

Mr [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr [REDACTED]

**Show Cause Notice – Potential Compliance Action**

1. I am a delegate of the ACT Regulatory Authority (the Authority), also known as Children’s Education and Care Assurance (CECA). As you may be aware, the Authority is the regulator of education and care services in the ACT and is responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT)* (the *Law*). One of the Authority’s roles is to investigate suspected offences under the *Law*.
2. Authorised Officers are currently investigating an allegation that you used corporal punishment upon an 11-year-old child, on 11 May 2023 at YWCA Hawker School Age Care SE-0009734 (the Service) operated by The Young Women's Christian Association of Canberra PR-00005876 (the Provider).
3. Web addresses to the *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT)* (the *Law*), and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (the *Regulations*) are provided for your convenience at the end of this notice.
4. Authorised Officers have obtained evidence in relation to the allegation. However, the Authority’s investigation is not complete until you have had an opportunity to respond to the allegation and evidence obtained by the Authority. This is the reason for sending this Show Cause Notice (Notice) to you.
5. Detailed instructions of how to respond appear at the end of this Notice.
6. If substantiated, the alleged conduct may constitute inappropriate discipline, which is an offence under section 166(3) of the *Law*.
7. “Discipline” is any strategy employed by an educator with the intention of changing a child’s behaviour. Discipline that is inappropriate within the meaning of section 166 of the *Law* includes any form of physical punishment or any behaviour management strategy likely to cause emotional or physical harm to a child. Examples include yelling, physically dragging a child, unreasonable restraint of a child, using threatening or humiliating language, isolating, or shaming children.
8. If, after considering all available evidence, the Authority finds an offence has occurred, it will need to consider whether compliance action is required. The Authority considers many factors when determining appropriate compliance action, the focus being on ensuring future compliance and improved outcomes for children, rather than punishment.

9. Possible compliance actions include the following (further details appear at the end of this Notice):
  - a. The Authority issuing you with non-statutory caution
  - b. Enforceable Undertaking pursuant to section 179A of the *Law*; and
  - c. A Prohibition Notice pursuant to section 182 of the *Law*.

#### **Background**

10. On 12 May 2023, the Authority received a notification from the Provider alleging that you used inappropriate discipline on an 11-year-old child. Refer Attachment A.
11. The Authority was also advised that your employment at the Service was suspended by the Provider pending the outcome of the Provider internal investigation. Refer Attachment B.
12. Due to the risk of harm to children if subjected to inappropriate discipline amounting to corporal punishment, the Authority determined to investigate your alleged conduct.

#### **Allegation of Inappropriate Discipline**

13. It is alleged that on 11 May 2023, you, [REDACTED] as an educator of the education and care service, subjected a child, believed to be [REDACTED] (11 years old), to corporal punishment, in that you shook her to get her attention, causing her pain and discomfort, contravening section 166(3) of the *Law*.

#### **Evidence relevant to Allegation**

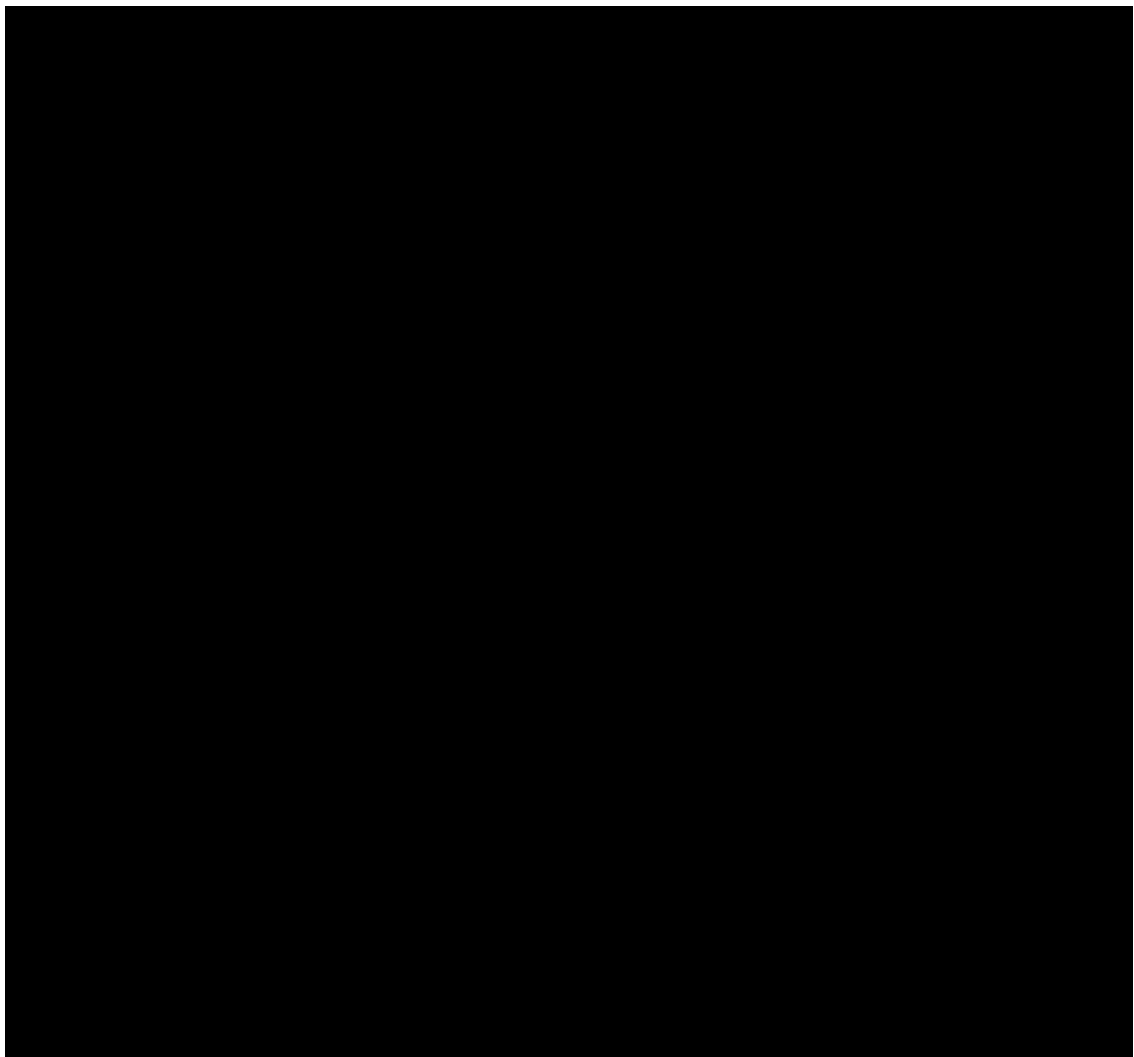
14. Witness evidence and relevant documents support that on 11 May 2023, you grabbed a child, [REDACTED] by the ribs and shook her sufficiently to cause her pain and discomfort, to have her listen to you.
15. The following prescribed records relevant to the allegation obtained from the Provider pursuant to a Notice allowable under section 215 of the *Law* include:
  - a. Casual educator position description and contract.
  - b. Educator handbook and acknowledgement.
  - c. Working Directly with Children records for 11 May 2023.
  - d. Child Attendance records 11 May 2023.
  - e. Incident Report for [REDACTED] 11 May 2023.
  - f. Policy and procedure- Code of Conduct and Interactions/Relationships.
  - g. Final findings letter dated 9 June 2023.

Refer Attachment C.

16. The Authority also received an electronic record of Interview (ROI) and transcript, by consent, between you, [REDACTED] Operations Manager, [REDACTED] and People/Capability Manager, [REDACTED] on 23 May 2023, in which include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a. A five-year-old child, [REDACTED] made you a token of your likeness.
  - b. [REDACTED] made [REDACTED] cry some 20 minutes before the incident between you and [REDACTED]
  - c. You believe [REDACTED] behaviour was unsafe.
  - d. After leaving the Service, you return to tell her [REDACTED] off.
  - e. You admit grabbing [REDACTED] to get her attention so that she would listen to you.
  - f. There was no intention on hurting [REDACTED]

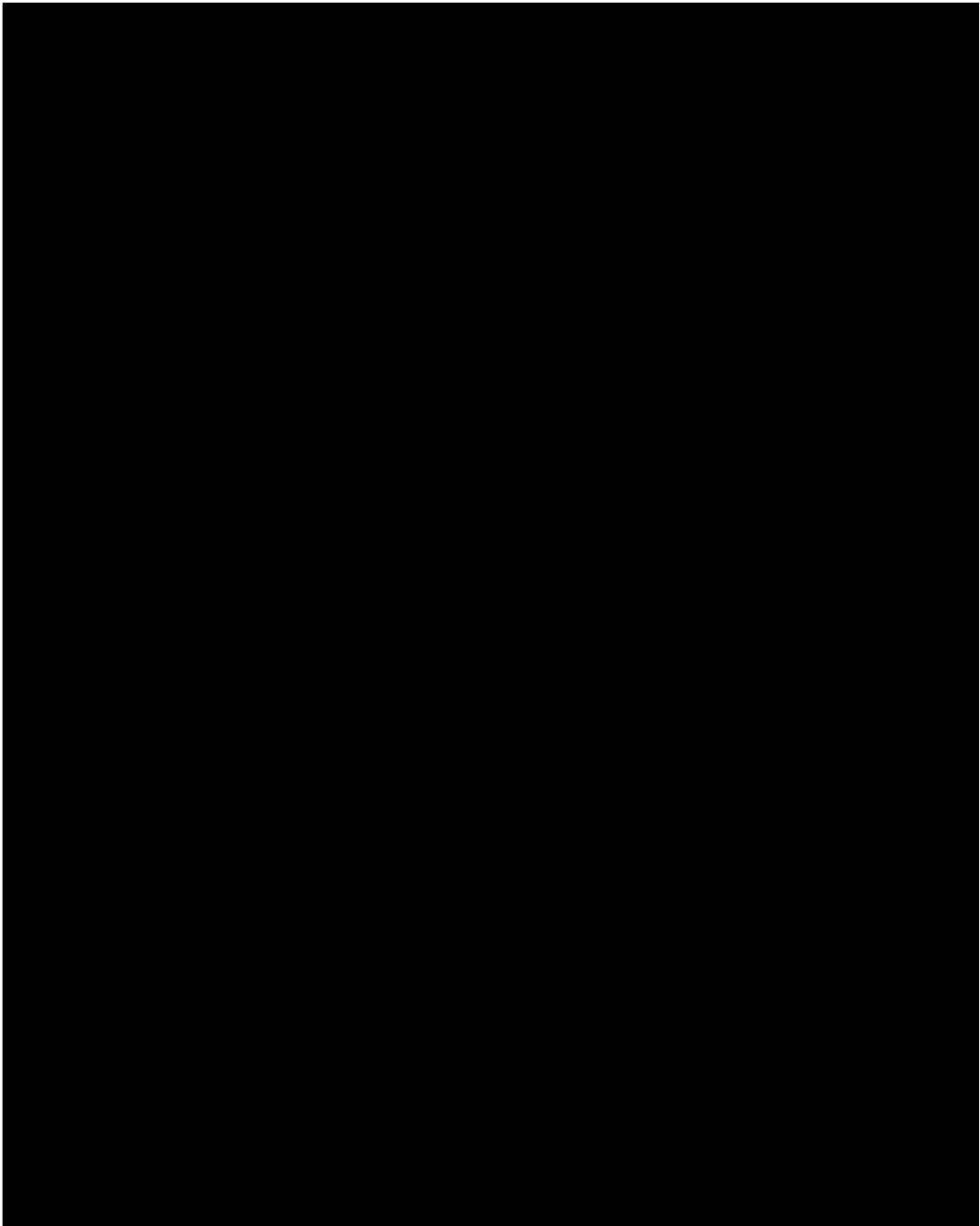
Refer to Attachment D for transcript (Electronic recording available upon request).

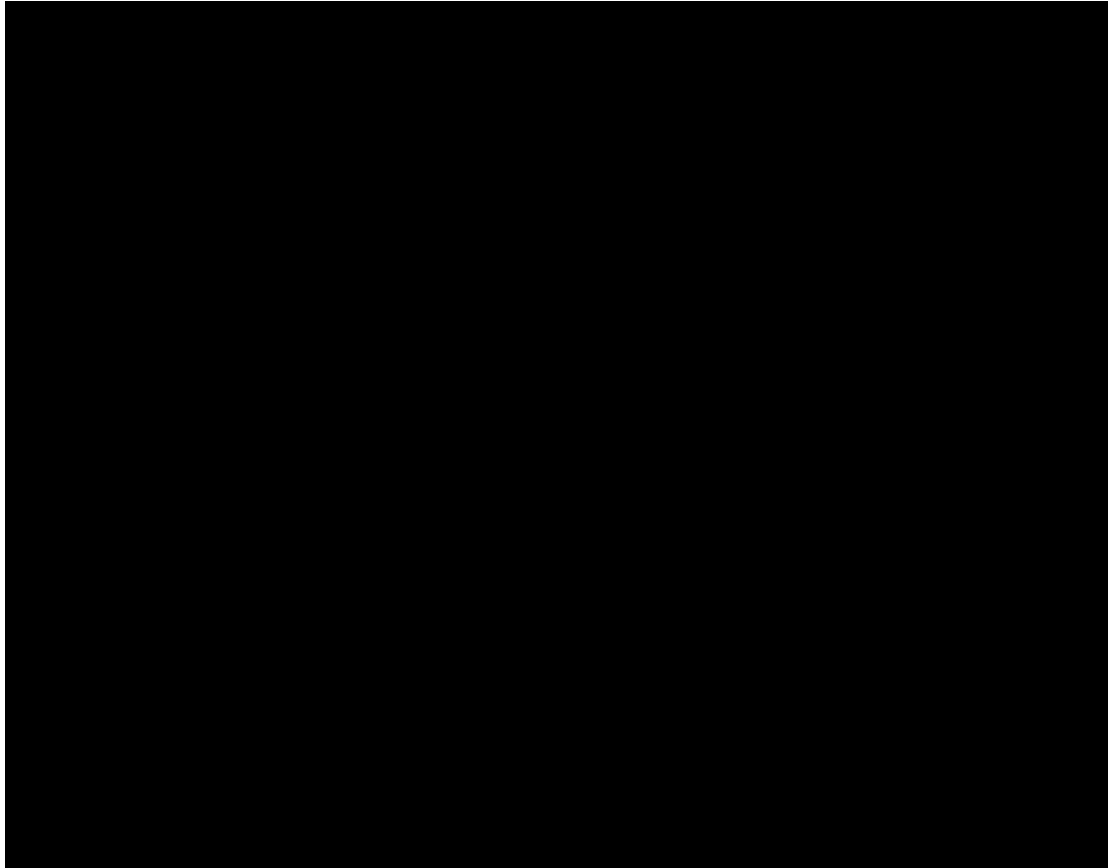
17. During the investigation, the Authority obtained further information and statements from witnesses. Relevant extracts from those documents appear below with personal information redacted where not required for procedural fairness purposes.
18. Relevant extracts from transcript of Witness A include:





19. Relevant extracts from Witness B's statement are:





Contravention Supported by Evidence

20. The evidence currently available to the Authority relevant to the allegation is sufficient to support the following offence under the *Law*:

**Section 166(3) – Offence to Use Inappropriate Discipline**

- (3) A staff member of, or a volunteer at, an education and care service must not subject any child being educated and cared for by the service to-
- (a) any form of corporal punishment; or
  - (b) any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

**Potential Compliance Actions**

21. Should the offence be substantiated on the balance of probabilities, the Authority will need to consider whether any compliance action is required. As well as administrative action such as a formal Caution Letter, the potential statutory compliance actions are an enforceable undertaking or prohibition, as set out below:

**Section 179A of the Law – Enforceable undertaking**

- (1) This section applies-
- a) if a person has contravened, or if the Regulatory Authority alleges a person has contravened, a provision of this Law; or
  - b) in the circumstances set out in section 27(a), 72(a) or 184(3).

- (2) If subsection (1) (a) applies the Regulatory Authority may accept a written undertaking from the person under which the person undertakes to take certain actions, or refrain from taking certain actions, to comply with this Law.
- (4) If subsection (1)(b) applies in relation to a person other than the approved provider of an education and care service, the Regulatory Authority may accept a written undertaking from the person, under which the person undertakes to take certain actions, or refrain from taking certain actions in relation to an education and care service.

**Section 182 of the Law – Grounds for giving prohibition notice**

- (2) The Regulatory Authority may give a prohibition notice to a person who is in any way involved in the provision of an approved education and care service if it considers that there may be an unacceptable risk of harm to a child or children if the person were allowed –
  - (a) to remain on the education and care service premises; or
  - (b) to provide education and care to children.
- (3) For the purposes of subsection (1), a person may be involved in the provision of an approved education and care service as any of the following –
  - (a) an approved provider;
  - (b) a nominated supervisor;
  - (c) an educator;
  - (d) a family day care educator;
  - (e) an employee;
  - (f) a contractor;
  - (g) a volunteer;
  - (h) a person who was formerly a person referred to in paragraphs (a) to (g) in relation to the approved education and care service –or in any other capacity

**Section 183 – Show cause notice to be given before prohibition notice**

- (1) Before giving a prohibition notice, the Regulatory Authority must give the person a notice (a *show cause notice*) –
  - (a) stating that the Regulatory Authority proposes to give the person a prohibition notice; and
  - (b) stating the reasons for the proposed prohibition; and
  - (c) inviting the person to make a written submission to the Regulatory Authority, within a stated time of at least 14 days, about the proposed prohibition.

Effect of an Enforceable Undertaking

- 22. An Enforceable Undertaking is a formal “promise” to the Authority to do or not do certain things. Terms vary, but examples of requirements are:
  - a. only working with children under supervision; or

- b. doing some additional training to improve your skills as an educator; or
  - c. keeping the Authority advised of your workplace; or
  - d. having an approved mentor.
23. It is a flexible way to ensure ongoing compliance with the *Law* and *Regulations* and may be appropriate depending on the level of risk to children.
24. If you offer an enforceable undertaking and the Authority accepts it, failure to comply with any of its terms after acceptance allows the Authority to apply to the relevant tribunal or court for an order under section 181(2) of the *Law* to enforce the undertaking.

#### Effect of a Prohibition Notice

25. If, after considering all available evidence and any submission you wish to make, the Authority decides to issue a prohibition notice, while the prohibition notice is in force you must not:
- a. provide education and care to children for an education and care service; or
  - b. be engaged as an educator, family day care educator, employee, contractor or staff member of, or perform volunteer services for, an education and care service; or
  - c. carry out any other activity relating to education and care services.

#### Right of response

26. Please note that the Authority has made no decision at the time of sending the Notice and will make no decision without giving you a reasonable opportunity to respond.
27. If you do not respond to the Notice at all, or within the allowed timeframe, the Authority can only consider the evidence it already has when deciding if any offences have been substantiated on the balance of probabilities and, if so, what (if any) compliance action should be taken.
28. You have a right to respond to the allegations set out in this notice. You may respond in writing or by way of a recorded interview with two Authorised Officers.
29. You may, within 14 days of receiving this letter, make a written submission for the Authority's consideration in deciding if compliance action should be taken. If you need additional time, please direct a request with reasons to the contact officer.
30. At Attachment E to this Notice is a '4 Step Guide to Responding to a Show Cause Notice' to assist in the development of your submission.
31. If you wish to respond in a recorded interview with Authorised Officers, please advise the contact officer within seven days. A convenient time will be arranged for you to attend at the Authority's premises in Stirling, ACT, to provide your response in person. You are permitted to bring a support person to that interview, as long as the person does not have any connection with the Provider or the Service.
32. If you respond in writing, please direct your written submission via email to Authorised Officer Brian Cropper at [brian.cropper@act.gov.au](mailto:brian.cropper@act.gov.au) or by post to:

Brian Cropper – Authorised Officer  
Children’s Education and Care Assurance  
GPO Box 158,  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

**Caution**

33. Please be aware that it is an offence under section 295 of the *Law* to provide the Authority with false or misleading information or documents.

**Legislation**

34. The *Law* applies to you as an educator and to any service you may be employed at.
35. The *Law* is applied in the ACT by the *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011* <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-42/default.asp>.
36. The *Law* and *Regulations* can be viewed at: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-law,and>  
<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>
37. Should you have any questions about this Show Cause Notice please contact Authorised Officer Brian Cropper at [brian.cropper@act.gov.au](mailto:brian.cropper@act.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,



Jo Williams  
Director – Regulatory Operations  
Children’s Education and Care Assurance  
Education and Care Regulation and Support

25 July 2023