

## COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES POLICY

Policy Number:	POL4.V20		
Approved by Board on:	Aug 2020	Scheduled Review Date:	Aug 2022

### 1. Introduction

Neighbours Aid Ltd. endeavours to provide a program of the highest quality. However, from time to time, customers, volunteers or staff may raise concerns or complaints about matters or issues relating to their experiences with Neighbours Aid Ltd.

Neighbours Aid Ltd. has a commitment to create an environment which is free from discrimination and harassment and where all customers and staff are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. Neighbours Aid Ltd. has an obligation to treat all complaints of discrimination, victimisation, sexual harassment, vilification or seeking unnecessary information on which discrimination might be based seriously. All complaints will be handled confidentially and impartially, investigated promptly and recommendations implemented.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a complaint and grievance handling framework for addressing any complaints and disputes that may arise in the Neighbours Aid Ltd. workplace or retail environment from customers, volunteers or staff.

### 3. Policy

Neighbours Aid Ltd. will endeavour to provide a complaints and grievances policy which is visible, accessible, and one which encourages prompt attention to complaints. Confidentiality will be respected by all parties.

Neighbours Aid Ltd. will, subject to principles of confidentiality and persons' rights to privacy, endeavour to provide updates to complainants and persons against whom a complaint is made. Neighbours Aid Ltd. recognises, however, that there may be circumstances in which this would not be desirable and therefore reserves the right to decline to inform or update any persons on any complaint. Circumstances in which these updates are not desirable will be entirely at Neighbours Aid Ltd.' discretion.

Neighbours Aid Ltd. will also comply with its Privacy Policy in respect of any complaint.

Neighbours Aid Ltd. will regularly educate and train employees and volunteers on the Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedures.

### 4. Process

- a. Complaints or grievances from Customers, Volunteers or Staff to be formally registered, they should be made in writing and addressed to the Store Manager, or if it relates to the Store Manager, to the Neighbours Aid Ltd. Head Office.  
Use form FAS4.V20 available from the Store Manager or the staff room.
- b. A complaint can be made to any Store Manager, supervisor or human resources staff member in Neighbours Aid Ltd;
  - i) If the complaint is from a staff member or volunteer of Neighbours Aid Ltd, the Supervisor or Store Manager should also review the PAS15.V20 Procedures and Guidelines for Staff and Volunteer Complaints;

- ii) If the complaint is from a customer or client of Neighbours Aid Ltd., the Supervisor or Store Manager should also review the PAS16.V20 Procedures for Customer Complaints.
- c. The complaint will be handled fairly and based on the principles of natural justice.
- d. Natural justice means the right to be given a fair hearing and the opportunity to present your case, and the right to have a decision made by an impartial decision maker.
- e. There will be no victimisation as a result of making a complaint or supplying information to an investigation or other person with a role in this procedure.
- f. The complaint will be handled confidentially. The person managing the complaint will be independent and impartial of the complaint and any other parties involved. This may be the supervisor, Store Manager, Head Office HR staff or person appointed from outside Neighbours Aid Ltd.
- g. All parties to a complaint have the option of nominating a support person to be present.
- h. All parties to a complaint who require an Auslan or language interpreter will be provided with a professional interpreter.
- i. The complaint will be dealt with as a matter of priority following these steps:
  - iii) The person managing the complaint will discuss the issue with the complainant within 48 hours of the complaint being made.
  - iv) The person being complained about will be informed of the allegations against them. They will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
  - v) Statements from witnesses and any other relevant evidence will be collected.
  - vi) This part of the complaint process will be completed within 10 business days.
- j. A report documenting the investigation process, the evidence, findings and recommendations will be prepared and submitted to the appropriate decision maker.
- k. The Store Manager will decide what action will be taken, depending on the outcome of the investigation and any other relevant factors.
- l. Parties to the complaint will be advised about any action to be taken in relation to them. If the outcome is not acceptable to the parties, an appeal can be made within 3 working days to the CEO to review the complaint and outcome.
- m. The Store Manager will implement the recommended actions.
- n. The CEO will monitor the outcomes of complaints and take appropriate action to prevent further complaints arising.
- o. A complaint can also be lodged with an external agency such as the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland, which has a one-year time limit unless there is good reason for any delay.
- p. A complaint to an external agency will not prevent this Complaint Procedure from continuing where the CEO decides that this is appropriate.
- q. Neighbours Aid Ltd. will keep a record of all complaints and outcomes on the Neighbours Aid Ltd. Complaints Register.
- r. Neighbours Aid Ltd. will endeavor to investigate and resolve anonymous complaints in accordance with this policy and related procedures however, it may be limited based on information provided. Neighbours Aid Ltd. will keep a record of any anonymous complaints it receives on the Neighbours aid Ltd. Complaints Register.
- s. While the dispute and the dispute resolution mechanism remains contained within the internal process of Neighbours Aid Ltd. (those not involving independent third parties), agreed expenses (other than costs associated with the complainant obtaining legal advice) will be borne by Neighbours Aid Ltd. At no stage will any legal or associated costs of the complainant be borne by Neighbours Aid Ltd.
- t. Neighbours Aid Ltd. will review this procedure every two years.