

Feedback and Complaints Procedure.

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to assist staff in understanding the Marist Youth Care (MYC) response to complaints/allegations.

Procedure

MYC has developed a three tiered model to respond to complaints, when an issue arises or a complaint is made. The person who receives the complaint needs to decide on where the complaint sits within the three tiers. It is appropriate to seek input from a supervisor as well as the person making the complaint in deciding the most appropriate response.

For more details of the three tiered approach consult the Complaints Policy.

External Complaints

When a complaint is received from an external service (FACS, other agency) either by phone, email or letter, the person receiving the complaint should notify a supervisor and pass on the details. The Feedback and Complaints form may be used to record the complaint and the outcomes. A decision is then made about the most appropriate way to respond. Responses can be a phone call returned, an email, a letter or a meeting to address the issues. Notification and a copy of records of all external complaints should be forwarded to the Manager Professional Standards for entry into the Complaints database (register).

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Internal Complaints

When a complaint is received from an internal source (staff or clients) either by phone, email or letter, the person receiving the complaint should notify a supervisor and pass on the details. The Feedback and Complaints form or a Client Complaint form may be used to record the complaint. A decision is then made about the most appropriate way to respond. Responses can be a phone call returned, an email, a letter or a meeting to address the issues. An investigation may also be required. Notification and a copy of records of all external complaints should be forwarded to the Manager Professional Standards for entry into the Complaints database (register).

Investigation Process

The investigation of complaints occurs when a matter reaches Tier 2 and 3. Matters at Tier 1 level are managed in supervision or at a program level in most cases.

The following stages outline the process for managing more serious Tier 2 and 3 matters.

Stage 1 - Immediate Response plan (48 hours)

- Conduct risk assessment and arrange for Inquiry plan to reduce risks
- Identify what the issue is – is it a staff grievance, performance only, reportable conduct etc
- Identify any reporting requirements
- Report to ombudsman within 30 days required when relevant
- Report criminal matters to the NSW Police, or other relevant authority
- If Helpline report is not required ensure FACS are still informed if child is in care of Minister
- Enter Data and open file

Stage 2 - Develop Inquiry Plan (5 working days)

- Document clearance to proceed with investigation if needed (FACS /Police)
- Check terms of reference are clear what information is required to investigate the complaint
- Determine method of inquiries
- Nominate support person PLUS contact person for the person subject of the complaint (PSOC) and victim or other
- Develop plan for communication and support to relevant persons
- Nominate person to make inquiries and gather other information (a manager/supervisor will not be asked to investigate a complaint from their area)
- Always interview in pairs
- Estimate time frame
- Consult on plan as required
- Communicate plan to relevant persons
- Update database and file as needed

Stage 3 – Pre inquiries (5 working days)

1. Communication with alleged PSOC and victim as required – oral and written
2. Arrange interviews in order (complainant, other witnesses, PSOC last)
3. Ensure permission to interview children and support persons in place
4. Gather relevant information
5. Draft guiding questions
6. Update file

Stage 4 – Inquiries/ gathering information (4-6 weeks)

- Conduct interviews or take statements

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- Record interview where appropriate (recorders available from Administrative staff)
- Record questions and answers in as much detail as possible
- Have interviewees verify record of interviews
- Any other documentation or information obtained
- Place all documents on electronic and paper file

Stage 5 – Finding and outcomes (5 working days)

- Assess all information gathered
- Consult as necessary to make finding
- Consult with relevant persons to determine outcomes
- Draft investigation report and recommended findings and outcomes
- Obtain approval for finding and outcomes (CEO, Executive Managers)
- When finding or outcome is adverse to PSOC arrange for preliminary finding to be provided to PSOC and obtain their response
- Coordinate final determination of finding and outcomes
- Draft letter to communicate finding and outcome to PSOC
- Update file and database

Stage 6 – Closure (5 working days)

- Send any final reports to Ombudsman or other relevant authorities
- Ensure final communications have gone to PSOC
- Inform any other relevant person (eg: child/staff) that matter is finalised
- Refer on implementation of outcomes
- Close file and final entries on database

Stage 7 – Recommendations (5 working days)

- Include recommendations from Final Investigation in separate report.
- Manager Professional Standards to discuss and send recommendations to appropriate Executive Manager(s) or EMAC for implementation.
- Executive Manager or EMAC (minutes) to report discussion and allocation of tasks around implementation of recommendations, including timeframe.
- Timeframe to be communicated to Manager Professional Standards, for follow up.
- Manager Professional Standards to liaise with staff allocated tasks.
- Manager Professional Standards reporting back to EMAC upon completion of tasks for CEO approval.

Why is all this important?

1. To ensure best practice in service delivery and care to clients
2. To ensure best practice in care of staff
3. To ensure legal compliance
4. To ensure adherence to the philosophy and values of the Agency.

Training

All staff should have access to and be aware of this policy and procedures. MYC provides training in investigation Procedures periodically.

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Related Policies, Procedures and forms

Complaints Policy
 Grievance Procedure
 Philosophy & Code of Conduct
 Child Protection Policy
 Child Protection Procedure
 Quality and Continuous Improvement Policy
 Feedback and Complaint Form
 Client Complaint Form.

Review

Annually as part of the Policy review schedule

Document History

September 2008	Approved Complaints Policy and Procedures
November 2010	Draft Complaints Procedures ver1
July 2011	Approved Feedback & Complaints Procedure ver2
September 2012	Updated (Change in position title and minor updates) ver3

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