

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES		
(MAN 1)	COMPLAINT HANDLING	
GIRL GUIDES SOUTH AUSTRALIA		

**i. Document Management**

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## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Girls Guides South Australia takes all complaints seriously.
- 1.2. Girl Guides South Australia will handle complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness (natural justice), that is:
  - all complaints will be taken seriously;
  - both the person making the complaint (complainant) and the person the complaint is against (respondent) will be given full details of what is being said against them and have the opportunity to respond (give their side of the story);
  - irrelevant matters will not be taken into account;
  - decisions will be unbiased and fair, and
  - any penalties imposed will be fair and reasonable.
- 1.3. If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity then Girl Guides South Australia will report this behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority.
- 1.4. Girl Guides South Australia has an escalation route for complaints from Unit, District, Region and State levels.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to describe the broad roles and responsibilities of staff<sup>1</sup>, members and volunteers towards complaint handling, and to ensure our core values, good reputation, positive behaviours and attitudes are protected and maintained. Specifically, the responsibilities:
  - 2.1.1. Girl Guides South Australia staff, members and volunteers have towards the safety and wellbeing of our members,
  - 2.1.2. Girl Guides South Australia staff, members and volunteers have towards any records which may be kept in relation to any complaint handling, and
  - 2.1.3. Girl Guides South Australia staff, members and volunteers have in enabling; supporting and ensuring those responsibilities are met.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to staff and volunteers working for Girl Guides South Australia aged 18 years or older, whether or not they are members of the Association:
- 3.2. This policy applies to staff, members and volunteers who have access to records kept by Girl Guides South Australia.
- 3.3. This policy will continue to apply to person/s following termination of their association with Girl Guides South Australia.

## 4. Objectives

- 4.1. This policy is designed to ensure that Girl Guides South Australia staff, members and volunteers understand and maintain a complaints handling procedure that is unbiased and open and transparent.

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<sup>1</sup> A person is employed by the organisation if they are employed, contracted, subcontracted, acting as an agent of, or volunteering for, a relevant organisation.

- 4.2. Through this policy, Girl Guides South Australia is demonstrating its commitment to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of all members.

## 5. Policy Details

### 5.1. Member protection

- 5.1.1. Girl Guides South Australia supports the rights of our volunteers and encourages their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all participants.

### 5.2. Identify and analyse risk of harm

- 5.2.1. Girl Guides South Australia will develop, maintain and implement risk management strategies to ensure appropriate treatment of complaints.
- 5.2.2. This policy, its associated documents and other Girl Guides South Australia policies will form part of the Associations risk management strategy.

### 5.3. Maintain codes of conduct for adults and children

- 5.3.1. Youth members, adult members must abide by the values and behaviours laid out in the Girl Guide Promise and Guide Laws.
- 5.3.2. Staff, members and volunteers must ensure their behaviour is consistent with the Code of Conduct, as laid out in Guide Lines.
- 5.3.3. Staff, members and volunteers should be aware that the success of the Australian Guide Program is the modelling of expected behaviours by adults and therefore must lead by example.

### 5.4. Choose suitable volunteers and employees

- 5.4.1. Girl Guides South Australia will take all reasonable steps, including but not limited to those identified in this policy and the associated documents, to ensure that it engages suitable and appropriate people to work with youth members.
- 5.4.2. Suitability will be assessed through a range of screening processes, including but not limited to a criminal history assessment.

### 5.5. Support, Train, Supervise and Enhance Performance

- 5.5.1. Girl Guides South Australia will ensure that staff, members and volunteers, have ongoing supervision, support and training such that their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the appropriate environment to satisfactorily handle complaints.

### 5.6. Monitor and report (Lodge compliance statement)

- 5.6.1. Staff, members and volunteers will provide all information required to report on the organisations compliance with the Child Protection Act 1993 as amended within the timeframes provided by the State Manager.
- 5.6.2. The State Manager will collate data and reports on the compliance of staff, members and volunteers with this policy and the Child Protection Act 1993 as amended.

### 5.7. Access to records

- 5.7.1. Access to records relating to complaints will be tightly controlled.
- 5.7.2. Girl Guides South Australia will retain appropriate records about complaints and the resolution of the complaint.
- 5.7.3. Information will be stored securely and confidentially.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

Parties	Responsibilities
<p><b>6.1.</b> State Commissioner and State Manager</p>	<p>Oversee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The implementation of this policy's requirements and to monitor and manage all associated risks.</li> </ul> <p>Ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– complaints against or initiated by staff, members and volunteers are investigated in a timely and procedurally fair manner and by appropriately trained and supported personnel.</li> </ul> <p>Monitor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The complaints procedure is fair, reasonable, open and transparent.</li> </ul> <p>Manage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Whole of system reviews of serious critical incidents and actioning of subsequent recommendations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6.2.</b> Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Act in accordance with the requirements outlined in this policy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6.3.</b> Region Managers</p>	<p>Ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Complaint procedures are followed in a timely manner and are fair, reasonable, open and transparent.</li> </ul> <p>Enable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Region members and volunteers participate in complaint resolution in a timely manner</li> </ul> <p>Provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Support to members and volunteers experiencing difficulties in maintaining safe and respectful environments.</li> </ul> <p>Address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Performance issues - as they relate to meeting the requirements of this policy - with members and volunteers in the region.</li> </ul> <p>Raise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Concerns to the State Commissioner when complaints are of a serious nature or require a formal procedure to be used.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6.4.</b> Members and Volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Act in accordance with the instruction and advice of their immediate manager/supervisor</li> <li>– commit to resolution of complaints in a timely, open and respectful manner.</li> </ul>

## **7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

- 7.1. Unit leaders will provide information to their managers on any complaints received and the response taken.
- 7.2. Region Managers will monitor the reports provided by unit leaders (as outlined in 7.1), provide any support required and advise the State Commissioner and the State Manager if resolution cannot occur or a formal investigation is required.
- 7.3. The State Commissioner and the State Manager will ensure the policy's relevance, and its alignment with national standards is maintained and will amend the policy as appropriate.

## **8. Appeals and Complaints**

Grievances arising from the operation of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Girl Guides South Australia Complaints Handling Procedure.

## **9. Definitions and Abbreviations**

- 9.1. Refer to the Girl Guides South Australia Definitions of Terms for standard Girl Guides South Australia terminology.

## **10. Associated Documents**

- 10.1. **International Conventions**
  - 10.1.1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 10.2. **State Legislation**
- 10.3. **State Government Policies**
- 10.4. **Girl Guides Australia Guide Lines**
  - 10.4.1. Guide Lines (including the Girl Guide Promise and Laws and the Code of Conduct)
- 10.5. **Girl Guides South Australia Documentation**
  - 10.5.1. GGSA Procedural Manual
  - 10.5.2. Definition of terms
  - 10.5.3. Complaints Handling Procedure