

Client Management Policies & Procedures

Part C.8 – Complaint and Grievance Management

Applicable to:

This policy extends to grievances brought by any member of staff, parent or client of Teen Challenge QLD. Some grievances are better handled by specific Teen Challenged QLD policies, including Child Protection, Sexual Abuse, Workplace Harassment and Bullying.

Definitions:

Due Process:

Due Process refers to procedural fairness and also refers to expeditious action to resolve grievances. Due process incorporates principles of natural justice.

Grievance:

For the purposes of this policy, a grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction from any party (made verbally or in writing) with Teen Challenge's services.

A grievance may be about the conduct of a person residing at, employed by or connected to the organisation; about specific practices and policies of Teen Challenge QLD; or about Teen Challenge QLD generally.

Natural Justice

Natural Justice is the right to be given a fair hearing and the opportunity to present one's case, to have a decision made by an unbiased or disinterested decision maker and to receive procedural fairness.

Victimisation

Victimisation is the unfavourable treatment of a person as a direct result of that person having made a complaint, or being the subject of a grievance.

Policy:

Teen Challenge QLD is committed to providing a fair, safe and productive environment, where grievances are dealt with in a transparent and equitable manner. An essential part of developing that environment is ensuring that members of the organisation's communities (staff, clients, parents, volunteers and the public) are encouraged to come forward with their grievances in the knowledge that Teen Challenge QLD will take appropriate action to resolve those grievances.

Teen Challenge QLD is committed to the confidentiality of all grievances, at all steps in the process of their resolution.

Procedure:

Where a member of the Teen Challenge QLD community feels aggrieved about something that has occurred at Teen Challenge QLD, which they believe is wrong, unfair, offensive, unlawful, misleading or of poor quality, they should make their grievance known to the organisation so that the problem can be resolved.

The grievance should be put in writing and sent to the relevant manager at the Teen Challenge facility. All grievances not resolved at the local site level will be forwarded to the Executive Director for information and

attention. The Executive Director will be advised of all written grievances, regardless of whether they are resolved at the local site level.

The person making the grievance is encouraged to identify himself or herself in the written statement so that an appropriate response can be made. Responding to anonymous grievances will be at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Where a grievance is made to a member of staff and that person is unable to resolve the matter immediately and directly, the grievance will be referred to the Executive Director.

Note: Where the grievance may have legal consequences, it will be sent directly to Executive Director, who will advise the Chairman of the Teen Challenge Board. Grievances sent to the Board will be directed to the Executive Director for advice and information, then tabled and discussed at a Board meeting.

Receipt of the written grievance will be acknowledged within five (5) working days.

The Executive Director will sign the written grievance to indicate that he or she has read the grievance.

The grievance will be recorded in a log by the Executive Director and an investigation will be undertaken with a view of achieving resolution within two (2) weeks of receiving the complaint. If the investigation takes longer, reports on progress will be made regularly to the complainant until a resolution is achieved.

During the investigation the Executive Director may seek interviews with the complainant and other relevant parties or witnesses, and a written record of meetings and telephone conversations may be produced and kept on file for future reference.

If the person making the grievance believes that the issue has not been properly resolved by reference to the Executive Director, the grievance can be referred to the Chairman.

The Chairman will attempt to resolve the matter within two (2) weeks of receiving the grievance and should follow similar steps outlined for action by the senior manager. All documentation, including the written grievance and other file notes, will be handed to the Chairman.

If the grievance remains unresolved following the Chairman's investigation, it may be referred to an independent third person by the complainant or by the Chairman. The independent third person will be a person agreed to by the complaint and the Chairman, and will be a person suitably qualified to consider the grievance.

After giving due consideration to the grievance the independent person may do one or more of the following:

- refer the complaint back to the Chairman with advice for resolution
- seek to resolve the matter directly

If the investigation carried out by the Executive Director, Chairman or independent person reveals that the grievance is valid; a number of actions may be taken, depending on the nature of the grievance.

If a client from the Family Support Service has a grievance that is unresolved following the above process, they may refer grievance/complaint to the Department of Communities - <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/about-us/customer-service-compliments-complaints/complaints-management-policy-procedure>

Possible actions include:

- the complainant receives a verbal or written apology
- the person against whom the grievance was made receives a verbal or written reprimand
- one or both parties agree to participate in some form of counselling or mediation
- disciplinary action takes place where misconduct or unsatisfactory performance has occurred
- Teen Challenge QLD takes action to reform its policies and practices and information about the reform will be made available to wider community

If the investigation reveals that the grievance is unsubstantiated, the complainant will be given an explanation as to why that finding was made. Despite the grievance being unsubstantiated, Teen Challenge QLD may still take some action to address any issues that flow out of the investigation.

Where a grievance involves the Executive Director, the grievance should be sent directly to the Chairman of the Board for action.

The complainant has the right:

- To be heard and listened to.
- To have the complaint addressed with procedural fairness.
- To have the complaint dealt with quickly.
- To seek legal advice.
- To advice and support.
- To have a support person present at all meetings.
- To confidentiality and sensitivity in the resolution of the process.

Victimisation and repercussions of ill treatment as a result of bringing the complaint will not be tolerated.

The complainant has the responsibility:

- To approach the process in good faith.
- To uphold strict confidentiality
- To be courteous in dealing with the respondent and the Executive Director
- To ensure that any support person understands their role in the process

The Respondent has the responsibility:

- To approach the process in good faith
- To uphold strict confidentiality
- To be courteous in dealing with the complainant and the Executive Director
- To ensure that any support person understands their role in the process.

Relevant Policies and Reference Material:
The Privacy Act (Cwth) 1988
Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994
Teen Challenge QLD Board Policy – Grievance Management 2.8
Teen Challenge QLD Vision, Mission and Values
Teen Challenge Enterprise Agreement 2013

Review Dates
Last Reviewed: November 2017
Approved: Joanne Hobbs (Executive Director)
Next Review: November 2018