

1.8 *Dispute and Conflict Resolution Policy*

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the Board, staff, volunteers and participants of the Aldinga Community Centre to achieve the resolution of disputes and conflict in a positive manner, as quickly, fairly and effectively as possible.

2. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Centre's Board to ensure that this policy is implemented.

It is the responsibility of the Centre's Community Development Officer (CDO) to ensure that the procedures are implemented.

3. Principles

The Centre recognises that conflict does occasionally occur and that, where a dispute and conflict has or may have an impact on the Centre, staff, volunteers (including members of the Board of Management) and participants have the right to be heard. The satisfactory resolution of any dispute or conflict will be the ultimate goal for all parties.

4. Definitions

Complaint - the expression of dissatisfaction about the Centre's activities, services or programs or about the complaints handling process itself (see the Complaints Policy).

Conflict - disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns.

Dispute - the expression of a (real or perceived) wrong or dispute that causes (real or perceived) concern or conflict.

The types of problems that can be addressed by this Policy and Procedure include but are not limited to the following:

- personal or work-related disputes between Board members, staff, volunteers or Centre hirers or users.
- the breakdown of working relationships due to personality conflicts
- disputes arising over disciplinary issues
- misunderstandings about the nature of volunteers roles, for example the boundaries of volunteer or staff roles
- differing treatment (or perceptions of such differing treatment) between people or groups of people (see also the Equal Opportunity Policy)
- unacceptable behaviour such as bullying, harassment or unwanted touching.
- any instance where a person or a group of people have a complaint or dispute with another person or group of people, or the Board of Management or the Centre more broadly.

5. Policy

Disputes and conflict can occur as a result of any behaviour or circumstance which may threaten the ability of the Centre staff or volunteers (including members of the Board of Management) to manage their roles and responsibilities properly, or may threaten any participant's ability to enjoy and benefit from the activities of the Centre.

The Centre is committed to effectively resolving disputes and conflict. This policy and the associated procedures are to be used when a dispute arises and a person believes s/he has been wrongly treated and wants action to be taken to remedy the situation.

Disputes and conflict can have a major impact on the Centre. Without clear procedures to deal quickly with the situation there can be negative consequences such as loss of work satisfaction, poor performance, discontent, a lack of team and/or organisational cohesiveness and a negative perception and dissatisfaction within the community.

This policy acknowledges the legal responsibilities that employers and employees have in relation to:

- Work Health and Safety Act
- Equal Opportunity legislation
- Specific Industrial Awards and Agreements.

The Centre will ensure that disputes are treated seriously and are addressed in a fair and consistent manner that respects the rights of all involved.

The Centre will make every effort to establish an atmosphere of trust and open communication so that disputes are dealt with in a constructive manner.

The resolution process will focus on the re-establishment of good relationships and positive outcomes through conciliation, negotiation and mediation.

All staff, volunteers and participants of the Centre are to be informed of the Policy and Procedures through a range of manuals, handbooks and notices posted in the Centre and on its website.

The Dispute and Conflict Policy and Procedure will be included as part of the Board, staff and volunteer induction process.

All relevant parties will be informed by a person designated to manage disputes for the Centre when the Dispute and Policy Procedure is instigated and must be given the opportunity to present their case, be fully informed about any allegations and decisions made and have the right to be supported by a person of their choice. The dispute will be documented in the confidential Dispute Register.

Resolution of any conflict or dispute is to be achieved as quickly as possible and with the minimum possible number of people involved.

All conflicts or disputes which involve a breach of the Code of the Conduct will be acted on in accordance with the Code.

Any disputes which involve breaches (or suspected breaches) of the law will be promptly referred to the appropriate external authority for adjudication.

Where the dispute may fall under Commonwealth or State legislation (e.g. Work Health and Safety, the Disability Discrimination Act, the Equal Opportunity Act or specific Industrial Awards or Agreements) the parties have the right to seek information and/or follow processes which are set out under these Acts.

Action to address the situation is to be commenced within one week of a formal notice of a conflict or dispute being made. In most cases, it is expected that resolution will be achieved within a further two weeks.

All parties have a right to confidentiality and privacy, subject to the necessary legal responsibilities of the Centre, its staff and its volunteers.

It is expected that every effort will be made to resolve the dispute within a framework of informal but open and honest communication which acknowledges the changing emotions of the people involved.

6. Approvals

	Policy	Procedure
Approving Authority	Board of Management	Board of Management
Approval Date	21 st September 2017	21 st September 2017
Next Review Due	September 2018	September 2018