

Policy Name:	<b>Complaints and Appeals</b>	
Prepared By:	Miriam Cadwallader	Policy Number: 7.5
Authorised By:	Board of Governance	Policy Group: 7. Consumer Issues
Date Ratified:	22 January 2018	Review Date: January 2023
Version: 3.0	Replaces: Version 2	

## 1. PURPOSE

---

The organisation is committed to handling and resolving client complaints in a confidential, fair and timely manner.

## 2. SCOPE

---

This policy applies to all users of Living & Learning Pakenham Inc.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

---

<i>Appeal</i>	A process for requesting the review of an official decision made
<i>Complaint</i>	An expression of dissatisfaction with academic or non-academic services.
<i>Complainant</i>	The person who formally lodges a complaint or appeal.

## 4. POLICY

---

### Types of Complaints

There are many factors that influence a client's decision to make a complaint. There is also a range in the types of complaints that can be made. Examples of factors and types of complaints include:

#### Service delivery complaints;

- dissatisfaction with service provision
- accuracy and timeliness of information
- communication breakdown
- cultural issues
- stress and fatigue

- incidents of conflict
- inappropriate behaviour of staff and volunteers
- poor maintenance of facilities and equipment
- client abuse, harassment, discrimination and neglect
- breach in client confidentiality.

#### **Governance complaints:**

- financial mismanagement
- fraud
- procedures followed not in accordance with the organisation's constitution or organisational policies.

#### **Complaints of potentially criminal nature:**

- If the complaint has criminal implications, such as fraud or abuse, then the Police should be notified immediately.
- There are two ways clients may chose to make a complaint to the organisation:
  - verbal – face to face or by phone
  - written – formal letter, e-mail, fax.

#### **Anonymous complaints**

- Some clients may wish to remain anonymous in making their complaint. This should be respected and the complaint investigated.

#### **Responding to complaints**

- All complaints are to be handled and resolved immediately, wherever possible, using the following process:

#### **Verbal complaints**

- It is suggested that employees:
  - listen carefully and respond to the client in a polite and respectful manner.
  - clarify your understanding of the complaint and ask the client how they would like the complaint resolved. Wherever possible, try to resolve the complaint at the time.
- If the circumstances do not allow the complaint to be resolved immediately, direct the complaint to the CEO.
- If the CEO is unavailable, the complaint should be directed to the staff member with the most appropriate skills to handle the matter, e.g. Wellbeing Officer.
- If the client wishes only to speak with the CEO, arrange a meeting between the CEO and the client at a time that is mutually convenient.
- Advise the client that they may submit the complaint in writing. See Client Complaint Form.
- Follow the process for written complaints below.
- Record complaint in the Client Complaint Log.

### **Written complaints**

- All complaints of a serious nature, e.g. corruption, fraud, harassment, etc. must be submitted in writing and referred to the CEO for investigation. If the complaint involves the CEO or the client feels that the CEO is not the appropriate person to handle the complaint, refer the matter to the Chairperson of the Board of Governance.
- Upon receiving a written complaint, the CEO or Board of Governance should aim to provide a response within ten (10) working days.
- The response may include the following:
  - confirmation that the complaint has been received and the matter is being investigated
  - an understanding of the complaint
  - suggested actions for resolving the complaint
  - complaint process, including the estimated timeframe for resolution
  - client satisfaction and right to appeal
  - contact name and number.

### **Appeals and seeking outside assistance**

- If the complaint involves the CEO, the matter must be referred to the Board of Governance.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved internally, an option is to seek support from an external organisation at their own expense.

## **5. RELATED PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS:**

---

Complaints and Appeals  
Client Complaint Form  
Client Complaints Log

## **6. RELATED POLICIES:**

---

9.1 Education  
9.2 Quality Assurance