



## **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of South-West Durham and Northumberland (BBBS) defines a complaint as any concern pertaining to our business that is put forward by staff, Board members, volunteers, donors or external stakeholders (via telephone, mail, email, social media, etc.), that is indicative of dissatisfaction or a serious concern.

Examples of complaints include but are not limited to:

- Perceived failure to do something agreed upon
- Failure to observe policy or procedure
- Unfair or discourteous actions/statements by a staff member/volunteer
- Perceived inappropriate behaviour by a staff member/mentor/volunteer
- Perceived misuse of equipment or property on the part of anyone associated with BBBS
- Perceived wrong doing regarding the handling or use of cash, donations, gifts in kind, tax receipting, solicitation issues, fraud, non-compliance with CRA

Anyone personally affected can file a complaint and their complaint will be reviewed in accordance with procedure.

### **POLICY**

BBBS is committed to responding to a complaint and making every reasonable effort to investigate it as soon as possible. A complaint by staff, Board members, volunteers, donors or external stakeholders will be addressed in an ethical and courteous manner.

BBBS will:

- Make every effort to resolve the complaint promptly
- Advise complainants of their options to refer their complaint to a more senior staff person if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome
- Provide updates to complainants during review processes
- Provide complainants clear and understandable reason for decisions to complaints
- Use complaints to assist in improving services, policies and procedures

### **PROCEDURE**

1. When a complaint is received, the receiver of the complaint will record the complainant's information, including name, phone number, email address, context of complaint and date contacted.
2. Complaints received in writing shall be acknowledged within 48 hours, and staff shall attempt to resolve the matter within 10 business days.
3. The receiver of the complaint, if appropriate, will work to resolve the complaint immediately.
4. The receiver will listen, record all facts and seek to understand the complainant.
5. If the receiver is unable to resolve the complaint they may transfer the complainant to an individual that holds the primary relationship, responsibility, or specific knowledge in the area of concern.
6. If the complaint is transferred, the recipient of the transfer must acknowledge to the transferor that he/she has received it and will act upon it within 24 hours.
7. The individual who initially received the complaint will notify the complainant that their complaint has been transferred to a more suitable individual, and provide the name and contact details.
8. If the individual cannot resolve the complaint, it shall be referred to the Executive Director.
9. If the complaint is about the Executive Director, it shall be referred to and handled by the Chair of the Board.



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10. Complainants should be kept informed of the status of their complaint. Every attempt should be made to resolve such complaint within 10 business days. In such cases as it has to be transferred, an additional 10 business days to a maximum of one month of having been initially received.
11. It is necessary to keep a record of any complaint that involves a dispute over money or any type of financial transaction as well as any complaint that cannot be resolved on the same day that it is received.
12. Information about such complaints must be recorded on the Complaints Action & Tracking Form which includes: the complaint's contact information, a description of the complaint, the date and time it was registered, who received and handled it, what was done to resolve the complaint, the timeframe of any further contacts and when the complaint was referred to another staff member or the Board Chair, as well as a dated description of the resolution.
13. A copy of the form is to be provided to the Executive Director or to the Board Chair if applicable.
14. A summary of the complaints received, including number, and type shall be reported to the BBBS's Board Chair at the end of every fiscal year by the Executive Director.

This policy and procedure applies to complaints received by staff or board members of Big Brothers Big Sisters of South-West Durham and Northumberland ("BBBSSWDN") about our activities, programs, services, staff or volunteers.