

GRIEVANCE POLICY

OBJECTIVE

This Grievance Policy aims to ensure that any issues or complaints raised by board members, directors, staff, beneficiaries, or other stakeholders connected with Autistic Haus Limited are addressed in a fair, transparent, and timely manner. Autistic Haus Limited is committed to cultivating an environment where individuals can express concerns without fear and have them resolved professionally and confidentially.

COVERAGE

This policy applies to everyone involved with Autistic Haus Limited, including but not limited to:

- Directors and board members
- Volunteers and staff
- Service recipients or beneficiaries
- Other stakeholders linked to Autistic Haus Limited's operations

It addresses grievances concerning:

- The behaviour or actions of board members, directors, volunteers, or staff
- Organisational procedures or decisions
- Incidents of discrimination, harassment, or bullying
- Complaints regarding the quality of service delivery

TERMINOLOGY

- **Grievance:** A complaint or concern raised about the conduct of board members, directors, staff, or the services provided by Autistic Haus Limited.
- **Complainant:** The individual raising the grievance.
- **Respondent:** The individual or party against whom the grievance is directed.
- **Investigator:** The individual assigned to investigate the grievance.
- **Grievance Officer:** The Grievance Officer is the designated person responsible for managing grievances. They ensure the fair and impartial investigation of complaints, guiding the entire process from receipt to resolution. The Grievance Officer may be appointed by the Board of Directors or a governing body within Autistic Haus Limited.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- **Fairness and Objectivity:** Grievances will be treated with impartiality to guarantee that all individuals involved receive fair treatment.
- **Confidentiality:** The confidentiality of all parties will be preserved, and information will be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.
- **Timeliness:** Grievances will be acknowledged and addressed in a prompt manner.
- **Protection from Retaliation:** Individuals who raise grievances in good faith will not be subject to retaliation or adverse consequences.
- **Transparency:** The process for addressing grievances will remain open and clear to ensure all involved parties understand each step.

PROCESS

Informal Resolution

Whenever feasible, individuals are encouraged to resolve issues informally before escalating to a formal grievance. Direct discussions between the complainant and respondent, with or without the help of a board member, can often resolve misunderstandings.

Steps for Informal Resolution:

- The complainant should approach the respondent directly or contact a board member if appropriate.
- A board member may facilitate a meeting to discuss and address the concern.
- If the matter is settled informally, no further action is required unless either party requests a record for future reference.

Formal Grievance Submission

If informal resolution fails or the complainant opts for a formal approach, the grievance should be submitted in writing, detailing the issue, involved parties, relevant dates, and supporting documents.

Steps for Formal Grievance:

- **Submission:** The grievance should be put in writing, detailing the issue, involved parties, relevant dates, and supporting information.
- Grievances must be directed to the designated Grievance Officer or a board member.
- **Acknowledgment:** The Grievance Officer will confirm receipt within five business days.
- **Initial Review:** The Grievance Officer will assess if the issue falls within the policy's remit and decide if an investigation is necessary. An independent investigator may be appointed if required.

- **Investigation:** The Investigator will gather necessary information, interview the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses, and review relevant records or policies.
- **Decision and Resolution:** Based on the investigation, a report will be prepared with findings and suggested actions. The Grievance Officer or appropriate board member will review and make a final decision.
 - If the grievance is validated, corrective actions (such as mediation, training, disciplinary steps, or procedural changes) will be taken.
 - If the grievance is dismissed, reasons will be communicated to the complainant.

External Mediation and Assistance

For complex grievances or unresolved matters, Autistic Haus Limited may involve an external mediator or relevant authorities. Independent mediation may be provided by professional QLD-based organisations such as:

- **Queensland Dispute Resolution Centres (DRCs):** Offering mediation services across the state.
- **Queensland Ombudsman:** Investigates complaints about actions of Queensland public bodies, including non-profits.
- **Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland (ADCQ):** Assists with discrimination, harassment, and vilification complaints.
- **Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC):** Handles human rights complaints and dispute resolution.
- **Legal Aid Queensland:** Provides mediation services and legal advice.

External mediators facilitate discussions to help reach mutually acceptable resolutions. Costs, if applicable, will be borne by Autistic Haus Limited unless otherwise agreed.

External Bodies	Phone	Email Address or Website
Queensland Dispute Resolution Centres	(07) 4037 2600 (07) 4417 8141 (07) 4889 8402 (07) 4887 1760 (07) 4120 6708 (07) 3738 7000	drc.fnq@justice.qld.gov.au drc.nq@justice.qld.gov.au drc.mkywhit@justice.qld.gov.au drc.central@justice.qld.gov.au drc.wb@justice.qld.gov.au drc.sq@justice.qld.gov.au
Queensland Ombudsman	(07) 3005 7000	online complaint form
Queensland Human Rights Commission	1300 130 670	enquiries@qhrc.qld.gov.au
Legal Aid Queensland	1300 651 188	http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au

Right to Appeal

If either party is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may file an appeal. The appeal must be lodged in writing within 10 business days, stating the grounds (e.g., procedural mistakes, new evidence, or perceived unfairness).

Steps for Appeal:

- **Submission:** The appeal should be directed to the Board of Directors or a designated independent panel.
- **Review:** The panel will review the appeal and may conduct further investigation if necessary.
- **Final Decision:** The panel's decision is conclusive, and both parties will be informed in writing.

PRIVACY AND RECORD-KEEPING

All grievances, investigations, and resolutions will be recorded and securely stored by Autistic Haus Limited. Access to grievance records will be limited to those directly involved in resolving the grievance.

POLICY REVIEW

This Grievance Policy and Procedure will undergo an annual review or be revised as needed to stay aligned with current laws and best practices.