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| TITLE:<br>Complaints Policy   | SPONSOR:<br>President & CEO              |
| Date Issued:<br>December 2014 | Date To Be Reviewed By:<br>May 2026      |
| Distribution:<br>All staff    | Issuing Authority:<br>Board of Directors |

## POLICY OBJECTIVE

The QEII Foundation (the “Foundation”) is a registered charity committed to the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. The Foundation works to continuously improve the services provided to the community that it serves and from time to time, the external community may have concerns or complaints related to the Foundation’s activities, programs, services, employees, or volunteers. The Foundation believes that the external community has the right to voice these concerns and complaints, and how the Foundation responds directly reflects its reputation and values.

For this purpose, the Foundation has developed and established a Complaints Policy, to provide guidance on the way in which the Foundation receives and resolves such complaints, and to establish that the process for resolving those concerns/complaints shall be timely, fair, and respectful.

## DEFINITIONS

**Complaint:** a direct expression of dissatisfaction to the Foundation office or to a Foundation employee or Board Director from any individual external to the Foundation regarding the services, actions, or inactions of the Foundation as an organization or anyone acting on behalf of the Foundation.

**Executive Leadership Team (ELT):** comprised of the President and CEO, and the Vice Presidents (VPs) of Communication, Administration, and Philanthropy.

**External to the Foundation:** any person who is not a paid employee, consultant, or service provider of the Foundation, and is not a Board Director of the Foundation.

**Most Responsible Leader (MRL):** the leadership who is most appropriate to report to in a situation due to the context of relationships and departmental roles– this could include, but is not limited to, a manager, director, vice president, or a Board Director.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES**

- All individuals who lodge a complaint are valued and will be treated with courtesy.
- This policy applies to individuals external to the Foundation.
- A complaint is an opportunity for organizational improvement.
- Complaints will be investigated in depth and handled in an efficient and effective manner.
- The review of complaints shall be fair, impartial, transparent, and respectful to all those involved.
- Privacy and confidentiality of all parties will be maintained.

## **POLICY**

1. The Foundation shall respond to all complaints or concerns received via email, phone, mail, or in person. All complaints shall be acknowledged within two business days of receipt.
2. The Foundation will make every reasonable effort to fully investigate each complaint as soon as possible. A complaint consists of name, contact information, and appropriate detail of the concern/complaint to demonstrate good faith. Additional information will be requested as required. Procedures are noted in the section that follows.
3. Anonymous comments that are submitted through social media channels are not considered complaints under this policy. Harmful and/or discriminatory comments received through social channels will be addressed under the Social Media policy.
4. All concerns/complaints are treated as confidential and shall remain between the relevant Foundation representative and the complainant.
5. The complaint or concern will be addressed and resolved by the staff member(s) most appropriate to the situation.
6. If the complaint or concern is with respect to an employee that is not the CEO or a VP, it will be directed to the MRL and referred to HR. The President & CEO will be advised of all complaints made with respect to an active or former employee. Specific HR policies and processes may apply.
7. If the correspondence is deemed not to be a complaint, the responsible staff member will follow up with the complainant.

## PROCEDURE

1. Complaints which arrive via [info@ge2foundation.ca](mailto:info@ge2foundation.ca) shall be:
  - a. Handled by the Communications and Marketing team as the group that oversees the general Foundation email. A Communications team member may respond to the complaint if they are able or may direct it to the MRL for response and resolution.
  - b. In some situations, the complaint shall be directed to the VP, Communications and Marketing for discussion with the President & CEO for an organizational response.
2. Complaints which arrive by mail, in person or by telephone shall be:
  - a. Resolved by the person who receives the complaint, if possible.
  - b. Directed to the MRL for resolution should the person who received the complaint be unable to provide resolution.
  - c. Where appropriate in the opinion of that MRL, the complaint shall be directed to the President & CEO for resolution. Any complaint made with respect to a current or former employee, or an active or former volunteer will be brought to the attention of the President & CEO prior to final resolution.
3. Every complaint which arrives at the Foundation shall be logged in Raiser's Edge, coded appropriately in the action field, and sufficient detail in the notation for the substance of the complaint to be understood. It is the responsibility of the person who resolved the complaint to ensure it is appropriately recorded in Raiser's Edge.
4. Raiser's Edge reports will be run annually and will form the basis of the annual Complaints Report to the Board of Directors.
5. The form at Appendix "A" provides a guideline on what information may be relevant when taking a complaint.
6. When receiving a verbal complaint, staff should listen and seek to understand the complaint, and may attempt to resolve it expeditiously. Such complaints should be acknowledged in writing immediately by whoever is tasked with resolution.
7. Where an anonymous comment is received, or a negative comment on social media is brought to the Foundation's attention, it may be appropriate, at the discretion of the VP Communications, to:
  - a. Discuss the comment internally with a view to organizational improvement.
  - b. Attempt to contact the person who made the comment to ascertain whether they want their complaint recorded, and whether it can be resolved.
  - c. Harmful and/or discriminatory comments received through social channels will be addressed under the Social Media policy.
8. When the complaint cannot be or is not resolved despite the MRL's best efforts the matter shall be forwarded to the President & CEO.
9. Where a complaint:
  - a. Includes allegations against a member of ELT, or
  - b. Includes allegations against a Director of the Board, or

- c. Includes allegations of fraud, unethical fundraising behaviour, illegal behaviour, or libelous behaviour against any staff member or volunteer, or
  - d. Is made by any person employed or contracted by Nova Scotia Health, the Complaint shall be reported to the Board Chair within one (1) business day of receipt and the Board Chair may, at his/her sole discretion, direct how the complaint shall be addressed. If the complaint is about the Board Chair, the complaint shall be directed to the Vice Chair.
10. In some circumstances, the person handling the response to a complaint may require or request help in guiding the response. In these cases, the President & CEO will be advised and they may convene a special committee and/or seek external guidance.

## **RELATED FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS**

Complaints Register

Safe Disclosure Policy

Social Media Policy

## **HISTORICAL DATES**

May 2015 – Reviewed.

January 2019 – removal of paper forms, clarification of social media comments, addition of reporting to Board Chair.

February 2023 – addition of note for cases of complaints against employees of the Foundation, re-formatting, addition of Most Responsible Leader in definitions.



**Complaint Intake Worksheet**

Name of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_ or

Anonymous

Date Complaint was filed: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Complaint:

Individual Service     Monetary Handling     Organizational     Other

Additional Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who Received the Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

If the complaint was transferred for resolution, who handled resolution of the complaint?

\_\_\_\_\_

Section below to be completed by handler of the complaint:

Planned Steps taken to resolve the Complaint:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Expected time Frame for Resolution: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
Current Date End Date

Actual time to Resolution: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
Current Date End Date

Description of Final Resolution:

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Raisers Edge Account updated/created (where complainant's name is known)