

## **Complaints Handling Policy**

### **Purpose**

At the Huon Valley PCYC, we are committed to upholding the safety and wellbeing of all people who attend our facility and programs, including children and young people and persons with disability. All people, including children, young people, staff, volunteers, parents, carers and clients with disabilities should feel supported in making a complaint, or providing feedback. Complaints made by, on behalf of, affecting, or relating to children, young people or persons with disabilities will be taken seriously, and their rights will be safeguarded throughout the investigation process. We are guided by and follow the National Principals for Child Safe Organisations and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission's Code of Conduct. This policy seeks to support the achievement of this goal by providing a transparent and consistent process for handling complaints.

### **Responsibilities**

The Huon Valley PCYC, its staff and volunteers have a responsibility to comply with this policy and procedure and ensure that:

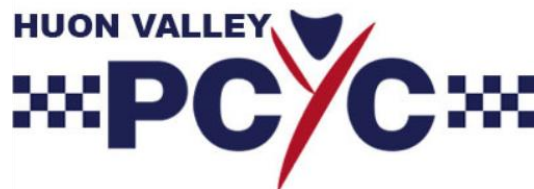
1. The rights, safety and wellbeing of children and persons with disability are embedded into the complaints process
2. Reporting responsibilities and obligations are defined and actioned
3. Staff and volunteers are aware of what information they can share, with whom, and when and how it should be communicated.
4. Confidentiality and privacy are maintained in accordance with legislative obligations.
5. Adequate Risk Management Policies and Procedures are in place
6. Complaints and subsequent investigations affecting all people, including children, young people and persons with disabilities, are properly investigated, taken seriously, and their rights are safeguarded throughout the investigation process.
7. The Complaints Handling process is fair and objective
8. Outcomes and review options are adequately explained
9. Full and accurate records are kept in line with relevant legislative requirements.

### **Procedure**

This is a 12 step procedure.

1. Receiving the complaint

The Huon Valley PCYC accepts feedback and/or complaints in various ways, including in person, by phone, via website, by email, by mail, or by social media. Details on how to make a complaint, advocacy supports, and this Policy are made available on the Huon Valley PCYC



website [www.hvpcyc.org.au](http://www.hvpcyc.org.au). Unless the complaint is resolved at first point of contact, details of the complaint will be recorded along with other relevant information.

## 2. Recording the complaint and relevant information

Upon receiving a complaint or feedback, the Huon Valley PCYC will record complaint details, such as details about the complainant, any additional communication or support required; details about the subject of the complaint, the complaint issues, how the complaint was resolved/investigated; risks managed and the complaint outcome.

## 3. Acknowledging the complaint

Complainants will be acknowledged at the time of receipt or as soon as possible afterwards. The Huon Valley PCYC will acknowledge the complaint by using the complainants preferred communication method and provide information about the complaint – handling process, the likely steps and expected timeframes.

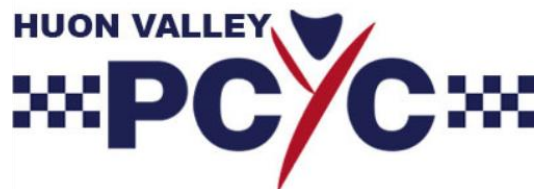
## 4. Assessing the complaint and addressing immediate risks

In an initial assessment of a complaint, the Huon Valley PCYC will

- Question if the complaint raises any immediate risks to the safety or wellbeing of a person.
- Consider what other issues the complaint raises.
- Detail what steps need to be taken to address and manage risks throughout the complaints process.
- Consider if any person requires any additional supports during the complaints process, including providing contacts for advocacy and support services.
- Consider what evidence needs to be immediately secured/protected/kept confidential.
- Consider the seriousness and urgency of the issue.
- Consider the outcomes sought by the complainant.
- Notify relevant authorities or agencies, when required, in line with the Huon Valley PCYC External Reporting Policies, Mandatory Reporting requirements, the National Principals for Child Safety and the NDIS Code of Conduct.

## 5. Planning the involvement of a child, young person or person with disability

Where the complaint received involves a child, young person, or person with a disability the Huon Valley PCYC will develop a plan for involving the affected person, their parent/carer/representative where required, including when and how information will be communicated to them throughout the process and how they will be supported.



## 6. Resolving complaints

After assessing a complaint, the Huon Valley PCYC will plan the actions required to manage and resolve it. Wherever possible, the Huon Valley PCYC will try to resolve complaints promptly with a complainant and—particularly where the matter is minor—as soon as possible after the complaint is made. However, where the complaint relates to a serious allegation or incident, this may not be appropriate. The Huon Valley PCYC will keep the complainant adequately informed about what is happening with their complaint and clarify timeframes where there are delays.

To resolve the complaint, the Huon Valley PCYC will:

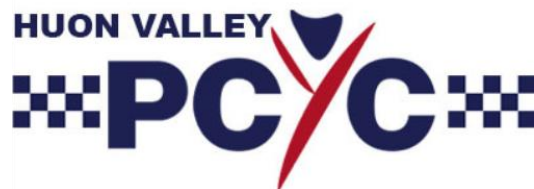
- work with the person making the complaint to see how the issues can be appropriately addressed.
- make inquiries with the person who is the subject of the complaint, and/or
- conduct an investigation into the issues raised in the complaint, in cooperation with police/child protection authorities where relevant.

The nature and scope of any action taken will depend on a number of factors including:

- the circumstances of each case
- any statutory requirements
- the issue(s) complained about
- the parties involved.
- the likely outcome.

## 7. Conducting an investigation

- The Huon Valley PCYC will undertake the following steps as part of an investigation:
- Action the relevant issues identified through the assessment process, starting with any immediate safety risks posed to any person, child, young person, or person with disability and undertake any risk management associated with the subject of complaint.
- Select the appropriate investigative approach by looking at any statutory requirements, consulting relevant external bodies (e.g. police and child protection agencies) and considering the nature of the issue or allegations raised and the likely outcome of the investigation.
- Develop an investigation plan, ensuring that, where appropriate, relevant authorities are consulted and involved in its design and implementation to ensure an organisation's actions do not compromise a police or child protection, or NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission investigation.



- Obtain and protect evidence, including identifying relevant witnesses and putting the allegations to the subject of complaint at the appropriate point in time—affording them fairness.
- Analyse, assess and weight all of the evidence gathered.
- Make findings about the allegations and explain them to the subject of complaint and the complainant.

#### 8. Providing regular updates

The Huon Valley PCYC will let the complainant and—depending on the complainant’s needs, also their family, guardian and/or support person—know what is happening with their complaint, when they can expect updates, and who to contact for more information or if they have questions about the process.

#### 9. Providing the final outcome

The Huon Valley PCYC will report final findings to the complainant, the subject of complaint and other stakeholders, considering privacy, confidentiality, and procedural fairness obligations.

The Huon Valley PCYC will explain to the complainant and the subject of complaint—using the most appropriate communication channel and putting in place any necessary supports—the key steps taken to investigate the complaint, the outcome (including the reasons for your decision), and available avenues for review and/or appeal if they are dissatisfied with the outcome and/or the complaints process.

#### 10. Closing the complaint and recording the outcome

The Huon Valley PCYC will close the complaint and keep comprehensive records about:

- How the complaint was managed
- The outcome
- Any recommendations and/or outstanding actions and how they have been addressed.

#### 11. Facilitating ongoing support for those involved in the complaint

The Huon Valley PCYC will consider whether the person who made the complaint or any person, child, young person or person with disability involved in the complaint (or their parents/carers/representatives) is likely to need or want ongoing support. Where required the Huon Valley PCYC will facilitate referrals to other organisations and support services.



## 12. Continuous improvement

In addition to making adjustments to any systems or practice weaknesses identified by a specific complaint or general feedback, the Huon Valley PCYC will look for any additional opportunities for continuous improvement.

### Relevant Legislations and Standards

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997. Tasmania.
- Family Violence Act 2004.
- Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021- 2031
- Tasmanian Government CBOS Working with Vulnerable People Requirements.
- The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- The National Standards for Out-of-Home Care.
- Charter of Rights for Tasmanian Children & Young People in Out-of-Home Care
- CCYP Strategic Framework 2022 & 2023

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