

## CHAPTER EIGHT:

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| <b>Section: Program</b>  | <b>Policy: Complaint Procedure</b>                 |
| <b>Approved Date: April 2006</b><br><b>Revision Date: April 2010</b><br><b>July 2013</b><br><b>Sept. 2018</b><br><b>Jan. 2020</b><br><b>September 2023</b> | <b>Policy Number: 1.27.0</b><br><b>Page 1 of 5</b> |

### *Purpose*

The Salvation Army London Village is committed to conducting its operations in a manner consistent with the organization's vision, mission, principles, beliefs and goals. Subsequently, the Village is committed to resolving any issue, concern or complaint in a professional, objective and timely manner.

This policy will ensure that there is a clearly defined process for expressing and/or addressing a complaint or concern.

### *Policy*

Any parent/guardian, program participant, member of the community, community group, or staff member has the right to present a request, suggestion or complaint.

The Village will provide a fair and impartial method for seeking appropriate resolution.

Any anonymous complaints will be documented and reviewed for follow-up. The outcome of the review will be shared with the appropriate program/team.

Attempts to resolve participant and/or public concerns and complaints shall begin with informal, direct discussions among the affected parties, following the established procedures and organizational structure. Only when informal meetings fail to resolve the issue shall more formal procedures be utilized.

Program participants and their parents/guardians will be informed of the complaint procedure/process at the time of admission and annually thereafter. A copy of the policy will be offered to them and every effort will be made to provide it in language suitable to their understanding.

The Complaint Policy will be available to the public through a link on the agency website.

### *Procedure*

- 1.0 When a generic complaint or request is received, the person receiving the complaint will document concerns on the Public Complaint Form and ensure it is passed on to the appropriate person or designate within the next business day. For Program specific
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complaints they will be documented in an Incident Report by the person that received the complaint and passed on to the Program Supervisor and/or Program Director. **It is important that the appropriate person receives the complaint.**

- 2.0 Document the concern, issue or complaint including the contact date, and as appropriate, the time, place and names of any people involved. The name and telephone number of the complainant should be recorded.
- 3.0 Staff will act in a manner that is professional, courteous and impartial. It is illegal to reprise or seek to punish or take revenge on a person who has filed, is named or participates in any way in a complaint.
- 4.0 Complaints can be received in writing, by phone, or in person.
- 5.0 **FIRST LEVEL:** Program specific complaints and requests shall be addressed initially to the Program Director who will contact the complainant within 24 hours to obtain all relevant information regarding the concern, issue or complaint. Based on the information provided and the nature of the concern, issue or complaint and determine what immediate action may be taken in response. A follow-up meeting or contact date might be established. The Program Director will attempt to provide a reasonable explanation, resolution and/ or take appropriate action within their authority within two business days.

As appropriate, the Program Director shall report the matter and the resolution to the Executive Director.

All other complaints and requests received shall be addressed by the Executive Director within two business days.

The Program Director or Executive Director will document the follow-up.

- 6.0 **SECOND LEVEL:** If the issue cannot be resolved satisfactorily at the first level, it shall be directed to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will respond within two business days. The Executive Director will ensure that the proper steps have been followed and the complaint has been discussed with the appropriate person.
  - 7.0 **THIRD LEVEL:** If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion with the Executive director a conference shall be scheduled at Divisional Headquarters with the Area Commander
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within seven business days. Prior to this conference the Executive Director shall provide the Public Complaint Form/Incident Report and any other relevant documentation which will include the specific nature of the complaint, brief statement of relevant facts, how the complaint has been handled to date, if and how the complainant has been affected adversely, the action requested, and the reasons why such action should be taken or not taken.

- 8.0 **FOURTH LEVEL:** Should the matter not be resolved by the Area Commander or is beyond his/her authority and requires Board action, the Area Commander shall provide the Divisional Commander with a complete report within seven business days.
- 9.0 **FINAL LEVEL:** After reviewing all information relative to the complaint, the Divisional Commander shall provide the complainant with its written decision and may grant a hearing before the Divisional Executive Board. The complainant shall be advised of the Divisional Commander's decision, in writing, no more than ten days following the hearing.

In the event that the complainant is dissatisfied with the conclusions, recommendations or final report/action plan, the complainant is encouraged to contact the Program Supervisor at the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services London Area Office.

- 10.0 When providing follow up to the concern, issue or complaint the service provider will use language suitable to their understanding and make reasonable efforts to ensure that any person who is informed of the results of the review understands those results.
- 11.0 For any concern or complaint that relates to the violation of the rights of a person supported the review will include future measures that could be implemented to prevent the same violation from recurring and the implementation process of such measures ie. training/retraining.
- 12.0 At any time the person making the complaint can contact either the Ontario Ombudsman's office or the Information and Privacy Commissioner as appropriate to their situation.
- 13.0 The complaint will be reported as a serious occurrence to the Ministry if it is considered to be of a serious nature involving allegations of:
- Abuse or mistreatment of a program participant
  - Injury or death of a program participant
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- Illegal activity
- Operational, professional or financial misconduct
- Safety standards
- Any incident that may likely attract media attention

14.0 As appropriate, the London Police or the Children's Aid Society will be contacted i.e. in the case of alleged abuse or illegal activity.

15.0 If the concern, issue or complaint involves a program participant, the appropriate family members, advocates or identified others will be notified as soon as possible.

16.0 Staff will cooperate with the Police/Children's Aid Society in any investigations to be conducted. Within five business days of receiving the conclusions and recommendations of any investigation this information will be communicated to the appropriate individuals in accordance with all relevant legislation, laws, regulations, policies, practices and procedures.

17.0 Following the investigation by the Police/Children's Aid Society the Salvation Army may initiate an internal review as well. If a review team is created, such a review team can include employees, community members, program participants and/or parents/guardians. Upon completion of an internal review the results/recommendations will be communicated to the appropriate individuals in accordance with all relevant legislation, laws, regulations, policies, practices and procedures within five business days once the results/recommendations have been received.

18.0 The Executive Director will ensure that those involved in reviewing and resolving complaints are not put in a position where they are in a conflict of interest. Staff are required to declare any actual or potential conflicts; if a staff member declares that involvement in the process is a conflict of interest for them they will be removed from the process.

19.0 If the concern, issue or complaint is about a staff, the Program Director in consultation with the Executive Director determines the immediate course of action regarding a possible suspension or a reassignment of duties and in the event of a serious occurrence, follows the serious occurrence reporting requirements.

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20.0 All matters of a confidential nature are handled accordingly. Actions related to employee discipline are maintained in the strictest confidence.

21.0 The Salvation Army will provide the complainant with the appropriate names and contact telephone numbers of relevant government offices or officials as requested.

22.0 The Salvation Army ensures that any concern, issue or complaint made about the organization, operations, service quality or employees is handled professionally and in a timely manner, as outlined above.

23.0 The Salvation Army handles all information related to a concern, issue or complaint in confidence and in accordance with all relevant legislation, laws, guidelines, policies, procedures and practices.

24.0 The Salvation Army will document all contact information and actions taken in relation to the concern, issue or complaint. All documentation related to the concern, issue or complaint is the property of The Salvation Army.

25.0 The Program Director will conduct an annual review and analysis of the complaints and feedback received to evaluate the effectiveness of its policies and procedures. Revisions to policies and procedures will be considered as needed.

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