

<b>West Neighbourhood House</b>	
Policy Title:	<b>Complaints Policy</b>
Approved by:	West Neighbourhood House Board of Directors
Approval date:	September 2009
Revision dates:	October 2011 / March 2014 / April 2018 /            /

*The Complaints Policy will be posted at all West Neighbourhood House locations. Additional copies are available upon request.*

### **Policy Statement**

West Neighbourhood House is committed to providing high quality programs and services to a diverse community. We respect and value staff, students and volunteers working in the organization and together we strive to continuously improve our work. We welcome constructive feedback.

Accordingly, West Neighbourhood House has a Complaints Policy to ensure an accessible and fair process to hear and respond to complaints.

### **Applicability**

- General public
- Program Participants, Clients, Members
- Volunteers
- Students
- Staff

### **General Principles**

- All complaints shall be dealt with promptly, thoroughly and in an impartial and fair manner.
- Complaints should be filed as soon as possible following the date of the incident that is the subject matter of the complaint.
- West Neighbourhood House has the discretion not to investigate any complaint that is submitted one year following the date of the incident that is the subject of the complaint.
- All staff, students and volunteers are expected to cooperate fully in an investigation.
- West Neighbourhood House will advise an individual when a complaint has been made against them, but will also respect the confidentiality concerns of the complainant (as set out below).
- There shall be no retaliation of any kind whatsoever against any individual for making a complaint in good faith, providing information in connection with a complaint or investigation, or as a result of the resolution of a complaint. Any staff member who engages in retaliatory action may be subject to discipline.

- Any staff member or volunteer who is found to have lodged a complaint under this policy in a bad faith or vexatious manner may be subject to discipline or released from their volunteer obligations.
- Nothing in this policy prevents or discourages an individual from seeking legal recourse through the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, the Ministry of Labour or any other legal avenue that may be available.

## **Procedures**

1. Anyone who wants to make a complaint (the “Complainant”) will need to fill out a Complaint Form (attached). The Complaint Form can be submitted to a Unit Director or Manager or into the feedback boxes at each location or via email to [info@westnh.org](mailto:info@westnh.org)
2. The Unit Director or Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three (3) business days of the complaint being brought to their attention and will inform the Executive Director.
3. The Unit Director or Manager will investigate the complaint expeditiously and will make every effort to complete their investigation and respond to the Complainant within ten (10) business days from the date of acknowledgment. The Unit Director or Manager will determine the best time to inform the individual that a complaint has been made against them.
4. The Unit Director or Manager will arrange to meet with the Complainant to inform them of the response to the complaint. If an in-person meeting is not possible, the response will be communicated to the Complainant in an alternate manner.
5. If the Complainant is satisfied with the response from the Unit Director or Manager the complaint will be closed and all related paperwork forwarded to the Executive Director.
6. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the response from the Unit Director or Manager they may request reconsideration by the Executive Director. A reconsideration request can be made verbally or in writing to the Unit Director or Manager and must be submitted within five (5) business days of the Complainant being advised of the response to the complaint.
7. The Executive Director will acknowledge receipt of the reconsideration request within three (3) business days of it being brought to their attention.
8. The Executive Director will consider the original complaint, the response, the reconsideration request and will review the steps taken by the Unit Director or Manager in order to determine if further investigation or action is appropriate.
9. The Executive Director will respond to the reconsideration request expeditiously and will make best efforts to render a decision within ten (10) business days of receiving the reconsideration request.
10. If the Complainant remains dissatisfied, they may be advised of the option of appealing in writing to the Board of Directors.

**Note:** The Unit Director, Manager and Executive Director have the authority to assign any of the functions outlined above to a designate of their choosing.  
The timelines indicated above may be extended in extenuating circumstances.

## **Appeals**

1. Older Adult Centre Service Applicants and clients (hereafter referred to as “individuals”) have the right to appeal a West Neighbourhood House decision through the West Neighbourhood House’s internal Appeal Process and also through an appeal to the Health Service Appeal and Review Board as set out in the *Home Care and Community Services Act, 1994* s. 39 and 40 Complaints and Appeals.
2. Individuals are informed of how to contact the Health Services Appeal and Review Board.
3. The following West Neighbourhood House decisions can be appealed to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board:
  - A decision by West Neighbourhood House that the person is not eligible to receive a particular community service.
  - A decision by West Neighbourhood House to exclude a particular community service from the person’s plan of service.
  - A decision by West Neighbourhood House respecting the amount of any particular community service to be included in the person’s plan of service.
  - A decision by West Neighbourhood House to terminate the provision of a community service to the person.
4. The following cannot be appealed to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board:
  - The quality of a community service provided to the person or arranged for the person by West Neighbourhood House.
  - An alleged violation by West Neighbourhood House of any of the person's rights set out in the *Home Care and Community Services Act*, subsection 3 (1). 1994, c. 26, s. 39 (1).
5. Individuals may appeal a decision to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board once it has been rendered by West Neighbourhood House or if a decision has not been rendered within 60 days.

## **Complaints About Management or the Board of Directors**

- If the complaint is about a Manager or Unit Director the complaint should be submitted directly to the Executive Director.
- If the complaint is about the Executive Director or about a member of the Board of Directors it should be submitted to the Board President who will respond to the complaint fairly, expeditiously and adhering as closely as possible to the procedures outlined above.
- If the complaint is about the Board President then the Vice President will respond to the complaint adhering as closely as possible to the procedures outlined above.
- The Board President will ensure that the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors is informed of any complaints about the Executive Director.

## **Confidentiality**

- While absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, best efforts will be made to protect

the privacy of the Complainant to the extent reasonably practicable. Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because an effective investigation requires revealing certain information to the alleged wrongdoer and potential witnesses. Accordingly, information contained in the complaint and related documentation will be shared with individuals on a “need to know” basis. Records relating to complaints will be kept confidential on the same basis.

- In some circumstances, it may be necessary to share information about the complaint with other organizations or other judicial/quasi-judicial contexts (e.g. police, professional regulatory bodies, Health Services Appeal and Review Board, Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, Child Protection Services, grievance and arbitration procedure etc.). Information will also be shared where disclosure is required by law.
- On a case by case basis, the Executive Director and/or Board President will retain the discretion to inform other stakeholders, e.g. specific funders, about a complaint.

### **Final Documentation**

- All complaints will be documented in a Complaint Form.
- The Unit Director or Manager (or designate) will document the investigation and their response.
- Complaint Forms and all related documentation will be sent to the Executive Director to maintain in a central file. Information relating to complaints may be used to examine patterns of complaints.
- Annually, the Executive Director (or delegate) will prepare an anonymized summary of all complaints received for the Board of Directors.



NEIGHBOURHOOD  
HOUSE

Formerly St. Christopher House

## **Complaint Form**

*Anyone who requires assistance in filling out this complaint form may contact the Manager of Human Resources at (416) 532-4828 x223.*

### **Complainant Contact Information:**

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** To the extent possible your personal contact information will be kept confidential as outlined below. Please let us know your preferred method of contact and whether you have any concerns receiving calls or emails from us.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Basic Complaint Information:**

**Site:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of incident:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time of incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Individual(s) Who the Complaint Relates To (where applicable):**

\_\_\_\_\_



3. List and attach copies of any supporting documents that are relevant to your complaint.

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**Privacy:**

I have reviewed the Complaints Policy and understand that:

1. The complaint that I have submitted and all the documents I have provided will be shared within the organization and with the individual who is the subject of the complaint on a “need to know” basis to the extent required in order to properly investigate and respond to the complaint and to address similar concerns arising in the future.
2. West Neighbourhood House may have to disclose this complaint and related documents with other organizations or other judicial/quasi-judicial contexts, as outlined more fully in the Complaints Policy. This information will also be shared where disclosure is required by law.
3. General information contained in this complaint may be shared with other stakeholders, e.g. specific funders, on a case by case basis. Personal information will not be disclosed unless absolutely necessary and you will be notified.
4. A copy of this complaint and related documentation will be retained by the Executive Director in a central file after the investigation is completed.

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Signature

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Date