



Complaints Handling Policy

Policy & Procedure Owner	CEO Office	
Approved by	CEO	
	Date Approved	Next Review
	January 2018	March 2019

Purpose The purpose of this policy is to enable any person associated with Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia) to bring to the attention of the CEO and/or Board evidence of misconduct or a complaint against the organisation or anyone associated with it. It provides for protection of the person(s) disclosing the misconduct or making the complaint and enables investigation of the issue(s) raised.

Abbreviations	ERFA	Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia)
	ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
	Programs	All programs/projects which are funded partially or in whole by ERFA
	Partner	Any organization which has an MOU/Contract with/or receives funding from ERFA

Contact information

- Chief Executive Officer, Bren Arkinstall – barkinstall@edmundrice.org
- Programs Director, Emily Faller – ejfaller@edmundrice.org
- ERFA Board Chair, Paul Gallagher – chair@erf.org.au
- www.erf.org.au or +61 7 3621 9649
- Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) <http://www.acfid.asn.au> or +61 6 02 6285 1816

Implementation Plan

- Available on ERFA website
- Provided to all Program Leaders for distribution to staff and volunteers

Related Forms Incidents, Complaints and Compliments Reporting Form (ICCF)



Definitions

Partners

Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia) is a company limited by guarantee. The objects of the company are set out in clause 3 of ERFA's constitution. Clause 3 (f) reads as follows:

To develop partnerships with overseas aid agencies or formal arrangements with other delivery agents related to the Company but resident in Developing Countries for the implementation of the objects in paragraph (a).

One of ERFA's roles is to act as trustee of the Edmund Rice Overseas Aid Fund.

Throughout its policies and official documentation ERFA uses the term **Partners** for those organisations with which it has formed alliances in developing countries for the receipt of overseas aid funding for the in-country delivery of education, health and development projects. These are not partnerships in the legal sense. Rather they are alliances for funding that ERFA has formed with in-country organisations with whom ERFA has communicated its vision, mission, values, policies and expectations with respect to sustainable development and whose own vision, mission, values, policies and development goals are congruent with those of ERFA.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- enable all Management, Staff, Contractors and Volunteers of ERFA, any Partner Organisation, or any individual associated with programs managed or funded by ERFA, to bring to the attention of the ERFA CEO or Board, evidence of misconduct or a complaint against the organisation or any individual(s) associated with it;
- provide protection for persons who disclose misconduct or bring forward a complaint;
- provide for the investigation of disclosures.

2. Definition of “complaint” as outlined by ACFID

The ACFID Code defines complaint as an 'expression of dissatisfaction' made to an organisation related to its product or its services.

In this policy “misconduct” means:

- corrupt conduct; or
- a substantial mismanagement of ERFA resources; or
- a serious breach of ERFA policy; or
- conduct involving substantial risk to a child or children, public health or safety or to the environment that would, if proved, constitute either a criminal offence or reasonable grounds for dismissing or terminating the services of a manager, staff member, or volunteer of ERFA or Partner Organisation who engaged in that conduct.

3. Complaints involving Child Protection

ERFA is committed to the safety and well being of all children. For complaints involving child protection, please refer to our Child Protection Policy and contact ERFA’s Chief Executive Officer at ceo@erf.org.au or +61 7 3621 9649.

4. Process for complaints handling in Australia

In Australia, ERFA provides four pathways for the lodgement of complaints or misconduct for all staff, partners and the general public. These are:

1. lodgement of a complaint on-line via ERFA website; or
2. lodgement of a complaint via email or telephone (with details on ERFA website); or
3. An opportunity to access a complaint form via a designated representative at each program; or
4. If not completely satisfied with ERFA’s response, the opportunity to lodge a complaint via ACFID.

ERFA will ensure that it regularly provides the opportunity for feedback and communication of the complaints handling procedure. This will be done via newsletters, public notices and at all professional development opportunities.

5. Process for complaints handling Overseas

Overseas, for the projects and programs ERFA supports, there are three pathways for the lodgement of complaints or misconduct for all staff, partners and the general public. These are:

- 1) an opportunity to lodge a complaint online via the overseas program website or ERFA website; or
- 2) an opportunity to access a complaint form via the Program Leader; or
- 3) for people unable to access electronic or hardcopy complaints a verbal complaint can be made to the Program Leader who will submit this to the CEO of ERFA as required.

ERFA will ensure that it regularly provides the opportunity for feedback and communication of the complaints handling procedure. This will be done via newsletters, public notices and at all professional development opportunities

6. Procedure

ERFA will adhere to the ACFID Code of Conduct guidance for complaints as detailed in Commitment 7.3.3 and will maintain a register, along with a review by the CEO and Programs Director for all complaints received.

All complaints (unless against the CEO) will be submitted directly to the CEO via the agreed pathway.

Any complaint against the Chief Executive Officer can be made to the Programs Director, ERFA Board Chair or to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

The Chief Executive Officer is required to report to the Board on all complaints received and ERFA's response to them.

7. Protection of Complainants

A person who believes on reasonable grounds that a manager, staff member, or volunteer of ERFA or Partner Organisation has engaged in, or proposes to engage in, misconduct in their capacity as a representative of ERFA will not be discriminated against in any way for making such a complaint. The key principles are:

7a. Impartiality

If an individual makes a complaint, it will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No judgments or assumptions will be made and no action will be taken until the investigation is complete, except in the case of a child abuse or any unlawful act where, in these instances, legislative and legal obligation will be observed.

7b. Detailed Information

If a complaint is made against an individual, that individual's rights will be protected and he/she will be entitled to know detailed information about the substance of the complaint and will be given an opportunity to put forward his/her interpretation of the situation.

7c. Confidentiality

Individuals can feel secure that if they do make a complaint it will remain confidential. The only people who will have access to information about the complaint will be the parties involved in the complaint and the person investigating.

7d. Respect

The complaints management process will be conducted in a manner that is respectful of all parties.

7e. No Victimisation

Individuals can be assured that if they make a complaint they will not suffer in any way as a consequence. ERFA's authorities will ensure, to the best of their abilities, that a person who makes a complaint is not victimised in any way.

7f. Good Faith

It is expected that complaints are made in good faith and are not vexatious or malicious.

7g. Timeliness

Each complaint will be finalised within as short a period as possible. Every effort will be made to ensure complaints are finalised within one month and complainants will be advised if the matter cannot be finalised within that timeframe.

{Below message to be inserted here in local language. Message to be displayed in both local language and English}

CHILD PROTECTION AND COMPLAINTS

Please contact _____ for help if:

- you or someone you know is being hurt, harmed or treated badly
- you have a complaint or concern about this facility or someone who works here

Or, you can contact the funding partner, the Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia):



+61 7 3621 9649

ceo@erf.org.au

www.erf.org.au