



## Complaint Handling Policy

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### Introduction

St Kilda Mums (also trading as Geelong Mums and Eureka Mums) (the Organisation) will ensure that complaints are handled fairly, efficiently and effectively.

This policy provides information on the key principles and concepts of our complaint management system.

### Scope

This policy applies to all employees volunteers, trainees, students gaining work experience, contractors and sub-contractors and all those who represent, or engage with the Organisation.

### What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about our services, decisions, actions or the actions of our people.

### Guiding principles

The Organisation is committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures, products and complaint handling.

Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable time frame.

People making complaints will be:

- provided with a copy of our complaint handling policy
- given the opportunity to make a complaint anonymously
- treated with respect and actively involved in the complaint process, where possible and appropriate; and
- provided with reasons for our decision/s and informed about any avenues for redress or review.

### No detriment to people making complaints

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

### **Making a complaint**

All complaints will be recorded, assessed and responded to using our Customer Service Software. The feedback form is available in every staff member's email signature and in the "Tell us what you think" section in the footer of each branch's website.

We will ensure that information about how and where complaints may be made is well publicised on our website. We will inform people who make complaints to, or about us, about any internal or external review options available to them (including any relevant Ombudsman or oversight regulatory bodies).

We accept anonymous complaints if there is a compelling reason to do so and will carry out a confidential investigation of the issues raised where there is sufficient information provided.

### **Responding to complaints**

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.

We will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be escalated as soon as possible/practicable.

We will endeavour to respond to all complaints within five working days.

We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them of the following as soon as possible:

- the expected time frames for our actions
- the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
- their likely involvement in the process; and
- the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).

We will also advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our time frames for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.

The three levels of complaint handling are:

#### **Level 1**

We aim to resolve complaints at the first level, at the frontline. Wherever possible staff will be adequately equipped to respond to complaints, including being given appropriate authority, training and supervision.

#### **Level 2**

Where this is not possible, we may decide to escalate the complaint to a more senior person within our organisation. This second level of complaint handling will provide for the following internal mechanisms:

- assessment and possible investigation of the complaint and decision/s already made; and/or
- facilitated resolution (where a person not connected with the complaint reviews the matter and attempts to find an outcome acceptable to the relevant parties).

### **Level 3**

Where a person making a complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of our review of their complaint, they may seek an external review of our decision (by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission for example).

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with us. We will record complaints resolved at first point of contact.

### **Objectivity and fairness**

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

We will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

### **Responding flexibly**

Our staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible. We will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives.

We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

### **Confidentiality**

We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate.

Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by us as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.

### **Empowerment of staff**

All staff managing complaints are empowered to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

Staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of our complaint management system.

### **Responsible Person**

The CEO is the person ultimately responsible for handling complaints. You can contact the CEO directly at [complaints@stkildamums.org](mailto:complaints@stkildamums.org).

### **Managing unreasonable conduct by people making complaints**

We are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or complaints. At the same time, our success depends on:

- our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible
- the health, safety and security of our staff and volunteers; and
- our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive.

When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our work. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with this policy.

### **Accountability and learning**

We will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis by management and board. Redactions may be made for sensitive information.

We will run regular reports on:

- the number of complaints received
- the outcome of complaints, including matters resolved at the frontline
- issues arising from complaints; and
- systemic issues identified, and the number of requests we receive for internal and/or external review of our complaint handling.

Regular analysis of these reports will be undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of our customer service and make improvements.

Both reports and their analysis will be provided to our CEO, senior management and board for review, at least annually.

### **Continuous improvement**

We are committed to improving the way our organisation operates, including our management of the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, we will:

- support the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- implement best practices in complaint handling
- recognise and reward exemplary complaint handling by staff
- regularly review the complaint management system and complaint data; and
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of our analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

### **Internal staff complaints**

Our code of conduct and volunteer manual outlines the procedure for internal complaints - about a staff member or volunteer.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed and updated every two years or sooner if required. It will be readily accessed by all staff via the People & Policy App on Salesforce.

This policy will be published on the St Kilda Mums website.

Any questions in relation to this Complaint Handling Policy, please contact the CEO.

### **Policy Implementation Documents**

The following documents are to be used in conjunction with this policy:

- Code of Conduct
- Volunteer Policy & Procedure Manual
- Dispute Resolution Policy