



Autism Advisory and Support Service

"Empowering children with autism
and their families through knowledge & support"

Client/Worker Complaints Policy

Purpose:

All Clients and workers have the right to complain, without fear of retribution, victimisation or vilification. Complainants are not limited to Clients, as defined below. All complaints will be handled in a sensitive and confidential manner, and will be responded to promptly. The following procedure sets out the guidelines for complainants.

1. Definitions:

- Client – includes parents, carers, and advocates of children, and social group participants.
- Complainant – includes Clients, workers, members of the Community, other services or organisations and other interested parties.
- AASS Worker – includes employees, contractors, work experience students and volunteers.

2. Principles:

- Any individual who comes into contact with AASS will be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- All complaints will be treated sensitively, fairly, confidentially and in a timely manner.
- AASS will promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times.
- Complainants have a right to be present at all hearings pertaining to the complaint.
- The complaint procedure is based on the principles of natural justice.

This means:

- Fully informing a person of any allegations that are made against them.
- Giving individuals the opportunity to state their case, provide an explanation or put forward a defence.
- Ensure that proper investigation of the allegations occurs.
- Ensuring that the decision-maker acts fairly and without bias.

3. Procedure for complaint against AASS

1. Individuals are encouraged to raise their complaint with the AASS worker concerned in the first instance. This can be done either informally (by talking to them) or formally (by putting their complaint in writing).
2. If the individual is not satisfied with the outcome, or does not wish to discuss the issue with the AASS worker concerned, they should contact another AASS worker. Ideally, this will be the HR Coordinator. At this stage the informal complaint has become formal.
3. Once a formal complaint is made, a **Complaint Form** is filled in by the complainant.
4. Once the **Complaint Form** has been completed, the complainant will forward to an appropriate AASS worker for investigation (usually the HR Coordinator).
 - 4.1. The initial complaint should not be made to the Board President, as this role may be involved in the decision making part of the appeal process.
 - 4.2. If the complaint involves the HR Coordinator, it will be sent to the CEO.
 - 4.3. If the complaint involves the CEO it will be sent to the President.

- 4.4. If the complaint involves the President it will be forwarded to an appropriate Board member.
5. Once a complaint has been made, the complainant will be contacted within 3 business days, by the person handling the complaint, to acknowledge receipt. The issue can be dealt with either over the telephone, or a meeting can be organised to discuss the nature of the complaint.
6. The HR Coordinator (or person nominated to investigate) will advise the CEO of the complaint.
7. The HR Coordinator (or person nominated to investigate) will investigate the issue if required, ensuring that the principals of natural justice are followed, see **Complaints Policy**.
8. During investigations, all parties are able to have a support person present (to support the person and to ensure investigation is conducted in a fair manner, and to interpret if necessary).
9. If the complaint is found to be of a criminal nature, then the police will be contacted for investigation and action.
10. Once the issue is investigated, an Action Plan will be developed for resolution of the complaint (where applicable) and documented in the **Complaint Form** (final page, *AASS Use Only* section).
11. The action plan will clearly state the action(s) to be taken, the AASS worker(s) responsible for the action, and the date by which action is to be achieved.
12. The HR Coordinator (or person investigating) will advise the CEO of the outcome and resolution and file the **Complaint Form** appropriately.
13. The CEO will include in the Board report and **Complaints Register**.
14. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution proposed, then the complaint will be forwarded to the President of AASS for review.
15. If there is still no resolution achieved, then the complainant has the right to take the complaint to an external party. These include, but are not limited to:

NDIS Related complaints:

NDIS Quality Safeguards Commission

1800 035 544 or complete an online form at www.ndiscommission.gov.au

Complaints about NSW Government Agencies:

NSW Ombudsman (For)

Ph: 02 9286 1000

Toll free (outside Sydney metro): 1800 451 524

www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint

Email: nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au

Other business complaints (product safety or services):

NSW Department of Fair Trading

Fill out online form

<https://www.cas.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/icmspublicweb/forms/GeneralForm.html>

Australian Human Rights Commission

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/complaint-information>

Email: newcomplaints@humanrights.gov.au

GPO Box 5218

Sydney NSW 2001

Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW

Ph: 02 9268 5544

Toll free (outside Sydney metro): 1800 670 812

Email: complaintsadb@agd.nsw.gov.au

16. If the complainant does not wish for the complaint to be dealt with internally, then they should contact one of the above mentioned agencies.

4. Feedback and evaluation

The staff member handling the feedback must, upon completion, request that the complainant fill out and submit a **Complaint Feedback and Evaluation Form**.

For more information please call (02)9601 2844.

Autism Advisory and Support Service * 88 Memorial Ave, Liverpool NSW 2170 *TEL: (02) 9601-2844
FAX: (02) 9601-1339 * Email: info@aass.org.au * Web: www.aass.org.au