

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES		
<b>(MAN 1)</b>	<b>COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURES</b>	
GIRL GUIDES SOUTH AUSTRALIA		

### i. Document Management

Status	Approved
Date approved	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2014
Approved by	Girl Guides SA Inc Board
Review date	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2017
Responsible Person	State Manager
Managed by	Policies and Procedures Committee

### ii. Revision Record

Date	Version	Revision Description
9/11 / 13	1.0	draft

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## Definitions and Abbreviations

1. The Girl Guides South Australia Definitions of Terms are incorporated into this Procedure.
2. Options for management of complaints are:-
  - 2.1. Self Management - The person with the complaint tries to resolve the problem directly with the person who has upset them. Self management of complaints can quickly resolve many lower level and 'accidental' issues.
  - 2.2. Supported in the process by a person in authority - The immediate manager or someone else with authority in the association is available to provide assistance to listen and provide options (based on the complaints procedures and Complaints Handling Policy) to the person with the complaint if they:
    - have not been able to sort out the problem themselves
    - are not sure how to handle the problem
    - want to talk about the problem and get some more information about what to do
    - continues to experience the problem after approaching the other person or people involved.

## Complaint Handling Procedures

**Note:** State/Territory laws and the Child Safe Environments Policy state that all Girl Guides South Australia Staff, members and adult volunteers must report allegations or suspected incidents of non-compliance with the Child Safe Environments Policy. If unsure of your requirements, contact your local child protection agency or the police to seek advice.

- 2.3. Informal Internal process - After talking with their immediate manager or someone else with authority in the association, the person with the complaint may decide:
- there is not problem
  - the problem is minor and that they do not want to proceed with the matter
  - to try and work out their own resolution, with or without support
  - to seek an informal mediated resolution with the help of a third person such as a mediator or an official.
- 2.4. Formal Internal process - If the complaint has not been resolved, the person with the complaint may decide to write a formal complaint to the Management committee or Board of Girl Guides South Australia. A formal procedure is most appropriate when:
- matters have not been satisfactorily resolved at the informal level
  - matters involve serious allegations
  - the other person denies the allegations
  - the person or people being complained about are more senior than the person with the complaint

A formal internal complaint usually involves an investigation of the complaint and then recommendations about outcomes.

- 2.5. Appeal process - If the person with the complaint or the person complained about is not happy with the process or outcome of the investigation, or any recommended mediation does not result in a mutually acceptable solution, then either party is entitled to appeal.

In an appeals process, the complaint is reheard by a different investigator/ decision maker and the decision is reviewed. In most organisations, a person has the right to one internal appeal.

- 2.6. External Options - If the internal complaint resolution procedure does not achieve a satisfactory resolution or outcome, or if the person with the complaint believes it would be impossible to get an impartial resolution within Girl Guides South Australia, they may approach an external body (such as Volunteering SA & NT) for advice or to lodge a complaint at any time during the process.

## Procedures

### 1. Complaint Handling Process

When a complaint is received by Girl Guides South Australia staff, member or volunteer, the person receiving the complaint will:

- listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the problem;
- ask what the complainant would like to happen;
- explain the different options available to help resolve the problem;
- take notes; and
- maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity.

## Complaint Handling Procedures

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, Girl Guides South Australia staff, members or volunteers will assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process. This may involve:

- supporting the person complaining to talk to the person being complained about
- bringing all the people involved in the complaint together to talk objectively through the problem (this could include external mediation);
- gathering more information (e.g. from other people that may have seen the behaviour);
- seeking advice from our district, regional, state and/or national body or from an external agency (e.g. Volunteering SA&NT);
- referring the complaint to their immediate manager within the association; and/or
- referring the complainant to an external agency such as a community mediation centre, police or anti-discrimination agency.

In situations where a complaint is referred to Girl Guides South Australia Management Team or Board and an investigation is conducted, the staff, members and volunteers will:

- co-operate fully;
- ensure the complainant and respondent are not victimised;
- where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the respondent(s); and
- act on the Board or Management Team of Girl Guides South Australia's recommendations.

At any stage of the process, a person can seek advice from or lodge a complaint with an anti-discrimination commission or other external agency.

### **2. Disciplinary Measures**

Girl Guides South Australia will take disciplinary action against anyone found to have breached our policy or made false and malicious allegations. Any disciplinary measure imposed under our policy must:

- Be applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements;
- Be fair and reasonable;
- Be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach;
- Be determined by our Constitution, By Laws and common sense.

Possible measures that may be taken include:

- verbal and/or written apology;
- counselling to address behaviour;
- suspension or termination of membership, participation or engagement in a role or activity;
- de-registration of accreditation for a period of time or permanently;
- a fine; or
- any other form of discipline that our association considers reasonable and appropriate.

### **3. Appeals**

The complainant or respondent can lodge one appeal against decisions of or disciplinary measures imposed by Girl Guides South Australia to the Board of the

## Complaint Handling Procedures

association. Appeals must be based on either a denial of natural justice, because of unjust or unreasonable disciplinary measure(s) being imposed, or on the grounds that the decision was not supported by the information/evidence presented and available to the manager.

### **Associated Policies**

1. These procedures support the Complaints Handling Policy.

Complaint Handling Procedures

Reporting Form		
<b>MAN 1/1</b>	<b>RECORD OF COMPLAINT</b>	
GIRL GUIDES SOUTH AUSTRALIA		

<b>Name of person receiving complaint</b>		Date:
<b>Receiving person's role within Girl Guides South Australia</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Unit Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Unit Leader <input type="checkbox"/> District Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Region Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Parent or Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff member <input type="checkbox"/> State Team member <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Other .....
<b>Complainant's Name</b>		
<b>Complainant's contact details</b>		
<b>Complainant's role within Girl Guides South Australia</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Unit Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Unit Leader <input type="checkbox"/> District Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Region Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Parent or Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff member <input type="checkbox"/> State Team member <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Other .....
<b>Subject (person) of the complaint's name</b>		
<b>Subject (person) of the complaint's contact details</b>		
<b>Subjects role within Girl Guides South Australia</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Unit Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Unit Leader <input type="checkbox"/> District Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Region Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Parent or Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff member <input type="checkbox"/> State Team member <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Other .....

# Complaint Handling Procedures

<p><b>Location of alleged incident or complaint</b></p>	
<p><b>Description of the issue</b></p>	
<p><b>Nature of the complaint</b></p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Selection dispute                      <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership style  <input type="checkbox"/> Personality clash                      <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying  <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse    <input type="checkbox"/> Child Abuse       <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Abuse     <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal Abuse       <input type="checkbox"/> Victimization  <input type="checkbox"/> Harassment  <input type="checkbox"/> Unfair decision  <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination   <input type="checkbox"/> Racial       <input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality       <input type="checkbox"/> Disability                                   <input type="checkbox"/> Religion       <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy  <input type="checkbox"/> Other  ..... </p>
<p><b>How the complainant wishes to have the issue resolved</b></p>	
<p><b>Information provided to the complainant</b></p>	

Complaint Handling Procedures

<b>Resolution or action taken</b>	
<b>Follow up action</b>	

The above is a true record of the resolution of this complaint:

Name of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# FLOW CHART FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

