

## Managing conflict through Mediation Policy and Procedures

St Pius X OSHC recognises that the service will run most effectively when there is minimal conflict and it is resolved quickly. We recognize that mediation is an effective tool in achieving this and actively promote it within the service for all participants to use.

Mediators *promote* constructive communication, *help* disputants take responsibility for their own actions, *clarify* their needs and feelings and *focus* on mutual needs and interests.

Mediators (third party) HELP people in a conflict to work together to resolve the dispute. This principle acknowledges that children in conflicts (disputants) have the wisdom within them to resolve their own disputes. The mediator GUIDES and HELPS this to happen.

Staff are expected to use the mediation process with children's disputes.

Mediation is

- a fair way to resolve conflict. A mediator does not take sides, but serves as an impartial listener and facilitator to help people in conflict come to an agreement.
- Workable because the disputants solve their own conflict and their feelings are dealt with
- Focuses on problem solving rather than on blaming, punishment or revenge
- Enables the child ownership and acceptance of their behaviour and the consequences as they have been involved in resolving the conflict through the mediation process

In order for mediation to effectively resolve conflict the mediator needs to be an active listener which involves;

1. Putting yourself in the other person's place to understand what the person is saying and how she or he feels.
2. Show understanding and interest by;
  - your tone of voice
  - facial expression
  - gestures
  - good eye contact
  - body language
3. Do not;
  - interrupt
  - offer advice
  - give suggestions
4. Reflect and paraphrase what the person has said to ensure that your understanding of the situation is accurate
5. Ask questions to clarify what is being said
6. Repeat in your own words what you think the person means

### Rules for mediation to occur

If the problem is to be solved both parties must agree on the following points:

1. One person speaks at a time, no interrupting
2. Listen to each other
3. Be honest
4. No put downs

The mediator will be fair and not take sides

### Mediation steps

Decide who will talk first....

1. What is the problem?
2. How do you feel?
3. What do you want to happen?
4. What is the plan/solution?
  - Work with suggestions until they develop one they are both happy with.
  - There may be more than one problem.
  - Make sure all problems are solved.
  - Check that both disputants are happy with the plan.
5. How can you avoid the problem happening again?
6. In closing, tell the disputants the problem is solved

### Strategies for resolving conflicts

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Take turns | 2. Share     |
| 3. Compromise | 4. Apologise |
| 5. Get help   | 6. Avoid     |
| 7. Humour     | 8. Chances   |

### Handling difficult situations

1. What are the likely problems?
  - Are they telling the truth?
  - Lack of willingness to solve the problem
  - Inability to explain situation due to low self-esteem, powerlessness or power over
2. How to counter/strategies
  - Review rules and agreements ie, the importance of honesty
  - Separate disputants- talk to them individually and then try to solve the problem all together
  - Allow them a cool-off period -time out until they are willing to participate

### What if one person won't agree to mediate?

Staff member asks what will happen/are the consequences if you don't sort out the problem? Is that what you want to happen?

No then it will help to mediate

Yes then I can't help you now. If you change your mind I will help you  
This disputant then suffers the consequence

The person who did want help needs to carry on..until such time that the other disputant is willing to mediate.