

Handling of Complaints and Concerns

Purpose *To ensure that the Board has a process for handling of complaints and concerns*

Policy Statement *At all levels, ASC is dedicated to concern resolution processes that:*

- *Retain and repair relationships*
- *Understand each other's point of view*
- *Identify solutions to resolve conflict*
- *Provide learning from concerns raised for continuous quality improvement.*

Clients, parents, guardians/family members, employees, volunteers and Board Members will be informed about their right to express their concerns, complaints or disagreements and the process to do so. This information will be presented during orientation processes.

Complaints and concerns that do not reach resolution at an informal level, direct service level, or at the Executive Director level will have a formal process for review and decision by the ASC Board of Directors.

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Handling of Complaints and Concerns

If a complaint is brought to the attention of a Board Member by an employee, client, parent, guardian/family member, or volunteer and there has been no previous attempt to resolve the complaint at an informal level, unless there is a conflict in doing so, it will be the responsibility of the Board Member to ensure that the person is referred to the Executive Director. The Executive Director and the Program Directors are responsible for follow-up.

1. Handling of Complaints and Concerns from clients, parents, guardians/family members, employees and volunteers:
 - a) All attempts will be made to resolve concerns through an informal process (see services Policy/Procedure – Addressing Concerns, and Human Resource Policy/Procedure – Concern Resolution Process). However should resolution not be reached, clients, parents, guardians/family members, employees and volunteers will be supported to bring their concern forward through to the Executive Director, and if required the Board of Directors.
 - b) Concerns may be brought forward to the Executive Director verbally or in writing by the client, parent, guardian/family member, employee or volunteer. If desired, support through the process of addressing a concern may include assistance from a person of their choice including external entities such as ombudsman, advocates, band councils, child and family services, interpreter, co-worker, etc.) The Executive Director will review applicable informal concern resolution summaries, and provide opportunity for continued discussion, with potential resolution of the concern. The Executive Director will document all relevant information on the Concern Resolution Summary Form.
 - c) Should the client, parent/guardian, family member, employee or volunteer not feel their concern is resolved, they can request that the Executive Director forward their concern to the Board of Directors for review. Alternatively, if preferred, they can make their own request verbally or in writing for a review by the Board.
2. Handling of Complaints and Concerns between Board Members:
 - a) Wherever possible the Board Members will be encouraged to talk to each other about concerns between each other.
 - b) If the Board Members are not able to resolve their concerns between each other, the Executive Director and/or Board President/Vice President should be notified and an informal resolution discussion will be held.
 - c) If the Executive Members are unable to reach a resolution between the parties involved, the concerns will be brought forward for a formal review by the Board.

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3. Formal Process for Board Review of Concerns/Complaints:

- a) The President/Vice President shall, within 14 working days, notify the involved parties that a concern/complaint has been received.
- b) The President/Vice President will call a meeting of the Board within the next seven working days.
- c) Board Members will be provided with any applicable concern resolution summaries and will begin the formal process for review of the concern/complaint.
- d) The Board will determine if the complaint, or concern, appears to be a violation of interpretation, application or disregard of Board Policies and/or Association Bylaws.
- e) In the next seven working days, the President/Vice President will provide the parties involved with separate opportunities to meet with the Board in order that factual information may be obtained for decision making. If desired, support through the process of addressing a concern may include assistance from external entities such as ombudsman, advocates, band councils, child and family services, interpreter, co-worker, etc.). The Board will meet again within the next seven working days to consider the information obtained and whether there has been a violation of interpretation, application or disregard of Board Policies and/or Association Bylaws. Legal advice may be sought, or mediation may be considered and may affect the above timelines. In this matter, all parties will be notified.
- f) A course of action that falls within Board Policy and ASC Bylaws will be determined by the Board, as a whole, for decision. The parties involved will not participate in the vote.
- g) The President/Vice President will notify the involved parties about the decision of the Board within three working days following the decision.
- h) Decisions by the Board, and/or results of mediation will be considered final.

Based on outcomes of concern resolution processes, any recommendations for changes/additions to existing Policies or ASC Bylaws will be brought to the Board for discussion and recommendation.

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