POLICY AREA: COMPLAINTS, GRIEVANCES AND CONFLICTS

COMPLAINTS

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:
The purpose of this policy is to set out specific procedures and performance standards to ensure efficient and competent handling of complaints and concerns. The policy and procedures have been framed around principles of natural justice, individual rights and equal opportunity.

In addition to these procedures specific programmes may be required to adhere to contractual obligations in regards to recording and reporting complaints.

This policy applies to all of GRCEC’s staff members and volunteers with these procedures followed if the complaint or concern is from an external source such as a service user, their family, another agency or department.

POLICY STATEMENT:
GRCEC is committed to the provision of professional services to our service users and stakeholders. However we recognise that we do not always get it right. It is a service users’ right to complain about a service or express concerns, and to have access to a complaints procedure within that service. We are committed to responding to complaints/concerns in an endeavour to improve our services. Complaints and concerns should be resolved in a timely and sensitive manner and resolution should result in all parties being satisfied with the outcome.

RESPONSIBILITY
- Line managers are responsible for ensuring that contractual obligations and procedures in regards to reporting and recording complaints are adhered to.
- Staff are responsible for actively participating in and complying with this procedure should they receive a complaint.

PROCEDURES
GRCEC will:
- Ensure that all programme participants (or their parents, carers or families) are aware of their right to lodge a complaint and have that complaint heard.
- Ensure that the hearing of any concerns are listened to, treated seriously and investigated promptly.
- Ensure that the complaint and GRCEC’s response is fully documented as part of the formal process and filed in a complaints register relative to the service area.
- Advise programme participants (or their parents, carers or families) of their options to take the complaint to an external agent. Contact details of the appropriate complaints service will be provided.

The following steps apply:

1. Complainants will be encouraged to first discuss the matter with the involved party prior to lodging a formal complaint with the view to resolving any issue before taking it further.
2. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the staff member will meet formally with their Line Manager and report on the complaint/concern. At this point a record of the incident should be recorded in the complaints register of the service area.
3. Dependent on the circumstances and severity of the complaint the Line Manager
will make a decision to follow the matter up with the complainant or refer it to the
Director of GRCEC for further advice. A meeting must be arranged with the
complainant within seven working days of the complaint being received.

4. From this point formal contact will be made with the complainant to discuss and
hopefully resolve the issue. A record of all contacts and consultations should be
recorded in the complaints register. Written complaints must be responded to in
writing.

5. If the complainant is dissatisfied with results then information should be given to the
client regarding their options to take the matter further through the Ombudsman,
Contractors complaints division, Equal Opportunity Commission, Department of
Commerce or other appropriate authority or agency.
GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

Person with grievance

Parties handle complaint

Line manager provides information and resources to parties

Person makes complaint to line manager. Line manager documents complaint in a file note. Respondent is advised, unless confidentiality is compromised. *

Complaint withdrawn

Informal resolution (within 5 working days of complaint)

Internal resolution step 1 (within 5 working days of receipt of written complaint)

If it is determined that the complaint requires disciplinary action the consequences will depend on the severity of the offence and relevance to other policies and procedures.

Internal resolution step 2 (within 7 working days of receipt of grievance reports and outlines of action taken)

External resolution

If the complainant considers the complaint or dispute has not been resolved to their satisfaction they will be provided with the opportunity to access an independent arbiter of their choice.

The complainant, the respondent and the line manager are given the opportunity to discuss the matter with the Director. Written recommendations are made and followed up as required. *

If the complainant wishes to appeal the outcome of the grievance at Step 2, the appeal should be directed to the GRCEC Board, in writing, after notifying the Director of the intent to do so. In circumstances where the grievance relates to the behaviour of a Manager or is of an extremely sensitive nature it may not be appropriate for the matter to be referred to the Manager and should be referred immediately to the Director for investigation. In circumstances where the grievance relates to the actions or decisions of the Director, the matter should be referred to the Chairman of the Board, after notifying the Director.

The person to whom a grievance is directed may request a support person to attend with them.