



# 2025

## **RIVERSIDE DOG THERAPY PROGRAM COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY (CLIENT)**

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### **DOCUMENT DETAILS**

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<b>Version</b>	<b>Date Amended</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Date for next review (Every 2 years or post incident)</b>
2025	22/01/2025	Hannah Bevan	22/01/2027

## **THE SCOPE OF THIS POLICY**

This policy applies to the concerns clients, parents and/or guardians may have regarding:

- their child's learning, behaviour and welfare within the program
- client health and safety issues before, during and after the program
- Riverside Dog Therapy Program organisation and management.

## **THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLIENTS, PARENTS AND CARERS**

Any client and or their parent or guardian has the right to raise a concern and have it dealt with promptly, fairly and without feeling that there will be any negative repercussions for either themselves, other clients or staff involved. We would hope that most concerns would be heard and resolved informally.

Any client and or parent/guardian has the right to confidentiality except if others need to be informed such as police or DHHS, the reason for this decision and the procedure will be explained to the client and/or parents before any contact is made.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- Confidentiality will be respected and maintained by all parties involved.
- We will strive to resolve all concerns informally first.
- Formal complaints need to be in writing to the appropriate staff member.
- Concerns need to be brought to the centre's attention as soon as possible for best possible outcome.
- An impartial person may be involved, if needed, but only with consent from all parties.
- Interview times need to be made with all parties present as soon as possible when a concern first arises.
- A support person may be present during meetings or interviews for both parties. The support person must maintain confidentiality and follow the guidelines set out within.
- Accurate and appropriate notes will be kept and given to parties directly involved, whilst adhering to the conditions of the Commonwealth Privacy Act.
- The outcome of a formal complaint will be communicated to the parent/guardian in writing.
- Where the matter involves DHHS, or any other non-Government/ Government agency the appropriate people will be notified, and the protocol set in place by these agencies will be adhered to.
- Staff will discontinue any meeting or discussion if a complainant becomes abusive, uses profane or threatening language or attempts to physically intimidate staff, clients or parents/guardians. Anyone doing so will be asked to leave the premises immediately.

## **THE PROCESS**

### **STEP 1**

Issues concerning an individual client should be directed to the staff involved. If a client or their parent/guardian does not feel comfortable talking with that particular staff member then they can talk to another staff member.

### **STEP 2**

An appointment needs to be made to see the staff member involved or an appropriate alternative staff member, through the centre secretary. Hopefully an informal meeting will resolve any concerns. This can include follow up actions.

### **STEP 3**

If an informal discussion is unable to resolve the concern then a written complaint by the client/parent/guardian needs to be presented.

### **STEP 4**

There will be an acknowledgement of formally lodged concerns within two (2) working days.

### **STEP 5**

There will be an attempt to address and resolve formal lodged concerns within seven (7) working days.

### **STEP 6**

Where the concern remains unresolved by the centre after all reasonable efforts have been made by both parties, or the concern is about the centre then the matter should be referred to Consumer Ombudsman by the client, parent/guardian or support worker.

### **STEP 7**

A formal avenue of appeal is available at this stage.

**The Consumer Ombudsman:** 0333 300 1620

**Consumer Affris Victoria:** 1300 55 81 81

**The ACCC:** 1300 302 502

### **Concerns of a Legal Nature**

Where a staff member receives a complaint of a legal nature, involving potential criminal activities, they are obligated to report it to the local Victoria Police.

The processes of this document will not be adhered to if a complaint is handed over to any legal authority.

We are compelled to comply with the relevant instructions contained in any court order, such as Apprehended Violence Orders and Parenting Orders that pertain to a client and/or family within the centre community.