



Ms [REDACTED]  
Person with Management or Control  
Affinity Education Group Limited  
RE: Milestones Early Learning Macquarie

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms [REDACTED]

**Show Cause Notice – Proposed Compliance Action**

1. I am a delegate of the ACT Regulatory Authority (the Authority), also known as Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA).
2. As you are aware, the Authority is the regulator of education and care services in the ACT and has the responsibility of monitoring and enforcing compliance with the *Education and Care Services National Law* (the *Law*). One of the Authority's roles is to investigate suspected offences under the *Law*.
3. The Authority is currently investigating multiple suspected offences at Milestones Early Learning Macquarie - SE-00009808 (the Service) operated by Affinity Education Group Limited - PR-40001112 (the Provider). Web addresses to 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 from other sources and the Authority has determined that the Provider has a case to answer regarding suspected offences. However, the Authority's investigation is not complete until the Provider has had an opportunity to respond to the allegations and evidence obtained by the Authority. This is the reason for sending this Show Cause Notice (Notice) to you. Detailed instructions of how to respond appear at the end of this Notice.
5. If substantiated, the allegations may constitute offences under sections 166 and 167 of the *Law*. If, after considering all available evidence, the Authority finds any offences are substantiated on the balance of probabilities (or any combination of them) it will need to consider whether compliance action is required.
6. Where offences under the *Law* are substantiated, the Authority considers many factors when determining appropriate action, the focus being on ensuring future compliance and

improved outcomes for children, rather than punishment. Further details regarding potential compliance actions appear at the end of this Notice.

### **Grounds for issuing Show Cause Notice**

7. Evidence obtained during the investigation to date supports offences under the *Law* within the following areas: Inappropriate discipline.

### **Facts**

1. On 25 January 2024, the ACT Regulatory Authority (the Authority) received a notification alleging an educator, had used force to redirect a child, known to be [REDACTED] 2 years 10 months old, on 24 January 2024. It was also alleged that on 25 January 2024 that an educator had lifted a child, known to be [REDACTED] 3 years 3 months old, by their wrists, and dropped them onto the ground.  
Refer Attachment A.
2. Due to the risk of harms and hazards likely to cause injury if children are inappropriately disciplined, the Authority determined to investigate the matter, which engaged suspected offences under section 166 of the *Law*.

### **Grounds – Inappropriate discipline**

#### Allegation One

3. It is alleged that on 24 January 2024, the Provider failed to ensure that no child being educated and cared for by the Service, was subjected to any form of corporal punishment, in that, a child believed to be [REDACTED] 2:10) was forcefully move to the ground and help by an educator, contravening section 166(1) of the *Law*.

#### Allegation Two

4. It is alleged that by 25 January 2024, the Provider failed to ensure that no child was subjected to any form of corporal punishment, in that, a child believed to be [REDACTED] (3:3) was lifted by his wrists and dropped by an educator, contravening section 166(2) of the *Law*.

### **Legislation Relevant to the Allegations**

8. The following provisions of the *Law* are relevant to the Allegation:

#### **Section 166(1) of the Law - Offence to use inappropriate discipline**

The Approved Provider of an education and care service must ensure that no child being educated and cared for by a service is subjected to-

- (a) Any form of corporal punishment ; or

(b) Any discipline that is unreasonable under the circumstances.

Penalty: \$11 400, in the case of an individual

\$57 400, in any other case.

Evidence relevant to the Allegations

5. On 22 February 2024, the Provider furnished documents pursuant to 215 Notice including the following relevant documents:

- a) Child Attendance
- b) Working Directly with Children records
- c) Policy and procedures
- d) Suspension letter for [REDACTED]

Refer Attachment B for relevant documents which are redacted in parts to protect individual identities.

6. On 27 March 2024, the Provider furnished documents pursuant to a supplementary 215 Notice including the following relevant documents:

- a) Workplace Investigation Report

Refer Attachment C

7. During the investigation, the Authority obtained witness statements, relevant extracts from which appear below, with personal information redacted where appropriate. Due to the specific circumstances surrounding the alleged offences, witnesses are identifiable from the content of their evidence.

8. Please note that educator witness statements were obtained utilising powers under section 215 of the *Law*, imposing an obligation to attend before the Authority and provide relevant evidence under questioning by an Authorised Officer. It is an offence to fail to comply.

9. Relevant extracts from Witness A's statement include:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

■ [Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

■ [Redacted text block]

■ [Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

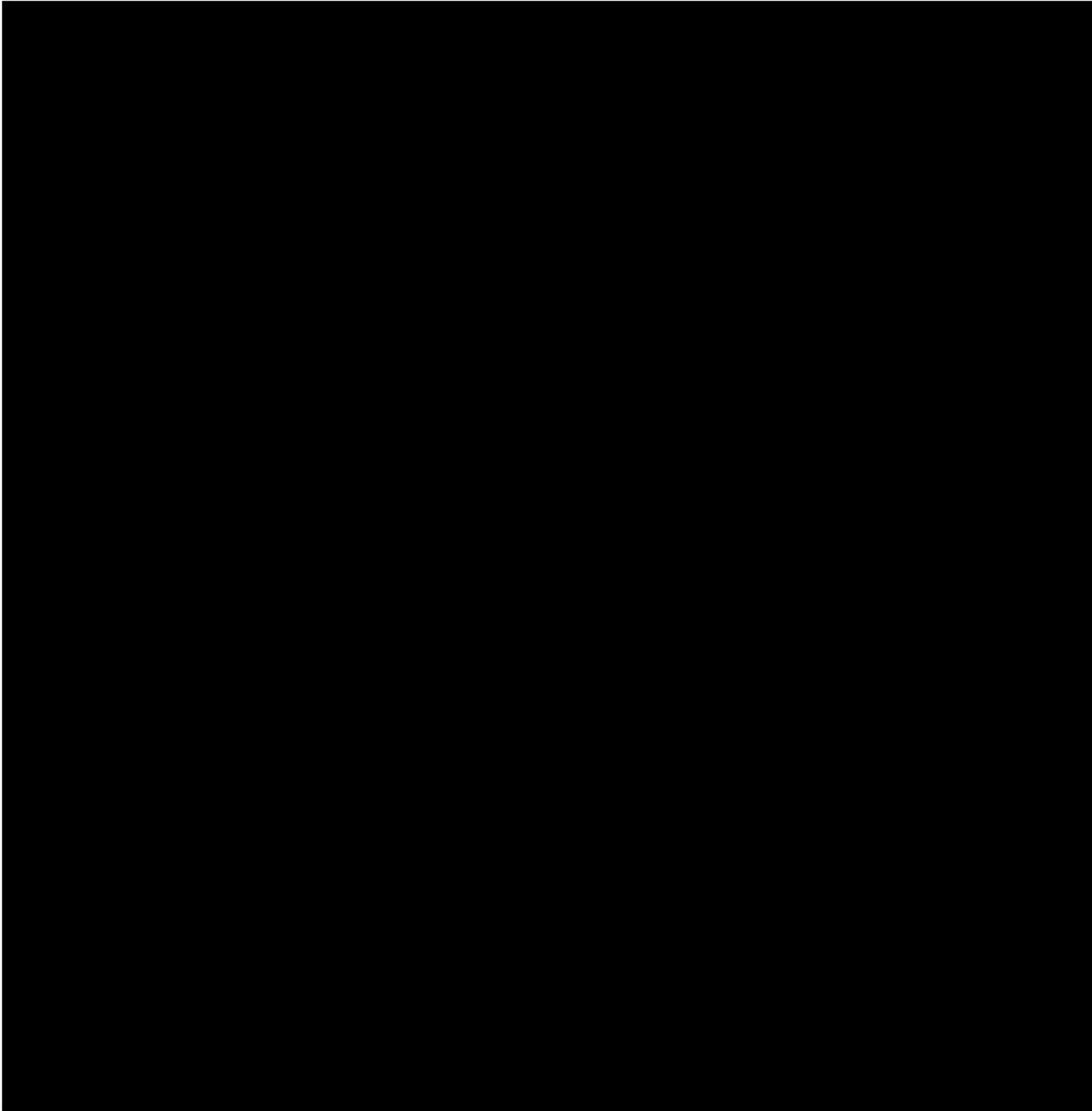
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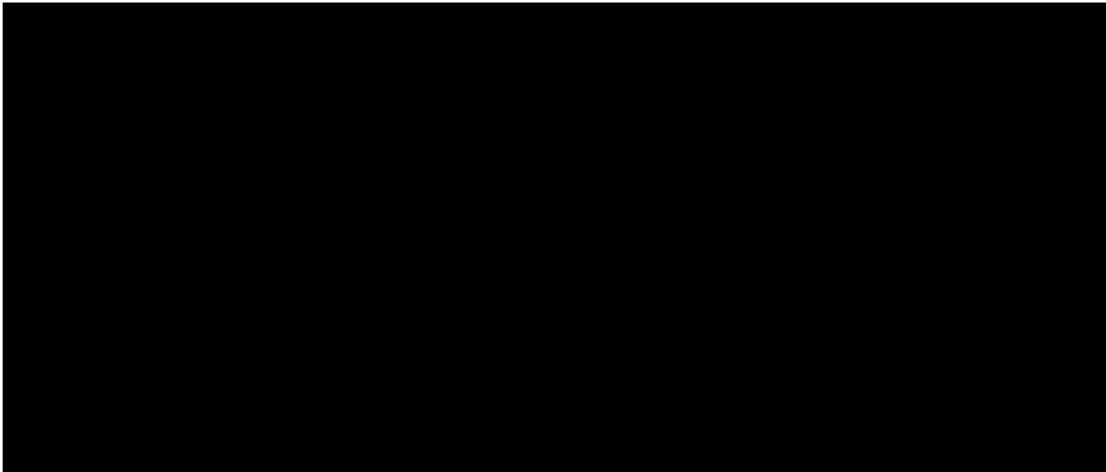
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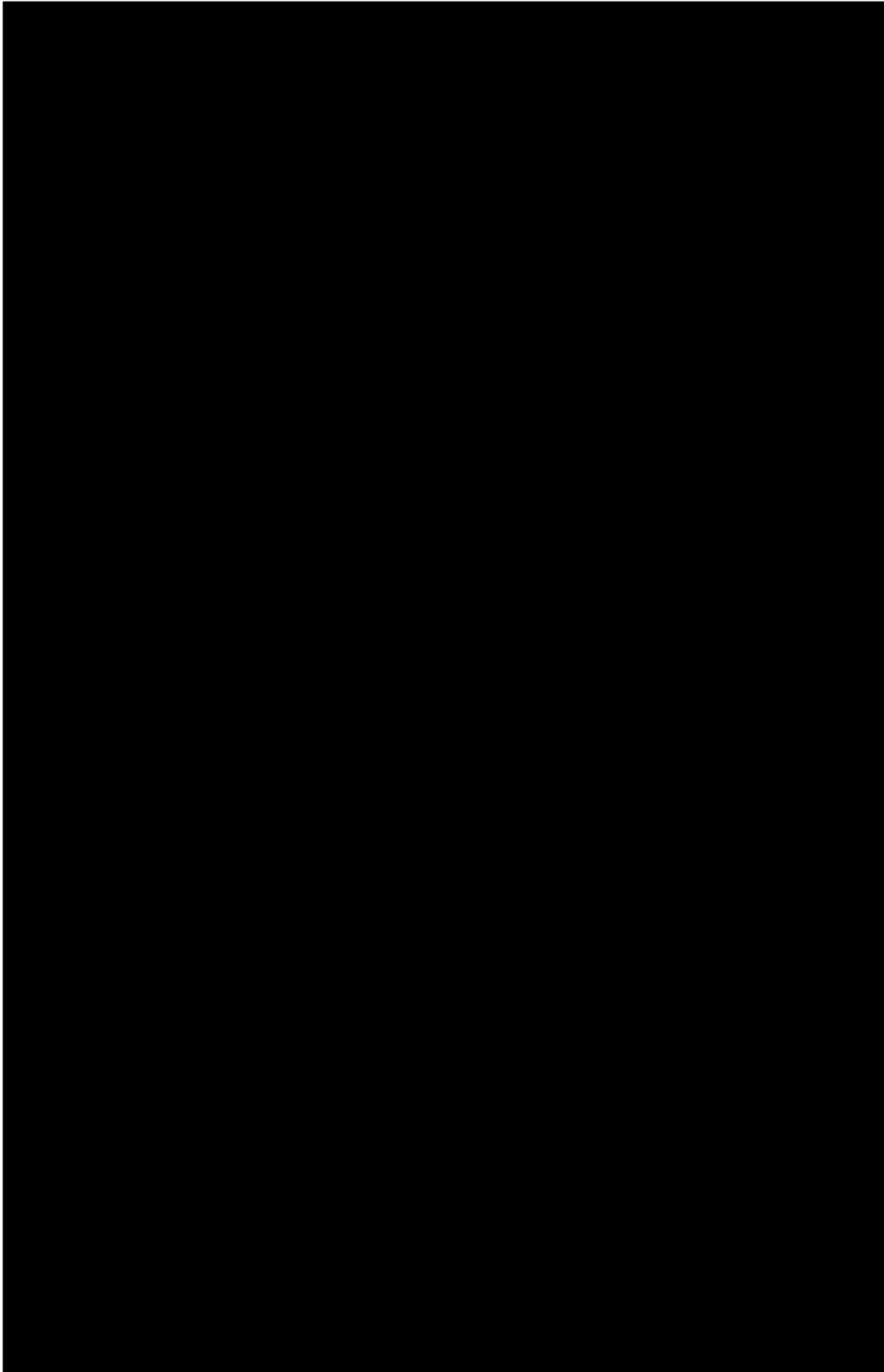


Relevant extracts from Witness B's statement include:



Relevant extracts from Witness C's statement include:





### Contraventions Support Allegations

10. Evidence gathered appears to support that on 24 January 2024 [REDACTED] was subjected to corporal punishment, in that he was pushed to the ground and held forcefully by [REDACTED] due to his behaviour, contravening section 166(1) of the *Law*.
11. Evidence gather appears to support that on 25 January 2024 [REDACTED] was subjected to corporal punishment, in that he was lifted by his wrists and dropped from a height of approximately 50cm by [REDACTED] due to his behaviour, contravening section 166(1) of the *Law*.

### Potential Compliance Action

9. The Authority reiterates that no decision has been made at this time – this letter is a step in the investigation process. However, procedural fairness requires that the Authority take this opportunity to advise you of potential compliance actions if an offence is substantiated. Potential compliance actions include:
  - a. Non-statutory Administration Action (similar to a caution) with no further action;
  - b. Non-statutory Administrative Action with measures to be taken and evidence produced; or
  - c. A Compliance Notice under section 177 of the *Law*, if the Authority is satisfied that the Service is not complying with the *Law*.
  - d. Imposing of Conditions on the Service’s approval under section 51 of the *Law*.
  - e. Suspension of the service approval under section 72 of the *Law*. The suspension would be in effect from the time the provider has been notified of the decision until the provider can demonstrate that they have mitigated any future risks.
  - f. Cancellation of the service approval under section 79 of the *Law*.
10. In arriving at a decision concerning compliance action, if warranted, the Authority considers many factors, such as severity of non-compliance and the compliance history of the Provider and Service.
11. If a matter is determined as warranting consideration of suspension or cancellation of a service approval, please be aware that additional opportunity to respond to the grounds for such action would be provided, as required under sections 71 and 78 of the *Law*.

### Right of response

12. As mentioned previously, this is the Provider’s opportunity to respond to the allegations and evidence set out in this Notice. You may, within 14 days of receiving this Notice, make a written submission for the Authority’s consideration in deciding if any offences are substantiated and, if so, whether any compliance action should be taken.

13. At Attachment D to this Notice is a '4 Step Guide to Responding to a Show Cause Notice' to assist in the development of your submission. Please direct your written submission via email to [declan.barbagallo@act.gov.au](mailto:declan.barbagallo@act.gov.au) or by post to:

Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA)  
Education Directorate  
Attention: Declan Barbagallo  
GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601.

**Caution**

14. I am informing you that the excerpts of witness accounts taken for the Authority's investigation are included in the interests of procedural fairness. The statements taken during the investigation and the excerpts provided for your consideration in the show cause process are protected disclosures under section 296 of the *Law*.
15. The *Law* provides, at section 297, for the protection of persons who make protected disclosures from serious detrimental action against them in reprisal.
16. Please also be aware that it is an offence under section 295 of the *Law* to provide the Authority with false or misleading information or documents.
17. The *Law* applies to you as a provider and any service you operate. 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>.
18. 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>
19. Should you have any questions about this Show Cause Notice please contact Declan Barbagallo on [declan.barbagallo@act.gov.au](mailto:declan.barbagallo@act.gov.au)

Yours Sincerely



Nicole Withers  
A/g Assistant Director  
Children's Education and Care Assurance  
Education and Care, Regulation and Support

30 July 2024