

Rationale

SDN acknowledges that people who use or interact with our services have a right to complain when dissatisfied with that services. SDN encourages feedback and we understand that complaints are inevitable, valuable and must be managed effectively.

SDN recognises when complaints are properly handled and analysed, they help to improve service delivery for complainants, for all children and families who access the service. SDN records and analyses trends from complaints to drive organisational policy development and continuous improvement.

Scope

This policy, and its associated documents, applies to the entirety of SDN Children’s Services and the entirety of its wholly owned subsidiaries. This policy applies to all SDN services.

This policy does not apply to staff grievances and reportable conduct.

Complaints regarding the handling of personal, sensitive or health information (e.g. concerns raised by families about SDN’s management of their personal information) should be forwarded in writing to the SDN Privacy Officer (email: privacy@sdn.org.au) and will be handled in accordance with the relevant privacy legislation, as required.

Key Terms

Complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of an SDN service provided will be recorded as a complaint.

Complainant

A party that makes a complaint.

Feedback

Information which is used as a basis for improvement and/or information of what is working well.

Policy

SDN will:

- manage complaints in a responsive, efficient, effective, and equitable manner
- aim to address all complaints in a fair, timely and collaborative manner
- make different channels for making a complaint available
- treat each person making a complaint fairly and create a safe environment for making complaints,
- not discriminate against a person making a complaint
- support participation in the complaints process
- commit to treating all complaints without prejudice
- manage complaints confidentially (as per relevant legislation) and with due respect to the complainant in accordance with the guidelines set out below:
 - advise complainants if confidentiality applies to their complaint. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If a complaint is about another person that person has a right to know the allegations being made against them and be given a chance to respond
 - support a complainant, when required, to make an effective complaint
 - be responsive to diverse cultural and linguistic needs of complainants and encourage participation through:
- continuous and easy access to meaningful and culturally relevant information
- opportunity to have a chosen support person to assist or represent them
- provision of support to complainant which reflects their individual, cultural and linguistic needs
- communicate the Complaint Management Policy and Procedure clearly
- inform the complainant at each stage of the process and of the outcome of the complaint
- monitor complaints as part of SDN's continued quality improvement
- endeavour to reach a local resolution using options such as mediation, conciliation and referral; however, where this is not possible, SDN will support complainants to access external complaint handling agencies wherever necessary.

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY		GI-OP-1.13	
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Related SDN Documents

Policies

- GI-HLP-1.04: Equity, Social Justice and Social Inclusion
- GI-HLP-1.09: Privacy and Protection of Information
- GI-HLP-1.10: Code of Conduct
- GI-HLP-1.14: Communication with Families
- GI-HLP-1.19: Complaint Conduct
- SD-HLP-2.02: Child Protection and Wellbeing
- HR-OP-3.09: Grievances
- HR-HLP-3.02: Equal Employment Opportunity and Good Working Relationships

Procedures

- GI-PRO-1.13-01: Complaints Management
- GI-PRO-1.14-01: Feedback Management
- GI-PRO-1.19-01: Complainant Conduct
- SD-PRO-2.02-01: Reporting an Allegation of Possible Reportable Conduct
- SD-PRO-2.02-02: Responding to Concerns about Risk of Harm
- SD-PRO-2.02-03: Working with Children and Vulnerable People and Police Checks
- HR-PRO-3.09-01: Grievances

Forms/Templates

- GI-FRM-1.13-01-01: Complaints Form
- GI-FRM-1.13-01-02: Complaints Register

Other SDN Document

- GI-ADD-1.13-01-A: Completing the Complaints Register Work Instructions

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Relevant Legislation/Regulations

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, sections 172(f) and 174(2)(b)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, regulations 168(2)(o), 173(2)(b) and 176
- Schedule 1: National Quality Standard, standards 7.2 and 7.3, elements 7.3.1, 7.3.3 to 7.3.5
- Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2013
- Health Records Information Privacy Act 2002
- Privacy Act 1988
- Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)
- Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT)
- Human Rights Commission Act 2005 (ACT)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- National Standards for Disability Services
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators

Other References/Related Documents

- For external resources and support. NSW Ombudsman, Ph: 02 9286 1000
www.ombo.nsw.gov.au
- Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW - If the complainant is still dissatisfied, they will be advised to contact the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW, PH: 02 9268 5555 if applicable.
<https://www.antidiscrimination.justice.nsw.gov.au/>
- NSW Ombudsman (2004) Effective complaint handling. NSW Ombudsman
- NSW Ombudsman (2009) Complaint handling kit. NSW Ombudsman

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