

Client Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy

This policy outlines:

- PANDSI's commitment to addressing grievances in a fair and equitable manner; and
- The Client Grievance Handling and Dispute Resolution Procedures.

This policy applies to:

- Clients, both female and male, of PANDSI services and their children.

Grievance Policy Statement

It is the policy of PANDSI to maintain a harmonious service delivery environment which is free of discrimination and which affords equality of opportunity. PANDSI encourages clients to express concern about service delivery issues and to raise concerns with the Support Worker (SW) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on an informal basis in the first instance and if not resolved, to seek recourse to more formal grievance and dispute procedures.

Procedural Responsibilities

The person lodging the grievance:

There may be more than one person involved in lodging a given grievance. The person/s making the grievance has a right to be informed about the progress of the grievance process.

The Respondent:

The person who is alleged to have acted unfairly, or in a discriminatory manner, or is alleged to be the reason for the grievance. There may be more than one respondent in any grievance situation. The respondent will be given the opportunity to respond to the substance of the grievance.

Supervisors and Managers:

The first point of contact should be the Lead Support Worker and/or PANDSI Chief Executive Officer. The CEO is responsible for reporting the grievance to the Board.

Resolution Phase:

Wherever possible, the resolution of grievances should be determined in a way that is satisfactory to those involved, and, as far as possible, to the person/s who lodged the grievance. This will include

1. acknowledging the person's concern;
2. investigating (informally, and if necessary, more formally); and
3. giving parties involved the opportunity to respond to the concern

PANDSI staff and volunteers are expected to make reasonable acknowledgement of their contribution to the cause for the concern. PANDSI will take reasonable action to redress the concern.

A grievance should only be regarded as satisfactorily resolved where the outcome is fair with respect to:

- any damage and suffering;
- the anticipated long-term outcome; and
- the improvement of the immediate circumstances which gave rise to the grievance.

The resolution must not be contrary to any relevant legislation, policy or procedure.

Documentation:

A Client Grievance Form should be completed and record any details of the grievance, parties involved, action taken and resolution. This form is to be stored in a separate grievances file. A copy can be stored on the client file if the client so chooses but will otherwise not be held on that record to ensure confidentiality. In the case that the grievance refers to an incident or accident a separate Incident/Accident Form must also be completed.

Confidentiality:

The confidentiality of every person involved will be maintained. Information about the grievance will be given to the CEO, and to the Board (although people involved will not be identified in a report to the Board unless, in the judgement of the CEO, it is necessary to appropriately report). Otherwise, information about the grievance will only be provided to people who need to know in order for PANDSI to investigate and respond to the grievance.

All employees, volunteers and contractors involved in the resolution of grievances should ensure that information regarding the grievance is treated confidentially.

Time Standards:

Grievances should be reported and resolved promptly. However reasonable time limits must be allowed for discussion at all levels of authority. A grievance should not remain with the Chief Executive Officer for more than 2 working days before action towards resolution or referral has commenced.

All official grievances and complaints received should be reported to the Board of PANDSI.