

EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE POLICY

Policy Statement

Little Adventures Early Learning (LAEL) is committed to providing a workplace where employees are treated with dignity, respect and fairness. The purpose of this policy is to provide employees with a clear process for raising workplace concerns or grievances and to ensure those concerns are managed promptly, fairly, consistently and confidentially, wherever practicable.

LAEL encourages employees to raise concerns early so that issues can be resolved before they escalate and negatively impact individuals, teams or the workplace.

Scope

This policy applied to all LAEL employees, including permanent, part-time, casual, fixed term employees and other workers engaged by LAEL where appropriate.

Policy Statement

LAEL promotes an open, respectful and consultative workplace where employees feel comfortable raising concerns without fear of reprisal.

Employees who raise a genuine concern will be treated fairly and supported through the process. LAEL will not tolerate victimisation or adverse treatment of any person because they have raised genuine workplace concern or participated in a grievance process.

All parties involved in a grievance are expected to:

- Act respectfully and professionally;
- Participate honestly and in good faith;
- Maintain confidentiality wherever possible; and
- Cooperate with enquiries or investigations.

Responsibilities

Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- Treating others respectfully;
- Raising concerns promptly;
- Participating honestly in grievance processes;
- Maintaining confidentiality; and
- Complying with this policy.

Responsible Persons/Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director/Approved Provider

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Responding to concerns promptly;
- Supporting employees;
- Escalating matters where appropriate;
- Maintaining confidentiality; and
- Seeking advice from Human Resources when required.

Human Resources

Human Resources is responsible for:

- Providing advice and guidance;

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- Supporting managers and employees;
- Coordinating investigations where appropriate;
- Maintaining appropriate records; and
- Monitoring compliance with this policy.

Guiding Principles

When managing workplace grievances, LAEL will seek to ensure that matters are:

- Addressed as early as reasonably practicable;
- Managed fairly and impartially;
- Handled with procedural fairness (natural justice);
- Treated confidentially, subject to the requirements of a fair investigation;
- Resolved at the lowest appropriate level wherever possible; and
- Documented appropriately.

While every grievance will be taken seriously, LAEL retains discretion to determine the most appropriate process for managing each matter depending on its nature, seriousness and circumstances.

Informal Resolution

Employees are encouraged, where appropriate and where they feel safe to do so, to raise concerns directly with the person involved in an attempt to resolve the issue respectfully and promptly. Many workplace concerns can be resolved through open communication and constructive discussion. Employees may seek assistance from their manager or Human Resources if they are uncomfortable addressing the issue themselves.

Formal Grievance Process

Where a matter cannot be resolved informally, or where the issue is serious in nature, employees should report the matter as soon as reasonably practicable to:

- Their immediate manager;
- Another manager (where appropriate); or
- Human Resources.

Employees should provide sufficient information to enable LAEL to understand the concern, including:

- The nature of the complaint;
- Relevant dates and locations;
- Persons involved;
- Any witnesses;
- Supporting documentation where available; and
- The outcome sought, if known.

Assessment and Investigation

Upon receiving grievance, LAEL will determine the most appropriate way to manage the matter. Depending on the circumstances, LAEL may:

- Seek further information;
- Facilitate an informal discussion or mediation;
- Meet with the parties involved;
- Conduct a workplace investigation;
- Interview witnesses;

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- Review relevant documents or other evidence;
- Appoint an external investigator where appropriate; or
- Implement temporary workplace arrangements while the matter is being assessed.

Not every grievance will require a formal investigation. Where an investigation is undertaken, LAEL will seek to ensure that:

- All parties have an opportunity to be heard;
- Relevant evidence is considered objectively;
- Decisions are based on available information; and
- Procedural fairness is provided to all parties.

Employees participating in formal grievance meetings may request a support person present. The support person is not an advocate and is present to provide support to the employee during the meeting.

Confidentiality

LAEL will make reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality throughout the grievance process. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Information may need to be disclosed where reasonably necessary to:

- Investigate the complaint;
- Provide procedural fairness;
- Comply with legal obligations; or
- Protect the health and safety of employees.

Employees involved in a grievance are expected to maintain confidentiality and not discuss the matter unnecessarily with others.

Outcomes

Following consideration of the grievance, LAEL may determine that:

- No further action is required;
- Informal resolution is appropriate;
- Mediation should occur;
- Workplace practices require improvement;
- Counselling or training is required;
- Performance management is appropriate;
- Disciplinary action is warranted; or
- Other corrective action is necessary.

Where appropriate, employees will be advised that the matter has been finalised. Due to privacy obligations, LAEL may not disclose specific disciplinary outcomes affecting another employee.

Serious Misconduct

Where a grievance substantiates serious misconduct, LAEL may take disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment in accordance with applicable legislation and company procedures. Where appropriate, LAEL may suspend an employee on pay while allegations are investigated.

Escalation

If an employee believes their grievance has not been appropriately addressed, they may request that the matter be reviewed by a more senior manager or Human Resources. Nothing in this policy prevents an employee from exercising any legal rights available under applicable legislation, including making a complaint to the relevant external authority.

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False or Malicious Complaints

LAEL encourages employees to raise genuine concerns. Knowingly false, malicious or vexatious complaints may result in disciplinary action. A complaint that is made in good faith will not be treated as malicious simply because it is not substantiated.

References

- *Fair Work Ombudsman: Effective Dispute Resolution (Best Practice Guide)* – August 2025

Policy Review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part of the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities, where necessary, as part of the review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.