



YSA MELBOURNE COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Young Scientists of Australia Melbourne Chapter (YSA Melbourne) aims to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all members of the community free from harassment and discrimination of all forms. In order to maintain such an environment, there are checks and measures in place that ensure that there are appropriate avenues through which a member of the organisation can provide feedback and have their voice heard by the executive committee on matters relating to YSA Melbourne. This feedback process can take one (or more) of several forms. This provides a mechanism through which YSA Melbourne can be improved collectively by both its members and the executive committee.

The YSA Melbourne Complaint Handling Policy aims to formalise this process to ensure that complaints are handled in a systemised and consistent manner. This policy is based on practice used to deal with complaints since 2013. The treatment of Formal and Informal Complaints is not laid out specifically by the constitution but rather by this policy document.

YSA Melbourne is not the only avenue available to YSA members to resolve issues; YSA members may also seek resolution independent of or concurrent with YSA Complaint Handling procedures.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the YSA Melbourne Complaint Handling Policy is to describe the classification, submission process, trigger and escalation options for three types of complaints: Informal Complaints, Formal Complaints, and Grievance Proceedings.

Complaints may be lodged about any aspect of YSA Melbourne that a member wants acknowledged or acted upon by the executive committee, or a subset thereof. These aspects may include, but are not limited to: YSA plans, activities, and the conduct of members.

This document should be read in conjunction with the YSA Melbourne Constitution which provides an explanation of how Grievance Proceedings are to be handled, and the YSA National Code of Conduct which sets out the rules and bylaws of the association.

The Code of Conduct is signed and agreed to by all members of the association upon sign up. It stipulates that members in breach of this Code may be subject to disciplinary action by the member's home chapter. Both the YSA Melbourne Constitution and the YSA National Code of Conduct are available on the YSA Melbourne Policies & Documents webpage: <http://ysa.org.au/melbourne/about-us/policies-documents/>



1.2. Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply:

- Executive Committee – the YSA Melbourne executive committee
- Senior Leadership - the senior executive positions of the Executive Committee. This may include all or some of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.
- YSA Event Coordinators – anyone who holds a leadership or managerial position for a particular YSA Melbourne event, activity, or initiative

1.3. Limitations & Exclusions

The YSA Melbourne Complaint Handling Policy is not the appropriate avenue for the immediate resolution of issues that pose an immediate threat to health and safety or require specialist skills or training.

In the event of emergencies or situations that require specialist training, YSA Melbourne members are to remove themselves from danger, remove others if safe to do so, and notify the appropriate authorities. Resolving major threats to health and safety is beyond the expected duties of YSA Melbourne members. The exception is if members are formally accredited and have been assigned to these duties (e.g. First Aid officer).

Lodging a complaint may be the follow up response after the situation has been resolved. The purpose of a complaint would be to provide feedback and prevent future occurrences.

Here are examples of situations, of which the immediate resolution is beyond the expected duties of YSA Melbourne members. Immediate and follow up responses are outlined.

Incident	Immediate Response	Follow Up Response
<i>Fire breaks out in laboratory during demonstration at university</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. If safe to do so, direct participants away from fire, else evacuate self. Raise the fire alarm when safe.2. Following this:<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. If university lab demonstrators or staff are present:<ol style="list-style-type: none">I. Alert university staff.II. Follow university lab safety incident procedures.B. Or if lab demonstrators are not present:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Alert YSA staff leader (or leadership team) of safety breach.2. An informal or formal complaint is not required to ensure that adequate follow up occurs.3. If a YSA member contributed to the safety breach (e.g.: by neglecting a safety procedure), and the follow up that occurred was not satisfactory, lodge a complaint to the YSA staff leader or an executive committee member.



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Alert program director. II. If ambulance or fire truck is required, call 000 and notify campus security. 	
<p><i>YSA staff member becomes aggressive while at the accommodation of a residential program and verbally threatens the safety of another person.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only if safe and willing to do so, attempt to prevent the situation from further escalating. 2. Only if able and safe to do so, alert YSA staff leader. 3. Call 000 and report incident to police. 4. Follow the advice of police phone operator until police staff arrive. 5. Follow instructions of police staff until immediate threat is dealt with. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alert YSA staff leader (or leadership team) of safety breach. 2. Lodge complaint to YSA staff leader (or leadership team).
<p><i>Social event attendee has an anaphylaxis response after eating lunch.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call 000 and report incident to ambulance phone operator. 2. Notify the assigned First Aid Officer if present. 3. Follow the advice of ambulance phone operator, where safe and able to do so, until paramedic staff arrive. 4. Follow instructions of paramedic staff until the ambulance leaves. 5. Attempt to contact family of attendee and advise of incident. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alert social coordinator of anaphylaxis incident. 2. If necessary, lodge complaint regarding the improper handling of dietary requirements to an executive committee member.
<p><i>Persons A and B are both YSA Melbourne members over the age of 18 and attend monthly socials. At several socials, Person A performs non-consensual acts towards Person B including unwelcomed hugs and tickling, as well as making sexual innuendos.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If willing to disclose, Person B approaches the Social Coordinator or other YSA member who they are comfortable with. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The Social Coordinator advises Person B of the support and resources available to them via the Sexual Harassment section of this Complaint Handling Policy, as well as the support avenues and complaint options available to them under this document. B. The Social Coordinator, and any present Executive Committee members, speak to Person A to identify unacceptable behaviours and resolve immediate threat. See follow up response for further resolution by YSA Melbourne. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If made aware of this issue: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Following the event, the Social Coordinator again communicates to Person B their support avenues and complaint options under this document. B. The Social Coordinator creates a personal record of the incident including, time, place, event and the involved parties. This record is kept for 7 years, in confidence, unless Person B lodges a complaint to the Executive Committee, in which case it may be considered in the investigation. C. If willing, Person B lodges complaint to Executive



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Person B then contacts the Victorian Police, CASA and/or the Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission for immediate specialist support and protection. If unsure whether the incident constituted sexual harassment, Person B would contact either service for clarification and advice. 3. Person B creates a personal record of the incident including, time, place, event and the involved parties. 	<p>Committee or Committee member.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> D. Only if given permission by Person B, the Social Coordinator lodges a complaint to the Executive Committee or Committee member on behalf of Person B. E. If not given permission by Person B to report, the Social Coordinator still reports to the Executive Committee that a sexual harassment incident has occurred, including what actions and advice has been given to the victim. However this report does not include details that allow for the identification of the victim, and is not intended to trigger an investigation. The Executive Committee then reviews existing procedures. <p>2. Person B may lodge a complaint to Executive Committee or Committee member, without any prior notification.</p>
<p><i>Persons A and B are both over the age of 18, and are both YSA staff members at a science outreach program for year 9-10 students. At the student disco, Person A notices Person B in a quiet part of the venue kissing Person C, who is a 15 year old program participant.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Person A immediately reports the incident to the YSA Staff Manager, or other YSA member who they are comfortable with. 2. The YSA staff leader calls 000 and reports the incident to the police. 3. If able and willing to do so, the YSA staff leader, with another YSA staff member, then ceases the two people from kissing, removes Person B from the venue, and immediately removes Person B from their duties for the entire program. 4. The YSA staff leader alerts the program director of the incident. 5. The YSA staff leader ensures that the parent of Person C is informed of the incident and made aware of this Complaints Handling Policy as soon as practicable, with consultation with the program director. 6. The YSA staff leader ensures the immediate wellbeing of Person C until the program Director, legal guardian or Police staff arrives. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Person A and/or the YSA staff leader lodges a Formal Complaint to the Executive Committee or Committee member, for feedback, preventative and disciplinary purposes. 2. Upon receiving the complaint, the Executive Committee informs Person B of the accusation of child abuse (in the notification of complaint), and issues a sanction prohibiting Person B from engaging in any further YSA Melbourne events/activities involving children under the age of 18, until the incident has been reported to the Police or Department of Human Services, it has been investigated, and a decision has been made by either of these entities, or the court or jury. 3. The Senior Leadership investigates as per the Formal Complaints handling procedure, and when findings are delivered, the committee votes to take further sanctions and Grievance



	7. Person A and the YSA staff leader keep their own personal records about the incident.	Proceedings as deemed necessary.
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1.4. Question of Neutrality

Formal Complaints must be investigated by neutral parties. The Senior Leadership may not always be neutral and therefore appropriate. If a Senior Leadership member is part of the complaint they cannot be involved in the investigation. To ensure the neutrality of investigators is agreed upon, the complainant and the person(s) whom the complaint is made against, and other Senior Leadership members are invited to determine the neutrality of investigators.

If the neutrality of a Senior Leadership member questioned by either the complainant, the person(s) whom the complaint is made against or other Senior Leadership members, they cannot be involved in the investigation.

In these cases another committee member or a respected and experienced former committee member may be called upon to assist in the handling of the complaint.

If none of the proposed persons are agreed to be neutral by all parties within 14 days of the notification of complaint being issued, the executive committee may appoint one or more committee members to undertake the investigation (by circular resolution or resolution at a committee meeting).

In this case all parties are invited to make submissions to the executive committee about their concerns of the neutrality of each proposed person. This allows the committee to make an informed judgement.

See Section 2.3 for the further information relating to the handling of Formal Complaints.

1.5. Mental Health Considerations

The complaint handling process can be an emotionally and mentally demanding procedure for all parties involved, including those undertaking the process. The mental health of the involved parties should be taken into account when throughout the implementation of this policy.

However, YSA Melbourne executive and general members do not undergo mandatory training in mental health and counselling, hence do not have the responsibility of supporting or counselling either party to this process.

Before implementing any procedure or action as part of this policy, the person(s) responsible for completing the process should always consider the potential mental health impacts on themselves, the



person whom the complaint is about, and the complainant. This should be done to ensure that the process is not more emotionally or mentally demanding than is necessary for any party involved.

In addition, the following considerations should be made clear to all parties:

- All involved parties have mental health support available to them, including but not limited to local General Practitioners, Beyond Blue, Headspace and Kids Helpline services (see appendix A for further information on each of these mental health support services).
- In the instance of a Formal Complaint either the complainant, the person(s) the complaint is made against, or the person(s) investigating the complaint may request to the Senior Leadership a delay in the process by no more than 30 days beyond the original time frame set out, if they need additional time to seek professional mental health support. The Senior Leadership shall then consider the request and make a decision. The complainant, the person(s) who the complaint is made against, and the committee must be notified in writing within 48 hours of this decision occurring. This notification must identify the duration of the delay in number of days, and the intended purpose(s) of the delay (i.e. Person A requires further time to seek counselling). If required, this delay can be extended by a resolution of the executive committee, with the same notification requirements as above.

1.6. Confidentiality

Due to the sensitive nature of complaints, care must be taken when handling information gathered during the complaint handling process.

In the case of Informal Complaints, the Senior Leadership may disclose any or all relevant information to the parties involved (including any third party witnesses), in order to seek a resolution.

In the case of Formal Complaints, all information gathered throughout the complaint handling process shall be treated on a need-to-know basis. Prior to the handing down of corroboration findings to the executive committee, the Senior Leadership may disclose key descriptive information to the parties involved (including any third party witnesses involved in the corroboration process), in order to provide context for those involved in the process. A third party witness should be informed that they are being consulted as part of a corroboration process relating to a particular type of event or initiative being operated by YSA Melbourne. Any third party witness shall also be informed that no conclusions have yet been reached, that the person being investigated has been informed of the complaint, and reminded to not speculate and or spread information about this process to other members of the community.

For protection from persecution by their peers, a complainant may request to remain anonymous throughout the complaint handling process, for either Informal or Formal Complaints. The Senior Leadership must respect this request, and are prohibited from disclosing the identity of the complainant in any communication with those outside of the Senior Leadership, be it in verbal or written form.



1.7. Sexual Harassment

YSA Melbourne takes a zero tolerance stance against all forms of harassment.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual behaviour, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It can be physical, verbal or written. All incidents of sexual harassment – no matter how large or small or who is involved – require timely and appropriate action. Just because someone does not object to inappropriate behaviour at the time, it does not mean that they are consenting to the behaviour.¹

As YSA Melbourne members do not undergo mandatory training in dealing with sexual harassment, the immediate response is not to be taken by YSA Melbourne. In these circumstances, lodging a complaint is the follow up response if desired by the victim and is done after the incident. The purpose would be to provide feedback and prevent future occurrences.

As an immediate response victims can contact the Victorian Police, the Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault Forum or the Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission. However victims have the right to abstain from any reporting.

If a YSA Melbourne Event Coordinator or Executive Committee member is made aware of a sexual harassment incident, they must advise the victim the options made available to them including reporting to the Victorian Police, etc., and filing a Formal Complaint to the Executive Committee. If the victim chooses not to report to the Executive Committee by filing a complaint, this request must be granted. In this case, the aware party must disclose to the Executive Committee that a sexual harassment incident has occurred, including what actions and advice has been given to the victim. This disclosure must not include specific identifiers that could breach the victim's request of confidentiality; and is intended to prompt the committee to review existing procedures. The aware party must also keep personal notes of the incident for 7 years, to be kept in confidence, unless the victim lodges a complaint to the Executive Committee, in which case it may be considered in the investigation process.

Victoria Police is committed to providing the highest level of service to all victims of sexual assault/harassment. To learn more about sexual harassment, including your options for reporting sexual harassment, and what support services are available to you, please see: http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=43353.

The Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault Forum (CASA) is committed to addressing all inequalities within society, which result in the perpetration of sexual violence against women, children and men. CASA aims to ensure that victim/survivors of sexual assault have access to services, which are responsive and appropriate to their needs, empowering the service users to make informed choices. A free

¹ <http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/sexual-harassment>



confidential 24 hour emergency or crisis care service is available (call 1800 806 292) for victim/survivors who have recently been sexually assaulted. This includes crisis counselling support and may include access to medical care and legal processes. To learn about the other resources, counselling, and support offered by CASA, please see: <http://www.casa.org.au/survivors-and-friends/>.

If you feel you have been discriminated against, sexually harassed, victimised or vilified, you or someone on your behalf can make a complaint to the Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission. The commission will help resolve your complaint through their free, fair and timely dispute resolution service. To learn more about sexual harassment, including how to make a complaint to the Commission, please see: <http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/sexual-harassment>.

1.8. Child Abuse

Child abuse is an act or omission that endangers a child's physical or emotional health or development. By definition, abuse is not an accident, but neither is it always the intention of the person to inflict harm or injury. Child abuse may be physical, sexual or emotional, and may occur through neglect and in some cases harm may be accumulative².

YSA Melbourne members do not undergo mandatory training in dealing with child abuse and are not expected to provide support to child abuse victims. If an act of child abuse is reported with reasonable belief during a YSA Melbourne event to the YSA Event Coordinator, the accused YSA staff member must be removed from their duties immediately, and must be prohibited from engaging in any further YSA Melbourne events/activities involving children under the age of 18, until the incident has been reported to the Police or Department of Human Services, investigated, and a decision has been made by either of these entities, or the court or jury.

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. Accordingly, a new criminal offence has been created in Victoria that imposes a clear legal duty upon all adults to report information about child sexual abuse to police. Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence³.

A 'reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused;

² http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=43369

³ <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>



- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused;
- professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused; and/or;
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

A person will not be guilty of the offence if he or she has a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information. A reasonable excuse includes:

- fear for safety - a person has a reasonable fear for their own safety or the safety of another person (such as a child or another family member) and they do not report to police due to those circumstances; and;
- where the information has already been disclosed - a person believes on reasonable grounds that the information has already been disclosed to police and they have no further information to add.

The new offence respects the position of a victim who does not want the offending disclosed and who is sufficiently mature to make that judgment. The obligation to report therefore does not apply where the information comes from a person aged 16 or over and this person requests that the offence not be reported. The law recognises that a child under 16 is not able to make this kind of decision and sometimes lacks the capacity to fully understand the effects of abuse.

If you make a disclosure to the Victorian Police, your identity will remain confidential unless you disclose it yourself or you consent in writing to your identity being disclosed; or a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary in the interests of justice for your identity to be disclosed.

There are several avenues available for immediate reporting and support:

- If a situation is life-threatening, contact police on Triple Zero '000';
- For immediate concerns about the safety of a child, contact the Department of Human Services Child Protection Crisis Line by telephone on 13 12 78.
- To discuss concerns about child abuse contact your local police station:
http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=7

In these circumstances, lodging a complaint is the follow up response if desired by the victim and is done at a time following the incident when any immediate threat has been resolved, and is done with the purpose of providing feedback and the prevention of future harm.



1.9. Responsibilities of YSA Event Coordinators

It is the responsibility of YSA Event Coordinators:

- to have read and understood the YSA National Code of Conduct;
- to have read and understood the YSA Melbourne Constitution;
- to have read and understood this YSA Melbourne Complaint Handling Policy;
- to receive general feedback from event staff and participants;
- to explain to any event staff and participants who wish to bring any issues to the attention of the committee what options are available to them as per this policy, and how to contact the Senior Leadership or executive committee in order to lodge an Informal or Formal Complaint; and;
- to notify the Senior Leadership or executive committee if they believe a breach of conduct or safety to have occurred under their duty of supervision (special rules apply to sexual harassment incidents as per section 1.7 of this policy).



2. THE COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS

2.1. Overview

YSA Melbourne defines the 3 potential stages of a complaint as follows:

Stages	1. Informal Complaint	2. Formal Complaint	3. Grievance Procedure
Submission	In conversation or communication to YSA event organiser or Executive Committee	Specific submission in writing (electronic or paper) to executive committee or Senior Leadership	Formal motion to commence voted on by Executive Committee
Summary	Complaints intended to provide feedback, debrief and resolve issue.	Complainant expects a formal action to be taken or wants the complaint noted by the Executive Committee.	As outlined by Constitution, Rules 13 and 14.
Action	Personal handling by Senior Leadership team, or YSA Event Organiser where appropriate.	Senior Leadership or mutually agreed person(s) investigates and corroborates. Presents findings to Executive Committee and involved parties.	As outlined by Constitution, Rules 13 and 14
Estimated Conclusion Time	2 Weeks	2 Months	2 Months
Records Kept for 7 Years	Lodgement of complaint, communications sent and received (including response plan), actions taken, resolution/escalation.	Lodgement of complaint, original notification to involved parties, question of neutrality proceedings, corroboration process, findings handed down, discussions held and decisions made at the executive committee, resolution/escalation, close out report.	As outlined by Constitution, Rules 13 and 14
Escalation	Complainant can escalate to Formal Complaint if not resolved.	Executive Committee can vote to accept findings, and vote to take additional actions or initiate Grievance Procedure.	



Note that lodging an Informal Complaint relating to the same matter is not required before lodging a Formal Complaint.

2.2. Informal Complaint

An informal complaint is designed to facilitate feedback and debrief, and/or to allow the quick resolution of an issue or behaviour. There may not be a specific action requested at this point, but rather just a way of passing along information that an action was not appropriate or should be changed. This is considered the first step.

A committee member who receives an informal complaint is required to inform the Senior Leadership team of details relating to the informal complaint. Together, they will create a response plan based on the intention of the complainant. This plan should include the information that will be communicated to all parties involved in the complain, which may include:

- The attitudes and actions of the person(s), which the Senior Leadership deem to have been in breach of the National Code of Conduct.
- The proposed resolution for all parties involved.

This information is to be delivered in written form (electronic or paper) to all parties, and then submitted to the committee at the next committee meeting for official record keeping. To provide all parties the opportunity to change behaviours and attitudes in a short amount of time, this information should be delivered within 2 weeks of the informal complaint being lodged with a committee member.

This information, together with responses from all involved parties after sufficient time for the developed plan to be adopted has elapsed, will be stored on official record for a period of at least 7 years.

Note that the Informal Complaint procedure is distinct and different to dealing with minor, once-off issues. One example of a minor and once-off issue is a YSA event coordinator being approached with a minor issue (e.g.: a person has not washed their bowl/plate after breakfast). These types of issues, should be dealt with by the YSA event coordinator personally on the spot, but can also be escalated to an Informal or Formal Complaint if any involved party believes it is appropriate to do so.

An example of an informal complaint is described in the following scenario:

- *Person A is conducting a science demonstration. Person A performs an experiment without undertaking correct procedure by only wearing rubber gloves not fully insulated gloves when handling liquid nitrogen. This exposes Person A and others to a safety risk if Person A were to spill liquid nitrogen and injure themselves and lose control of the demonstration potentially injuring others.*
- *The show is completed without incident despite the potential safety risk.*



- *Person B is watching the science demonstrations and provides feedback to Person A and or the Senior Leadership of Person A’s unsafe practices.*
- *The Senior Leadership investigates by talking to others who witnessed the demonstration to confirm.*
- *The Senior Leadership then communicates the identified safety breaches to Person A and B, and provides a proposal for Person A and B to adjust the presentation.*
- *This proposal, along with responses from Person A and Person B, is recorded and kept for 7 years.*

2.3. Formal Complaint

A Formal Complaint is a specific submission made in writing (paper or electronic) to the Senior Leadership, the executive committee, or an individual committee member whom the complainant is more comfortable with, where it is expected that the committee will take note of the complaint or it is expected to take action in response.

When a Formal Complaint has been received by the committee, the Senior Leadership will respond by first notifying all involved parties of the complaint as well as the executive committee, by writing (electronic or paper), within 14 days. This notification will include:

- The identity of the person(s) who the complaint has been made against, their role and the time of which the complaint is concerned with.
- In the event that the complainant does not wish to remain anonymous, the identity of the complainant.
- The proposed members of the Senior Leadership who will be conducting the corroboration process, and an invitation for the complainant and those being complained against to assess the neutrality of each of these members.
- Instructions on how to access this complaint handling policy document.
- The proposed timeline for the corroboration process, and handing down of findings to the committee. The corroboration process should not require longer than 2 months to complete. If the Senior Leadership believes the complaint will take more time than this to corroborate, they must provide an explanation to justify this. This is done to ensure all complaints are resolved in a timely manner.

The Senior Leadership are to communicate with the involved parties to come to a decision on which members of the Senior Leadership are to conduct the corroboration process. All parties must deem each of the proposed persons neutral. If a proposed person is not deemed neutral, they are not permitted to conduct the corroboration process.



If none of the proposed neutral persons can be agreed upon by the involved parties within 14 days of the notification, the executive committee may decide by circular resolution or by resolution at a committee meeting, to appoint one or more members of the committee to undertake the corroboration process. In this case, the executive committee shall take submissions from parties, as to why there are concerns with the neutrality of each person, so the committee can make an informed judgement. An email informing all related parties is then to be sent out with updated corroboration details and proposed timelines.

The corroboration team then undertakes the corroboration process. This shall involve the following activities where possible:

- Formally speaking with both the complainant and the person(s) the complaint is made against;
- Ratifying comments made by both involved parties with neutral or third party input where available;
- Consulting relevant records and documents.

The corroboration process should be completed within the time originally specified. If it cannot be completed within this time, the reason an extension is required should be put to the executive committee, who shall approve or reject the extension by resolution.

Once the research process is complete, the corroboration team will hand down the findings of their investigation to the committee and the involved parties, at least 7 but no more than 14 days prior to an executive meeting, where the findings will be further addressed. This is done so that committee members and the involved parties can be made aware of the details of the complaint, including elements of the complaint that were verified throughout the investigation process. This handing down of findings shall also be recorded officially in minutes of the executive meeting.

All parties related to the Formal Complaint shall be invited to this executive meeting to speak on the findings handed down.

Following the delivery of findings by the corroboration team, and response from all related parties, the committee then has the opportunity to determine by committee resolution what actions are to be taken in response to the complaint, whether this is to deliver a notice of suspension, change YSA Melbourne rules and policies, other actions recommended by the investigation, or to simply vote to accept the findings relating to the complaint.

This motion does not constitute Grievance Proceedings. Grievance Proceedings require a specific starting trigger, which is the resolution by the Executive Committee to begin a Grievance Proceeding. The prompt for this motion to be considered by the Executive Committee may come from an Executive Committee member or the original complainant. The formal Grievance Proceedings have a very rigorously defined process in the Constitution, which maximises the recourse that is available to all parties involved.



Following the decision by the committee on what actions are to be taken in response to the complaint, the Senior Leadership will then deliver all involved parties a Formal Complaint close out report, by writing (electronic or paper). This close out report will include:

- The findings handed down by the corroboration team to the committee, for purposes of verification and future self-improvement of parties involved.
- The decision made by the committee in response to the complaint, including notice of any suspensions or sanctions, plans to change YSA Melbourne rules and policies, or to simply accept the findings relating to the complaint
- Instructions on how to access this complaint handling policy document.
- The options available to all parties to escalate the complaint to a Grievance Procedure, and a suggested timeframe of 2 months in which to do so.

All related correspondence is to be kept on record by the Senior Leadership and the corroboration team. The close out report must also be stored with other Executive Committee documents for a period of at least 7 years.

Continuing the example presented in Section 2.2, the Formal Complaint process is described in the following scenario:

- *Person B is not satisfied that Person A has responded to their feedback about science demonstration safety, and notes that in the next science demonstration the same unsafe practices are undertaken by Person A.*
- *Person B lodges a Formal Complaint with the Senior Leadership team to investigate and take action to resolve.*
- *The Senior Leadership sends an email to Person A, Person B, and the committee, entailing details of the Formal Complaint, proposed corroboration members and timelines. Persons A and B agree that the members of the Senior Leadership are all neutral to the conflict.*
- *The Senior Leadership members investigate by talking to others who witnessed the demonstration to confirm.*
- *The Senior Leadership team talks to Person C who assisted Person A in the science demonstration about the preparation and safety practices.*
- *The Senior Leadership reviews the plans and procedures for the science show and any associated preparations or practices.*
- *The Senior Leadership team speaks with Person A about the science demonstrations.*



- *The Senior Leadership compiles all of their findings and submits it to the Executive Committee via email 7 days prior to the next meeting, with the summary of the report stating Person A undertook unsafe demonstrations after feedback to improve the processes.*
- *Person A and B are both invited to the upcoming executive committee meeting.*
- *At the committee meeting, the executive committee reviews the findings provided, and Person A and Person B both have an opportunity to speak on the report.*
- *The committee votes to accept the report presented by the Senior Leadership team and acknowledge the findings.*
- *The executive committee then discusses and votes to decide if further action needs to be taken, which could include a recommendation to exclude Person A from further science demonstrations, a recommendation for Person A to undertake detailed safety training or to initiate further sanctions such as Grievance Proceedings.*
- *The Senior Leadership prepares the Formal Complaint close out report, entailing the results of the corroboration process, the action decided on by the executive committee, and options available to all parties to escalate the complaint further.*
- *The Senior Leadership collates correspondence relating to the handling of the Formal Complaint, for record keeping purposes.*

2.4. Grievance Procedure

The Grievance Procedure, by contrast, is set in motion by the Executive Committee as a whole and is outlined in the constitution of YSA Melbourne (specifically Rule 13 and 14). It is a possible “next step” after a Formal Complaint has been heard.

The Complaint Handling processes defined in Sections 2.1 – 2.3 are designed to ensure that the Executive Committee has in place a clear process that allows for input, informal mediation and resolution before taking the ultimate step of Grievance Proceedings.

In order for Grievance Proceedings to take place, the Executive Committee must first vote to accept the findings of the Complaint, and then if desired by the committee or requested by the complainant, initiate further proceedings. The Grievance Procedure process is a well documented formal process designed to give both parties a chance to have their voice heard and can take up to 60 days.



APPENDIX A – MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

Below are four suggested services through which the parties involved in the complaint handling process may access mental health and counselling support.

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS (GPs)

General practitioners are doctors who are trained to help people with any type of physical or mental health issue.^[4]

All involved parties are encouraged to consider consulting their family/local G.P., to discuss any concerns they have regarding the potential effects of the complaint handling process on their own health. From here, their G.P. can provide referrals to professional Psychologists and Counsellors, to provide specialist mental health support. GPs will explain how this may help, what services are available and how to get started. They may also be able to fill out a mental health care plan to help the person access these services for free.

BEYOND BLUE

Beyond Blue is an Australian, independent non-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression, anxiety disorders and related mental disorders^[5]. Phone Counselling, Web Counselling and Email Counselling are available through Beyond Blue.

Phone counselling is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via 1300 22 4636.

Online Chat is available from 3pm to 12am (AEST), 7 days a week via:
<https://online.beyondblue.org.au/WebModules/Chat/InitialInformation.aspx>

To send an email, visit

<https://online.beyondblue.org.au/WebModules/Email/InitialInformation.aspx>, complete your details and write your message – you'll hear back from one of Beyond Blue's trained mental health professionals within 24 hours.

⁴ <http://headspace.org.au/get-info/getting-help-from-a-general-practitioner-gp/>

⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beyondblue>



HEADSPACE

Headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds. The service is designed to make it easy as possible for a young person and their family to get the help they need for problems affecting their wellbeing. This covers four core areas: mental health, physical health, work and study support and alcohol and other drug services. ^[6]

Headspace services can be accessed through:

- Headspace centres - <http://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/>,
- The online counselling service “ehespace” - <https://www.eheadspace.org.au>

THE KIDS HELPLINE

The Kids Helpline is a free, private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25 in Australia ^[7]. Phone Counselling, Web Counselling and Email Counselling are available to members of the public.

Phone Counselling is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Calls to 1800 55 1800 are free of charge and do not incur any costs from phone carriers (when made within Australia from home or mobile phone services).

Web Counselling is available 12pm to 10pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 10pm Saturday & Sunday (Queensland time). The person requesting assistance can speak with a counsellor through an instant messaging service. <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/get-help/web-counselling/>

Email Counselling can be accessed via <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/get-help/email-counselling/>. Sometimes an email response can take up to two weeks. It is suggested that those requiring urgent assistance should contact Kids Helpline via 1800 55 1800.

⁶ <http://headspace.org.au/about-us/>

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kids_Helpline