

**CLIENT CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS POLICY**

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# 1. Purpose & Objective

1.1 Maharat Learning Center is dedicated to providing clients and families with the highest standards of quality and care. This Client Concerns and Complaints Policy has been created in order for the Center to take the necessary steps to ensure that clients and families are satisfied with our services and to ensure that all employees understand the process for receiving and managing client concerns/complaints.

1.2 The Client Concerns and Complaints Policy has been written and designed to ensure that client concerns/complaints are recorded, management and monitored correctly, and evaluated regularly in order to ensure continuous client satisfaction and quality improvement.

# 2. Scope

2.1 The Client Concerns Complaints Policy and its guidelines and procedures is applicable to all staff, clients, and visitors of MLC.

2.2 MLC employees who have an internal complaint should refer to the Grievance Policy in the Internal Guidelines (HR028), and follow the procedure of filling out the ‘Internal Concern/Complaint Form’ (HR055) available from the Human Resources (HR) department and submission to the respective HR personnel for further action.

# 3. Definitions and Abbreviations

3.1 **MLC:** Maharat Learning Center

3.2 **CEO/MD:** Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director

3.3 **HOD:** Head of Department

3.4 **PD:** Principal Director

3.5 **HR:** Human Resources

3.6 **QCBD:** Quality Compliance & Business Development Manager

# 4. Policy

4.1 Understanding how to receive and resolve client concerns/complaints is an integral part of successful customer service and quality care. As employees of MLC, it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that client concerns/complaints are handled with efficiency, professionalism, and care at all times. As the Center works hard to promote the respect and value of all clients and families, it is imperative that all staff understand the importance of client satisfaction and feedback and its impact on the success and progress of the Centers’ services.

4.2 It is therefore the policy of the Center that all staff understands how to receive and process a client concern/complaint in accordance with the procedures and guidelines described within this policy. Client concerns/complaints, or suggestions for improvement should generally be directed to the Center Manager or Client Relations team at MLC, however all staff should familiarize themselves with the Client Concerns and Complaints Policy in order to ensure that the policy outlined herein is adhered to at all times.

4.3 In the event a client does not feel he/she has received adequate care or service, is disappointed about any aspect of the care or service our Center offers, or if the client has any other reason for concern, clients are requested to raise the matter with MLC as soon as possible. Clients are informed of this within the Maharat Parent Handbook.

4.4 Concerns/complaints submitted by clients must be precisely recorded and managed in accordance with the Complaint Management Procedure detailed below, which is a six step process designed to manage the receipt, investigation and response of concerns/complaints.

* 1. **Receipt of a Complaint**
  2. **Registration of the Complaint and Acknowledgement of Receipt**
  3. **Investigation**
  4. **Analysis & Resolution**
  5. **Response**
  6. **Follow Up and Preventative Action**

4.5The six step procedure is detailed below and a flowchart for ease of reference is included with this policy as Attachment A.

# 5. Procedure

## 5.1 Step 1: Receipt of a Complaint

5.1.1 Concerns/complaints may be received from clients verbally or in writing. Clients may utilize the Client Concern & Complaint Form (CR019), which can be requested from the Center Manager or Client Relations team, may submit a complaint via the *iClient* web application, via email or via other written communication.

5.1.2 Should a client approach a member of staff or department directly with a complaint, staff are required to receive the complaint, register the complaint, and follow the guidelines specified below in order to properly manage the complaint.

5.1.3 If a client wishes to submit a complaint, and the client has not yet communicated the complaint to the specific department involved, staff must direct the client to the Center Manager or Client Relations team. The Center Manager and Client Relations team are additionally trained to receive and manage client concerns/complaints and are available to guide and assist clients with their concerns/complaints.

## 5.2 Step 2: Registration and Acknowledgement of the Complaint

5.2.1 If a client concern/complaint is received by a member of the Social Care team, they must receive the complaint utilizing the Client Concern & Complaint Form(all applicable sections of the form must be completed) and submit the form immediately to the Center Manager. The Center Manager shall be responsible for acknowledging the receipt of the complaint and processing the complaint and its resolution, and is also be responsible for registering receipt of the complaint as soon as the complaint has been filed.

5.2.2 If a client concern/complaint is received by a member of the administrative staff, the staff must receive the complaint utilizing the Client Concern & Complaint Form (all applicable sections of the form must be completed) and submit the form immediately to the Center Manager. The Center Manager shall be responsible for processing the complaint and its resolution, and is also be responsible for registering receipt of the complaint as soon as the complaint has been filed.

5.2.3 Upon registration of the concern/complaint, the Center Manager shall be responsible for acknowledging receipt of the concern/complaint to the client in writing or via a phone call within 24 hours (concerns/complaints received on Thursdays after 2:00 PM must be acknowledged no later than 12:00 Noon on Sundays).

5.2.4 The Center Manager shall be responsible for acknowledging receipt of any concerns/complaints; however a Head of Department (HOD) may be requested to acknowledge receipt in certain cases. In the absence of the Center Manager, a member of the Client Relations team or the Quality Compliance & Business Development Manager (QCBD) shall take the required action regarding the complaint.

## 5.3 Step 3: Investigation

5.3.1 Upon receipt and registration of the complaint, the Center Manager (or allocated responsible person in the absence of the Center Manager) shall consider nature of the complaint and determine the appropriate person(s) within the applicable department to coordinate the investigation, management and resolution of the complaint, which may be someone other than the Center Manager. The investigator must clearly identify the issues involved with the complaint and appropriately determine the seriousness of complaint in accordance with the guidelines provided below in order to determine the course of action required.

**Level 1:** Concerns/complaints that involve a single department and can be easily resolved by a decision or response by the Center Manager. Furthermore, if the Level 1 complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, it may be escalated to the applicable HOD or QCBD.

**Level 2:** Concerns/complaints that involve multiple departments, and will require communication and resolution from multiple departments. Additionally, a Level 2 complaint may be registered with the applicable HOD and QCBD as required.

**Level 3:** Concerns/complaints that involve the professional/moral/ethical conduct of a staff member, indicate a potential child protection issue, or involve legal issues and will require communication and resolution from the CEO/MD, Principal Director (PD), Center Manager, HR Manager and/or QCBD.

5.3.2 For any client concern/complaint (Level 1, 2, or 3) the allocated responsible person shall be responsible for contacting and informing the appropriate staff members involved.

5.3.3 If there is any uncertainty with the details surrounding the concern/complaint, the client shall be contacted for additional information to clarify the uncertain issues. If a meeting with the client should be required as part of the investigation stage, the following guidelines shall be adhered to by all staff present:

* Be punctual in arriving for the appointment.
* Set an agenda for the meeting and ensure meeting minutes are taken.
* Focus on the issues involved with the specific complaint.
* Refrain from discussing past differences or concerns/complaints.
* Focus on achieving results.

## 5.4 Step 4: Analysis & Resolution

5.4.1 After gathering and assessing all of the information involved with the complaint and meeting with the relevant staff/client involved with the issue, the allocated responsible person shall be required to review the information and identify disputed facts, inconsistencies, reliability, gaps in information, systemic and performance factors in accordance with applicable standards and procedures and company policies.

5.4.2 The allocated responsible person managing the complaint shall be responsible for determining the final resolution and plan of action.

## 5.5 Step 5: Response

5.5.1 The allocated responsible person shall be responsible for communicating the official response in writing to the client; however the CEO/MD, PD, applicable HOD or QCBD may be requested to communicate the official response in certain cases.

5.5.2 The response should clearly communicate the outcome and if necessary it should propose remedial actions or resolution.

5.5.3 The response should reach the client no later than 7 working days from the date of acknowledgement for administrative department/operational concerns/complaints and no later than 21 working days from the date of acknowledgement for Social Care department concerns/complaints.

5.5.4 For Social Care department concerns/complaints, if the official response is not available 21 working days from date of acknowledgement, a written response from the PD should be issued to explain any such delays. Thereafter, a written response should be sent every 5 working days until final resolution is achieved.

## 5.6 Step 6: Follow Up and Preventative Action

5.6.1 The Center Manager is responsible to monitor and report client concerns/complaints on a monthly basis to the Management.

5.6.2 After resolution of a concern/complaint, the Center Manager shall be responsible for ensuring confirmation that the resolution has been implemented and the client is no longer experiencing difficulty with the issue.

5.6.3 It is important that staff reflect and review concerns/complaints regularly in order to ensure improvements are made where necessary to prevent recurrence of similar concerns/complaints.

5.6.4 On a quarterly basis, the Center Manager will generate an analysis report on concerns/complaints across all departments. As part of this reporting process, the Center Manager shall provide and discuss findings and recommendations to the Management during HOD and/or Quality Improvement meetings, in order to address any system, process and/or practitioner issues.

5.6.5 The Leadership will review the findings and recommendations and integrate the necessary changes into the quality improvement plan.

## 5.7 Guidelines for Customer Service Etiquette

5.7.1 MLC firmly believe that all clients must be treated fairly and with courtesy and respect at all times. In order to ensure the Centers’ employees understand the standards of etiquette when working with clients, the following guidelines should be followed.

**5.7.2 Employee Etiquette with Clients**

All Center employees are required to adhere to the following steps of etiquette when meeting with and working with clients:

* Treat clients with courtesy at all times.
* Make clients feel important.
* Be willing to assist and help clients.
* Smile and stay positive.
* Pay attention to your personal appearance - it reflects your company standard.
* Ensure that you are fully informed and equipped with relevant information, including price lists, terms, policies, service knowledge, etc.
* Do not blame others or the company if you cannot find information.

**5.7.3 Personal Etiquette in Responding to Concerns/Complaints**

When responding to concerns/complaints, employees are advised to adhere to the following guidelines at all times:

* Stay calm.
* Use open ended questions to gather information.
* Actively listen and concentrate only on the client’s issues.
* Empathize.
* Take accountability and accept responsibility if the complaint is clearly justified.
* Refrain from excusing errors made or justifying incorrect action/inaction.
* Refrain from blaming other staff members or placing fault with others until complaint is fully investigated.
* Make notes to clarify doubts and read them back to the client.
* Agree on a course of action and provide a time frame for resolution.
* Under-promise and overachieve when discussing a resolution.
* Promptly follow through every complaint to completion.

# 6. Related References/Documents

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CR019 | Client Concern & Complaint Form |
| HR028 | Employee Internal Guidelines |
| HR055 | Internal Concern/Complaint Form |

# 7. Amendments

7.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years at a minimum, or as required.

# 8. Attachments

8.1 Attachment A: Policy Authorization Page

8.2 Attachment B: Complaint Management Procedure Flowchart

# Attachment A – Complaint Management Procedure Flowchart

Client complaints to the center either via phone/ email/ IClient/ in person/ other written communication

Communicate official response in writing to the client & complete section 5 of the complaint form

Communicate official response in writing to the client & complete section 5 of the complaint form

● Admin department complaints = response within 7 working days\*

● Social Care department complaints = response within 21 working days\*

(\* from the acknowledgement date)

Review information & derive final resolution – subsequently complete section 4 of the form

Review information & derive final resolution – subsequently complete section 4 of the form

Level 1

Gather info & complete section 3 of the complaint form

Investigator to gather info & complete section 3 of the complaint form

Complaint is of which level?

Complaint receiver fills section 1 of the complaint form and submits form to Center Manager

Center Manager acknowledges receipt of complaint within 24 hours & complete section 2 of the complaint form

● Center Manager to report client complaints quarterly to management

● Complaints Analysis Report to be reviewed by Management

● Center Management to review findings and recommend changes into the quality improvement plan

Review completed form to determine follow up &/or preventative actions required and complete section 6 of the form

Level 2 & 3

# Attachment B - Policy Authorization Page

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Creation Date: January 2017 Created By: Karen Evans, QCBD** | | | |
| **Revision Date** | **Edited By** | **Version Number** | **Next Review Date** |
| **January 2017** | **Karen Evans** | **V.1** | **June 2017** |
| **June 2018** | **Karen Evans** | **V.2** | **June 2020** |

**Approval Signatory:**

**Name: Dr. Hibah Shata**

**Designation/Title: Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director**

**Date: 30 June 2018**

**Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Company Stamp:**