	YMCA of Central East Ontario	Approval Date: April 26, 2017  Created: April 2017 Approval: April 26, 2017
	Policy: Complaints Policy	Status: APPROVED

**Intent**

The YMCA of Central East Ontario is committed to providing excellent programs and services. We recognize that from time to time there may be concerns or complaints, that our stakeholders have the right to raise such complaints or concerns and that they need avenues to do so. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints received from members of the public about YMCA services and programs are dealt with promptly, consistently and fairly. The YMCA recognizes that when a person has a complaint about the YMCA, the way in which his/her complaint is handled is critical to the person’s ongoing relationship with the organization.

**Scope**

This policy and procedure applies to all complaints received from members of the public about our activities, programs, services, staff or volunteers. This policy serves as a companion to the organization’s Whistleblower Policy. This policy does not apply to employees or volunteers, as there is a Conflict/Problem Resolution Policy available in the Personnel Policies to address concerns or complaints they may raise.

**Guiding Principles**


- It is in the interest of all parties that complaints are dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible.
- Review of complaints is fair, impartial and respectful to all parties
- Complainants are advised of their options to escalate their complaint to a more senior staff person if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome
- Complainants are provided clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to complaints. Updates are provided to complainants during review processes
- Complaints are used to assist in improving services, policies and procedures
- This complaints policy shall be available on our website to aid in transparency in the way complaints are handled. Hard copies will be available upon request.
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually

**Definition**

Complaints are defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with regard to a service/program, an action or a decision taken by the YMCA, or the way in which YMCA employees or volunteers carry out their duties. Complaints typically arise when a person believes:

- The YMCA has failed to do something agreed upon or expected
- A YMCA policy or procedure has not been followed
- A YMCA policy or procedure is unfair or inadequate
- An error has been made
- YMCA employees or volunteers acted in a wrongful way

A complaint is distinct from an inquiry, feedback or a suggestion.

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**Procedure**

**Informal Complaint**

If you have a complaint or concern, you are encouraged to discuss the matter with the staff who is most connected to the concern/situation, either in person, by phone or by email. If your complaint is not resolved or if you are uncomfortable discussing the issue with the relevant person, you can inform the Supervisor, Manager or General Manager for the program or service. This informal process can be used to resolve many inquiries or matters of simple error that can be corrected to your satisfaction. If the matter is not resolved at this stage, you have the opportunity to make a formal complaint.

Every effort will be made to resolve complaints in a timely fashion. When receiving a verbal complaint, staff should listen and seek to understand the complaint, and may attempt to resolve it immediately. If follow-up is required, basic contact information including name, phone number and email address should immediately be recorded.

Where a complaint cannot be easily resolved, it will be escalated to the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team. If this person cannot resolve the complaint, it will be escalated to the President & CEO of YMCA of Central East Ontario. If a complaint is about the President/CEO or decision made by the President and CEO regarding membership suspension/expulsion, you may submit a written appeal to the Board of Directors. If the complaint is about the President & CEO, it will be handled by the Chair of the Board.

**Formal Complaint**


If you have been unable to resolve your concern through the informal process described above, a formal complaint may be made in writing to:

*Complaints  
c/o Vice President of Association Services  
YMCA of Central East Ontario  
123 Aylmer St. S., Peterborough, ON K9J 3H8*

Please provide your contact information, as the YMCA will not respond to anonymous complaints. If you are unable to register the complaint in this manner due to a disability, you may contact the YMCA to request accommodation, which will be provided appropriate to your needs and circumstances.

**Process**

Once you have registered a complaint, the YMCA is committed to handling the complaint promptly, consistently and fairly. You will be treated with respect and kept informed of the status of the complaint. The YMCA will respond to your complaint within 2 business days of receiving the complaint to confirm the complaint has been received, and indicate expectations for how long the investigation will take if it can be reasonably assessed at that point.

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The YMCA aims to resolve all complaints within 10 business days of receiving them. If this timeline cannot be met, you will be informed of the reasons and given a revised timeframe. Upon completion of the investigation, you will be provided with clear reasons for the decisions relating to the complaint.

### **Appeals**

If you are not satisfied with the findings or the corrective action, you may submit a written appeal to the President/CEO or Designate within 10 business days of the receipt of the communication. The decision made at this level is considered final.

### **Confidentiality/No Retaliation**

The YMCA will make every effort to ensure confidentiality for the person reporting a complaint or concern. In some programs that receive funding from partner agencies complaints may need to be shared with those agencies. No person who in good faith under this policy submits a concern/complaint shall suffer harassment or retaliation.

### **Records**

Serious complaints and their resolutions will be recorded as serious occurrences and reviewed by the Vice President of Association Services. A complaint is defined as serious if it is one of the following:

- Any complaint about the operational, physical or safety standards of the service that is considered serious by the General Manager.
- Any complaint made by or about a child, or any other serious occurrence involving a child that is considered by the General Manager to be of a serious nature.

Information recorded includes a description of the complaint, who handled it, timeframe and a description of the resolution. A summary of formal complaints received including number and type will be reported to the YMCA's Board of Directors by the President & CEO at least annually.