



# Dealing with Family Grievances and Complaints

## Policy PP07V01

*Effective date of Policy: December 2020*

*Date of next review: December 2021*

### Be Heard Philosophy

As a part of our philosophy, we strive to provide the highest level of care to our children and connect with them and their families. This includes addressing concerns and grievances that families may have promptly and appropriately to strengthen our connection with them.

**AIM:** To investigate all complaints and grievances with a high standard of equity and fairness. We will ensure that all persons making a complaint are guided by the following policy values:

- procedural fairness and natural justice,
- code of ethics and conduct,
- a culture free from discrimination and harassment,
- transparent policies and procedures,
- opportunities for further investigation, and
- adhering to Be Heard's mission

### 1. Responsibility

- Management
- Staff
- Families
- Students and Volunteers

### 2. Implementation

#### PRINCIPLES

The Dealing with Family Grievances and Complaints Policy ensures that all persons are presented with procedures that:

- value the opportunity to be heard,
- promote conflict resolution,
- encourage the development of harmonious partnerships,
- ensure that conflicts and grievances are mediated fairly, and
- are transparent and equitable.

In meeting Be Heard's duty of care, management and staff agree to implement and endorse the Be Heard Dealing with Family Grievances and Complaints Policy.

## **GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT**

Grievances and complaints can fall into three categories;

- Minor Grievances/Complaints- These can be the result of misunderstanding and are generally resolved by discussion and clarification.
- Moderate Grievances/ Complaints -These can cause some disruption to staff or families and some general concerns.
- Serious Grievances/ Complaints-These are related to the health, safety and wellbeing of children, staff and families at Be Heard and will possibly lead to breaches of policies, formal reporting and Training, dismissal and potential legal proceeding.

Families are encouraged to raise all concerns, grievances and complaints within 24 hours with Be Heard staff or the Director Rhyannon first. This will give those most closely involved an opportunity to address any issues in the light of a detailed awareness of the everyday issues faced during service delivery and a detailed knowledge of those involved.

### **MINOR AND MODERATE GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

If appropriate and the complainant feels comfortable doing so, they can approach the person involved to organise a mutually suitable time to discuss the concern, grievance or complaint appropriately.

The staff member concerned will inform Be Heard management about the grievance, the discussion and its outcome. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they must notify Be Heard management or Director Rhyannon who will investigate the grievance/complaint and work towards reaching a satisfactory outcome for all parties involved.

If the complainant does not wish to speak with the particular person involved, they must notify Be Heard management who will investigate the grievance/complaint and work towards reaching a satisfactory outcome for all parties involved.

Grievances at this level will normally be resolved by discussion and clarification of the needs or wishes of the complainant or by clarification of Be Heard's procedures or policies. Resolution may also involve the development of new policy or procedures if the matter or point of view raised has not previously arisen or been considered by Be Heard.

### **SERIOUS GRIEVANCES / COMPLAINTS**

If the complainant feels comfortable doing so, they must contact Be Heard to organise a mutually appropriate time to discuss the concern, grievance or complaint. The complainant is required to document all relevant information for Be Heard to investigate.

The written complaint should contain the following information;

- Time and Date of Complaint
- Name of Complainant
- Contact Details of Complainant
- Time and Date of incident/ situation resulting in cause for concern
- The nature and details of the complaint
- Complainant Relationship to Be Heard (family, child, staff etc.)

Be Heard then investigates the grievance/ complaint by;

- Conducting discussions with relevant people
- Taking statements from possible witnesses
- Reviewing relevant documentation
- Taking photographs and observations

Throughout the investigation, only relevant people and authorities involved in the complaints procedures will have information. Be Heard will keep the complainant informed of the progress and outcome when handling all grievances and complaints.

## **FAMILY OBLIGATIONS**

- Read the procedure relating to how to raise a grievance or complaint as outlined in this policy
- Follow the procedures for grievances and complaints in a professional manner
- Raise all concerns, grievances and complaints within 24 hours
- Use the complaints & grievance process to communicate any matter to Be Heard

## **BE HEARD PROCEDURES**

- Ensure the Dealing with Family Grievances and Complaints Policy is adhered to all times
- Provide all families a copy of the policy which outlines the Be Heard Grievances and Complaints Policy and relevant procedures and inform them of any changes as required
- Encourage families to feel comfortable about raising concerns by being open and responsive
- Handle all grievances and complaints sensitively, confidentially and promptly which include:
  - ensuring all confidential conversations/discussions take place in a private area.
  - ensuring that all documentation is kept confidential by being stored securely and that all information is only given to the relevant people and authorities involved in the complaints procedures.
  - documenting all grievances and complaints, detailing action taken to address the matter, who was involved and the outcome.
  - Keeping the complainant informed of the progress when handling all grievances and complaints.
  - encouraging staff to identify family concerns and ensure such concerns are addressed at the earliest opportunity.
  - ensure unbiased procedures are practiced at all times.
  - act as a mediator or ensure a mediator acceptable to both parties is available to assist.

## **STAFF PROCEDURES**

- Familiarise themselves with the Dealing with Family Grievances and Complaints Policy and adhere to it at all times.
- Respond in a sensitive, confidential and prompt manner when handling a grievance or complaint and raise the matter with Be Heard
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality at all times to the maximum extent. Possible by ensuring all conversations, discussions take place in a private area

- Assist Be Heard in documenting the grievance or complaint, including the action taken, who was involved and the outcome.
- Ensure that staff, families and children are not treated unfairly as a result of a concern, complaint or grievance being raised

### 3. Sources and References

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission

### 4. Review

Date Reviewed	Modifications	Next Policy Review Date
December 2020	Creation of Policy	December 2021

### IMPORTANT NOTICE AND DISCLAIMER

This is an important notice to all Families, staff, contractors, and other users of this Policy.

1. This Policy has been prepared by Be Heard based on the information available as at the issue date. Be Heard reserves the right to vary this Policy at any time, including to take into account any changes to the legislation and legislative instruments that may apply from time to time.
2. While all reasonable care is taken in preparing this Policy, Be Heard does not make any warranty about or accept any responsibility for whether the Policy complies with, accurately interprets or adequately implements all legislation and legislative instruments that may apply from time to time.
3. To the greatest extent permitted by law, Be Heard disclaims all liability to any person in respect of anything, and of the consequences of anything, done or omitted to be done by any such person in reliance, whether wholly or partially, upon any information presented in this Policy.