

Complaint and Disciplinary Policy

Objective

- To resolve complaints quickly, co-operatively and amicably at an early stage through discussion and conciliation;
- To protect the right of complainants by acting promptly to remedy the complaint, where such is valid and substantiated;
- To protect the rights of persons complained against by ensuring that complaints are properly investigated and decisions made only on the basis of sound evidence, proper evaluation, and by adhering to the principles of natural justice;
- To empower both parties to the conflict by treating their grievances seriously and with sensitivity whether or not these can be resolved through the process of discussion and conciliation; and
- To ensure that all staff are treated fairly and are aware of the processes and outcomes that might be actioned in the event of a breach of expected conduct.

Policy Statement

Child Matters is committed to ensuring that all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with fairly. The following procedures apply to, and are available to all staff and students of Child Matters.

Procedure - Complaints

1. All complaints will be resolved within four weeks if reasonably possible.
2. **Informal Conciliation**
 - 2.1. If a complainant decides not to make the complaint in writing, informal conciliation may be effected.
 - 2.2. Provision will be made for all complaints to be handled in an informal manner if so desired by the complainant.
 - 2.3. The complainant may arrange to meet with the person to resolve the conflict by discussion and conciliation. Any or all parties to this meeting may bring a support person of their choice.
 - 2.4. If conciliation fails, or if the complainant so chooses, the complainant may make a complaint in writing.
3. **Written complaints to CE**
 - 3.1. All complaints made in writing are to be made to the CE except where the complaint is against that person, in which case it should be directed to the Board Chairperson.
 - 3.2. Receipt of all written complaints will be acknowledged in writing.
4. **Mediation**
 - 4.1. In cases of Misconduct or Serious Misconduct, the CE shall determine the appropriateness of Mediation.
 - 4.2. In other cases, if the complainant does not want the complaint to be handled informally, and the issue is not one of Misconduct or Serious Misconduct, the CE is required to arrange a meeting with the two parties within three weeks of receiving the written complaint. The intent of the meeting is to resolve the complaint by mediation.
 - 4.2.1. A discussion or meeting will be held with all parties involved.
 - 4.2.2. A record of the meeting must be kept by the CE.
 - 4.2.3. Consultation will be held where appropriate with external advisers.

Last review: May 2023

Reviewed by: Jane Searle, CE

Next review: March 2025

- 3.4
- 4.2.4. Options will be considered and a resolution reached.
 - 4.2.5. Resolutions will be conveyed in writing to all parties.
5. **Written complaints to Board of Trustees**
- 5.1. If conflict remains unresolved through mediation, or if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant should submit the written complaint to the Board of Trustees for investigation and consideration.
6. **Complaint against student**
- 6.1. If the complaint is made against a student, and upheld by the CE, the CE may decide that:
 - 6.1.1. A verbal or written warning will be issued, or
 - 6.1.2. The student's continued enrolment is subject to a suitable behavioural contract being negotiated, or
 - 6.1.3. The student's enrolment is terminated.
 - 6.2. See also the Student Disciplinary Policy.
7. **Complaint against staff**
- 7.1. If the complaint is made against a staff member the CE is required to investigate the allegation. If the complaint is upheld by the CE, the CE may decide:
 - 7.1.1. A verbal or written warning will be issued, or
 - 7.1.2. More serious disciplinary action as appropriate will be taken.
8. **Complainant to be informed**
- 8.1. Complainants of written complaints to the Board of Trustees will be informed in writing as to whether their complaint was upheld.
9. **Complaints to be recorded**
- 9.1. A record is to be kept by Child Matters of all complaints and any related information to the complaint.

Disciplinary Actions

10. Definitions

10.1. Code Of Ethics

- 10.1.1. Employees of Child Matters are expected to comply with the Code of Ethics at all times. The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to provide a guideline on the standards of behaviour required of all employees. The Code of Ethics does not specify every potential act of behaviour but rather establishes the obligations generally expected of employees. As needs and circumstances arise, Child Matters may modify, add or delete from these as required. Employees will be informed of any such changes.

10.2. Misconduct/Serious Misconduct

- 10.2.1. A breach of misconduct or serious misconduct may result in the appropriate disciplinary procedure being followed.

Responsibilities

Owner – CE