

CHILD SAFETY

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy Statement

Mypower Foundations is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all children in our care. We understand the importance of actively listening to children and believe that children have the right to express their views, raise concerns, and have them addressed in an appropriate and timely manner. This policy outlines the procedures for receiving, responding to, and resolving complaints made by or on behalf of children in our care.

Definitions

Child: Anyone under the age of 18 years.

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction or concern, whether oral or written, made to or about Mypower Foundations, related to our services or the complaint handling process itself, where a response or resolution is expected.

Complainant: A person, group of persons, or organization making a complaint. In the context of this policy, it refers to a child or someone on behalf of a child.

Mandatory Reporting: The legal requirement to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as mandated by local laws.

Procedure

1. Receiving Complaints:

- Children are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult if they have any concerns or complaints.
- Parents, guardians, or concerned parties are encouraged to speak on behalf of a child where the child cannot or does not want to speak for themselves.
- Any party may report complaints through any channel the complainant is comfortable with, including in person, via email, or an online reporting form, ensuring accessibility for all.
- All staff and volunteers must be trained to receive complaints from children, showing empathy, understanding, and taking all concerns seriously.

2. Recording Complaints:

- All complaints will be documented in a dedicated Complaints Register maintained by the Director or appointed officer and maintained securely and in accordance with data protection regulations.
- Details will include the nature of the complaint, the date, the person involved, the desired outcome as expressed by the complainant and the actions taken.

3. Assessing & Investigating:

- Complaints will be investigated promptly and impartially.
- The Director or a designated staff member will assess the complaint and determine the nature and severity of the complaint and the appropriate course of action.
- Some complaints may be resolved immediately, while others might require a thorough investigation.
- Immediate protective measures shall be taken if required to ensure the child's safety while the complaint is being investigated.
- If the complaint involves allegations of abuse or harm, appropriate authorities will be notified immediately.
- Trained professionals, experienced in working with children, may conduct interviews with the child involved, ensuring a child-friendly environment and approach.
- Relevant staff members and witnesses may be interviewed, and any pertinent evidence collected.

4. Feedback & Resolution:

- The child (and if applicable, their guardian) will be kept informed about the progress of their complaint.
- Every effort will be made to resolve complaints within a reasonable time frame.
- Appropriate actions will be taken to address the complaint, which may include corrective measures, counselling, or disciplinary actions, as warranted.
- Once resolved, feedback will be provided to the child about the outcome and any actions taken.

5. Reporting to Authorities

- In cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, Mypower Foundations will comply with mandatory reporting requirements and report to the appropriate authorities as mandated by local laws.

5. Appeals:

- If the child or their guardian is not satisfied with the resolution, they have the right to appeal the decision.
- An independent body or person will review the complaint and the resolution to ensure fairness.

6. Continuous Improvement:

- All complaints will be reviewed periodically to identify any recurring issues or trends that may indicate broader concerns within the organization.
- Policies, training, and procedures will be updated as needed based on the feedback from complaint resolutions.

Responsibility:

Board of Directors/Management:

- To ensure that all staff and volunteers are trained on this policy and understand their roles in the complaint handling process.
- To maintain confidentiality and protect the rights and well-being of the complainant throughout the process.
- To report to the appropriate authorities where mandatory reporting is required.
- To review and update this policy periodically, ensuring its effectiveness and relevance.

Staff, Contractors and Volunteers:

- All staff and volunteers are responsible for promptly reporting any complaints or concerns they become aware of.
- They shall cooperate fully with any investigations and adhere to the organization's child protection policies.

Children's responsibilities:

- Children and their families have the right to report complaints and expect that their concerns will be taken seriously and handled confidentially.

External Authorities:

- Mypower Foundations will collaborate with and report to external authorities as required by law when handling complaints that involve suspected child abuse or neglect.

Relevant Legislation and Policies:

- Privacy Act 1988
- Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
- Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- United Nations Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- NDIS Code of Conduct
- NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework
- the Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW)
- Child Protection Act 2012
- Working with Children Check Requirements
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Crimes Act 1900
- National Principles for Child Safe Organizations