

# MATTHEW JOHN

## EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

### **PARENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS POLICY**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for Matthew-John Early Learning Centre (“MJELC”) to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues or concerns relating to their children enrolled at MJELC. This policy complies with the requirements of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 11, Sched. 1* (the “Act”) and its regulations.

#### **Policy**

##### **A. Overview**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in MJELC programs and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As reflected in our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, educators and support staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by MJELC and every effort will be made to address and resolve these issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible. An initial response will be provided to parents/guardians within two (3) business days.

Concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or upon request, in writing. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to all parties involved.

##### **B. Confidentiality**

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children’s Aid Society).

When communicating with parents in relation to responses, progress reports or final resolutions, the level of detail provided will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

### **C. Conduct**

MJELC programs maintain a high quality for positive interaction, communication and role modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party. If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled during an interaction, they may immediately end the interaction and report the situation to the MJELC Supervisor.

### **D. Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child**

#### ***General Obligation***

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, they will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly in accordance with the "Duty to Report" requirement under *The Child and Family Services Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.11.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

#### ***Procedures***

If the issue or concern is:

1. Program Room Related, for example, schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc., the parent/guardian can raise the issue or concern to the classroom staff directly or to the MJELC Supervisor;
2. General, Centre or Operations-Related, for example, child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc., the issue should be raised to the MJELC Supervisor;
3. Staff-Related, the parent/guardian can raise the issue or concern to the individual directly and/or to the MJELC Supervisor. All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the MJELC Supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation; and
4. Student / Volunteer Related, the issue or concern should be raised to the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student or to the MJELC Supervisor. All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the MJELC Supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.

#### ***The Steps for Staff and/or Supervisor in responding to issue/concern***

Staff must:

1. Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised or arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within five (5) business days.
2. Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include: (i) the date and time the issue/concern was received; (ii) the name of the person who received the issue/concern, (iii) the name of the person reporting the issue/concern, (iv) the details of the issue/concern, and (v) any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.
3. Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.
4. Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within three (3) business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter and document reasons for delays in writing.
5. Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.

### ***Escalation of Issues or Concerns***

Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to the MJELC Supervisor and/or the MJELC Board of Directors.

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the Act and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch. Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

### **E. REVIEW**

This policy will be provided to all MJELC employees at the commencement of their employment and will be made available to them at all times thereafter. The contents of this policy and the procedures set out herein will be reviewed at least annually and at any time that changes are required by law. A record will be kept showing the date of each review conducted, and each record will be signed by each person who conducted or participated in the review.