



Concerns & Complaints Procedure

1. Rationale

It is important that clearly defined procedures are established to ensure that all incidents, concerns and complaints are attended to promptly and fairly to bring about an effective resolution to the parties concerned.

2. Purpose

In order to maintain a safe environment for Cambridge Lifeskills staff and the children and whānau we work with, we provide an accessible procedure for handling concerns and complaints in a fair and equitable way in accordance with all ethical obligations and relevant legislation.

3. Delegation

The Board delegates to the Manager/Clinical Leader responsibility for ensuring processes are in place to effectively manage a concern or complaint. The Board delegates the Manager/Clinical Leader discretion to suspend or dis-continue the counselling where they consider this to be in the best interests of the child. Examples may include (but are not limited to) inter-agency involvement, such as Oranga Tamariki, or the Family Court or a concern or complaint regarding a Counsellor.

In the event of a concern or complaint about the Manager/Clinical Leader the responsibility lies with the Board. In the event of a concern or complaint about the Board, the Chairperson will receive a complaint in the first instance and form a subcommittee of the Board.

4. Guidelines

In order to comply with this procedure it is important that the Manager/Clinical Leader shall:

- 4.1 Work at all times to meet the best interests of the child, as outlined in the agreed terms of engagement.
- 4.2 Maintain positive working relationships with all stakeholders with a view to ensuring concerns are managed through discussion and mutual agreement in the first instance.
- 4.3 Ensure the process for concerns and complaints is clearly available and communicated, including posting to the Cambridge Lifeskills public website.
- 4.4 Ensure counsellors regularly review the Code of Conduct.
- 4.5 Ensure membership/registration to appropriate bodies are maintained by staff as appropriate (for example if employed as a member of the NZAC).
- 4.6 Ensure the privacy and confidentiality of staff, clients and their families is maintained throughout the concerns and complaints process.

4.8 Effectively manage any conflicts of interest that may arise.

5. Process

5.1 Concern or complaint regarding a Counsellor

- a. A concern or complaint is received by the Manager/Clinical Leader.
- b. In the first instance the complainant is to be encouraged to refer their issue to the Counsellor concerned to attempt to resolve the issue at the lowest possible level by mutual agreement.

5.2 Concern or complaint involving the Manager/Clinical Leader

- a. The Board Chairperson and Deputy (or delegate) are responsible for managing the concern or complaint.
- b. The Board may consider using the services of an external investigator to resolve the complaint.

5.3 Concern or complaint involving a Board Member

- a. A subcommittee of the Board is responsible for managing the concern or complaint.
- b. The written complainant is received by the Board Chairperson.
- b. The Board may consider using the services of an external investigator to resolve the complaint .

6. Insurance

Cambridge Lifeskills holds professional indemnity insurance that is relevant to its work.

7. Seeking legal advice or support

Cambridge Lifeskills reserves the right to seek legal advice or other advice/support in the course of its work.

8. Review

This procedure will be reviewed as part of the Board policy/procedure review cycle.

Last reviewed: February 2023

Relevant policies: Privacy Policy; Employment Policy; Health & Safety policy & procedure.

Relevant legislation: Children's Act 2014; Privacy Act 2020; Employment Relations Act 2000; Health & Safety Act 2015.

Complaints Flow Diagram

RATIONALE: To ensure Cambridge Lifeskills responds to complaints in a fair and consistent manner
GUIDELINES: All investigations will comply with all relevant legislation
eg Human Rights Act, employment agreements etc.

