

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Complaints Policy

This policy applies to complaints received by Covenant House Toronto (CHT) about our activities, programs, services, staff or volunteers.

1. Guiding Principles

It is in the interest of all parties that complaints are dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible, based on the following guiding principles:

- Complaints shall be reviewed in a manner that is fair, impartial and respectful to all parties.
- Complainants shall be advised of their options to escalate their complaint to a more senior staff person if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome.
- Complainants shall be provided clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to complaints.
- Complainants shall be provided with updates during review processes.
- Complaints will be used to assist in improving services, policies and procedures.
- The complaints process shall be accessible to all persons, and CHT will strive to alleviate barriers to access, wherever possible.

2. Types of Complaints

Definition – A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by CHT as an organization or a staff member or volunteer acting on behalf of CHT. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- perceived failure to do something agreed upon
- failure to observe policy or procedures
- error made by a staff member/volunteer
- unfair or discourteous actions/statements by a staff member/volunteer
- dissatisfaction with fundraising practices/approach

Anyone personally affected can complain and their complaint will be reviewed in accordance with this policy and procedure.

3. Complaint Receipt and Handling

A complaint may be received verbally (by phone or in person) or in writing (by mail, fax, email, social media). The employee or volunteer who initially receives the complaint will acknowledge to the complainant that the complaint has been received and will be acted on either by them personally or by another staff member. If a timeframe for action can be determined, that will be included in the acknowledgement.

4. Resolving the Complaint

Every effort will be made to resolve complaints received in a timely fashion. When a verbal complaint is received, staff will seek to understand the complaint and attempt to resolve it immediately if possible. Complaints received in writing will be acknowledged within 2 business days if a telephone number or email is on file. Otherwise, efforts will be made to resolve and communicate the matter in writing within 10 business days.

Where a complaint cannot be easily resolved, it will be escalated to the next level of authority. It will continue its escalation up to the Executive Director if a resolution still remains to be found. Complainants will be kept informed of the status of their complaint. Every attempt will be made to resolve escalated complaints within 10 additional business days so that all complaints are resolved within a month of having been received.

If the written decision of the Executive Directors is unsatisfactory, the complainant may submit their issue to the Covenant House Toronto Board of Directors. The submission must be in writing and directed to the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors will issue a written decision within 30 days of receiving the complaint. The decision will be in writing. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.