



GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY

Girl Guides Victoria volunteers and staff members have the right to volunteer and work in a safe environment and to be treated with dignity and respect.

Through this policy and procedure volunteers and staff members can have a grievance addressed. All volunteers and staff members have a right to use the procedures in this policy if they believe they have a legitimate grievance that can be dealt with under these procedures.

Aim of the Policy

Girl Guides Victoria is committed to maintaining an environment that encourages collaboration, cooperation and communication.

All volunteers and staff members have the right to perform their roles in a safe and supportive environment and to be treated with dignity and respect.

It is recognised, however, that on occasion incidents or situations may occur and that a volunteer or staff member may be aggrieved. A grievance may be lodged in order to resolve a complaint or concern.

This policy aims to ensure that *internal* grievances are handled and resolved in an appropriate, fair, transparent and timely manner.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all registered volunteers and staff members, including but is not limited to:

- Unit Leaders, Manager and Unit Helpers
- Support Group and District Support Team volunteers including committee members
- Members of State Council, Executive Committee, and any Committee of Girl Guides Victoria

All volunteers and staff members of Girl Guides Victoria will be aware of and adhere to this policy.



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Definitions

What is a grievance?

A grievance is an alleged wrong or hardship suffered, which is the grounds of a complaint. It may arise from any action or inaction, behaviour, situation or decision impacting on a member of Girl Guides Victoria that she thinks is unfair or unjustified.

Grievances can include but are not limited to the following examples:

Behaviour	Actions
<p><u>Inappropriate behaviour</u></p> <p>This type of behaviour is often seen as how a person presents themselves. It is the least offensive of behaviours but can have an impact on the way other people feel and can also escalate.</p>	<p>Rude, loud, inappropriate or degrading jokes; swearing in public; shouting out loud; not listening; not including others.</p>
<p><u>Disrespectful Behaviour</u></p> <p>These behaviours are more hostile than inappropriateness, and they are usually aimed directly at another person or persons.</p>	<p>Rude and discourteous, criticizing, ridiculing, or dismissing another person’s achievements; shouting, degrading a volunteer, member or Girl Guide in front of other people; inappropriate sarcasm; speaking in a condescending or belittling way; swearing at another person; dismissive or negative gesturing when someone else is speaking; talking over another person.</p>
<p><u>Mild Bullying</u></p> <p>These behaviours fall on the harsher side of disrespect, and they are aimed directly at another person or persons. It is important to recognise these behaviours, and to say something if you see any of them so that they don’t escalate and cause a greater risk of disruption to volunteers and Girl Guides. Mild bullying is likely to continue without intervention.</p>	<p>Removing responsibilities unfairly; denying access to information necessary for performing work; not sharing tasks equally; behaving in an intimidating manner; damaging a person’s reputation; disregarding good work and achievements; starting or failing to stop destructive rumours or gossip about a person; singling out and isolating one person from others—either socially or physically.</p>

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<p><u>Moderate to Severe Bullying</u></p> <p>Bullying becomes moderate to severe when the instances of abuse increase in frequency and personalization. There is no complete list of bullying behaviours, but the key is intent to harm or humiliate. Included in this level of behaviour are stalking, domestic/intimate partner violence, and stated threats.</p>	<p>Gossip campaigns about a person's character to other volunteers; physical intimidation; public humiliation or ostracism; singling out another volunteer in condescending ways; showing clear signs of hostility; harshly and constantly criticising; yelling; screaming; or humiliating a person.</p>
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Principles for managing grievances

- All volunteers and staff members of Girl Guides Victoria will be informed about this policy and procedure, how to make a grievance, and the process to be followed in response to a grievance.
- All grievances will be addressed sensitively, promptly and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
- All grievances will be dealt with in a professional and respectful manner. A person wishing to make a grievance will be supported in doing so. Where a volunteer or staff member is the subject of a grievance, Girl Guides Victoria will ensure that they are provided with procedural fairness and able to explain their point of view.
- Fairness and impartiality will prevail throughout the appropriate resolution process - until a grievance is investigated and a decision is made, a grievance is an allegation, not a fact.
- The right person will be delegated to address grievances. In the first instance this will be the Chief Executive Officer. A grievance will not be reviewed by a staff member who is named or involved in the grievance. In the event that the grievance is about or involves the Chief Executive Officer, the Governance Chair or State Commissioner, the grievance will be investigated by another senior officer. That is, if the grievance is about the CEO it will be investigated by the Governance Chair; if it is about the State Commissioner it will be investigated by the Governance Chair, and if it is about the Governance Chair it will be investigated by the State Commissioner or the Deputy Governance Chair. These people may be contacted through the GGV office.
- A serious grievance – particularly where personal or organisational risk is identified - will be escalated for immediate attention and review by the Chief Executive Office and/or the State Commissioner.



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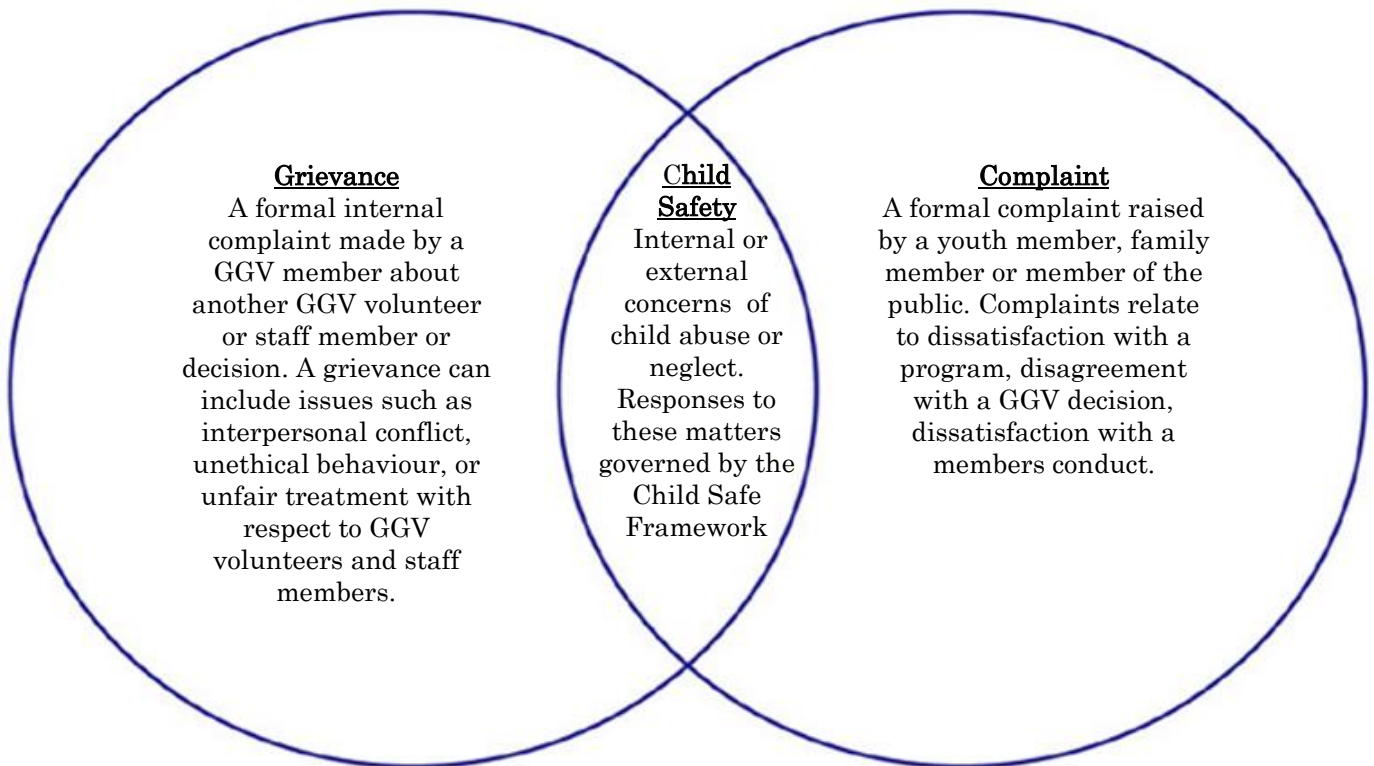
- All reasonable steps will be taken to respect the confidentiality of the people involved in a grievance. Information will only be made known to those named in the grievance or on a need to know basis, for example any witnesses who may be interviewed as part of the investigation.
- All grievances will be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible.
- All persons involved in a grievance will be regularly informed of progress, including time frames, findings (whether the grievance is substantiated or not substantiated) and any consequences and/or further actions.
- Accurate documentation of the grievance will be maintained by the reviewer. Completed records of a resolved grievance will be recorded on iMIS.

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What is not included in this policy?

This policy does not apply to complaints raised by girl members and/or their families and the non-guiding community. The **Complaints Policy and Procedure** outlines the necessary steps to be taken in cases of complaints. As noted above grievances can be lodged by adult members of GGV or employees.

- This policy does not apply to allegations, disclosures or suspicions of abuse and neglect of girl guides. Where child safety concerns arise in the context of a grievance, or the ensuing investigation, the Chief Executive Officer, State Commissioner, Governance Chair or other named senior officer will ensure the concerns are addressed in line with the principles, policies and procedures as set out in the organisation’s **Child Safe Framework**.



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PROCEDURE

How do grievances get resolved?

1. In the first instance, a volunteer or staff member who has a grievance is asked to make a good faith attempt and raise the matter directly with the person with whom they have the issue. If, for any reason, the aggrieved is not able to approach the person directly or the matter does not appear simple to resolve, then the following process will apply.
2. The aggrieved is required to contact the Chief Executive Officer at Guide Centre to lodge the grievance. The CEO will either become the reviewing staff member or will nominate another reviewer (as above).
3. If the aggrieved is not able or willing to lodge the grievance in writing, the reviewing staff member will document the initial conversation with the aggrieved.
4. Both the State Commissioner and the Governance Chair will be advised of the grievance and the process to follow.
5. The reviewer will investigate the grievance as a matter of priority. This may involve forwarding a copy of the grievance to any persons mentioned in or involved in the circumstances leading to the grievance. The reviewing staff member will interview all parties named or involved in the grievance.
6. If it is appropriate for parties named in the grievance to meet (whether in person or by teleconference) a suitable day and time will be scheduled. All parties are permitted to bring a support person to this meeting. The role of the support person is to provide professional and moral support to the person concerned. The support person acts as a witness to the process, but may not disrupt the process, interfere or answer questions for others.
7. The reviewing staff member will lead the meeting with the aim of resolving the matter. There are several outcomes that may result from the investigation. Ideally, all parties would reach an agreement on a resolution. Some cases may require the parties to attend an external mediation session to assist in resolving interpersonal conflict. Other cases may result in further enquiry and disciplinary action.
8. If at any point during the grievance process, child safety concerns arise, the reviewing staff member will refer to the **Child Safe Framework** and follow relevant principles, policies and procedures.



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9. If you are involved in a grievance procedure and you are not satisfied with the outcome, you have the right of appeal. To appeal the decision you are required to write a letter to the Chief Executive Officer, stating the circumstance and your grounds of appeal. This letter of appeal must be received within 30 days of the date of the decision. This appeal will then be taken to the Executive Committee where the process and decision of the grievance investigation will be reviewed. Until the determination of the appeal, the initial decision remains in effect. The Executive Committee will make a decision regarding the appeal appeal within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. The decision is then final and binding.

Supporting documents

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Child Safe Framework
- Respectful Behaviours Charter

Version Information

Version Number	Content Updated	Person Responsible	Date Updated
1.2	Appeal timeline added Version Control section added	P&P	Sept 2020
1.1	Amended		May 2017
1.0	Original		Jan 2013