



Complaints

1.0 PURPOSE

Smiths Falls Community Food Bank (SFCFB) will provide a clear and accessible process for individuals to raise inquiries, concerns, and complaints, ensuring that all issues are addressed fairly, transparently, and in a manner consistent with SFCFB's mission, vision, and values. This approach fosters trust and accountability while protecting individuals from retaliation or reprisal.

2.0 POLICY

It is the policy of SFCFB to enable all clients, volunteers, and employees to raise inquiries, concerns, and complaints without fear of reprisal. SFCFB is committed to addressing complaints in a timely, consistent, and informed manner, ensuring thorough investigations and resolutions. This policy ensures SFCFB's responses are aligned with its mission, vision, and values and promotes a culture of accountability and respect.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Incidents - Any occurrence, condition, or situation arising in the course of work that resulted in or could have resulted in injuries, illnesses, damage to health, or fatalities.
- 3.2 Complaints - Any statements, whether in writing or verbally given, that indicates that a client we serve is unsatisfied with services/product received from SFCFB or finds the service/product received as unacceptable.
- 3.3 Concern - Something that causes worry about a person or SFCFB.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of all Board members, employees, and volunteers to report concerns about all suspected violations of SFCFB's policies or actions that in some way reduce the dignity of clients we support.
- 4.2 The Executive Director and/or volunteer designate will respond to inquiries, concerns and/or complaints appropriately, resolving complaints in a timely, fair respectful and consistent manner.

5.0 RETALIATION AND WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

Any person who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith will be subject to discipline, up to and possibly including termination of employment or volunteer position.



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6.0 UNFOUNDED AND MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS

Any allegations that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

7.0 RISK LEVEL OF COMPLAINTS

7.1 High Risk

- Impacts the reputation of SFCFB, the provincial association (i.e. Link2Feed) or affiliate food bank.
- Impacts the reputation of a donor.
- Impacts the safety of the public, an employee or volunteer at SFCFB.
- High risk safe food handling practices.
- Breach of SFCFB Code of Ethics
- Suggestions of legal/financial wrongdoing.
- A threat to involve the media.

7.2 Medium Risk

- Issues related to our communications (advertising, programs, etc.)
- Quality of service provided by SFCFB and/or food bank staff/volunteers.
- Issues related to how donated funds are invested.

7.3 Low Risk

- General comments/complaints about SFCFB, fundraising, communications etc

8.0 PROCEDURE

8.1 An individual may appeal a referral or refusal using the complaints process and procedures outlined below.

8.2 Internally:

- SFCFB will maintain and monitor a complaint box accessible to employees, volunteers and clients. The Executive Director (ED) and/or designate will monitor this box.
- All complaints must go to the Executive Director (ED).
- If not satisfied with the ED's response, the complaint should be taken to the Chair of the Board of Directors, who will involve other members as appropriate.
- If the complaint originates from the ED, it will be addressed by the Chair or the Vice Chair as appropriate.
- All complaints are to be written, dated, and signed to be investigated. Volunteers and/or staff will use the Incident Report Form for any Complaints.
- All complaints made to the ED will be reported to the Board as part of their monthly reporting obligations.



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- All complaints made to the Chair will be documented and reported to the Board.
- Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.
- The ED/designate or Board Member who received the complaint will notify complainant acknowledging receipt of the complaint.
- The initial response to a complaint will occur as soon as possible and not more than 3 days from receiving the complaint.
- The ED/designate or Board Member may contact the complainant to clarify the complaint.
- Every effort will be made to review and respond to a complain within 10 business days.
- All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken, if warranted by the investigation.
- Actions taken should be recorded and dated and the document should be filed in the ED filing cabinet with the accompanying complaint and/or documents.
- All complaints will be followed up with the complainants, explaining the actions taken and outcomes.
- The ED/designate or Board Member will correct any inaccurate personal information and/or bring forward recommendations for amendment to policies and procedures based on the complaint outcome.
- Debrief of medium and high-risk complaints will be reviewed to identify if there is a required change in SFCFB's policies, processes, programs etc. to reduce the opportunity of a similar situation or complaint.

9.0 Further Dispute Resolution Process

9.1 Via Feed Ontario

- Individuals can verbally communicate the complaint to the Member Relations Co-coordinator or the Executive Director of Feed Ontario.
- SFCFB must be given 10 (ten) business days' notice by Feed Ontario that the matter is being brought forward for discussion.

9.2 Via Food Bank Canada's Customer Experience Hotline

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, an issue can be escalated to Food Bank Canada's Customer Experience Hotline (refer to *"Food Banks Canada Customer Experience Hotline Overview"*). The appointed person at Food Banks Canada will consider whether or not due process was followed and if the complaint warrants further response. This



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will not necessarily change the decision or final outcome. If due process was not followed the outcome may be changed.

10.0 REFERENCES

10.1 Supporting Documents

- Food Banks Canada Customer Experience Hotline Overview
- Incident Report

10.2 Cross Reference Board Policies

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Conflict Resolution