Complaints and Feedback Policy

Purpose

Our Patch is committed to delivering services of a high quality and transparent service. A robust and open complaints and feedback policy contributes to maintaining quality services and ensuring issues and concerns are addressed in a timely manner. This policy provides guidance on how complaints can be made and Our Patch's process for resolving complaints.

Our Patch's Complaints Policy is operationalised through Our Patch's

- Workplace Investigation Procedure.
- Work Instruction Complaints, Feedback, Suggestions – Children and Families.
- Work Instructions Complaints, Feedback, Suggestions – Service Provision.

Scope

This policy applies to all employed staff, Board members, volunteers, contractors, consultants, labour hire workers, and work experience students engaged by Our Patch Group (Schools Plus, Amaze & Our Patch) to assist in its activities.

The term **'worker'** will be used to encompass all engagement types.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Child and Young Person	A person under the age of 18.
Complainant	Person who has made the complaint.
Respondent	Person subject of the complaint.

Policy Statement

Our Patch is committed to enacting children, families, workers, community members and Stakeholders right to provide feedback, make suggestions or make a complaint about our service. All feedback, suggestions or complaints will be treated with respect, assessed fairly and responded to promptly.

Our Patch values open and positive relationships with children and families who use our service and is committed to continuous improvement and excellence in service.

When designing service provision, Our Patch respects and values the input of the key stakeholders within the communities we serve.

Where possible, Our Patch employees will acknowledge all complaints and attempt to resolve when they are first raised.

Our Patch will:

- accept, explore and resolve complaints in a timely manner,
- aim to resolve complaints informally when first raised by a child, family, worker, community member or stakeholder,
- assist people to make a complaint,
- listen respectfully to complainants,
- apply procedural fairness in the management of complaints,
- ensure children, families and workers are not disadvantaged by making a complaint,
- review all feedback and suggestions for improvement to assess and guide improvements in practice and service delivery,
- use the outcomes of complaints to inform continuous improvement of our services,
- inform children and families of their rights to make complaints about Our Patch or the service delivered.

Roles and Responsibilities

Delegations

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for oversight of the Complaints and Feedback Policy on behalf of the organisation. This responsibility is delegated to the:

- Chief Operating Officer (COO) when the complaint or feedback is related to service provision, or,

- The Head of Safeguarding and Compliance (HSC) if the complaint or feedback relates to child safety, wellbeing or reportable conduct, or
- The Head of Talent and HR Operations (HTHRO) if the complaint relates to staffing issues.

If the above manager is not available the CEO will direct responsibility.

The delegated Head of role remains accountable for the complaint and provides oversight and support. Day-to-day management of the complaint is led by the Area Manager unless the Head of role directs otherwise, for example for reportable conduct.

Responsibilities

The **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** will:

- be informed of the complaint or potential complaint,
- ensure Our Patch's complaint management procedures are implemented, with an emphasis on resolving a complaint quickly and efficiently to ensure the child, family or worker's need is addressed in a timely manner,
- where required ensure a complainant feels heard and is assured their complaint is taken seriously.

The **Chief Operating Officer (COO)** will:

- ensure an appropriate investigation or review process is undertaken where a complaint relates to service provision,
- ensure all feedback, suggestions and complaints are assessed with a view of using information to improve service delivery,
- provide additional information and context to the complaint process,
- provide direction, supervision and support to any worker involved in the complaint process,
- ensure the child and family are provided with information and support during the complaint process,
- accept delegation of complaint management as directed by the CEO,

- ensure procedural fairness in the management of all complaints with the support of the Head of Talent and HR Operations (HTHRO),
- record and track the complaint in the complaint (when relating to service provision), feedback and suggestions register including type of feedback, suggestion or complaint, timeframe for resolution and team member responsible for managing the complaint or suggestion,
- provide a quarterly report on feedback, suggestions and complaints to the Executive Team, including commentary on trends and key issues.

The **Head of Safeguarding and Compliance (HSC)** will:

- lead any investigation process if the complaint relates to reportable conduct,
- lead any process if the complaint relates to child safety and wellbeing,
- accept delegation of complaint management as directed by the CEO,
- ensure Our Patch's child safeguarding systems, policies and procedures are up to date,
- ensure the organisation complies with any additional external / legislative reporting requirements that may arise,
- inform the relevant statutory bodies (e.g. Reportable Conduct Scheme in QLD & Vic) if applicable, Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme is administered by the Queensland Family and Child Commission and commenced 1 July 2026; Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme is administered by the Social Services Regulator; South Australia does not currently operate a separate reportable conduct scheme and instead applies its Child Safe Environments framework.
- complete child interviews if required and ensure parents are present,
- ensure procedural fairness in the management of all complaints with the support of the Head of Talent and HR Operations (HTHRO),
- record and track the complaint in the complaint (when related to child safety), feedback and suggestions register including type of feedback, suggestion or complaint, timeframe for resolution and team member responsible for managing the complaint or suggestion,

- provide a quarterly report on feedback, suggestions and complaints to the Executive Team, including commentary on trends and key issues.

The **Head of Talent and HR Operations (HTHRO)** will:

- be informed of the complaint where a worker is the respondent,
- ensure procedural fairness in the management of all complaints,
- lead any investigation process relating to workers except in the case of reportable conduct or a child safety and wellbeing concern,
- provide advice and support to any team member in the management of the complaint or feedback,
- record and track the complaint in the complaint (when relating to staffing issues), feedback and suggestions register including type of feedback, suggestion or complaint, timeframe for resolution and team member responsible for managing the complaint or suggestion,
- accept delegation of complaint management as directed by the CEO,
- provide a quarterly report on feedback, suggestions and complaints to the Executive Team, including commentary on trends and key issues.

Area Managers will:

- support Educators and Service Leaders in understanding and managing a complaint management process,
- advise the P&C or HSC and COO should a complaint be received,
- ensure that a serious incident form is completed when relating to a notifiable complaint as per the national law and regulations,
- advise the Service Leader to not investigate independently or interview the child,
- gather information at a service level to inform the complaint management process,

- assist with information gathering from a service level to inform any investigation which may occur.

Service Leaders/or Responsible Person (RP) will:

- ensure shifts are covered if workers are stood down,
- support educators to understand what feedback, complaints and suggestions are,
- implement safety and risk management plans,
- inform the relevant statutory bodies (e.g. Police, State Child Protection authorities) if applicable,
- ensure the name and contact details of the person families and workers can contact regarding a complaint are clearly displayed at the service, in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations,

Workers will:

- understand what a complaint is,
- report to their Service Leader about any feedback, suggestions or complaints,
- complete a factual file note, recording child's words,
- cooperate with any investigations, including attendance at interviews,
- adhere to Our Patch's Code of Conduct, Child Protection Policy and related Child Safe policies,
- under the direction of their Service Leader, support any child who has been impacted and their family as applicable and appropriate.

Children's Voices

It is imperative the child's voice guides every aspect of Our Patch, so children are encouraged to provide feedback about all aspects of Our Patch. Children are encouraged to continually provide feedback to make sure their voices are heard. Our

Patch wants children to feel grounded and supported and to have ownership of their Patch. Children are the core of Our Patch and ensuring they can participate in a program that reflects them and their wants is fundamental.

Our Patch's passion and vision is about capturing children's voice. To help improve children's experiences at Our Patch all children will be able to use one of the many tools we utilise in practice. All feedback is recorded and appropriate follow up will occur.

Feedback, suggestions and complaints made by children will increase children and family satisfaction with Our Patch and create empowered and engaged children as well as a program that reflects the needs and wants of children.

Tools and strategies to hear children voices, seek their feedback and complaints is found in the work instruction.

Types of Complaints

Complaints in Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) may relate to the way the service is delivered, the conduct or decisions of workers, or matters that affect the safety, wellbeing, dignity, rights or participation of children or workers. A complaint may be made verbally or in writing by a child, parent, family member, worker, school representative, community member or other stakeholder.

Our Patch will take all complaints seriously, record appropriately and risk assess to determine whether they can be resolved at service level or require escalation, investigation or external notification.

Child-related complaints

Child-related complaints are concerns that directly involve a child's safety, wellbeing, participation, dignity, rights, behaviour support, inclusion or experience of care. These complaints must be assessed promptly to determine whether any immediate safety response, family communication, risk management, safeguarding response, investigation or external notification is required. They include but are not limited to:

- concerns about a child's physical or emotional safety, including inadequate supervision, hazards, injury, illness, trauma or unsafe transitions;

- concerns about interactions between workers and children, including disrespectful communication, inappropriate behaviour guidance, exclusion, humiliation, rough handling or inappropriate discipline;
- concerns about peer interactions, including bullying, aggression, intimidation, social exclusion, unsafe play or inadequate educator support to manage conflict;
- concerns about inclusion, equity or participation, including whether a child's disability, developmental needs, cultural identity, language, medical needs or individual support requirements are being appropriately planned for and supported;
- concerns about behaviour support, including whether strategies are appropriate, child-centred, respectful and consistent with the child's support plan or family input;
- concerns about privacy, dignity or respect for children, including inappropriate sharing of personal information, toileting or changing practices, photographs, digital images or online environments;
- concerns raised by a child about feeling unsafe, unheard, unfairly treated, excluded, worried or uncomfortable at the service;
- concerns that may indicate abuse, neglect, reportable conduct, a serious incident, or a breach of the National Law, National Regulations or child safeguarding requirements.
- Where a complaint alleges a serious incident has occurred, a child's health, safety or wellbeing has been compromised, or the National Law or National Regulations may have been breached, the matter must be escalated to the Safeguarding and Compliance Team.
- Where a complaint alleges a serious incident, a contravention of the National Law, or physical or sexual abuse of a child, Our Patch will notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of becoming aware of the allegation; for other prescribed circumstances, notification will occur within 7 days, in accordance with the National Law (s174) and National Regulations (regs 175–176),
- Our Patch does not need to determine that a breach has occurred before considering whether notification or further action is required.

Service provision complaints

Service provision complaints are concerns about how Our Patch's services are organised, communicated, delivered or managed. These complaints may not involve an immediate child safety concern, but they may indicate a need to improve service quality, communication, supervision, staffing, systems or family engagement. Examples of service provision complaints include but are not limited to:

- service communication with families, including delayed responses, unclear information or inadequate notice of changes;
- administration or enrolment matters, including bookings, cancellations, fees, accounts, attendance records or sign-in and sign-out processes;
- program quality, including limited activity choices, lack of child voice in programming or activities that do not meet children's interests, age or abilities;
- food, nutrition or allergy management concerns, including menu quality, dietary requirements or communication about food provided;
- service environment concerns, including cleanliness, access to resources, use of indoor or outdoor spaces, noise, equipment or facilities;
- staffing arrangements, including continuity of educators, educator availability, supervision practices or educator-to-child ratios;
- communication or partnership with the school, including use of shared spaces, transitions between school and Our Patch, or coordination during school events;
- the way a previous complaint, suggestion or feedback was handled, including concerns about timeliness, fairness, confidentiality or follow up.

Parents and Families

Our Patch will interact genuinely with families so families feel part of Our Patch. Parents and families will be encouraged to talk to us, provide feedback and suggestions and make complaints. Our Patch will listen and respond to all feedback, suggestions and complaints appropriately.

Tools and strategies to receive complaints from families feedback can be found in the working instruction.

Members of the Community and Stakeholders

Our Patch will have a seamless partnership with the school communities it operates in and endeavours to operate in line with the school, not as a separate identity. To achieve this Our Patch will have an open relationship with the school and its community, where involvement from the school community is wholeheartedly welcomed.

Workers

Workers are encouraged to provide feedback, suggestions and complaints. In the first instance workers and educators are encouraged to seek to resolve any issues they have directly with any other worker involved. Should a worker or educator want to pursue a complaint they are encouraged to speak to their Service Leader, and if the matter cannot be resolved on site, escalate to the People and Culture Team who will provide advice on how to progress.

Workers subject to a complaint or grievance are referred to the *Workplace Investigation Procedure* and the *Safeguarding Response Policy.*

Legislative Requirements

This policy supports compliance with:

Related Legislation/Standards	
Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)	https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/html/asmade/act-2024-049
Child Safe Regulations 2025	https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/html/asmade/sl-2025-0126
Child Safe Environment Program – SA	https://www.safespacelegal.com.au/child-safe-environments-program-south-australia/
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)	https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/child-wellbeing-and-safety-act-2005/046
Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)	https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1999-010

Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and other Legislation Amendment Act 2020 (Qld)	https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/html/asmade/act-2020-032
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)	https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/children-youth-and-families-act-2005/148
Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)	https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/lz?path=/c/a/children%20and%20young%20people%20(safety)%20act%202017
Education and Care Services National Law	https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2010-104a
Education and Care Services National Regulations	https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/sl-2025-601a
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Principle 6)	https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/national-principles-child-safe-organisations

Document Information	
Document Title	Our Patch Complaints and Feedback Policy
Document Type	Policy
Document ID	POL-008
Version Number	1
Effective Date	September 2026
Review Cycle	☒Annual ☐Biennial ☒Trigger Based
Review Date	September 2027
Document Owner	Head of Safeguarding and Compliance
Approved By	Kerin McMahon
Approval Date	September 2027
Supersedes	N/A
Acknowledgement Required	☐Yes ☒No
Location	Policy and Procedure Directory

Related Policies and Procedures	
POL-003	Safeguarding Response Policy
PROC-###	Workplace Investigations Procedure
PROC-###	Safeguarding Response Procedure

Version Control History				
Version	Date	Owner	Description of Changes	Approved by
1.00	September 2026	Head of Safeguarding and Compliance	New Policy	Chief Executive Officer