



# Complaints Management Policy

<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>BO-060</b>		
Date Approved:	20/03/2019	Approved By:	Board of Governance
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Version 1			

## 1. Aim

Camp Breakaway Inc is committed to ensuring that any person or organisation using Camp Breakaway's services or affected by its operations has the right to lodge a complaint or to appeal a decision of the organisation and to have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency.

The organisation will provide a complaints and appeals management procedure that:

- is simple and easy to use
- is effectively communicated and promoted to all clients and stakeholders
- ensures complaints or appeals are fairly assessed and responded to promptly
- is procedurally fair and follows principles of natural justice
- complies with legislative requirements

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to Staff, Volunteers, Clients, Caregivers, Guardians, Client Advocates and Contractors

## 3. Policy

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Grievance Policy,
- VOOHC Policy
- Incident Management,
- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Quality Improvement Committee TOR

## 3 References

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013: Principles.
- United Nations Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework

#### 4 Persons Responsible

- All employees and volunteers are responsible for: Reporting all complaints by entering into the complaints register database or logging this via Breakaway's website. Ensuring guests and visitors are aware of how to make a complaint.
- Supervisors are responsible for: Ensuring employees and guests are aware of this policy and the complaints process
- Managers are responsible for: Implementing this policy and ensuring the process is followed
- Board of Governance are responsible for: Approval of this policy and reviewing and updating this policy as required

#### Definitions

**Breakaway** – all Breakaway Incorporated services and programs

**Board of Governance** – the governing body of Breakaway, comprised of elected or appointed members who jointly oversee the activities and legal responsibilities of the organisation

**Manager** – refers to the GENERAL MANAGER

**Supervisor** – refers to all senior staff who are responsible for supervising one or more staff members

**Staff** – refers to employees of the organisation

**Volunteers** – refers to volunteers of the organisation

**Family** – refers to the parents/caregivers of the campers that receive support from Breakaway

**Visitor** – any person who is visiting a Breakaway service who is not a staff member, volunteer, client or family

#### Principles

Camp Breakaway Inc will:

- consider all complaints it receives
- treat all complainants with respect, recognising that the issue of complaint is important to the complainant
- maintain confidentiality of parties involved, keeping any information private to those directly involved in the complaint and its resolution
- ensure advocacy is available to clients who make a complaint and require support
- resolve complaints, where possible, to the satisfaction of the complainant
- deal with all complaints in a timely manner
- keep parties to the complaint informed of progress of the complaint
- ensure that [Governing body/Management Committee] members, staff [volunteers/others] are given information about the complaints procedure as part of their induction and are aware of procedures for managing client feedback and complaints
- ensure all service users, stakeholders and members are aware of the complaints policy and procedures
- ensure that a complainant is not penalised in any way or prevented from use of services during the progress of an issue
- ensure that feedback data (both positive and negative) is considered in organisational reviews and in planning service improvements

## **How do I know if information received is a Complaint?**

### **Procedures**

#### **Information for clients and stakeholders**

Camp Breakaway Inc complaints and appeals procedure will be documented or referenced for clients and stakeholders in NDIS Service Agreement, Guest welcome pack which is made available at the front desk or on the website

All clients will be informed of their rights and responsibilities with regards to complaints and appeals at the earliest possible stage of their involvement with the organisation.

The Complaints Process will contain information on the following:

- how to make a complaint or lodge an appeal
- contact person for lodging a complaint or appeal
- how the organisation will deal with the complaint or appeal, the steps involved and the timelines
- the rights of the complainant to an advocate, support person or interpreter
- how the person will be informed about the outcome of their complaint or appeal
- how to make a complaint to an external body including contact details

The information will also be made available to clients in an Easy Read format

### **Making a complaint**

A person wishing to make a complaint may do so in writing or verbally to:

- the staff member they were dealing with at the time
- the supervisor] of that staff member
- the General Manager
- the Chair of the Quality Improvement Committee
- electronically via Breakaway's website
- direct to the National Quality and Safeguards Commission

If the complaint is about:

- a staff member, the complaint will normally be dealt with by the General Manager
- management or senior staff, the complaint will normally be dealt with by the Chair of the Quality Improvement Committee
- the General Manager the complaint will normally be dealt with by Chairperson or Board of Directors

Written complaints may be sent to Camp Breakaway, 80 Highview Avenue, San Remo NSW 2262. The Office Manager will be responsible for receiving this correspondence and directing it to the appropriate person.

## **Lodging an appeal**

Clients or their advocates may lodge an appeal if they disagree with a decision made by the organisation, or by a staff member. An appeal should be made in writing and submitted to the Office Manager

### **Procedure for complaints and appeals management**

The person managing the complaint will be responsible for:

#### 1. Processing the complaint or appeal:

- Determining whether the complaint can be managed at initial contact and applying a frontline complaints management approach
- Completing the Complaints Form and providing to the General Manager
- Registering the complaint or appeal in the complaints register.
- Informing the complainant that their complaint has been received and providing them with information about the process and time frame

#### 2. Investigating the complaint or appeal:

- Examining the complaint within 21 days of the complaint being received
- Investigating the complaint and deciding how to respond
- Informing the complainant by letter within 7 days of the complaint being received of what is being done to investigate and resolve it, and the expected time frame for resolution

As far as possible, complaints or appeals will be investigated and resolved within 21 days of being received. If this time frame cannot be met, the complainant will be informed of the reasons why and of the alternative time frame for resolution.

#### 3. Resolving the complaint:

- Making a decision or referring to the appropriate people for a decision within 21 days of the complaint being received
  - informing the complainant of the outcome:
  - upheld (and if so what will be done to resolve it)
  - resolved (and how this has been achieved); or
  - if no further action can be taken, the reasons for this
- Informing the complainant of any options for further action if required

#### 4. Reviewing the complaint:

If the complainant is not satisfied with the investigation and proposed resolution of their complaint or appeal they can seek a further review of the matter by the Chair of the Quality Improvement Committee.

#### 5. Referral to external procedure:

A formal external complaints procedure may follow Step 4 if the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome. The complainant will be referred to NDIS registrar [specify external body].

## **Record keeping**

A register of complaints and appeals will be kept in the Complaints Register Database. The register will be maintained by Quality Improvement Coordinator and will record the following for each complaint or appeal:

- Details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint
- Date lodged
- Action taken
- Date of resolution and reason for decision
- Indication of complainant being notified of outcome
- Complainant response and any further action

Copies of all correspondence will be kept in Complaints Database

The complaints register and files will be confidential and access is restricted to General Manager and Quality Improvement Coordinator.

A statistical summary of complaints and appeals will also be kept in QMS file and maintained by Quality Improvement Coordinator. The Quality Improvement Coordinator will be responsible for preparing a report on number and type of complaints received to the Chair of Quality Improvement Committee.

Results from this report will be reviewed by Board of Directors and used to:

- Inform service planning by including a review of complaints and appeals in all service planning, monitoring and evaluation activities
- Inform decision making by including a report on complaints and appeals as a standard item on staff and management meeting agendas. This needs to be done

## **Complaints involving specific staff members or volunteers**

The General Manager has delegated responsibility for resolving complaints or disputes involving staff members or volunteers.

Internal complaints, where a staff member or volunteer makes a complaint concerning another staff member or volunteer, will be dealt with in accordance with this complaints policy

External complaints by clients or stakeholders made against a staff member or volunteer will be managed by the General Manager who will:

- notify the staff member or volunteer of the complaint and its nature
- investigate the complaint and provide the staff member or volunteer with an opportunity to respond to any issues raised
- attempt to mediate the dispute (if appropriate) and/or attempt to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the outside party
- take any other action necessary to resolve the issue

Any disciplinary action against a staff member or volunteer arising from a complaint will be taken in accordance with the procedures contained in organisation's disciplinary procedures.

Complaints involving the General Manager will be managed by Chairperson or Board of Directors

### **Complaints involving organisation members or Board Directors or members**

Complaints made against a member or Board Director member will be referred to the Chair of the Board or their delegate, and will:

- notify the person about whom a complaint is being made of the complaint and its nature
- investigate the complaint and provide the member with an opportunity to respond to any issues raised
- attempt to mediate the dispute (if appropriate) and/or attempt to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the outside party

Where the Chair of the Board is the subject of a complaint, the complaint should be referred to the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC)

### ***Document review history***

<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Section</i></b>	<b><i>Change</i></b>
18/03/2019		Initial