

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FOR ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD MISTREATMENT OR ABUSE

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Complaint Procedure for Allegations of Child Mistreatment or Abuse is to describe the procedure and protocols at Macquarie Conservatorium of Music Inc (Macquarie Conservatorium) that are implemented to respond quickly and effectively to disclosures of abuse (Irenyi, Bromfield, Beyer, & Higgins, 2006).
- 1.2 If you work for Macquarie Conservatorium (the Organisation) and a child or young person in the care of the Organisation discloses abuse that has been perpetrated by someone associated with that organisation, it is imperative to follow Macquarie Conservatorium’s protocols as well as make a report to the relevant statutory child protection department in your state.

2. Commencement of the Procedure

- 2.2 This Procedure will commence from 2/2/2015. It replaces all other Macquarie Conservatorium Complaint Procedure for Allegations of Child Mistreatment or Abuse (whether written or not).

3. Application of procedure

- 1.1. This Procedure applies to employees, agents and contractors (including temporary contractors) of Macquarie Conservatorium, collectively referred to in this Policy as ‘workplace participants’.
- 1.2. This Procedure is not limited to the workplace or work hours. This Procedure extends to all functions and places that are work related. For example, Eisteddfods, workplace performances, at schools and other functions.
- 1.3. This Procedure does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment. Nor does it form part of any other workplace participant’s contract for service.

3. Manager’s Responsibility

- 3.1 All reports of Allegations of Child Mistreatment or Abuse must be reported to the Manager / Director in the first instance.
- 3.2 The Manager / Director must ensure that the Procedure and protocols are followed.

CHILD PROTECTION STEPS AND PROCEDURES

1. Clarify basic details of the allegation

Listen and be supportive

Reassure the child that what has occurred is not their fault

- Be honest and explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening

- Avoid suggestive or leading questions – ask the child “What happened?” and “Then what happened?”

If another person makes the complaint ask the person to

- Explain their reasons for suspecting abuse (observation, injury or other)
- Provide the names and contact details of all people involved, including witnesses

2. Report allegations of a serious or criminal nature

Report any incident of a serious or a criminal nature to the police or child protection authority immediately.

If the child’s parent/s are suspected of committing the abuse, report the allegation to the relevant government agency

3. Protect the child and make sure the alleged offender is not victimised

Take action to ensure the child’s / children’s safety (eg move the alleged offender to a non-child related position, supervise the alleged offender or remove / suspend them from their duties while the matter is being investigated.

Make sure the individual accused of the offense is not victimised. If they are stood down make it clear that this does not mean the person is guilty and that a proper investigation will be undertaken before decisions are made.

4. Follow the child protection authority or police requirements

Further clarify and investigate allegation (if requested to do so). Provide information and assist in investigations as appropriate.

- The police or child protection agency may undertake an investigation. They may also request that the organisation undertake their own investigation (this should be done by an independent person with appropriate investigative expertise)
- Macquarie Conservatorium should provide information and assist with the investigation as appropriate
- Individuals or organisations should not try to investigate the incident themselves.

5. Manage the situation

You must manage the situation when an investigation is being conducted (internally or externally)

- Do not talk to the alleged victim, the family or alleged perpetrator about the complaint while the investigation is under way. If you are asked for information, your response should be confined to the complaint process and timeline.
- Take action to enquire the ongoing safety of customers, particularly children, until the authorities have completed the investigation. This may involve providing extra supervision or removal of a person from their position pending the outcome of the investigation. If the person is in a paid position, seek advice from your lawyer.
- Restrict what customers and their families are told. If there are enquiries, they should be handled by one person such as the Chairperson of the management board. Discussion should focus on the process rather than the people.

- If an alleged perpetrator has been removed from their position, the most you should tell others is that he/she is unable to attend for a short time.

6. Implement disciplinary action as required

Implement any disciplinary action as recommended by the police, child protection authority or state conservatorium or relevant education department. This action should be immediate.

Check with the relevant state government authority to see if you need to forward a report (eg The NSW Commission for Children and Young People requires notification of relevant employment proceedings)

7. Review and Evaluate

Once the issue has been resolved, Macquarie Conservatorium will review and evaluate our organisation's processes and procedures. Could the matter have been handled more sensitively? Efficiently? Quickly?

Associated Documents

- Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy
- Working with Children Check Policy

Reviewed and approved by Macquarie Conservatorium Board: 6 March 2018