



## YMCA of Greater Saint John Complaint Policy

The YMCA of Greater Saint John will take all reasonable steps to ensure that policies and procedures are fully understood, as well as consistently and fairly applied.

This policy is intended to encourage and enable all staff, volunteer, Board members, Voting members, program members, and “outside community members” to raise concerns so that we can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions. It is the responsibility of all Board members, staff, and volunteers to report concerns about violations of our policies or suspected violations of law.

### Philosophy

- We believe that complaints are to be dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible.
- We believe that the review of complaints shall be fair, impartial, and respectful to all parties.
- Complainants always have the option to escalate their complaint to a more senior staff person if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome, or if they are uncomfortable dealing with someone.
- Complainants are provided clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to complaints and are updated with relevant information throughout the process.
- We believe that complaints help us in improving services, policies and procedures.

### Types of Complaints

**Definition:** A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by the YMCA of Greater Saint John as an organization, staff member or volunteer acting on its behalf. Any staff, volunteer, Board member, voting member, program member, and “outside community member” personally affected can complain and their complaint will be reviewed.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Perceived or actual failure to do something agreed upon;
- Failure to observe policy or law;
- Breaches or departure from our ethical standards;
- Error made by a staff member/volunteer; or
- Unfair or discourteous actions/statements by staff member/volunteer.

**Critical vs. Non-Critical Complaints:** A critical complaint is any complaint brought forward by a member or outside community member with reference to any damages against the Y brand, program quality, safety concerns, or staffing concerns in relation to any violation of federal and/or provincial law, as well as any violation of company policy. These complaints must be brought forward to the Vice President of the department which received the complaint, as well as the President and CEO. All complaints which do not fall under those areas mentioned will be deemed as non-critical complaints and must be documented and brought forward to the Supervisor or Vice President of the department.

### Complaint Receipt and Handling

A staff or volunteer complaint may be received verbally, by phone, in person, or any complainant may communicate in writing (by mail, fax, email), or through the dedicated email address (the\_Y\_listens@saintjohny.ca). An employee or volunteer who receives a complaint should first determine the proper person to handle it. This will generally be the person who has the primary relationship with the complainant, or who has the specific knowledge that is needed to resolve the problem. It is the responsibility of the person who receives the complaint to either resolve it, or transfer it to another person who can resolve it. If the complaint is transferred, the recipient must acknowledge to the transferor that he or she has received it and will act on it.

The person who initially receives the complaint should acknowledge to the complainant that the complaint has been received and will be acted on either by him or herself or another employee. If a time frame for action can be determined, it should be included in the acknowledgement. Basic contact information including name, phone number, and email address should immediately be recorded.



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### **Acting in Good Faith**

Anyone filing a written complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any complainants who make allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false, will be subject to appropriate sanctions. In the case of employees, volunteers and members such offenses will be handled on a case-by-case basis as determined by the President and CEO and the Chair of the Board of Directors.

### **Confidentiality**

Reports of violations or suspected violations may be submitted confidentially by the complainant. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

### **Resolving the Complaint**

Every effort should be made to resolve complaints received within 2 weeks. When receiving a verbal complaint, staff should listen and seek to understand the complaint, and may attempt to resolve it immediately. Complaints received in writing should be acknowledged as soon as possible, but in all cases in no more than 2 business days.

Where a complaint cannot be easily resolved, it should be escalated to the relevant Vice President. If the Vice President cannot resolve the complaint, it will be escalated to the President and CEO. If the complaint is about the President and CEO, it will be handled by the Chair of the Board of Directors.

### **Documenting the Complaint**

It is necessary to keep a record of any complaint on the same day it is received. Information about such complaints written or emailed (including a description of the complaint, who handled it, what was done to resolve the complaint, time frame, and a description of the resolution) and submitted to the department Supervisor.

Supervisors are expected to complete monthly reports on all complaints which are received within their work site and are to be saved on the Y: Drive. These complaints will be reviewed by the department Vice President on a monthly basis. If a complaint is deemed with a high severity level (i.e. critical complaints) the Vice President must be notified immediately and take the lead of the complaint brought forward.

This includes all complaints brought forward through the YMCA of Greater Saint John website, under the “Y Listens” webpage. These will be recorded as well as any complaint that is escalated for any reason, and any complaint that is not rectified to the complainant’s satisfaction the same day. The complaint should be broken down by a Complainant category of staff, volunteer, member, or external.

Any and all internal complaints within the YMCA of Greater Saint John, regarding staffing, or any internal matters of the YMCA of Greater Saint John, are to be reported to the Vice President, along with the President and CEO. Employees are to disclose any complaint to their supervisor, whichever they are most comfortable with.

All internal complaints will be documented and recorded in the same manner as those of external complaints by the Executive Assistant to the CEO, as presented by employees and/or supervisors. The department Vice President and CEO will be notified of any and all internal complaints brought forward to the Executive Assistant. A quarterly report will be provided to the senior management team and President and CEO. Annually, the President and CEO shall report to the Board of Directors a summary of the complaints received.

Any and all internal complaints brought forward will be subject to the outlines of the YMCA of Greater Saint John Employee Handbook section 2.6.