

COMPLAINT AND DISPUTE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and consistent framework for managing complaints and disputes within the Kokoda Youth Foundation (KYF). It ensures that all concerns are addressed promptly, fairly, and in a culturally safe and child-focused way, while meeting KYF's governance obligations and recognised sector best practice.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All KYF staff, volunteers, contractors, participants, parents, guardians, and community stakeholders.
- All complaints and disputes relating to KYF programs, services, decisions, or conduct.
- Complaints raised internally or externally, including anonymous complaints.

3. DEFINITION

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about KYF services, conduct, decisions, or staff/volunteer behaviour.

Dispute: A disagreement between parties that could not be resolved informally and requires formal intervention.

Lowest appropriate level: The most immediate point within KYF where an issue can be resolved effectively and fairly, without unnecessary escalation.

4. PRINCIPLES

Child-Focused – The safety and wellbeing of children and young people are at the centre of all complaints handling.

Accessibility – Complaints can be made verbally, in writing, online, or through a support person.

Impartiality – Both parties will have the opportunity to be heard.

Timeliness – Complaints and disputes will be acknowledged within 3 business days and resolved within 30 business days, with updates if longer.

Confidentiality – Information will only be shared with those directly involved.

Cultural Safety – Culturally safe processes (e.g., yarning circles, interpreters, cultural liaison) will be offered where appropriate.

Fairness – No one will be victimised or disadvantaged for making or responding to a complaint.

Governance & Accountability – Systemic issues will be reported quarterly to SLT, bi-annually to the Board, and summarised in the KYF Annual Report.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Complainant/Party to a Dispute – Raise concerns in good faith and provide accurate information.

Contact Officer (People & Processes Manager) – First point of contact for general complaints or disputes. Provides confidential information about options and support but does not act as an advocate.

Child Protection Contact Officer (Impact & Operations Manager) – First point of contact for complaints, concerns, or disputes that relate to child safety and wellbeing. Ensures mandatory reporting requirements are followed and supports culturally safe processes.

Managers/Investigators – Conduct impartial investigations, gather evidence, and recommend outcomes.

CEO – Makes final determinations, ensures decisions are implemented, and oversees systemic reporting to the Board.

Board – Provides oversight of systemic issues and reviews trends in de-identified form; does not handle individual complaints.

All Staff/Volunteers – Respond respectfully to complaints and escalate appropriately.

6. ESCALATION FRAMEWORK

Level 1 – Local Resolution	Department Manager attempts informal resolution.
Level 2 – Formal Resolution	CEO or delegate manages formal complaints/disputes and determines outcome.
Level 3 – External Resolution	Referral to QHRC, Fair Work, Police, Child Safety, or other regulator.
Level 4 – Board Oversight	Systemic or catastrophic issues only, reported in de-identified form.

7. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Complaints trends are reviewed quarterly by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Annual reporting to the Board supports accountability and systemic improvement.
- This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier if systemic trends or legislative change require it.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS & REFERENCES

Related Documents:

- KYF_RISK_POLICY_Child Protection and Risk Management Strategy_V2_2025
- KYF_RISK_POLICY_Child Safe Technology_V1_2025
- KYF_RISK_POLICY_Risk Management Framework_V1_2025
- KYF_RISK_PROCEDURE_Crisis Response Procedure_V1_2025
- KYF_GOV_POLICY_Risk Appetite Statement_V1_2025
- KYF_GOV_PROCEDURE_Complaint and Dispute Management Procedure_V1_2025
- KYF_GOV_PROCEDURE_Managing Racism Complaints_V1_2025

References:

- Child Safe Standards (Standard 6: Complaints Management; Standard 2: Voice of Children; Standard 4: Equity & Diversity)
- Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)

9. APPROVALS & AUTHORISATION

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Review Date
1	Board of Directors	7 October 2025	31 October 2026