

Policy Direction – Complaints

Rationale and Relationship to Mission, Principles and Values

Graceland Africa Mission (GAM) understands that complaints may arise from time to time, and that it is in interest of all parties that they are dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible. We also recognize that complaints can provide valuable information to assist in improving services, policies, and procedures.

We believe it is important to review complaints in a fair, impartial and respectful manner. Complainants need to be provided clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to their complaint. They should be advised of their options to escalate their complaint to a more senior board member if they are dissatisfied with their treatment or outcome.

Policy Objective

This policy outlines appropriate measures needed to resolve complaints as quickly as possible. It applies to complaints received by GAM regarding our activities, programs, services, and volunteers.

Before assuming or resuming, as the case may be, their duties and responsibilities for GAM, board of directors, advisory council members and volunteers shall review this document, acknowledging their knowledge and understanding of the Complaints Policy of GAM.

Authorization

The Complaints Policy was approved by the Graceland Africa Mission board of directors on May 26th, 2017.

Types of Complaints

Definition: A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by GAM as an organization or board director or volunteer acting on behalf of GAM. Examples include but are not limited to:

- The perceived failure to do something agreed upon;
- The failure to observe GAM policy or procedures;
- An error made by a director/volunteer; or
- An unfair or discourteous action/statement by director/volunteer.

Complaint Receipt and Handling

A complaint may be received verbally (by phone or in person) or in writing (by mail, fax, email). The board director, advisory council member or volunteer who receives a complaint should first determine the proper person to handle it. This

will generally be the person who has the primary relationship with the complainant or has the specific knowledge that is needed to resolve the problem. It is the responsibility of the person who receives the complaint to either resolve it or transfer it to another person who can resolve it. If the complaint is transferred, the recipient must acknowledge to the transfer or that he/she has received it and will act on it.

The person who initially receives the complaint should acknowledge to the complainant that the complaint has been received and will be acted on either by him/herself or another volunteer. If a time frame for action can be determined, that should be included in the acknowledgement. Basic contact information including name, phone number and email address should immediately be recorded.

Resolving the Complaint

Every effort should be made to resolve complaints received in a timely fashion. When receiving a verbal complaint, the board director, advisory council member or volunteer should listen and seek to understand the complaint, and may attempt to resolve it immediately. Complaints received in writing should be acknowledged within 2 business days and the board director, advisory council member or volunteer should notify the complainant of a resolution of the matter within 10 business days.

Documenting the Complaint

It is necessary to keep a record of any complaint that involves a dispute over money as well as any complaint that cannot be resolved immediately (on the same day it is received). Information about such complaints must be recorded. Information recorded should include a description of the complaint, the person who handled it, what was done to resolve the complaint, time frame, and a description of the resolution.

A complaints report or discussion is a standing agenda item entitled "Community Feedback" for every GAM board of directors meeting.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Monitoring and Compliance

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board chairperson.

Policy Review

The policy is to be reviewed at least once every five years following its approval.

May 30, 2017

May 27, 2023