

Workplace Conflict/Complaint Resolution

Manual/Section: Admin Manual/Human Resources	Policy No. 133
Key Words: Conflict / Complaint /	

1. PURPOSE:

To provide employees, volunteers, students and physicians with a step by step approach to resolve work related conflicts and/or complaints in a timely, respectful, supportive and consistent manner. The resolution procedure is based on standard expectations as defined by CHEO's Code of Conduct and reflects CHEO's mission and commitment to listening-caring-discovering-learning-advocating.

NOTE: This policy does not apply to incidents of workplace harassment or employee violence in the workplace.

For situations that involve any objectionable act, comment, display or e-mail that demeans, belittles, or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment, and any act of intimidation or threat, refer to the Workplace Harassment Policy and/or Employee Violence in the Workplace Policy.

2. POLICY:

Employees, volunteers, students and physicians are

- a) mutually responsible to create a respectful work environment by performing their duties in a manner that establishes, maintains and enhances integrity, confidence, trust and mutual respect,
- b) expected to be reasonable and fair in their expectation of each other and
- c) expected to resolve any conflict in a mature and professional manner.

CHEO's internal and/or external resources should be accessed in support of conflict/complaint resolution. Where resolution is not achieved the formal conflict/complaint process should be initiated.

Internal resources

- Human Resources offers support, acts in a neutral capacity as part of the resolution process and will assist in assessing the conflict/complaint as it relates to the violation of CHEO policies or an individual's rights.
- Organizational Development and Learning offers facilitation and staff development in the area of conflict resolution, effective communication, team work and leadership/management development.

External resources

- The Employee Assistance Program offers support, guidance, and resources to assist employees in conflict/complaint resolution.

False, frivolous, vexatious or malicious complaints made in bad faith and which may be knowingly filed by the originator will be dealt with seriously and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment by CHEO.

3. SCOPE:

All employees, volunteers, students, physicians at CHEO.

4. DEFINITIONS:***Work Related Conflict* (may be any of the following):**

- An open clash between two opposing groups or individuals
- A state of opposition between persons, ideas or interests

***Interpersonal Complaint* (may be any of the following):**

- An expression of grief, pain, or dissatisfaction with another employee
- A protest or outcry arising from something in the workplace
- A formal allegation of complaint against another party

5. RESPONSIBILITY:***Employees, Volunteers, Students and Physicians***

- Make every reasonable attempt to resolve the conflict/complaint with the individual or group of individuals involved.
- Actively participate and cooperate in the conflict/complaint resolution process regardless of the role played.
- Be professional, courteous, and honest.
- Keep an open mind.
- Be aware and respectful of different values, cultures, and beliefs.
- Respond to issues and requests in a timely manner.
- Regard all interactions and fact finding amongst the parties involved in strict confidence* (see note at bottom of Section 6 regarding confidentiality).
- Seek clarification of policies and procedures.
- Access internal and/or external resources to obtain advice or to assist in resolution.

Managers/Directors

- Review complaints.
- Document all meetings, formal or informal. Date and sign all documentation
- Promptly investigate all complaints.
- Consult with Manager/Director, Human Resources and/or Vice President where warranted.

- Access appropriate internal and/or external resources where warranted.
- Make every reasonable attempt to assist in the resolution process.
- Ensure timely resolution of conflict/complaint.

Human Resources Representative/Director

- Support timely resolution of conflicts and complaints.
- Act in a neutral capacity as part of the resolution process.
- Provide consultation to the Manager(s)/Director(s)/Vice President(s)/CEO investigating the complaint.

Senior Management

- Ensure all written complaints are investigated in a timely manner.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken towards conflict/complaint resolution.

6. PROCEDURE:

The following steps are intended to facilitate the Workplace Conflict/Complaint Resolution process. Complete each step before moving on to the next. Employees, volunteers, students, and physicians are strongly encouraged to seek guidance or assistance from internal and/or external resources in support of constructive and professional conflict resolution techniques and dialogue.

Step 1: Policy Review

(Originator of conflict/complaint):

Review and seek clarification of policies, procedures and professional standards applicable to the conflict or complaint. Where it appears that policies, procedures or professional standards have not been met or followed, do not exist, or are unclear, employees should consult with your Manager/Director and/or Human Resources Representative for clarification. Volunteers should consult with the Volunteer Co-ordinator, physicians with their Department Chief, residents/fellows with their Program Director and students should consult with their Clerkship Director.

If policies, procedures and professional standards have been met and adhered to, you may no longer wish to pursue the issue further and the process may be complete. If that is not the case, progress to Step 2.

Step 2: Resolution Attempt

(Originator of conflict/complaint):

Initiate an informal, private and professional dialogue between the conflicting individuals or group of individuals. Review nature of conflict/complaint, the impact on you, your feelings and perceptions around the issue and/or incident. Attempt to resolve the conflict through the achievement of a mutual understanding of the issue, the impact of conflict, mutual inquiry, reflection and learning about self and others. Mutually develop strategies and understanding to avoid future conflict. If after completing Step 2, a resolution is reached, the process is complete. If that is not the case, progress to Step 3.

Step 3: Engage Management

(NOTE: There is no HR involvement at this stage)

(Originator of conflict/complaint):

Review the nature of conflict/complaint, the steps taken to resolve the issue and the outcome of actions taken in Step 2 with your immediate Supervisor, Manager/Director. Explore alternative options, suggestions for management and resources available with the immediate Supervisor or Manager.

If after completing Step 3 you no longer wish to pursue the issue further, the process is complete. If the matter is not resolved, progress to Step 4.

Step 4: Complete the Workplace Conflict Investigation Form

(Originator of conflict/complaint):

Complete the Workplace Conflict Investigation Form (Appendix A). Submit the completed form to your Manager/Director.

If the complaint involves a physician, send a copy of the Investigation Form to the Chief of Staff.

If the conflict/complaint involves an employee / Manager/ Director or physician from another PSU, a copy of the Workplace Conflict Investigation Form must be sent to the Manager(s)/Director(s) of the PSU(s) involved.

Where conflict exists between an employee and the Manager/Director, complaints should be submitted to the next level of authority in the unit, with a copy to the Vice President, People, Strategy and Performance. By the submission of the Workplace Conflict Investigation Form, the process will progress to Step 5.

Step 5: Management Investigation & Analysis

(Manager/Director of originator of conflict/complaint and

Upon receipt of the Workplace Conflict Investigation Form, acknowledge receipt of the Form in writing, review the report with the originator of the workplace conflict/complaint. Investigate the complaint by meeting with the parties involved to gather/confirm facts and obtain clarification where required.

Make every attempt to meet with the individuals concerned within 10 days of receiving the complaint.

Document all meetings and information gathered and date and sign all documentation. The process will progress to Step 6.

Step 6: Management Assisted Resolution Attempt

(Manager/Director of originator of workplace conflict/complaint and Manager(s)/Director(s) of involved PSUs/Chief of Staff):

Based on analysis of the information obtained in Step 5, make every reasonable attempt to resolve the issue in a timely manner, within 10 days if possible. If more time is needed to complete the investigation, inform the complainant that it will be a longer period of time.

If after completing Step 6, a resolution is reached, complete Step 9. If resolution is not reached, forward a copy of the Workplace Conflict Investigation Form and supporting documentation to the Vice President(s) of the involved PSU(s) and send a copy to the Vice President, People, Strategy and Performance.

NOTE: After the process has reached Step 4, it becomes the ultimate responsibility of the Manager/Director of the originator of the complaint to ensure that the process is moving forward and that the necessary paperwork reaches the next level of management. The process will progress to Step 7.

Step 7: Vice President Intervention

(Vice President of originator of conflict/complaint and Vice President(s) of involved PSUs):

Based on analysis and outcome of the events in Step 6, make every reasonable effort to resolve the issue in a timely manner. If warranted, meet with all or some of the parties involved for additional fact finding and clarification. These meetings should ideally be conducted within 10 days of receiving the complaint.

Document all meetings and information gathered. If after completing Step 7, a resolution is reached, complete Step 9. If a resolution is

not reached, inform the Vice President, People, Strategy and Performance and forward a copy of the Workplace Conflict Investigation Form and supporting documentation to the Chief Executive Officer.

Every effort should be made to complete this step within 10 days following the meeting described in Step 7.

NOTE: Depending on the nature of the complaint, it is the ultimate responsibility of the Manager/Director of the originator of the complaint to ensure that the process is moving forward and that the necessary paperwork reaches the next level of management. The process will progress to Step 8.

Step 8: Final Intervention

(CEO):

Review the Workplace Conflict Investigation Form, supporting documentation and the outcomes achieved at Steps 1-7. At his/her discretion, the CEO will meet with all or some of the parties involved to gather additional information and/or clarification. It is recommended that this meeting take place within 10 days of receipt of the complaint, whenever possible. In consultation with the Vice President involved and/or the Vice President, People, Strategy and Performance, the CEO may also decide to have the matter referred to an external source for supportive services or additional investigation.

Based on analysis of the information gathered, formulate a resolution in a timely manner. The resolution invoked by the CEO (or by the external source via the CEO) will be deemed to be the final resolution on behalf of CHEO. Progress to Step 9.

Step 9: Closure

(Manager/Director, Vice President/Chief of Staff or CEO directly involved in final resolution):

When a resolution has been reached, the bottom portion of the Workplace Conflict Investigation Form must be completed and signed off by the Manager/Director, Vice President/Chief of Staff or CEO directly involved in the final resolution.

The steps taken to resolve the conflict/complaint and the outcome must be included in the report. The final resolution must be outlined in writing (in a letter) to the originator of the conflict/complaint and if warranted, to some or all of the parties involved. All levels of management involved in the resolution process must be copied on the letter. The Manager/Director of the originator of the

conflict/complaint, and any Manager/Director, Vice President/Chief of Staff or CEO directly involved in the final resolution must meet with the originator of the conflict/complaint to hand deliver the letter and to indicate and provide closure to the originator. A copy of the completed Workplace Investigation Form, supporting documentation and resolution letter to the employee(s) must be sent to Human Resources to inform the Vice President, People, Strategy and Performance that a final resolution has been reached and that the process is complete.

No Reprisals:

No reprisals will be taken against a person who has made a complaint or raised the issue of a workplace conflict in good faith. No reprisal will be taken against any individual who has cooperated in the investigation of a complaint or who has cooperated in attempts to resolve a workplace conflict.

Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible, recognizing that disclosure of information is required in the investigation process. Information disclosed to the respondent must contain sufficient detail to allow for an informed reply by the respondent, but does not usually include the disclosure of any documents/reports submitted by the complainant. Unauthorized disclosure of facts or opinions is prohibited and is subject to consequences.

7. CROSS-REFERENCES: CHEO's Code of Conduct
Workplace Harassment Policy
Employee Violence in the Workplace Policy

8. REFERENCES:

9. ATTACHMENTS: Workplace Conflict Investigation Form

10. DEVELOPED BY: Human Resources

Workplace Conflict Investigation Form

NOTE: Please refer to the Workplace Harassment and Employee Violence Policies to report incidents which are not related to Workplace Harassment:

The purpose of this Form is to initiate a formal investigation around an incident of workplace conflict occurring between CHEO staff (Management, Physicians, Employees and Volunteers) in the workplace. This form is to be completed only after attempting Steps 1-3 of the Workplace Conflict/Complaint Resolution process. **Please complete this form and forward it in a sealed envelope marked PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL to your Manager/Director and as indicated at Step 4. A formal, confidential investigation will be initiated upon receipt of the completed/signed report.**

Name:	PSU
Position:	

Date and time of incident(s):

Location of incident(s):

Name of individual(s) directly involved in the incident(s):

Name of witnesses to the incident(s):

Details of incident(s):

Feelings generated/impact of the incident(s):

My actions taken in response to the incident(s):

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Incident reported to:	
Signature of employee:	Date:

Resolution: Steps taken and outcome

Follow up actions:

Name and signature of management involved in final resolution:

Name:	
Signature:	Date:

Conflict / Complaint Resolution Process Flow

