

COMMUNITY CHILD CARE

CONDUCTING STAFF MEETINGS: AGENDAS AND OUTCOMES

Staff meetings are an important function of any staff team. Staff meetings are regularly held in all workplaces across all industries. These meetings can be an opportunity for the staff team, including educators and management representatives to sit together and share information on all aspects of the centre based children's service.

They can be used as a forum to discuss a range of ideas or issues that are interesting and relevant to the roles that individual staff members have within the children's service, such as team building, problem solving, professional development and celebration.

Develop a policy

Developing a policy explaining the procedure and expectations of staff members may assist with ensuring awareness of responsibilities toward these meetings. During an induction period, new staff members joining the team should be expected to read and become familiar with the policies and procedures of the service; so include this information in the staff handbook as part of the staff orientation package.

Items to be addressed in the development of this policy include (but are not limited to):

- ▶ *Where and how often staff meetings will occur*
- ▶ *Who is expected to attend*
- ▶ *Buddy system* – Setting up a documented process to ensure that those who attend a staff meeting will assist with ensuring that staff who cannot attend do not miss out on any information discussed. This method typically involves a roster system of all staff so the 'buddy' is not the same person all the time. The buddy's role is to pass on any information and explain the minutes to the person who was absent, and also find out before the meeting if there are any items that the person not attending wishes to question or inform the staff group about during the meeting. The buddy can then feed back any outcomes from this to the person who was absent
- ▶ *Minute taking* – Develop a roster system for this to allow all staff to be involved
- ▶ *Minute distribution* – Decide how minutes will be circulated after the meeting. This might be via a notice board, a book, emails or individual hard copies for all staff
- ▶ *Meals* – If meetings are held after hours, whether a meal or

refreshments be supplied

- ▶ *Time* – How long staff meetings will run for (unless otherwise planned) and outline how staff will be compensated in accordance with the relevant Award or Enterprise Bargain Agreement
- ▶ *Agenda items* – These should be allocated a time e.g. housekeeping – 10 minutes
- ▶ *Safety and security* – If the meeting is after hours, there should be suitable lighting, parking, and public transport. Keep in mind seasonal changes and daylight savings
- ▶ *Late children* – If the meeting is after the service has closed and a child has not been collected by the meeting start time, document this process (inform families of this policy). If staff members have their own children to care for at the time a staff meeting is to occur, decide if whether it is appropriate for staff to have their own children there with them, and think about activities that these children may be able to engage in while the meeting is being conducted. Inform staff of this
- ▶ *Agenda distribution and feedback* – How long prior to the meeting will this be distributed, how feedback or proposed additional agenda items are collected and who by
- ▶ *Regular agenda items* – Document the items that will always be discussed, which may include national and state frameworks, compliance and accountability, occupational health and safety and upcoming events

Plan ahead

Without regular communication, a team can lose its drive. Planning staff meetings to occur periodically throughout the year may assist in keeping the team focused on the service vision and implementing long term goals. Based on the size of the staff team, develop a realistic timeframe for these meetings to occur that will ensure adequate communication. It may be appropriate for smaller staff teams (such as educator meetings, room leaders group, and pedagogical leadership planning) to have a regular catch up every couple of weeks; larger groups may only be able to meet once a month.

If the matter is not urgent, plan the meeting well in advance. This gives the staff team a chance to make themselves available, and if requested, prepare any necessary items for discussion. Marking out the staff meeting days on a wall planner on the staff notice board area will encourage staff to mark these dates into their personal planners, and will help remind staff when a meeting is approaching.

The agenda

Prepare the agenda to cover all items of discussion and circulate to staff prior to the meeting. Ask for feedback on this as staff may want to suggest items needing to be addressed that have not been listed. Refer also to the buddy system.

The minutes

Develop a roster system for minute taking during staff meetings. Brief staff on what is involved with minute taking, as this may be something that not all staff are familiar with. Involving different staff members in minute taking will give staff a chance to be interested and responsible for what is going on. Developing a template for this purpose, may assist in accurate minute taking. After the meeting, minutes should be circulated to all staff according to the distribution method outlined in your policy.

Below is an example of a template that could be given to the allocated minute taker for a one-hour staff meeting occurring after the service has closed. The agenda is embedded and space is next to each area for notes to be taken.

Sometimes there are discussion points that arise during staff meetings that may not be appropriate to document. These may be references to a personal or private matter relative to a person, position or family. If this kind of discussion arises during the meeting, it may be necessary to point out that note taking is not necessary, as the information may be documented elsewhere or not at all. In this case, remind staff that the meeting may not be the appropriate forum for the discussion, particularly if the matter is being dealt with by another means.

Minutes should be recorded in a place that is accessible to staff but inaccessible to families and children. Implementing the buddy system discussed previously will ensure that staff members absent from the meeting can access the minutes to read over with a person who attended and who can discuss the minutes in detail. As mentioned earlier, it is important that the 'buddy' is not always the same person.

The outcome

The minutes will often define the outcome of the staff meeting. When the outcomes you are trying to achieve are clear, you can then develop strategies to satisfy these. If the outcomes are measurable, it will be clear when the service has achieved these, or how far the service has fallen short. Measurable outcomes often require a substantial amount of time and effort to fulfill, and will contribute to the success of the service and benefit all stakeholders.

As the staff team grows and changes, it may be necessary to redefine the strategies used to best suit the individuals within the staff team to assist in keeping the team moving forward and remaining inspired to be professional. The overall outcome of the meeting is dependant not only on the agenda and the staff who attend, but also on how closely the meeting remains focused on the philosophy and goals of the service, and how it acts to move the team forward together.

Time	Item	Outcome/Person responsible
6:00	Welcome and apologies	
6:05	Minutes/actions from last meeting	
6:10	Discussion on planned excursions risk assessment, staff-child ratio, and staff availability over the holidays etc	
6:30	National Quality Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ opportunities and challenges▶ time for group reflection and planning about curriculum and service practice	
7.20	Housekeeping (OH&S issues, reminders, upcoming events etc.) and any other issues relevant to staff interest	
7:30	Next meeting date close	



CCC provides leadership, advocacy and support to build the capacity of the children's services sector and promote public support for community owned, not for profit services.

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