



Dispute Resolution Policy

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Purpose

This policy sets out the requirements and the steps to make and resolve an internal complaint and the steps a manager or other relevant individual should take if they receive an internal complaint.

Scope

This policy applies to all personnel, trainees, students gaining work experience, contractors, subcontractors and all those representing the organisation.

Definitions

The organisation, St Kilda Mums, we, us, our - St Kilda Mums Inc., also trading as Eureka Mums and Geelong Mums

Personnel - staff and volunteers of the organisation, whether paid or not.

Policy

Open communication and feedback are regarded as essential elements of a satisfying and productive work environment.

The organisation will establish mechanisms to promote fast and efficient resolution of workplace issues.

No employee will be intimidated or unfairly treated in any respect if they utilise this procedure to resolve an issue.

All personnel should feel comfortable discussing issues with their manager in accordance with the procedure below.

The organisation encourages all personnel to resolve any issues or concerns that they may have at the earliest opportunity with each other or, failing that, their immediate manager.

All managers and supervisors should be aware of the possible ramifications of their actions when dealing with personnel issues and must ensure that all personnel are treated with fairness, equality and respect.

If there are any doubts or queries in relation to how to deal with a particular set of circumstances, managers should contact the CEO for advice at the earliest opportunity.

All formal avenues for the handling of grievances will be fully documented and the individual's wishes will be considered in determining the appropriate steps and actions.

1. Responsibilities

1.1. Chief Executive Officer

It is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure that:

- all managers, employees and volunteers are aware of their obligations and responsibilities in relation to communication and information sharing with their employees
- ongoing support and guidance are provided to all employees in relation to employment and communication issues
- all personnel are aware of their obligations and responsibilities in relation to handling grievances
- any grievance that comes to the attention of managers is handled in the most appropriate manner at the earliest opportunity

1.2. Managers and Supervisors

It is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to ensure that:

- any potential problems are identified, prevented and addressed before they become formal grievances
- they are aware of, and are committed to the principles of communicating and information sharing with their employees and volunteers
- all decisions relating to employment practices are made with consideration given to the ramifications for the individual, as well as the organisation in general
- any grievance is handled in the most appropriate manner at the earliest opportunity
- all employees, volunteers and other individuals covered by this policy are treated fairly and without fear of intimidation

1.3. Personnel

It is the responsibility of all personnel to ensure that they attempt to resolve any issues between themselves in the first instance (should they feel comfortable), and then if necessary, through their immediate manager and internal processes at the earliest opportunity.

2. Raising a complaint

An individual covered by this policy who considers that they have a dispute or grievance may:

- tell the other party involved that his or her behaviour is unacceptable and that it must stop, if they feel comfortable to do so, or
- raise the matter with their manager as a first step towards resolution. The two parties should discuss the matter openly and work together to achieve a desired outcome.

If the grievance/dispute is one of a confidential or serious nature involving a manager, the complainant may discuss the issue directly with the CEO.

If the grievance/dispute is one of a confidential or serious nature involving the CEO, the complainant may discuss the issue directly with the Board Chair chair@stkildamums.org.

The Board may then determine the best course of action and may engage external specialists to provide advice and assist with the matter.

While the steps above are being followed in relation to a dispute:

- (a) work must continue in accordance with the Fair Work Act 2009; and

(b) an employee must not unreasonably fail to comply with any direction given by the employer about performing work, whether at the same or another workplace, that is safe and appropriate for the employee to perform.

If the dispute is unable to be resolved at the workplace, a party to the dispute may refer it to the Fair Work Commission. Please refer to your relevant award for more information about this.

All complaints will be treated seriously, will be investigated promptly, confidentially and to the extent allowed by the law, impartially.

3. Informal Investigation

The manager should check for clarification of the issue to ensure they fully understand the complainant's concern.

Manager should then conduct an informal investigation, which includes, but is not limited to:

- speaking to all relevant parties as soon as possible, ensuring that all parties have the opportunity to have a support person, organisation or association present at any discussion
- gathering all information about the alleged conduct
- seeking a satisfactory resolution for all relevant parties where possible

When speaking with all relevant parties, the manager must:

- if more than one person is present, establish the role of each person (i.e. support person)
- outline the process that is to be followed
- inform the parties that any information obtained in the conduct of the review is confidential
- take accurate and detailed notes of all conversations (including dates, people involved) and attach any supporting documentation

The manager must ensure that the manner in which the meeting is conducted will be conducive to maintaining positive working relationships, and will provide a fair, objective and independent analysis of the situation.

All parties are to maintain complete confidentiality at all times.

4. Formal investigation

A formal investigation should be undertaken in the first instance if, in the sole discretion of the CEO, the complaint is sufficiently serious, having regards to the circumstances of the alleged conduct.

If a complaint cannot be resolved following an informal investigation, a formal investigation may also be undertaken.

The organisation has the discretion to determine whether a formal investigation is necessary in each case and the form the investigation will take.

The organisation may also appoint an internal or external investigator, whose function is to impartially investigate and resolve complaints.

Reference Documents

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

- a. Code of Conduct
- b. Volunteer Policy and Procedures Manual
- c. Employee Handbook

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d. Fair Work Act 2009

Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated every two years or sooner if required.

It will be approved by the Board and readily accessible by all staff via the People & Policy App on Salesforce.

This policy will be published on the organisation's website.

Any questions in relation to the policy, please contact the CEO.