

1. PURPOSE

This Feedback and Complaints Policy provides a mechanism for all clients of Abacus Learning Centre Ltd, ACN 122 901 704, (Abacus) to voice their opinions of both a positive and negative nature in a productive and safe manner for the betterment of the organisation.

2. APPLICATION

This policy covers all Abacus students, parents, carers, staff, Board of Directors and volunteers.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Abacus welcomes compliments, suggestions, complaints and other forms of constructive feedback to provide valuable information on levels of client satisfaction and opportunities to improve all aspects of service. All suggestions and feedback are taken seriously.

Feedback is recorded and handled effectively to gain valuable information in identifying areas for improvement, coordinating a consistent approach for resolution, reducing the potential for future complaints and allow for reporting and efficient allocation of resources.

Resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity in a way that respects and values the person's feedback, can be one of the most important factors in recovering the person's confidence about a service. It can also help prevent further escalation of the complaint. A responsive, efficient, effective and fair complaint management system can assist Abacus to achieve this.

4. PRINCIPLES

To ensure that feedback is understood and actioned effectively the following principles apply:

- 4.1 Time will be taken to listen carefully to feedback so that it is clearly understood.
- 4.2 Actions resulting from feedback received will be taken in a timely and professional manner.
- 4.3 A person making a complaint will be responded to quickly and effectively. A person making a complaint will not be subject to reprisal or other detrimental action as a result of making a complaint.
- 4.4 A complaint should be made in writing. A complaint made verbally, whether in person or by phone, will be documented by the person receiving the report.
- 4.5 A complaint may be made anonymously.
- 4.6 Any complaint received by staff or volunteer must be reported to the Board of Directors.
- 4.7 Complaints will be investigated thoroughly, confidentially and applying principles of procedural fairness.
- 4.8 Independent witnesses may be asked to provide relevant information.
- 4.9 Details of the nature of a complaint, investigation outcomes and the resolution will be documented clearly, accurately and in a timely manner.

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Providing a suggestion, feedback or complaint

A person can provide a compliment, suggestion, complaint or other feedback by:

- talking to the Executive Director, a Board member, a staff member or a volunteer; or
- completing an Abacus feedback form or writing a letter; or
- email or contact page on the Abacus web site.

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5.2 Receiving a suggestion, feedback or complaint

If a Board member receives a compliment, suggestion, complaint or other feedback from a client or other person, they will acknowledge that it has been received. The Board member will forward a compliment, suggestion or other feedback to the relevant Executive Director. Any complaint must be forwarded to the Board Chairperson. The Board Chairperson will forward the complaint to the relevant Executive Director for action, except where the complaint may relate to the Executive Director, in which case the Chairperson will

- a) determine the appropriate course of action; and
- b) send the complainant a written acknowledgement and confirmation that the matter will be investigated.

If a volunteer receives a compliment, suggestion, complaint or other feedback from a client or other person, the volunteer will acknowledge that it has been received. The volunteer will then give the compliment, suggestion, complaint or other feedback to the relevant Executive Director, manager or coordinator.

A manager, coordinator or other staff member who receives a compliment, suggestion, complaint or other feedback from a client or other person will acknowledge that it has been received. The manager/coordinator/staff member may discuss the feedback to understand and address the points raised, if it is within their responsibility and authority to do so. Any complaint must be reported to the relevant Executive Director that day for action. Compliments and suggestions should be reported to the relevant Executive Director within five days of receiving it.

On receipt of a complaint, the Executive Director will determine the level of seriousness and urgency, then proceed accordingly. The Executive Director will ensure that the complainant received a written acknowledgement and confirmation that the matter will be investigated.

5.3 Recording a complaint

The Executive Director, or Chairperson where applicable, will start a confidential file to record all information that is relevant to the complaint. The file will be kept up-to-date through the complaint resolution process.

5.4 Resolving a complaint or feedback

The Executive Director, or Chairperson where applicable, will determine what investigation is required to properly establish the basis of the feedback/complaint and who should conduct the investigation. The nature and extent of an investigation must be appropriate to the nature and seriousness of the feedback/complaint. An investigation is to identify the root cause and to understand the impacts on people and the organisation. It is important that any investigation is sufficiently thorough, handled sensitively, consistent with principles of natural justice and remains confidential.

The Executive Director, or Chairperson where applicable, will determine what action is required to resolve the issue(s) uncovered. The resolution actions will be implemented as applicable.

5.5 Communicating the resolution

The Executive Director, or Chairperson where applicable, will ensure that the feedback/ complaint resolution is communicated to the relevant people. The resolution of a complaint must be communicated to the complainant verbally and in writing, and a written report provided to the Board. The complaint file is to be completed and closed.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Board of Directors

Board members:

- May receive complaints, suggestions and other feedback from clients and others.
- Must forward any complaints, suggestions and other feedback received to the Chairperson or Executive Director as appropriate.
- Must ensure that complaints are resolved appropriately and in a timely manner.

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6.2 Executive Director

The Executive Director must:

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are appropriately aware of how to receive, respond to and process complaints, suggestions and other feedback.
- Ensure that Abacus students, parents and carers are appropriately informed of how to submit a complaint, suggestion or other feedback.
- Ensure that all complaints, suggestions and other feedback are handled in accordance with this policy.
- Ensure that complaints are reported to the Board appropriately and in a timely manner. Regular reports will include:
 - the number of complaints and other feedback received in a given period,
 - the outcomes of complaints and other feedback received,
 - issues identified and resolutions achieved.

6.3 Staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers must respond to and process any complaints, suggestions or other feedback they receive in a timely manner and in accordance with this policy.

7. DEFINITIONS

TERM	MEANING
Client	A student who receives Abacus services or their parent or other carers.
Complainant	The person or organisation who submits a complaint, either formal or informal, to Abacus.
Complaint	A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an Abacus support or service, including how a previous complaint was handled, for which a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
Informal complaint	Any complaint not identified by the person making the complaint as a formal complaint.

8. RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

- Feedback and Complaints Form

9. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

10. RELEVANT POLICIES

Nil

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