

Edmund Rice Services

A Framework for Preparing Parents, Guardians and Carers' Handbook

Index

- What are the goals of an Edmund Rice camp/service?
- What activities will my child become involved in whilst attending a camp/service?
- Will my child be eligible to attend a camp/service?
- How long does the camp/service run?
- Where is the service/camp held?
- How will my child be kept safe while attending the camp/service?
- Who can I contact to discuss the camp/service when my child is attending the camp/service?
- What can I do if I wish to give feedback about the camp/service or I have a concern or complaint about the camp/service?
- What is the child protection approach?

What are the goals and objectives of an Edmund Rice service?

The message of Edmund Rice was to always:

1. Respond to the needs of children and young people who may not have opportunities to participate in educational and recreational activities.
2. Provide opportunities for young adults to act as volunteer mentors and leaders to guide the developmental recreational experiences of children and young people

From these two messages an Edmund Rice service has three goals:

- **Goal One**
 - Edmund Rice services seeks to positively transform the lives of children through providing them with an opportunity to enjoy them, positively interact with other children and young people and to be mentored and supported by young adults.
- **Goal Two**
 - Edmund Rice services works to enhance the capacity of each individual child to recognize and build upon their own unique talents and skills and to utilize these talents and skills in a manner, which contributes towards a socially compassionate society.
- **Goal Three**
 - Edmund Rice services seek to increase young adults' awareness of and commitment to addressing social injustice and inequity, through encouraging and supporting their participation in social outreach and engagement programmes with children and young people.

What activities will my child become involved in whilst attending a camp/service?

Edmund Rice Services provides a group-based activity programme for children, which focuses on fun recreational activities which:

- Facilitate the development of self-understanding and capacity in children.
- Facilitate the development of positive social peer group interactions and learning
- Facilitate the role of young adult volunteers as positive role models in the lives of children.

Children and young people participate in a residential group work environment with young adult volunteers in which they take part in outdoor activities such as bush camping, canoeing, aquatic activities, sports and indoor activities such as arts and craft, plays, group games.

Will my child be eligible to attend a camp/service?

Edmund Rice Services tries to ensure as many children, who may not otherwise, are given the opportunity to attend an Edmund Rice Camp.

Children are selected to attend a camp on assessment of several factors:

- Referral report from a social welfare professional, which indicates:
 - Child or young person is unlikely to have other opportunities to attend a recreational camp
 - Child or young person will benefit from attendance at a camp
 - Child or young person expresses a desire to attend a camp
 - Family/guardians express a desire for the child to attend a camp

Social welfare services are encouraged to apply on behalf of a child and discuss each child's needs with Edmund Rice Services personnel (see attached referral form).

How long does each camp/service run?

Services are generally conducted for a 4-5 day period from the point of drop-off at the camp meeting venue site to the return of the child or young person to the collection point venue.

Where is the camp/service held?

Services can be held in different locations depending on the focus of the camp or the age group of the children or young people attending. You will know beforehand where a camp is being held.

How will my child be kept safe while on camp/service?

The care, safety and protection of each child or young person on a camp is of utmost importance to Edmund Rice Services. The services programme has a ratio of 1:1 for a young adult volunteer to child or young person, to enable a consistent monitoring of children or young people's safety and protection.

Edmund Rice Services has in place several child protection policies and procedures in relation to children on camp. These requirements are intended to make clear to all volunteers their roles and responsibilities in relation to the safety and protection of children and young people; these are:

1. Child Protection Framework
2. Risk Management Framework
3. Safety Audit
4. Child Behaviour Framework
5. Training Framework
6. Code of Conduct

Who can I contact to discuss the camp before, during and on completion of the camp?

When a camp is being organized the key contact person is always the Child Liaison Officer. The contact details of the Child Liaison Officer are issued with the application and information material for each camp. Once the child is accepted on Camp you can contact the Camp Captains, whose details are provided in the Acceptance Letter.

Contact can also be made with the Oceania Province Children's Services Standards Coordinator ph +61 438917505.

What can I do if I wish to give feedback about the camp or I have a concern or complaint about the camp?

Your feedback is important to us as part of our quality assurance procedures. It is always good to receive positive feedback as it lets us know what we are doing right in our provision of Edmund Rice Services. We also welcome feedback, which lets us know if you think what we are doing is not the correct way to do something or maybe something could be done in a different way.

The principles, which guide our approach to concerns and complaints, are:

- Edmund Rice Services is committed to protecting the well-being of children and volunteers on camp.
- Edmund Rice Services wishes to maintain a culture of openness to receiving concerns or complaints about services and respond to these in a timely and professional manner.
- Edmund Rice Services is committed to ensuring those who inform us of their concerns or lodge complaints are treated respectfully and experience no negative consequences or discrimination due to their actions.

Edmund Rice Services recognizes it can often be difficult to convey concerns or complaints about a camp service and seeks to ensure its protocols and procedures support a respectful and confidential response by our volunteers or Oceania Province staff members.

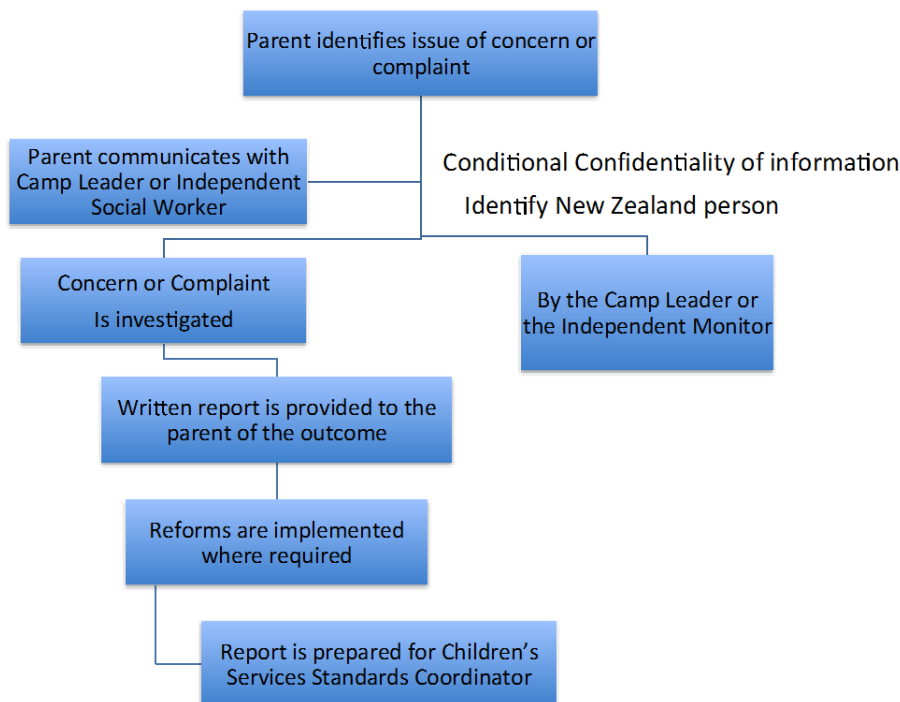
Protocol and Procedures

The outlined concerns and complaints protocols and procedures have been developed to achieve three objectives; these are:

- Immediacy of access to someone to whom the concern or complaint can be conveyed
- Timely responsiveness to the concern or complaint
- Independent monitoring of the concerns and complaints process.

Pathways to Indicate a Concern or Lodge a Complaint

Concerns or Complaints Pathway



You can provide us with feedback by:

- Filling in the feedback form and send it back to us
- Indicating in the acceptance form you are happy to give verbal feedback about the camp – the Camp Captain would contact you by phone
- Verbally to the Camp Captain when you see them who will write the feedback down and this will be given to the Children's Liaison person.

We will provide written acknowledgment of your feedback and where if required, changes have been initiated.

It is also important to us that you convey any concerns or complaints you may have about our services programme to enable us to investigate what may have happened and to importantly, instigate changes if required. Again a complaint can be directed to us either:

- In writing (on the attached complaints form) and handed to the Camp Captain
- Mailed to us at Edmund Rice Services
- Verbally to the Camp Captain who will write the feedback down

PARENTS' FEEDBACK FORM

Your feedback is important to us as it becomes part of our future planning and development for the Services programme to ensure children and young people have a great experience on our services and get the best out of services for themselves

You can give us feedback in a number of ways:

Change 3

- In writing (on the attached feedback form) and handed to the Camp Captain
- Mailed to us at Edmund Rice Services
- Verbally to the Camp Captain who will write the feedback down

You do not need to tell us who you are – this is optional information on the form.

Camp Attended	Date Attended
Question	Your Thoughts
How do you feel your child experienced the camp programme?	
Do you feel your child benefited from the services programme they participated in?	
Was there anything about the camp programme you may not have been happy with or thought could have been done differently or improved?	
Anything else you wish to give us feedback on?	

Thank you for your time.

COMPLAINT FORM

It is important you provide use with as much detail as possible to enable us to respond quickly and appropriately. Can you please let us know:

Question	Your Response
What does the complaint relate to in relation to something, which happened on a camp and/or how someone may have behaved?	
Where did the circumstances of the complaint occur?	
When did the circumstances of the complaint occur?	
Who was involved in the circumstances of the complaint?	

What would you like to see as a satisfactory outcome of how Edmund Rice Services responds to your complaint?	
Anything else you believe is important to let us know?	

Thanking you for your assistance.

Child Protection Information for Parents

Our Approach to Child Protection – children’s care, safety and protection

Edmund Rice services are committed to providing a child safe environment when your child or children attend one of our camps or other services. All staff and volunteers have Working with Children Clearance, Federal Police clearance and have undertaken and passed an assessment in Foundational Child Protection knowledge. We undertake risk audits of all locations and activities and make sure all settings and activities undertaken are appropriate to the age of the children.

It is important you are also aware of how we respond if we become aware of a concern relating to a child’s care, safety and protection during one of our camps or day activities.

We are required under Child Welfare Law and our Duty of Care to always act in the best interests of the child. This means we have to professionally check out a concern [which does not always mean there is a concern once we have checked it out] to make sure a child is not being harmed or at risk of harm. We do this by our training volunteers and staff to let a Reporting Officer [RO] who is present at every camp or activity know about a concern they may have about the well-being of a child. The RO is not a professional person but someone who has undergone extra training with us. The RO then lets Pauline know.

Pauline is a social worker who works for all the Edmund Rice services throughout Australia and in other countries. Pauline is a very experienced social worker and a mum of three grown up boys. Pauline will check the information relating to the concern and works with Manager Community Engagement [MCE] at Camps WA to make sure there are no safety concerns. It is important parents/guardians are aware contact is made with the referring agency to enable us to determine the safety or in some cases possible lack of safety of a child. If there are no safety concerns, the MCE or Pauline will talk to the parent/guardian about what was raised and seek to help if required to indicate how other assistance may be sought.

It is important for parents/guardians to know when a concern is raised in relation to alleged child sexual abuse under Child Welfare legislation we have a responsibility to make a Mandatory Report to the Department of Child Protection. We would also make a report where there are alleged concerns relating to physical abuse and neglect or other matters considered serious. When a report is made, parents cannot be informed we have made a report. We appreciate this may be difficult for parents/guardians however, as would be appreciated, we must always act in the best interest of the child and cannot speak to parents/guardians until safety is established.

Should you have any questions relating to our approach to child protection please feel free to contact me – or if you have any questions or concerns at any other time please contact me.

Dr Pauline Meemeduma
Ph 0438917505

Parent Information –Child Protection notification involvement of a child under 18 years.

Dear Parents/Guardians of a Volunteer under 18 years of age.

Any organisation, which works with children, has a responsibility to facilitate the care, safety and protection of the children receiving its services.

A key area of responsibility when children are on an Edmund Rice Camp relates to child protection notifications, which may occur on a camp. A key aspect of this responsibility relates to the expectation that volunteers when they become aware of a possible child protection concern or allegation they inform the on-site Reporting Officer. The Reporting Officer then immediately passes the information to the social worker Pauline. Pauline professionally manages the notification in partnership with the Camp Executive Officer to meet State child protection requirements and fulfill our Duty of Care.

It is important as a parent/guardian of a volunteer who is under 18 years of age you are aware, there is a possibility, albeit small, that your child may be the first point of contact to be told by a child or observe in relation to a child a possible child protection concern/allegation. When this occurs it is the responsibility of your child to pay attention to the relevant information [which they learn in the training prior to attending a camp] and convey the information as quickly as possible, to enable our professional staff member to manage the situation. At no stage would your child be responsible for managing the concern.

Where a volunteer is involved in a notification we are attentive to their well being after the notification. We check the individual is okay and let them know they can contact the EO [name] or Pauline at any time during and after the camp.

Your consent for your child's participation in the possible role of receiving a child protection notification is important and a consent approval is attached.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ring either myself on [] or Pauline [0438917505].

Yours Sincerely

Consent for an under 18 years of age volunteer to receive a first-point of contact child protection concern.

I [parent/guardian] give consent for my

son/daughter to receive a first point of contact

child protection notification concern and convey this information to the on-

site Reporting Officer.

Signed

Dated