

Complaints Procedure for Staff, Volunteers and Service Users

It is the responsibility of employees and volunteers to ensure that they attempt to resolve any issues through communication with the appropriate party in the first instance. If a resolution is not reached or the individual feels that the concern is of a serious nature, the matter should be raised with their Team Leader who may choose to follow the process below or refer to the Centre Manager. If the grievance/dispute is one of a confidential or serious nature involving the Centre Manager, the complainant may discuss the issue directly with the Board of Management President who will follow the process as set out below in place of the Centre Manager.

- All service users will be provided with the document: 'Information for Parents, Making a Complaint', at commencement of service.
- All complaints will be recorded on the Compliment and Complaints Reporting Register by the Team Leader/ Centre Manager and a copy of any correspondence relating to the complaint will be filed and securely stored [Complaints Reporting Register](#)
- Compliments will be recorded by the administration officer.
- Complaints and notifications about an individual disability worker or organisation can be made by any individual via the Victorian Disability Worker Commission website (vdwc.vic.gov.au)
- Should a complainant wish to make a formal complaint in writing, the complainant must complete the Complaint Record Form. (3-1b)
- The Team Leader/ Centre Manager should check for clarification of the issue to ensure they fully understand the complainant's concerns.
- The complainant will be offered the opportunity of having an independent witness at any discussion. The meeting will be chaired by the Team Leader/Centre Manager who has responsibility for the following:
 - If more than one person is present, establish the role of each person
 - Outline the process that is to be followed
 - Inform the parties that any information obtained during the discussion is confidential
 - Listen to the complainant and determine the problem

- Take accurate and detailed notes of all conversations (including dates, people involved) and attach any supporting documentation
 - Provide the complainant with a written summary of the meeting and clarification of the next steps to be taken.
- The Team Leader/Centre Manager/Board president must ensure that the way the meeting is conducted is conducive to maintaining positive working relationships, and will provide a fair, objective and independent analysis of the situation. Focus on
 - establishing the key facts and issue
 - listening encouraging open dialogue
 - the complainant's specific needs
 - guiding the discussion to find ways to resolve the dispute
 - Should the matter be resolved at this point, then the outcome will be recorded and a written copy provided to the parties involved.
 - All parties must maintain complete confidentiality regarding the issue/concern, process and the outcome.
 - The Centre Manager will advise the Board of Management President of any formal complaint made and the progress of discussions as they occur.
 - If the matter is not resolved at this point and the complainant wishes to pursue the complaint, the issue should be referred in writing to the Board President stating:
 1. The nature of the complaint(s).
 2. The previous attempts made to resolve the grievance; and
 3. The preferred remedy to resolve the grievance.
 - The Board President will call a meeting of the Grievance Sub-Board (made up of 3 members of the Board of management including the President and two others nominated by the President), the Centre Manager and complainant, within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint. This meeting of the Grievance Sub-Board will firstly discuss the complaint with the Centre Manager to clarify the process undertaken thus far, then will meet with the complainant. All discussions and outcomes will be recorded.
 - The complainant is entitled to have an independent support person present at this and all subsequent meetings.
 - The matter will be discussed openly and objectively to ensure it is fully understood.

- The Grievance Sub-Board will notify the parties involved in writing within 7 days of this meeting, informing them of the proposed set of conditions to resolve the grievance, which will only be implemented with the agreement of the parties.
- If the matter cannot be resolved, then further external mediation may be requested by either party.
- The Centre Manager or President (whoever has the final responsibility in the process for resolution of the grievance) must ensure that the appropriate steps are taken to implement the agreement.
- A follow up meeting will be held with the complainant and respondent separately to monitor the effectiveness of the remedial action. The Management of Complaints Client Survey can be completed at this time.

In all the above circumstances, the confidential Complaints Record Form and other documentation will be filed in accordance with the Centre's Privacy Policy.