephrasing questions as required to ensure they are understood;
- Actively listening;
- Conveying that abuse is unacceptable and affirming the child's right to report abuse; and
- Where appropriate, explaining the incident management process, possible next steps, and who may be able to assist.

Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre recognises that incidents of abuse may have broad and traumatic impact for all affected. Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre will ensure that all persons affected by an incident of abuse, including workers, the governing body and others, will be provided with access to appropriate medical assistance, counselling and additional services e.g. Employee Assistance Program.

Privacy, Protection and Confidentiality

Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre expects all responsible parties to respect privacy and maintain confidentiality in the handling, storage and communication of personal and confidential information in compliance with organisational standards and policies.

Wilsonton Heights Neighbourhood Centre will follow approved policies for communicating information to the relevant authorities in situations of emergency or serious risk to safety.

Refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Client Service Charter
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure
- Staff Induction, Training, Supervision and Support Policy and Procedure
- Cultural Safety Policy
- Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy
- Child Safe Policy

Supporting Documents

Complaints and Feedback Form

Complaints and Compliments Register

Review

This document was last reviewed in December 2025.

I CAN SHARE THINGS THAT WORRY ME OR WHEN I HAVE AN IDEA TO MAKE SOMETHING BETTER AT WILSONTON HEIGHTS NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE...

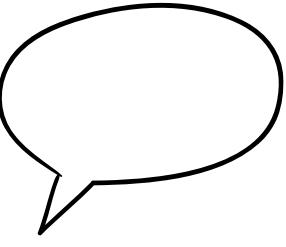
What is it about?

The Place	Myself	Friends or other kids	Parents, Workers or other Adults
Something or somewhere is unsafe	Someone forcing me to do something	Bullying	Not listening or helping or being respectful
Unknown person	Hurt	Annoying	Making me feel unsafe
Something is broken	Feeling sad, lonely, upset	Being mean	Arguing
An idea for something that kids need	Something that would help me	They need help	Not doing things that are helpful for kids

Who can help?

Parent, Aunty, Uncle, family or another adult	Someone who works here	Kaye, the Manager
		

How can I tell?

Ask for help	Ask your friends, parents, Aunties, Uncles or families to support you to tell	Write a note, draw a picture, or write on a complaint form and give it to an adult
		

If you don't want to tell your name when you write a complaint, you don't have to. If you tell us your name, we will make sure we talk to you or the person who looks after you as soon as possible about what we are going to do. If you share something private, we will only tell the people we need to tell to help you and to make you safe. If you aren't happy how we help with what you tell us, you can get an adult to help you call the government about it: 1800 491 467 (Adapted from Kerry Street Community School Child Friendly Complaints Procedure)

IF YOU WANT TO SHARE AN IDEA OR NEED
TO TALK ABOUT SOMETHING THAT IS
WORRYING YOU, YOU CAN TALK TO US



KAYE
(Manager)



AMANDA
(Aunty Gummy)



SHARMAINE
(Aunty)



TY

We want to listen to you!

We want to know your ideas!

If you share something private, we will only tell the people we
need to tell to help you and to make you safe