

Complaints Policy

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Policy Contact:	HR Director
Next Review Date:	07/2024
Applies To:	Destiny Rescue

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Destiny Rescue is committed to listening to its stakeholders. As such Destiny Rescue implements a complaint handling process internally and with its partners.
- 1.2. Destiny Rescue will ensure the complaints handling process is safe, confidential, fair, and responsive.
- 1.3. Destiny Rescue values stakeholders, and as such welcomes feedback and input from them, including complaints.

2. Scope

- 2.1. All Destiny Rescue stakeholders, including volunteers, contractors and partners.

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1. Destiny Rescue's stakeholders may make complaints via the following avenues:
 - 3.1.1. Your direct supervisor or HR if you are an employee or volunteer
 - 3.1.2. Written complaints form
 - 3.1.3. A complaint form available on the website
- 3.2. Where a complaint relates to staff misconduct, the [Misconduct Investigation Process](#) must be followed (see appendix E)
- 3.3. In the event that a staff member is concerned about their anonymity, they should refer to the Whistleblower Policy for guidance on reporting anonymously. Destiny Rescue is committed to protecting the anonymity of complainants, de-identifying their information when requested or appropriate.
- 3.4. Destiny Rescue expects that each of its partners has an approved complaints process that aligns with the underpinning principles of this policy. It must meet the needs of the partner's stakeholders, be child friendly and be available in formats and languages that they can access.
- 3.5. Destiny Rescue staff are encouraged to put more serious complaints in writing as well as meet with HR (or the CEO if HR may be part of the complaint) if they deem it necessary.

- 3.5.1. Where a complaint is regarding suspected or alleged child abuse, the complainant must contact the CEO and immediately refer to the complaints handling process in the Child Protection Policy (see appendix D)
- 3.5.2. Where a complaint is regarding suspected sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment the complainant must contact the CEO immediately and refer to the complaints handling process in the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy (see appendix D)
- 3.6. This policy will be made available on Destiny Rescue's website.

4. Underpinning Principles

- 4.1. The policy will be made available to all stakeholders and Destiny Rescue can make it available in formats that are accessible by all stakeholders.
 - 4.1.1. Partners must make their complaints policies available in formats which are accessible to their stakeholders.
- 4.2. Our complaints handling process will ensure a safe, fair and responsive way to make complaints or raise concerns.
- 4.3. Destiny Rescue will ensure complainants are protected.
- 4.4. Our complaints handling process will prioritise the protection of children.

5. Working with Partners

- 5.1. Destiny Rescue works with various partners around the world, in varied cultural settings. We acknowledge that the approach taken in each country may differ from our approach here in this policy.
- 5.2. Destiny Rescue, through its Project Development Team, will work with partners to ensure their complaints policies are tailored to meet their needs and are accessible to their stakeholders while still meeting the required standard as prescribed in this policy.

6. Procedure

- 6.1. Destiny Rescue will include the complaints handling process as part of induction material for all new partners, staff and volunteers.
- 6.2. It is mandatory that all Destiny Rescue stakeholders report wrongdoing following this process.
 - 6.2.1. Destiny Rescue staff are expected and obligated to report all suspected or alleged child abuse and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) concerns. Failure to report may result in disciplinary measures. Destiny Rescue has a zero tolerance policy towards child abuse and SEAH.
- 6.3. Complaints will be handled in a timely manner:
 - 6.3.1. Complainants will be issued an acknowledgement of the complaint (via email where possible) within three business days of the complaint being made.
 - 6.3.2. An initial review of the complaint must be conducted within seven business days of the initial acknowledgement. With expected timelines provided to the complainant at this time.
 - 6.3.3. The investigation process must begin within 10 business days of the start of the review process.

- 6.3.3.1. If the complaint is about staff misconduct then the [Misconduct Investigation Process](#) must be followed (see appendix E).
- 6.3.4. An appeal regarding the outcome of the investigation may be made up to 30 days after the complainant has been notified of the outcome.
- 6.4. Records must be kept of all complaints amounting to misconduct. The records may be deidentified at the request of the complainant or survivor as required.
- 6.5. Serious complaints (e.g. sexual misconduct, abuse, fraud) should be reported to the board of Destiny Rescue International Inc., with safeguarding being a standing agenda item.
- 6.6. Where a complaint may fall outside the scope of this policy, Destiny Rescue will take reasonable steps to refer the complainant to the appropriate place to make that complaint.

7. Managing Complaints

- 7.1. Complaints will be subject to an initial review to thoroughly assess their validity and map a course of action. Staff receiving complaints (Complaints Officers, supervisors, HR and the CEO) are expected to take all reasonable steps to assess the complaint in order to make a well-informed recommendation on a required course of action. The following factors must be taken into account:
 - 7.1.1. The safety of the complainant
 - 7.1.2. The severity of the complaint
 - 7.1.3. The implications on health and safety of all parties, including mental health
 - 7.1.4. Financial implications for all parties involved
 - 7.1.5. The complexity of the complaint
 - 7.1.6. Impact on the individual, the public and the organisation
 - 7.1.7. Potential to escalate further
 - 7.1.8. Reputational risk for Destiny Rescue
 - 7.1.9. The need for immediate or expedite action
 - 7.1.10. Were there children involved in the complaint
 - 7.1.11. Was the complaint regarding SEAH
- 7.2. The review process should be used to separate out complaints that are not warranted, vexatious or complaints that are not about Destiny Rescue and should be referred to another entity.
- 7.3. Where reasonable, complainants should be updated when a final decision or action is decided upon.
- 7.4. Serious and notifiable complaints such as assault, sexual assault, theft, damage to property, must be immediately escalated to your supervisor and CEO, investigation of these complaints must follow the [Misconduct Investigation Process](#) must be followed (see appendix E)
- 7.5. When reviewing complaints, always be aware of when a complainant, victim or survivor may need protection or assistance, employing a survivor-centred approach throughout the complaints handling process will ensure all parties are safe and protected.

8. Investigation Process and Determination

- 8.1. Where the initial review results in a recommendation for an investigation the below processes must be followed.
- 8.2. The investigation process should be undertaken by a committee determined by the DRI board.
- 8.3. The committee should ensure that a clear audit trail is maintained during their investigation.
- 8.4. Complaints should be investigated thoroughly to assess their validity, The committee is expected to take all reasonable steps to ascertain if a complaint is valid. Steps to be taken include but are not limited to:
 - 8.4.1. Speaking with all involved parties.
 - 8.4.2. Speaking with the relevant parties supervisors.
 - 8.4.3. Reviewing and past records or documents deemed relevant.
 - 8.4.4. Consulting with other relevant leadership.
- 8.5. Where the complainant has requested anonymity the complaint process should be conducted in a way that protects the complainant.
- 8.6. Upon completion of the investigation a report should be filed with HR outlining:
 - 8.6.1. The complaint.
 - 8.6.2. All investigative steps were taken.
 - 8.6.3. Whether or not the complaint was authentic.
 - 8.6.4. Actions steps taken or suggested, including remedial action as necessary.
 - 8.6.5. Suggested steps to prevent the issue from recurring.
- 8.7. The above report should only be made available where needed and approved by the DRI board and should be de-identified if requested.
- 8.8. Complaints should be filed in a complaints register and reviewed on an annual basis to determine if there are recurring issues or concerns.
 - 8.8.1. Major complaints and recurring issues should be brought to the DRI board for review.

9. Other Guiding Principles

- 9.1. Destiny Rescue is committed to the protection of survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation and ensures a survivor centred approach. Survivors will have their rights, needs and wishes and empowerment prioritised. Destiny Rescue will ensure the anonymity of the survivor when requested.
- 9.2. Where a survivor is found to have been abused or exploited by a staff member, volunteer or partner, based on the survivor's wishes, Destiny Rescue will assess what remedial action should be provided to the survivor. These may include:
 - 9.2.1. Medical care
 - 9.2.2. Legal assistance
 - 9.2.3. Financial assistance
 - 9.2.4. Or related referrals as required
- 9.3. Where a complaint falls outside of Destiny Rescue's jurisdiction Destiny Rescue will take reasonable steps to refer the complaint to the relevant entity, if there is any confusion regarding whether or not a complaint should be referred please notify the Complaints Officer.

10. Appendix A - Project Nation Contacts

- 10.1. Please note, the work we do in our partner projects is often sensitive and the relationships we have with governments can be delicate, if you have a concern or complaint about a partner or international project connected to Destiny Rescue please reach out to our International HR director who can help you to work through our complaints process.
 - 10.1.1. Chris Gribble - chris.gribble@destinyrescue.org

11. Appendix B - Australian Council For International Development (ACFID) Complaints

- 11.1. Should a complainant feel their complaint was not addressed appropriately they may make a further complaint to ACFID.
- 11.2. If a complainant feels Destiny Rescue has breached ACFID's code of conduct they may also raise their complaint with ACFID.
- 11.3. Complaints to ACFID can be made to the following:
 - 11.3.1. Email to code@acfid.asn.au
 - 11.3.2. Or posted to:

Chair, ACFID Code of Conduct Committee
Care Of ACFID
Private Bag 3
Deakin ACT 2600

12. Appendix C - Contacts

- 12.1. Complaints Officer: chris.gribble@destinyrescue.org
- 12.2. CEO: paul.mergard@destinyrescue.org
- 12.3. HR: chris.gribble@destinyrescue.org

13. Appendix D - Related Policies

- 13.1. [Child Protection Policy](#)
- 13.2. [Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy](#)
- 13.3. [Whistleblower Policy](#)

14. Appendix E

- 14.1. [Misconduct Investigation Process](#)

15. Policy Review

- 15.1. This document may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and other requirements, and to ensure that business needs are met. You will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made.
- 15.2. At minimum, this policy will be reviewed annually.

16. Further Assistance

- 16.1. For further assistance or clarification on this policy, please contact HR at policies@destinyrescue.org.

Version:	Author:	Revision Date:	Description of Change:	Approved by:
1.0	Brent Kirwan	24/11/2020	Updated for ACFID Compliance and PSEAH Requirements	Fiona Berkin
2.0	Various	23/06/22	Policy review	Tony Kirwan