

	<b>Policy Title:</b>	Complaints Policy
	<b>Approved by:</b>	LFCDG Board of Directors
	<b>Approval Date:</b>	October 3, 2024
	<b>Effective Date:</b>	October 3, 2024
	<b>Policy Owner:</b>	CEO

<b>Policy Statement:</b>	We believe the right to express concerns and complaints is an inherent right of any stakeholder and the Foundation is committed to a process which is timely, fair and respectful.
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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure complaints or concerns about Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides (LFCDG) on its policies, programs or activities are registered, processed and managed and resolved in a transparent and effective manner. An important objective of this procedure is to learn from experience and improve the manner in which the Foundation deals with its donors, clients, community and other stakeholders.

LFCDG is committed to its employees, volunteers, clients and visitors by providing the steps to be taken in the event a complaint is filed against an employee or organization. The policy initiates the steps to be taken by management once a complaint has been launched. The review of complaints shall be fair, impartial and respectful to all parties. The information gained from complaints shall be used to inform and improve policies, procedures and services within the Foundation.

**Scope:**

LFCDG adheres to the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. There may however, from time to time be concerns or complaints about or related to the Foundation. LFCDG wants to ensure individuals with complaints are able to raise their concerns, but that they should do so through proper channels of communication.

**Definitions:**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction from an external stakeholder, including clients, donors and volunteers about the service, actions, or lack of action by LFCDG as an organization or a staff member or individual acting on behalf of LFCDG. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Perceived failure to do something agreed upon;
- Failure to observe policy or procedures;
- Error made by a staff member/volunteer; or
- Unfair or discourteous actions/statements by staff member/volunteer.

**Responsibility:**

Oversight of the process for this policy rests with Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of LFCDG working with the Senior Management team.

**Procedures:**

- The Foundation shall respond to all complaints and make every reasonable effort to investigate and respond as soon as possible. A complaint can only be taken into consideration when it includes the following:
  - Full name of complainant
  - Organization/affiliation (if any)
  - Appropriate detail of the concern/issue to demonstrate that the complaint is made in good faith
  - Recommendations to address concern/issue [optional]
- It is necessary to the complaints process that factual issues be distinguished from comment or opinion. Anonymously submitted concerns or complaints will not be submitted to the complaint process. Anonymous complaints or concerns shall nevertheless be followed up to determine whether further attention is required and/or the matter should be formally referred to the complaints process. Consideration shall be given to the likelihood of confirming alleged facts or circumstances from reliable sources.
- All complaints are treated as confidential and communication regarding the complaint will remain between the appropriate Foundation representative and the complainant(s).
- Any complaints received in regard to LFCDG are considered a LFCDG matter and will be referred to the appropriate department within the Foundation.

**Complaint Receipt and Handling**

- A complaint may be received verbally (by phone or in person) with a written follow up, using the online Complaint Form.
- Complaints received in writing that are not addressed to a specific staff member, and complaints not immediately resolved, should be referred to the appropriate manager to acknowledge the complaint and either address the complaint or transfer it to the appropriate person and follow the process below for resolving and reporting
- The staff member receiving the complaint should immediately acknowledge to the complainant the complaint has been received and will be acted on either by him/herself or transferred to another person who can resolve it expeditiously. If a timeframe for action can be determined, that should be included in the acknowledgement. Basic contact information including: name, phone number, email address, date of receipt and a copy of the complaint should be recorded by the person handling the complaint. If the complaint can be handled at this stage, there is no need to escalate and log the complaint in a formal record.

- An employee or volunteer who receives a complaint which cannot or is not resolved immediately should determine the proper person to handle it. This will generally be the person who has the primary relationship with the complainant or has the specific knowledge that is needed to resolve the problem. It is the responsibility of the person who receives the complaint to either resolve it or transfer it to another person who can resolve it expeditiously. If the complaint is transferred, the recipient must acknowledge to the transferor that he/she has received it and will act on it. If the complaint can be handled at this stage, there is no need to escalate and log the complaint in a formal record. If the complaint needs to be escalated in order to be resolved, the complaint should be documented and logged centrally for the Senior Management team to review.

### **Resolving the Complaint**

- Every effort should be made to resolve complaints received in a timely fashion. When receiving a complaint, staff should listen and seek to understand the complaint, and may attempt to resolve it expeditiously. Such complaints should be acknowledged in writing immediately and staff should attempt to resolve the matter within 5 business days.
- Where a complaint cannot be or is not resolved as above, it will be escalated to the CEO who is then responsible for the complaint and resolution.
- If the complaint still cannot be resolved, it will be escalated to the Board of Directors who are then responsible for the complaint and resolution.
- If the complaint is about the CEO, it shall be referred to the Chair of the Board of Directors. If the complaint is against a Senior Manager, it will be referred to the CEO.
- A complainant shall be kept informed of the status of their complaint. Every attempt should be made to resolve escalated complaints within an additional 10 business days so that all complaints are resolved within 15 business days of having been received.
- Once the complaint is resolved, a letter documenting the resolution will be provided to the complainant.

### **Documenting the Complaint**

- Complaint information that is escalated to the management level must be recorded including a description of the complaint, who handled it, what was done to resolve the complaint, timeframe, and a description of the resolution or transfer. It is the responsibility of the person resolving or transferring the complaint to update the complaint log as soon as possible after the complaint has been resolved or transferred.
- Managers are responsible for maintaining the complaint log. The log will be reviewed, not less than monthly, by the Sr. Management team to determine whether there are recurring or patterns of complaints. If necessary, further action shall be taken to determine whether there are systemic or process issues with a view to addressing and eliminating such recurring complaints.

### **Reports to Executive Committee and Board**

- A summary of the complaints received, including number and type, will be reported to the LFCDG Board of Directors not less than annually.