

## Policies and Procedures Manual

### Complaints

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#### **Policy:**

1. U3A Knox Inc. acknowledges and supports the right of members and others to complain when there is; dissatisfaction, a grievance or an injustice is being alleged,
2. U3A Knox Inc. is committed to ensuring complaints are handled respectfully, as transparently and confidentially as the circumstances permit and in a fair, objective and friendly manner.
3. If required a Complainant must be provided with assistance to lodge a complaint and must not be disadvantaged or suffer reprisals for making a complaint.
4. Assistance must be provided to a Complainant with special needs to ensure that person is able to lodge a complaint.
5. Depending on the nature of allegations, complaints may be handled informally or formally.
6. A Complainant must not act aggressively, rudely or in a manner deemed threatening towards any person when submitting a complaint, during enquiries or an investigation or when advised the outcome of a complaint.
7. Complaints made anonymously are to be accepted and assessed, and
8. Members are to be made aware of this policy.

#### **Procedure:**

1. All complaints must be in writing, preferably using the "Complaints" form, or in a form acceptable to U3A Knox Inc., or if available by using the online template. With the exception of anonymous complaints and complaints received online, written complaints must be signed,
2. A complaint received online from a member providing his or her membership identification details will be taken to have been signed by the member,
3. A Complainant attempting to lodge a complaint verbally either in person or by telephone should be provided with a complaints form and if required assistance to

- complete the form, or assisted in lodging the complaint online, verbal complaints should be accepted.
4. On receipt of a complaint it must be referred to the Secretary without delay,
  5. The Secretary must:
    - I. Arrange for the complaint to be recorded and acknowledged as quickly as possible,
    - II. Ascertain from the complainant how the complainant believes the matter should be resolved.
    - III. Assess the complaint to determine priority and an appropriate course of action, to determine the facts and options for resolution
    - IV. Advise the Committee of the existence and nature of the complaint and the course of action proposed, and
    - V. Keep the Complainant informed of progress and on completion of enquiries or investigation provide a detailed response including a remedy where appropriate.
  6. If the complaint is to be formally investigated the Secretary may seek assistance as is required,
  7. All enquiries and investigations should be investigated confidentially and caution exercised if it is necessary to disclose any details which could identify the complainant or others.
  8. A record must be made of all information obtained during enquiries or an investigation,
  9. At the completion of enquiries or an investigation the Secretary must advise the Committee of the outcome and the proposed course of action to finalise the matter,
  10. To ensure natural justice, the Secretary shall not in any report make any comment in a finding adverse to any person unless that person has been made aware of the comments and has been given the opportunity to respond and his or her comments are fairly set out the report.
  11. If a Complainant is alleging that physical violence has occurred or there have been threats of physical violence or other alleged criminal conduct the Complainant must be advised to report the matter to police.
  12. When a Complainant has been advised to report a complaint alleging criminality to police the Secretary must write to the complainant confirming the advice given and inform the complainant the complaint will not be investigated by U3A Knox Inc. while police are investigating or considering the matter. Any further decision to consider the complaint before, during or following the outcome of any action by police may only be made by the Committee.
  13. If a member wishes only to report a matter alleging dissatisfaction, grievance or an injustice, the Secretary will assess the circumstances to determine an appropriate course of action and advise the Committee of the existence of the report and any action proposed.
  14. All complaints or reports that include allegations of personal injury from unsafe facilities or practices must be brought to the attention of the Health and Safety Officer to determine if any remedial action is required.