



Policy and Procedure Manual

Section: 02 Ethics, Empowerment and Improvement	Date issued: December 22, 2016	Page: 1 of 2
Subject: 2.03 Complaint Process		

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy and procedure applies to complaints received by Muskoka Victim Services about our activities, programs, services, staff, board or volunteers.

PURPOSE

The purpose of MVS's formal complaints policy is to ensure that all complaints are reviewed thoroughly, fairly and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

DEFINITIONS

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by MVS as an organization or a staff member or volunteer acting on behalf of MVS.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- perceived failure to do something agreed upon;
- failure to observe policy or procedures;
- error made by a staff, board or volunteer; or
- unfair or discourteous actions/statements by staff, board or volunteer.

PROCEDURE

Guiding Principles

- a) It is in the interest of all parties that complaints are dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible.
- b) Review of complaints is fair, impartial and respectful to all parties.
- c) Complainants are advised of their options to escalate their complaint to the Executive Director or Board of Directors if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome.
- d) Complainants are provided clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to complaints.
- e) Updates are provided to complainants during review processes.
- f) Complaints are used to assist in improving services, policies and procedures.

Anyone personally affected can complain and their complaint will be reviewed in accordance with this procedure.

Complaint Receipt and Handling

A complaint may be received verbally (by phone or in person) or in writing (by mail, in person, email). An employee or volunteer who receives a complaint will first determine the proper person to handle it. This will generally be the Program Coordinator who has the specific knowledge that is needed to resolve the problem. It is the responsibility of the person who receives the complaint to either resolve it or transfer it to the Program Coordinator who can resolve it.

The person who initially receives the complaint will acknowledge to the complainant that the complaint has been received and who will be in contact with them. If a timeframe for action can be determined, that is to be included in the acknowledgement. Basic contact information including name, phone number and email address is recorded on the complaint form.



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Resolving the Complaint

Every effort will be made to resolve complaints received in a timely fashion.

1. When receiving a verbal complaint, staff will listen and seek to understand the complaint and may attempt to resolve it immediately.
2. Complaints received in writing will be acknowledged within 5 business days and staff will attempt to resolve the matter within 10 business days.
3. Where a complaint cannot be easily resolved, it will be escalated to the Executive Director who will arrange to meet with the complainant to review the written complaint and to try and resolve the issue. Before this meeting, the Executive Director will investigate with the MVS personnel involved and the Program Coordinator the steps taken to date to solve the problem. Complainants may bring a supportive person to the meeting with the Executive Director.
4. If the Executive Director cannot resolve the complaint, it may be escalated to the Board of Directors. If the complaint is about the Executive Director, it will be handled by the Chairperson of the Board.
5. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the Executive Director, the complainant can submit a written appeal addressed to the Chairperson of MVS's Board of Directors. The Executive Director will provide the name and contact information of the Chairperson. The written appeal needs to include all relevant information. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors will advise the complainant and the Executive Director of the decision.

Complainants will be kept informed of the status of their complaint. Every attempt will be made to resolve escalated complaints within an additional 10 business days so that all complaints are resolved within a month of having been received.

Documenting the Complaint

It is necessary to keep a record of any complaint that cannot be resolved immediately (on the same day it is received). Information about such complaints must be recorded on the Complaint Form. Information recorded on the Complaint Form includes a description of the complaint, who handled it, what was done to resolve the complaint, timeframe and a description of the resolution.

Reporting the Complaint

Any complaint that will result in financial or media attention must be reported to the Chairperson or designate of the Board of Directors immediately. Complaints may require a Serious Occurrence Report to the Ministry.

A summary of the complaints received including number and type will be reported to the MVS's Board of Directors annually or more frequently as requested.

RELATED POLICES

Code of Conduct; Serious Occurrences

Approved by: Executive Director Signature: _____ Date Approved: _____
 Approved by: Board Chair Signature: _____ Date Approved: _____