WEST LAKES SHORE KINDERGARTEN
RAISING RIGHTS, GRIEVANCES AND RESOLVING CONCERNS

At West Lakes Shore Kindergarten everybody has rights and responsibilities.
We work together to develop responsibilities, rules and consequences which ensure the rights of all are respected.

Rights
There is a requirement for all preschools to develop and publish guidelines that describe appropriate and inappropriate steps and behaviours for all parents or caregivers to raise and resolve concerns about their child, the kindergarten, another child or issues that are real and relevant to the parent. This Policy outlines the process.

Context
Good relationships between home and the kindergarten give our children a better chance of success.
Child learning and the child’s wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do. Our learning, teaching and care programs are underpinned by our commitment to the following principles:
1. A constant focus on quality and standards.
2. Equity and access for all children
3. Accountability.
4. Partnerships.

This Policy provides information about avenues of communication, which strengthens the partnership between parents and the preschool providing quality education and care. It acknowledges the importance of the relationship between parents or caregivers and staff at this kindergarten

The process for raising concerns at West Lakes Shore Kindergarten
- In the first instance if you have any general enquiries you should speak with any one of the educators
- If you have a specific concern about your child or concern about another child, a process or routine please speak with the Director
- Concerns about general school/preschool matters such as the timing of special events; preschool policies; can be raised with the Chair of the Governing Council.
- Concerns about personal matters such as those about child, parent or caregiver or staff relationships should be raised in a confidential manner directly with the relevant teacher, or with the Director
- Your concern deserves time in order for it to be resolved, let the person know about your concern with a note or telephone call. This means they will be prepared and have a chance to gather all of the necessary information
- A time can then be set up which suits both parties. Arrange a time to speak to the Director providing information which will enable the meeting to be as useful as possible. If, together, you are not able to sort out the problem let the person know that you intend to speak to someone else
- At this kindergarten we find it is useful if the meetings and telephone conversations regarding concerns are documented.

It will always help if you are calm and honest in your approach. You should not approach a child/children directly.

The following points can act as a checklist to remind us that building meaningful partnerships relies on shared power and decision making.
1. Seek mutual respect – for example - appreciating the special skills and insights that both parents and staff bring to their relationship with children. At times the unique relationship that each parent or teacher has with the child may lead to differences in opinion as to what is best for the child.
2. Understand and appreciate each other’s perspectives – for example, the most basic role of parents is to protect their children. Eg If a child is hurt in the playground, it is natural that a parent will act in a way to defend the child.
3. Use two way communication –
Differences in opinion which are voiced in appropriate ways should be seen as a healthy indicator of the education community working together.
4. Set common goals that are realistic and attainable. In identifying what is needed a timeline will be given and this will vary according to the range and complexity of the issue, emergence of other unexpected additional issues, need for further inquiries to me made and the number of people involved. If at any stage there is a delay and a longer time frame involved, the staff member managing the issue is responsible for notifying the parent of the reasons for the delay and the likely timeframe within which the matter will be concluded. The expectation is that any follow through of the complaint will be within a turnaround time of two weeks. However if the complaint is easily actioned, then the turn around time would be within a few days.
5. **Hold realistic expectations** – for example, the best intentions can be undone if the promised delivery isn’t made. Positive relationships are built on open direct conversations where assumptions are surfaced in a safe trusting environment.

6. **Clarify team responsibilities** – Responsibilities of team member behaviour needs to be clear and appropriate to the Code of Conduct.

**Positive community relationships require that the site has a customer focus. All staff at the site needs to work to:**

- knowing what parents need and whether what is being provided is meeting those needs by regularly measuring parental satisfaction
- find ways to help parents know more about what the site has to offer their children in a way that is understandable.

A major role of the Director is to inspire positive talk about the site from within the site. Every effort is made to resolve issues at the local level.

**Processes for addressing a complaint or concern will include some or all of the following:**

- receiving, clarifying and documenting enquiries, concerns and complaints
- seeking and documenting further information
- deciding how and at what level the matter should be dealt with
- taking action about the matter
- communicating the action and ensuring the issue is resolved
- documenting the issue, the action and the outcome
- reviewing processes and procedures in the kindergarten as appropriate.

**Confidentiality statement**

It is important that your concerns are kept confidential, and although at times you may wish to seek support from friends or an advocate, it is important to do this with care. When the matter is discussed in the child’s hearing, it is important that the child understands that you have confidence that the issue will be resolved confidentially, at the preschool.

Criticism of the kindergarten or teacher does not support the child’s education as it can undermine trust and confidence. Similarly, staff is expected to maintain confidentiality and must not discuss the issue(s) in front of children. Staff would also expect the matters to be resolved with parents and caregivers appropriately.

Sometimes with the best of intentions we need to recognise signs that the situation has become stuck. On these occasions there are further steps that can be applied when the situation has reached stalemate.

**Additional support**

The Department of Education and Child Development indicates that a child’s preschool should be the first point of contact for parents, followed by the Regional Office and then the Parent Complaint Unit if the complaint cannot be resolved at the local level.

For further information, parents are also able to contact the free Parent Complaint Unit hotline on: Phone 1800 677 435 or by email: DECD parentComplaint@sa.gov.au Parents may contact the Parent Complaint Unit at any stage of the process for support and advice. This unit has a dual function:

- To provide advice and support to parents regarding their concern or complaint and
- To undertake objective and impartial reviews of complaints that has not been resolved at the local or regional level.

Open communication in a respectful way ensures the best outcome for you, your child and the kindergarten.

Director: Ms Tijana Gramp, telephone 8449 1189

Western Regional Office: telephone 8416 7333