

Staff Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy

Drafted by	Katherine Hinton	Approved by	Board
Version	5	Approved date	13/11/24
Reviewed by	Ruth Holdaway	Review date	13/11/24

Introduction

Open communication and feedback are regarded as essential elements of a satisfying and productive work environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity about the working environment Our Village Network Inc ("Our Village") will provide for all employees and volunteers. This working environment is designed to enable open communication and feedback between staff and volunteers so that disputes can be resolved quickly and directly without the need for a formal process to be initiated.

Recognising that at times formal processes are required where disputes can not be resolved directly, this document also outlines the charity's formal internal grievance and dispute resolution process.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers.

Policy

Our Village encourages its employees and volunteers to resolve any issues, concerns or disagreements they may have at the earliest opportunity with each other directly.

Where issues, concerns or disagreements escalate to a dispute which cannot be settled between the parties themselves, employees and volunteers have the right to raise a formal grievance.

On raising a formal grievance, this begins a process to seek resolution. The process for this is outlined in this document at the end of this policy statement.

Our Village is committed to providing a dispute resolution process that enables employees and volunteers to resolve issues to their satisfaction internally, without feeling they have to refer to external organisations or to authorities for assistance.

Our Village is committed to promoting fast and efficient resolution of workplace disputes.

All formal meetings and conversations about grievances will be fully documented and the employee/volunteer's wishes will be taken into account in determining the appropriate steps and actions to be taken.

No employee will be intimidated or unfairly treated in any respect if they utilise this Policy and/or Process to resolve an issue.

Related Documents

- Avoidance and Management of Sexual Harassment and Victimisation Policy
- Avoidance and Management of Bullying Policy

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Staff Grievance and Dispute Resolution Procedure

Drafted by	Katherine Hinton, Head of Corporate Services & People	Approved by	Board
Version	5	Approved date	13/11/24
Reviewed by	Ruth Holdaway, CEO	Review date	13/11/26

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Employees and Volunteers to ensure that:

- they attempt to resolve any issues through their immediate supervisor/manager and through internal processes at the earliest opportunity
- they are as clear as possible about the grievance and what resolution is being sought
- they raise a grievance and engage in the resolution process in good faith, which includes acting truthfully and confidentially throughout the resolution process
- they conduct themselves in a professional manner and observe appropriate workplace behaviours in line with the Our Village values and Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility of Managers to ensure that:

- any potential problems are identified, prevented and addressed before they become formal grievances
- they are aware of, and committed to, the principles of open and transparent communication and information sharing with their employees and volunteers
- all decisions relating to employment practices are made with consideration given to the ramifications for the individual, as well as the organisation in general
- any grievance is handled in the most appropriate manner at the earliest opportunity
- all employees and volunteers are treated fairly and without fear of intimidation.

It is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure that:

- all managers, supervisors, employees and volunteers are aware of their obligations and responsibilities in relation to communication and information sharing with their employees;

Turning pre-loved into re-loved so every child thrives.

- all managers, supervisors, employees and volunteers are aware of their obligations and responsibilities in relation to handling grievances;
- all managers, supervisors, employees and volunteers are supported when handling grievances.

Procedures

Principles to be applied at every stage

- Confidentiality must be maintained throughout.
- Detailed notes must be taken of every interaction and conversation - these are held in the file of the person being complained about not the file of the complainant.
- All managers and supervisors should be aware of the possible ramifications of their actions when dealing with employee/volunteer issues. They must ensure that all employees and volunteers are treated in the same way, with fairness and respect.
- The Manager/supervisor must ensure the meeting is conducted in a fair and objective manner and must assess the situation from a neutral perspective. This is to try to maintain positive working relationships throughout the complaint process and beyond.
- If there are any doubts or queries in relation to how to deal with a particular set of circumstances, managers or supervisors should contact the Head of Corporate Services & People or the CEO for advice at the earliest opportunity.
- If the discussions breakdown at any stage of the processes outlined below the situation should be discussed with the Head of Corporate Services & People or the CEO. Options will be to either bring in an external mediator or to go directly to Stage 3.

Stage 1: Resolution with support of Manager/Supervisor

- An employee or volunteer who considers that they have a dispute or grievance should raise the matter with their immediate supervisor as a first step towards resolution. NB. If the grievance is with the Manager/Supervisor then go straight to Stage 2.
- The Manager or Supervisor meets the complainant and checks they have a full understanding of the complaint from the complainant's perspective.
- The Manager or Supervisor meets the person being complained about. At this stage the person the complaint is about should be informed of the following:
 - The employee or volunteer that the complaint relates to has the right to have an independent witness present at the meeting with the manager/supervisor. The role of each person in the meeting must be made clear at the start of the meeting and documented.
 - The process to be followed
 - The fact that all conversations/meetings will be documented, with records held in the personnel/volunteer file of the person the complaint relates to, not the file of the complainant.

- Inform all involved that confidentiality must be maintained at all times - only those people directly involved in the complaint plus the relevant Head of Department/s, Head of Corporate Services & People and CEO can know the complaint has been made. Within this group details of the complaint should be shared minimally.
- The Manager or Supervisor must seek to understand the perspective of the person being complained about.
- Once all information is gathered, the manager/supervisor must make every effort to resolve the complaint with the parties involved. This may require further meetings - all parties are entitled to have independent witnesses at any further meetings, including mediation meetings with the complainant and person being complained about present.
- Each individual is entitled to have copies of the notes that relate to meetings in which they were present.
- Managers/Supervisors can seek support from their Head of Department or the CEO in managing this process.

If the matter is not able to be resolved at Stage 1, and the employee or volunteer wishes to pursue it, the next step is:

Stage 2: Resolution with support of Head of Corporate Services & People or CEO

- Head of Corporate Services and People or the CEO to hear the complaint and investigate - applying the same principles and process as applied to the manager/supervisor's investigation.

If the matter is not able to be resolved at Stage 2, and the employee or volunteer wishes to pursue it, the next step is:

Stage 3: External Resolution

While Our Village aims to resolve all matters internally, nothing in this policy will prevent an employee or volunteer from seeking assistance from an external authority at any time. Any internal grievance resolution activity may be suspended at this time.

Related Documents

- Avoidance and Management of Sexual Harassment and Victimisation Policy
- Avoidance and Management of Bullying Policy

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