

Policy Number: **OS02**
Policy Area: **Organisational Integrity and Standards**
Policy Title: **Complaints**



Related Documents: OS02.1 Complaints Handling Process
OS04 Sexual Misconduct
OS07 Whistle Blower Policy
G19 Retention and Use of Records

This policy has been modelled on policies from the Act for Peace Policy Manual. The Board expresses its thanks to Act for Peace for making this resource available for this purpose.

Introduction

1. A “complaint” is a formal expression of dissatisfaction or discontent, and/or misconduct, about someone or something and will generally be made in writing.
2. Global Mission Partners is committed to a transparent and efficient process of handling complaints.
3. Contact information, and a copy of this policy and related procedures, will be displayed on the GMP web site.
4. GMP’s international and Australian partners will be informed as to the process of making a complaint against GMP. A copy of this policy and related procedures will be sent to partners and be made available on the GMP Website.
5. Complaints made by beneficiaries of GMP programs or partners will be responded to in accord with these guidelines.
6. Annually, GMP staff and volunteers will be informed as to the Complaints Policy and Procedures.
7. GMP will keep a record of all complaints received. A synthesis of the focal point(s) of complaints and the status of their resolution will be tabled at the Board annually.
8. GMP will support its partners in developing appropriate complaints handling policies and procedures for their context.

9. Appropriate training will be provided to those who manage complaints.

Scope

1. This policy addresses complaints regarding:
 - (a) Actions of GMP;
 - (b) Actions of a partner organisation;
 - (c) Behaviour of GMP staff, Board, volunteers and contractors.
2. This policy addresses complaints of all types, including sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation and whistle blower complaints.
3. Decisions in relation to complaints:
 - (a) Which involve breaches of the criminal code: These will be referred to the Police.
 - (b) Where there is a credible allegation of serious or criminal child abuse, or risk of significant harm: Such complaints will be reported to the child protection authorities or police and their advice followed.
 - (c) Which involve breaches of the relevant professional code of conduct by endorsed ministers: These will be referred to the endorsing Churches of Christ Conference.
 - (d) Regarding an employee of a partner organisation: The complainant will be supported in approaching the partner organisation directly.
 - (e) Which are offensive, abusive or malicious: The complaint will not be considered and if made by a staff member, discipline procedures may be initiated.
 - (f) Received as part of a bulk mail or an email to multiple organisations: Such claims will not be considered.
 - (g) Which are anonymous: In extraordinary situations the Investigation Manager may give consideration to anonymous complaints if it is evident that there are grounds for further action and anonymity is required to ensure a safe and abuse-free environment.

Principles

1. Everyone has a right to be treated with respect.
2. Everyone has a right to “due process”, i.e. the person against whom any allegation is made has the right to know what is alleged against them, the right to put their case in reply, and the right for any decision to be made by an impartial decision maker.
3. Wherever possible a non-adversarial and non-judgemental resolution to the problem will be pursued. Conciliation is the preferred model for resolution of complaints.
4. Complaints are treated in an impartial, sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner.

Confidentiality

1. Complaints will be treated in confidence and, where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, this will be clearly indicated.

2. Accusations can be potentially defamatory, especially if confidentiality is not observed and a person's reputation is unfairly damaged. Discussion, information and records related to complaints will remain factual and confidential.
3. Persons raising complaints under this policy are encouraged to identify themselves and explain their concern with as much information as possible and sufficient detail to assist GMP in investigating the matter. The identity of the complainant shall be kept confidential.
4. All communication will be confidential unless the individual raising the concern directly instructs otherwise.
5. However, follow-up questions and the investigation may not be possible unless the source of the information is identified.

No discrimination or retaliation

1. GMP will ensure that there will be no discriminatory or retaliatory action against any employee, volunteer or third party who reports a concern to GMP in good faith based on his/her personal knowledge.
2. If a person believes that he or she has been retaliated against for reporting or participating in an investigation, he/she should immediately report such perceived retaliation to the Executive Director or to the Chair of the GMP Board. All such reports will also be investigated confidentially.
3. Allegations of a vexatious nature and without any factual substance may result in disciplinary action if the complainant is an employee. If a GMP employee makes a malicious complaint, disciplinary measures will be taken.
4. Complaints lodged for genuine reasons that are subsequently considered to be unfounded shall not be treated as malicious.

Retention of the Records

1. Minimal documentation will be kept and documents will be kept according to the G19 Retention and Use of Records policy.