MACQUARIE University	COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT	Work Area:	Early Learning & Vac Care
		Contact Officer:	Business Operations Manager, Early Learning
		Revision Number:	4
	Policy	Last Modified:	March 2026

PURPOSE	This policy will ensure a transparent and effective process is in place for how complaints are raised and subsequently managed.
RESPONSIBILITY/SCOPE	U@MQ Ltd Early Learning Centres, Vacation Care, and Junior Science Academy For ease of purpose, U@MQ will be referred to as Campus Life.
OVERVIEW	Campus Life is committed to fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. The Complaint Management Policy provides a structured and fair process for children, families, and staff to raise concerns or complaints about our services or conduct. We value all feedback as an opportunity to improve. To ensure a constructive and respectful environment for all parties involved, we require that all complaints and feedback be submitted in a respectful, courteous and non-threatening manner. Disrespectful, abusive, or discriminatory language will not be tolerated and may result in the complaint/feedback being dismissed or referred for further action. This policy outlines: • The principles that underpin the complaints resolution process • The mechanisms for lodging a complaint • Escalation and reporting of complaints • Unreasonable or vexatious complaints We are committed to handling all complaints fairly, promptly and confidentially, and to use the insights gained to enhance our services and practices. Definitions: • ***Person in Charge*** refers to whoever has responsibility for the service/program at that time. This is most likely to be the Centre Manager or JSA Program Supervisor/Coordinator/Manager or Responsible Person (dependent on the location/program type). • A ***Parent*** - means someone who has legal responsibility for a child. This may be a natural parent (through birth) or a legal guardian (legally appointed) but does not include a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child. • ***Complaint*** – means a statement or expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. • ***Frivolous or trivial complaint*** – means a complaint that is lacking in any substance or merit. These complaints are typically minor in nature and do not warrant formal investigation, do not impact the child's wellbeing, safety, or the quality of care, and/or are repetitive without new information or presented in a way that is harassing or unreasonable. • ***Vexatious complaint*** – means a complaint that: is repeatedly submitted without presenting new or relevant information; is made in a harassing,

	aggressive, or abusive manner; appears to be intended to intimidate, pressure, or undermine staff rather than resolve a legitimate concern; consumes excessive time and resources without contributing to service improvement; is unreasonable in nature, such as demanding outcomes that are unrealistic or outside the organisation's control. • ***Constructive Feedback*** – means helpful information that is given to someone to say what can be done to improve a performance, product, process or behaviour delivered in a respectful and solution-oriented manner • ***Complainant*** – means the person who has lodged the complaint • ***Respondent*** – means the individual or entity who is the subject of the complaint
THE POLICY	

Guiding Principles

Campus Life aims to maintain a complaint process that:

- is carried out with procedural fairness
- is carried out with transparency and consistency
- encourages, where possible, informal resolution of concerns
- is implemented in a timely and responsive manner
- ensures, so far as is practicable, privacy, confidentiality and the health, wellbeing and safety of all parties
- encourages the maintenance of harmonious relationships
- ensures that people are not adversely affected where they make a complaint in good faith

In line with regulatory requirements for Early Learning and Vacation Care, the regulatory authority is notified of complaints alleging the occurrence of a serious incident or contravention of the Education and Care Services National Law and/or Regulations.

Anonymous complaints will be accepted, however, if a complainant asks to remain anonymous it may affect Campus Life's ability to investigate, resolve and/or respond to the complaint.

Where a complaint is, or becomes, the subject of a police investigation, Campus Life will suspend the complaint investigation until further advice/guidance is received from the police or other relevant authority.

The Campus Life CEO will determine if a complaint is vexatious, frivolous or not supported by sufficient information to enable the complaint to be dealt with. Campus Life may dismiss or refer these types of complaints for further action.

A complaint may be withdrawn by the complainant at any time during the complaint resolution process.

Constructive Feedback
Campus Life is committed to fostering a culture of transparency, accountability and continuous improvement and values constructive feedback from children, families, and staff as a vital part of this process. All

constructive feedback is acknowledged and reviewed. Where appropriate, actions are taken and communicated to the relevant parties.

Constructive feedback is actively encouraged by:

- Creating a welcoming and open environment for communication.
- Regularly inviting feedback through surveys, meetings, and informal conversations.
- Ensuring staff are approachable and responsive to feedback.
- Providing clear information on how feedback is used to improve services.

Families and staff are encouraged to provide constructive feedback through any of the following methods:

- In writing: via email.
- Verbally: by speaking directly with staff, the Person in Charge, or management, in person or by phone.

Complaints - General

Complaints may be expressed formally or informally, in writing or verbally and may be submitted in person or via

- the Complaints Form (also available on the Early Learning Centre website)
- email the Centre or Program directly
- phone the Centre or Program directly

Contact details are available on the Early Learning Centre or Junior Science Academy webpages.

All complaints will be treated seriously and managed in a fair, transparent and confidential manner. Complaints are managed in accordance with a four-level approach to resolution:

a. Level 1: Informal complaint resolution
b. Level 2: Formal complaint resolution
c. Level 3: Internal review
d. Level 4: External review

Where appropriate, the complaint will be managed in the first instance by the Person in Charge in collaboration with the child (where applicable) and family. Where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest, the Campus Life CEO may nominate an appropriate alternative to manage and respond to the complaint.

Centres/Programs may receive complaints directly from children, particularly in the Vacation Care or Junior Science Academy programs. Where a child is not able to submit their complaint in writing, an adult may record the child's complaint on the Children's Feedback/Complaint Form on the child's behalf. If a staff member completes the form on behalf of a child, the parent/guardian of the complainant should be informed as soon as practicable.

The management of complaints that involve children will be child focussed and the safety, wellbeing, rights and best interests of all children will be the paramount consideration. Complaints that relate to a child exhibiting serious or harmful sexual behaviours (including behaviours directed toward other children), are considered child safety concerns, not general service complaints. This includes behaviour that is sexualised, coercive, developmentally abnormal, or raises concern about the safety or wellbeing of any child.

These complaints must be managed under the Keeping Children Safe Policy and Guidelines rather than the general complaints pathway. If aspects of the original complaint relate to service quality or communication rather than child safety:

- The child safety component is managed under child protection obligations

- The remaining portion may continue under the Complaints Policy and Procedure once it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Contact details for escalating a complaint are displayed in the centre foyer/sign in area.

Complaints Process and Escalation
A complainant may, at any stage, escalate their complaint within Campus Life, or to the U@MQ Board Chair, or to a relevant external agency such as the NSW Department of Education.

Complaints - Reporting
As per the Education and Care Services National Regulations, some complaints received by the Early Learning Centres and Vacation Care require notification to the NSW Department of Education. In these instances, the notification will take place within the required timeframe for the applicable type of complaint.

Where there is a complaint made in relation to an allegation that a staff member has placed a child at risk of harm, the Responding to Allegations Against Staff Policy and Procedure will be followed. This type of complaint may result in a Reportable Allegation notification to the Office of the Children's Guardian, a notification to the NSW Department of Education, and a report to police.

Responding to Complaints
All complaints will be responded to within a reasonable timeframe, with an initial acknowledgement of the complaint provided within 2 business days. Where the complaint is significant, or of a sensitive matter, a formal meeting time may be arranged and a management plan developed between the family and the service to ensure resolution.

Where appropriate and/or relevant, the person making the complaint will be informed about how their feedback has contributed to improvements or changes. Where the complaint is about an individual or group of staff members, any performance related action taken as a result of the complaint will remain confidential.

Privacy and Confidentiality
Any information associated with a complaint:

- will be treated with appropriate confidentiality, including by parties to the complaint
- may be disclosed in order to meet the requirements of procedural fairness and for the purposes of investigating or otherwise dealing with the complaint
- may be disclosed to an appropriate person or body where there is a serious risk of serious harm
- may be required to be disclosed by law

Confidentiality requests by the complainant or respondent will be applied where practicable. Confidential records will be maintained in accordance with the Records and Information Management Policy.

Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

Open communication and feedback that is constructive and respectful is welcomed. We are committed to addressing all concerns raised by families in a respectful and timely manner, however Campus Life has a responsibility to protect staff and maintain a safe and supportive environment for all.

- Complaints that are trivial, vexatious, repetitive without new information, or harassing in nature may be dismissed or referred for further action.
- U@MQ reserves the right to limit or discontinue engagement with individuals who persist in such behaviour.
- In cases where the nature of the complaints compromises the wellbeing of staff or the operation of the Centre/Program, U@MQ may take further action, including discontinuing the child's enrolment.

Policy Information	
Contact Officer (Role Title)	Business Operations Manager, Early Learning
Date Approved	Mar 2026
Approval Authority (Role Title)	CEO of U@MQ Ltd. (Campus Life)
Date of Commencement	Feb 2012
Amendment History	Feb 2012, April 2015, Oct 2025, Mar 2026
Date for Next Review	April 2029
Related Documents	Legislation Education and Care Services National Regulations • Section 174 • Regulation 168, 174, 175, 176 Policies Responding to Allegations Against Staff Policy Governance and Management Policy Code of Conduct – Child Safe Environments Keeping Children Safe Policy Procedures/Work Instructions Managing Complaints Procedure Responding to Allegations Against Staff Procedure and Flowchart Keeping Children Safe Procedure and Flowchart Forms Complaints Register Complaint Form Children's Feedback/Complaint Form
Policies superseded by this	This policy was previously referred to at the Complaints and Feedback Policy
Keywords	Complaint, Feedback