

# **GRANPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN™ TRUST NEW ZEALAND**

## **Updated Complaints Policy – May 2019**

Any person may lodge a complaint with Grandparents Raising Grandchildren™ Trust New Zealand about any matter over which the Trust has control and that he or she considers gives grounds for a grievance or an improvement. All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren™ Trust New Zealand is committed to achieving understanding, resolving as many issues as possible and preventing future occurrences. All investigations into complaints received will take into account the rights of the complainant and any individual about whom the complaint involves.

Complaints are also an important component of the Trust's client feedback system. The Trust will ensure that all feedback is communicated to appropriate staff and is taken into account in keeping with the Trust's continuous improvement principle.

### **Informal Complaint Resolution**

Where possible, the complainant should endeavour to raise and resolve the issue as close as possible to its point of origin (the source of the grievance) as soon as possible after the event. Formal complaint procedures should generally only be utilised where attempts at informal resolution have been unsuccessful or would not be in the best interests of the complainant.

All informal complaints will be recorded on the Trust's National Support Office Complaint Register for future reference and improvement reviews. Once reviewed, complaints must be signed off as soon as possible by the Operations Manager.

### **Written Complaints**

Where an informal approach is not in the best interests of the complainant, or where the complainant does not feel that informal resolution has produced a satisfactory outcome, a formal written complaint should be lodged with the Operations Manager.

A written complaint must contain a clear statement of the grounds for the complaint and supporting documentation or evidence where appropriate. Once received by the Operations Manager this will be logged and recorded immediately. The Operations Manager will then send written acknowledgement to the complainant and begin an investigation into the complaint within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.

Investigation of the complaint may include, where appropriate, interviewing the individual concerned, and obtaining statements from any individuals who may be involved in the matter. Where individual staff members are under investigation, they should be encouraged to seek support and advice. The Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring this option is discussed with staff involved in the investigation.

The complainant will be offered the opportunity of further information/clarification following the investigation. A letter addressing all elements of the complaint will be sent to the complainant at the conclusion of the investigation. Such a letter may also outline changes in practice the Trust is instigating to correct and/or improve issues highlighted.

Where further investigation is required, the co-ordinator of the complaint will keep the complainant fully informed of progress in writing, and negotiate a revised timeframe if necessary. If at any stage it appears likely that legal action may arise, the Operations Manager shall advise the Board of

Trustees, the Chief Executive, GRG solicitors and the Trust's Professional Liability Insurers as soon as possible.

Once finalised, all documentation relating to the complaint (including correspondence and actions) will be filed at National Support Office together with a completed entry in the Complaints Register – this entry must be signed off by the Operations Manager prior to filing.

### **Appeals Procedure**

Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation into a complaint, they may appeal in the first instance to the Board of Trustees. Such an appeal should be made in writing immediately upon receipt of the advice of the decision that the person wishes to contest. The statement must contain a clear outline of the grounds for the appeal, supporting documentation, and copies of any correspondence from the co-ordinator of the complaint.

### **Reporting/Monitoring of Complaints**

The Operations Manager will ensure that all feedback and complaints are regularly audited. All formal complaints and compliments will be recorded on the central register which shall be maintained by either the National Support Office's Administrator or Chief Executive. Anonymous complaints and compliments will also be reported upon and used for the purposes of process improvement and organisational development of the Trust.

### **Complaints Against Staff/Volunteers**

The Trust views complaints against its staff and representatives very seriously and is committed to handling any such complaints in an appropriate and professional manner. Where a representative/staff member of the Trust is the subject of a complaint, the Board holds full authority to take corrective or appropriate action. Any such action is at the discretion of the Board of Trustees and may include:

- suspension of the representative/staff member pending a full investigation of the complaint
- disciplinary action
- dismissal

Where a complaint is made regarding the safety of a child or young person who may be at risk of abuse, the Trust will invoke the procedures outlined in the GRG Abuse Protocol. Where the risk of abuse concerns a staff member or representative of the Trust, the Board may also invoke any necessary disciplinary procedures as outlined in this document.

Where it is alleged that a crime has been committed, the matter will be referred to appropriate authorities for investigation. Any such authorities may include the Police and/or industry governing bodies.

Wherever possible, the Trust will provide access to translation and language services as appropriate. If such services are not available in-house, the Trust will provide access and referrals to appropriate agencies.

### **Compliance**

In carrying out any of the above procedures, the Trust will ensure compliance with privacy and human rights legislation at all times. Any such instance where a child or young person is deemed to be at risk, the privacy provisions of Section 16 of the Children, Young Persons & their Families Act 1989 will apply.

**Policy Availability**

Copies of this policy will be provided to all Support Group Co-ordinators as part of a Co-ordinator Resource Pack. Co-ordinators will be advised that further copies are available on request from the Trust's National Support Office. All staff will also be advised of the process and provided with a copy of this policy upon employment.

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## Complaint Resolution Process

