



Recognised Awards Scheme

Customer Service Policy Guidelines

For CDET's Recognised Awards

The guidelines below for a Customer Service Policy are designed to support those who hold one of CDET's Recognised Awards. The guidelines may also be used as guidance for those applying for an Award and content provided may be amended to suit the needs of individual applicants. Please note that this is a guidance document and has no legal standing of its own.

All operational policies, procedures, resources and facilities remain the responsibility of the Recognised Award member. The original of this policy can be found on the CDET website.

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Please note that due to the nature of the service being delivered (i.e. teaching services), reference to the "customer" has been changed to "student" throughout this policy.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Our policy is to provide and maintain the best possible service to our organisation, students, teachers and the public. We take pride in providing a professional service whilst inspiring the highest level of trust.

Staff will be professional at all times and show:

- Courtesy in all circumstances
- Accuracy in what they do
- Accountability for the quality of service they deliver
- Integrity in all their dealings
- Consideration for the needs of customers
- Promptness in all their actions, keeping people informed of progress

APPLICATION

This Customer Service Policy applies to all permanent, temporary, freelance and casual employees or workers of our organisation; or to ourself if we work alone.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The Teacher / Principal / Manager or other designated employee shall be responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented
- It is expected that all employees or workers at the organisation shall adopt the communication behaviors outlined in this policy
- This policy is not meant to be all inclusive and additional behaviors, which support the goal of providing good customer service, should be encouraged and supported by the organisation

The teacher / organisation will play its part by:

- giving student care a high priority
- developing corporate values and practices on student care which are shared across the organisation and communicated effectively
- updating information to all its employees and workers to add to their knowledge and awareness of people and their care
- regularly monitoring its student care strategy to ensure that the needs of all its students, parents, carers and the public are met successfully
- provide a clear, accessible process for any person to comment or complain about any aspect of their own or the organisation's services

VALUES

The principles and care values that as an individual or organisation we all share are:

- The students, their parents and carers and the public are the organisation's most important people. They are the purpose of our work. All people coming into contact with our organisation will be treated equally. Everyone will have fair and equal access to all of our services.
- Every person is entitled to:
 - A standard of service which is known and agreed
 - Be listened to when they comment or complain
 - A sensitive response to their needs
 - A rapid response to their complaints
 - A courteous response to their enquiries
 - Continuous attention by us to their satisfaction
- There is a clear and accessible complaints procedure in place

Courtesy

Courtesy will be shown in all circumstances, even in difficult situations where the person may not show similar courtesy in return. Staff will be courteous in their spoken words, body language and demeanour.

Accuracy

Where there is any doubt about the accuracy of any information, the details will be checked and validated prior to release.

Accountability

Staff will look for ways to enhance the quality of service they deliver. Concerns about the quality of service will be referred to the next level of management or Principal.

Integrity

Staff will act with integrity in all their dealings with the public.

COMMUNICATION

FACE TO FACE CONTACT

We and our staff will be committed to:

- making sure that our buildings are accessible
- greeting visitors
- making sure our staff identify themselves
- listening to you and responding to your needs
- being welcoming, courteous and helpful at all times

OUR POLICY FOR THE TELEPHONE

All telephone calls shall be answered promptly and in a professional and courteous manner.

When answering the telephone, use a friendly, professional manner. Our greeting is the first thing heard by callers; you are setting an example and making the first impression for the organisation. Speak distinctly, with a warm welcoming tone. Let your caller know whom he or she is talking with, by telling him or her your name.

OUR POLICY FOR WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Communication in the form of a letter or memorandum shall be written in a professional and courteous manner. The written response to internal or external correspondence shall be clear, informative and timely.

Letters should be written in a professional format. All letters and memoranda should be proofread carefully, not only for spelling and punctuation, but also for consistency and accuracy.

The appropriate letterhead should be used. The letter should include the following: date, recipient's complete name and address, salutation, the response in the body of the letter, the complimentary closing, and handwritten signature. The final paragraph of the letter should include a person's name and telephone number to call if additional information is needed or if the recipient has more questions.

OUR POLICY FOR ELECTRONIC MAIL (E-MAIL)

If email access is provided within the organisation, communication via e-mail shall be conducted in a professional and courteous manner. The e-mail response shall be clear, informative and timely.

Communicate in a professional manner when using the e-mail system. Never put anything in an e-mail message that would be viewed as offensive or inappropriate for the organisation. Remember that all information contained in the e-mail message is considered public information.

The e-mail response should give complete and clear information with the option to use e-mail or call if there are questions. A letter format with a salutation and a complimentary closing should always be used when responding to inquiries. Always check for spelling, punctuation, and formatting errors prior to sending the e-mail message. Care should also be taken to ensure that all responses provide the appropriate information to the customer by checking for consistency and accuracy.

Your electronic mailbox should be checked frequently for messages. It is your responsibility to always check your electronic mailbox for messages.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

WHAT IS MEANT BY A COMPLAINT?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation or its employees affecting an individual person or group of people who are receiving a service.

A complaint does not include:-

- Requests for service
- Requests for information or explanation of the organisation's policy or practice
- Complaints about third parties, who are not working at the organisation

Stage 1 – At the point of service delivery

The individual receives the initial approach from the complainant and attempts to resolve their concerns to the best of their ability and to the complainant's satisfaction.

Employed teachers or individuals will pass any issues raised to the Principal / Manager. It is imperative to respond properly, fairly and consistently when a complaint is made. The Complaints Procedure will assist with this.

When a complaint has been dealt with quickly and fairly, the complainant feels they have been listened to and understood. Just as importantly, knowing how and why things have gone wrong is valuable information in helping us to improve our services, and make best use of our resources.

All complaints made must be reported to the Principal / Manager.

Individuals should aim to settle complaints quickly and amicably. However, complainants who are still not satisfied after Stage 1 must be referred to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure.

Stage 2 – by the Principal / Manager

In Stage 2, the complaint will be investigated fully and objectively by the Principal / Manager. The complainant should be informed as to who is dealing with their complaint, kept informed about progress and action being taken if the review of the complaint is likely to take more than a few days.

A written reply must be sent to the complainant within 10 working days of the request for their complaint to be investigated.

In complex cases, the complaint may take longer than 10 working days to investigate, but the complainant must still be notified in writing of progress to date, the reason for the delay and the revised timescale, within those 10 working days.

HANDLING COMPLAINTS

- Treat all complaints seriously, don't take the complaint or criticism personally
- Make your first response positive. Don't rush to the defensive
- Try to resolve the complaint as your first objective
- If there has been a mistake – acknowledge it and apologise
- Be prepared to take responsibility for other people's mistakes
- Take the initiative with suggestions to put things right and offer choices
- Try to make amends – but don't make promises you are not able to keep
- If the customer is wrong, don't embarrass them if you need to point it out
- Be tactful
- Learn from mistakes
- Watch your body language, say you're sorry with your actions as well as your words

If the complaint is about you

Where a person complains about a member of staff, the Complaints Procedure enables this to be investigated fairly, openly and thoroughly. Try not to take it personally – remember that the first objective is to try and sort out the problem. After that, see if there are any lessons to be learned from the incident. Be open and honest with yourself and others about what happened. Give as much information as possible – it will be treated in confidence. Occasionally a complaint may lead to disciplinary action and appropriate information relating to the complaint may then have to be recorded.

Moving on from a complaint

When a complaint has been found to be justified, the organisation's objective should then be, as far as possible, to put the complainant in the position he or she would have been in had things not gone wrong. Depending on circumstances, this will usually be achieved by:

- apologising to them and explaining what went wrong
- providing the service the person wanted
- changing things so that the cause of the complaint is not repeated

In some circumstances, a personal visit or other gesture, to mend damaged relationships with a complainant may be appropriate. There is no specific stage at which this approach should be taken and is at the discretion of the Principal / Manager.

There may be circumstances where the complainant feels justified in seeking financial compensation for the loss incurred. In such cases, this will remain at the discretion of the Principal / Manager.

What we ask of you

We or our staff should not be expected to deal with rude, abusive or threatening behaviour. If such unpleasant behaviour is encountered and cannot be calmed down, staff will politely state that they will have to terminate the contact (put the telephone down/leave the room etc). The organisation will take appropriate action against any individuals who are abusive to staff.

