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# Complaints Policy

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The Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation (RVCF) is a registered Canadian charity that is committed to high standards of conduct. We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance, where warranted, to put things right for the person or organization that has made the complaint. We believe that the process for resolving concerns and complaints should be timely, fair and respectful.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy (and associated procedures) is to create a transparent and fair method of receiving and responding to external complaints.

## Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of RVCF.

## Application

Complaints may come from any person or organization that donates or partners with the RVCF.

This policy is for external stakeholders of the Foundation.

Any complaints received by RVCF but that are ultimately intended for the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority will be forwarded to them to be handled under their policies.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

## Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

## Important Points about the Policy

The Foundation will respond to a complaint and make every reasonable effort to investigate it as soon as possible. Complaints will be addressed in a fair and consistent manner; however, some complaints may require more effort to address. Dissatisfaction with the outcome of a decision should not form the basis for a subsequent complaint under this policy.

## Process for Raising a Concern

**Reporting** - Many problems can be resolved easily and quickly, often at the time they arise, by speaking with an RVCF representative. If a problem cannot be resolved in this way, or if a member of the public wishes to make a complaint, the complaint should be submitted in writing directly to the Executive Director at [info@rvcf.ca](mailto:info@rvcf.ca). The Foundation will acknowledge the receipt of a complaint within five (5) business days.

**Evidence** – Although a complainant is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, a complainant should be able to demonstrate that he or she has made a report in good faith.

## How the Report of Concern will be Handled

**Initial Inquiries** – Complaints made to [info@rvcf.ca](mailto:info@rvcf.ca) will initially be handled by the RVCF Executive Director. As determined by the Foundation, another staff member (including staff from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority), Officer or Board member may be assigned to handle the complaint.

**Further Information** – The Foundation shall investigate the complaint and may seek further information from any Officer, Director, employee, contractor, volunteer or stakeholder of the Foundation, as appropriate. The actions taken by the Foundation with respect to a particular allegation will depend on the nature of the reported violation.

**Investigations** – Each case is unique, but the Foundation will handle any allegation reported pursuant to this policy respectfully and with discretion. If the facts warrant it, the Foundation will take corrective action or disciplinary action equal to the severity of the complaint.

**Reporting Back** – The Foundation will respond as soon as possible after the matter has been reviewed and a determination has been reached. The complainant will be advised of the results of the review.

**Anonymous Allegations** – Thorough investigation often depends on an ability to gather additional information. The Foundation encourages complainants to put their names to their inquiries. The Foundation will explore anonymous inquiries to the extent possible but will weigh the prudence of continuing an investigation against the likelihood of confirming the alleged facts or circumstances from attributable sources.

**Continuous Improvement** – The Foundation will keep a database of complaints received. The data will be reviewed regularly to determine whether there are frequently recurring complaints of a similar type. If there are, an investigation will be initiated to determine whether there are systemic process issues within the Foundation that need to be addressed to eliminate reoccurring incidences.

### Report to the Board

The Foundation shall inform its Board at minimum annually of the number, type and disposition of complaints received.

### Policy Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.