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Policy references:	Client Access to Policies #CG1101 Reporting of Inappropriate Activity Policy #B0101 Client Privacy Policy #CG0403		
Approved by:	Anka Brozic, Chief Executive Officer		

## Complaints

### Policy

The Complaints Policy is based on the fundamental values of respect for the individual and fairness. Staff, students and volunteers of Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre (the Health Centre) are encouraged to voice their complaints/concerns with regards to the operation of the Health Centre, the responsibilities associated with their position, and/or their co-workers, etc. All complaints/concerns are listened to and every attempt is made to come to a resolution in a mutually satisfying fashion.

Where the complaint is related to a conflict with a colleague, every reasonable effort should be made to resolve problems on an informal, consultative basis directly between the parties involved. The procedures described below provides a guideline for informal resolution, and a formal process for individuals who feel they have been treated unjustly or consider themselves aggrieved by an action or lack of action by the Health Centre.

#### Informal Problem Resolution Process

An attempt to resolve the conflict should first occur between the parties directly involved. When a conflict/problem arises, the parties shall meet as soon as possible to gain a clear understanding of the issues. Individuals must make a genuine effort to see all sides of the conflict. It is important that the necessary boundaries are observed in this process; i.e. confidentiality; respect for others and their opinions; a focus on the problems/issues, not the person; and establishment of and adherence to rules that promote trust, openness and commitment.

1. If the conflict/problem cannot be resolved between the two parties, the intervention is moved progressively to the next level of management. If a resolution is not found the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will determine a resolution process.
2. If an issue is still not resolved through the informal process, it can go forward to the Formal Problem Resolution Process.

If the individual does not feel comfortable meeting with the person they are having difficulty with, the individual will meet with their supervisor to discuss the complaint/concern and develop a plan which includes meeting with the other person involved in the complaint/concern.

When the complaint/concern is with the individual's supervisor, the individual will direct a complaint/concern to the CEO.

When the complaint/concern is regarding the CEO, the individual will direct a complaint/concern to the Board of Directors.

#### Formal Problem Resolution Process

If a conflict/problem is not able to be resolved through an informal process, the individual has 15 working days to initiate the Formal Problem Resolution Procedure.

Concerns should not go on indefinitely nor be held unresolved for an extended period of time. Therefore, a limit of ten (10) working days shall be imposed between steps of this procedure (unless extenuating circumstances intervene). The CEO may consult with appropriate individuals as necessary throughout the process.

1. Details must be recorded in written form and signed by the individual. Problems will not be addressed without the complainant's signature. This is submitted to the supervisor, when applicable, or to the CEO for signature<sup>1</sup>. The supervisor will deliver a signed copy of the grievance to the CEO for resolution. Where no supervisor is in place this transaction is handled directly by the CEO. The CEO will determine an appropriate process depending on the subject matter of the complaint<sup>2</sup>.
2. The CEO will inform the complainant of the process, and provide documentation of the resolution of the complaint. If appropriate, the CEO will convene a meeting of the parties, to seek resolution to the problem. The individual may request another person from within the organization to attend this meeting with him/her.
3. Decisions made by the CEO are considered final and shall conclude the process.
4. If the individual believes that the process or resolution was not appropriately navigated by the CEO, they may make a complaint against the CEO using this process. This should not be used simply for dissatisfaction with the resolution, but rather where the individual believes that the CEO was not fair, transparent or lacked reason in their approach and decision. In the event that the employee is not satisfied with the resolution, he/she may forward the complete documentation to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors for a review. The documentation will be the documents as outlined Steps 1 and 2. The Chairperson shall convene a meeting with the employee and Executive Director (together and /or separately) within 10 working days of receipt of the request. Others involved in the

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<sup>1</sup> Where the complaint is about the CEO, the submission shall be made to the Board of Directors, and the process and resolution will be determined by the Board.

<sup>2</sup> Note that this process is not to be used for issues of harassment or workplace violence. Refer to the Workplace Harassment and Workplace Violence policies for the process for such complaints.

matter may be asked by the Chairperson to provide additional information. The Chairperson also reserve the right to convene a meeting with all parties and the Board. The Chairperson shall use best efforts to make a decision within 15 working days of the original meeting with the employees. All parties shall be advised of the decision in writing.

5. Should all the above steps fail to resolve the problem in a satisfactory manner, an independent mediator may be hired if there is consensus by all parties, including the Board of Directors. The decision of the mediator shall be considered final and it is expected that the decision shall be respected by all parties involved.

All documentation will be kept in a password protected electronic file by the Executive Assistant. In those situations where a problem is submitted and upheld, documentation regarding the conflict/problem and resolution will be placed in the personnel file of the appropriate person/people.