

G11 - Complaints Policy

Big Brothers Big Sisters will facilitate in a respectful manner, the fair and efficient resolution of any concerns or complaints that arise involving Staff, Volunteers, Young persons, schools and/or Parents/Caregivers. Wherever possible, concerns or complaints should be raised informally in the first instance with the appropriate Staff to resolve the issue without the need for a formal process.

If it is not possible to resolve an issue informally, a formal complaint should be made in writing, addressed to the Board Chair and should clearly explain the nature of the concern or complaint. Each concern or complaint will be dealt with as close to its source as possible and will be confidentially investigated by the Big Brother Big Sisters Complaints Committee, comprising the Board Chair and the Manager/Branch Leader.

The Branch Board Chair is responsible for handling concerns or complaints about the Manager/Branch Leader and complaints that Complaints Committee has investigated and deemed to be serious. Any complaints involving allegations of bullying or harassment, inappropriate relationships with young people, criminal behaviour, or fraudulent activity will be deemed to be serious.

Big Brothers Big Sisters will endeavour to address and deal with any concern or complaint in a timely manner. The principles of natural justice will be followed throughout any investigation. Specifically, all parties will be given a fair hearing and will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation by the Board Chair within seven days of the completion of the investigation.

All material obtained part of the investigative process and the original complaints are held with the Board Chair in a Complaints File. Access to information relating to a specific case is limited to the complainant, Trust Board members, any legal representatives and appropriate government agency, such as the Police. Material is retained for a period of one year following the complaint resolution.

Note: Where a complaint is addressed to the National Office, the National Office will be responsible for managing and completing the complaints procedure in accordance with the established process.

Complaints Procedure

Review date:

1. A formal complaint may be initiated by:
 - The person affected (the complainant).
 - A third party on behalf of the person affected e.g. relative, friend, school staff where the complainant is under 18 years of age.
2. All formal complaints must be received:
 - In writing
 - Within 90 days of the incident
 - Through a mentor, a staff member or a Board member.
 - Formal, written complaints will be forwarded to the Board Chair within 24 hours of receipt.
3. Once the formal written complaint has been received, the Board Chair will refer the matter to the Complaints Committee comprising the Board Chair and the Manager/Branch Leader.
4. The Complaints Committee shall convene a small group (one or two persons) to investigate the complaint in separate meetings with the complainant and the Complainee. The Complaints Committee must advise the complainant and complainee of their right to nominate a support person(s) to be present at any discussions, interviews or meetings held as a result of the Complaints Procedure being invoked. The complainant and complainee will both be given seven days' notice of any interview or meeting that they are requested to attend.
5. Within seven days from the receipt of the complaint, the Complaints Committee will meet to discuss the complaint and take one of the following actions:

Where the Complaints Committee determines that the complaint is unwarranted, the Complaints Committee will:

Discuss the matter with the complainant again with a view to reconciling the complainant to an understanding of the problem,

Or:

Arrange for the matter to be discussed in a group situation with all parties present so that the complainant can be made aware of the misunderstanding,

Or:

Write to the complainant advising that the matter has been fully investigated and the Complaints Committee is satisfied that the complainee has not acted incorrectly.

And:

Report to the Board accordingly.

6. Where the complaint is found to be justified, but is not of a sufficiently serious nature to require formal action to be taken the Complaints Committee will:

Counsel the complainee and advise the steps to be taken to rectify the position,

And

Write to the complainant advising of the outcome,
And
Report to the Board.

7. Where the Complaints Committee considers the complaint to be both warranted and serious it will immediately call a full Board meeting to discuss the matter. Depending on the circumstances, the Board may suspend the complaine from Big Brothers Big Sisters employment pending the outcome of further investigation by the Board, led by the board Chair.

Problem Solving Procedure

Review date:

If the mentoring programme is to be as successful as possible it is important that any problems that arise are dealt with effectively. This procedure sets out information on how problems can be raised and worked through.

Steps involved

- 1 If you feel that there may be a problem, the first step is to check the facts and make sure there really is a problem, and not simply a misunderstanding.
- 2 You may want to discuss the situation with someone to clarify whether a problem exists. In doing so you should take care to respect the privacy of others and protect confidential information belonging to the employer.
For example you could seek information from:
Friends and family
Community Law Centre
- 3 If you feel you have a real problem discuss this with a Coordinator. (Except when it concerns him or her in which case it is forwarded to the Board Chair).
- 4 The Coordinator will initiate immediate resolution where practicable.
- 5 If you feel that the problem has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may wish to make an official written complaint. (Please refer to the complaints procedure)

Policy Revisions

Added: 30th January 2025

Note: Where a complaint is addressed to the National Office, the National Office will be responsible for managing and completing the complaints procedure in accordance with the established process.