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| **Policy Name:**  | **Complaint and Grievance Resolution**  | **Date Revised:**  | **9/2017** |
| **Purpose:** | **Rights to Complain and Submit Complaint**  | **Board Approval:** | **9/2017** |

**Policy:**

Greater New Beginnings Youth Services, Inc. informs clients, caretakers, family members and staff about their rights to complain, as well as Greater New Beginnings’ (GNB) complaint resolution process. This includes the right to complain to other organizations and stakeholders, such as school districts, county authorities, state authorities, or other agencies. GNB is committed to being personally and administratively attentive to client complaints, in proportion to the complaint’s implications and level of significance, and to resolving complaints whenever possible. Clients may freely voice complaints and recommend changes without being subject to coercion, discrimination, reprisal or unreasonable interruption of services.

Intake packets provided to clients and caretakers contain information about complaint procedures and client’s rights. Designated staff members within each program are trained on these procedures and are instructed to remind and/or guide clients and families about complaint procedures. In some circumstances, addressing certain complaints may fall under the purview of the client’s treatment plan. Even in circumstances where collaborative resolution is not part of the treatment plan, staff must opt for the least restrictive and most normative means of resolution.

When a Greater New Beginnings client and/or family member has a complaint with the treatment they are receiving, they have several options to have their complaint heard and resolved. GNB staff must seek to actively engage, listen and collaborate with clients and/or family members who have complaints. In the event of a commonplace or routine complaint, GNB clients and/or family members are encouraged to speak directly with the staff assigned to their case in order to determine an immediate and satisfactory resolution for all parties. In the event of a potentially serious complaint, Greater New Beginnings staff should immediately contact their program director. Potentially serious complaints are defined on a case-by-case basis at each individual program site. The program director is responsible for communicating guidelines for what constitutes a serious complaint, while the site’s supervisors and clinicians are responsible for adjusting these guidelines to an individual client’s needs and circumstances.

**Procedure:**

Greater New Beginnings staff must welcome complaints as an opportunity for communication and joint problem solving, and assist clients and/or families in deciding whether to file a complaint with GNB, the county, school district, other service provider, or with any combination of these options. When issuing a complaint, Greater New Beginnings encourages clients and/or family members to choose one or more of the following options:

1. **Verbal complaints.** If a client and/or family member has an issue with the treatment they are receiving, they are encouraged to make a verbal complaint directly to the GNB staff assigned to their case. They may also issue a complaint directly to any GNB staff member, a county case manager, school district staff person, state staff person or other service provider with whom they feel comfortable talking about the issue. If a client and/or family member does not know how to issue a verbal complaint, GNB staff will assist in connecting them with the appropriate resource.
2. **Written complaints**. If a client and/or family member wishes to file a complaint in writing, they may submit a written letter (in any format) that articulates the complaint. Immediately upon receiving a written letter detailing a complaint, the letter should be passed on to the Executive Director/Administrator. Alternatively, a client and/or family member may fill out the grievance/complaint form provided by the county, school district or other service provider. Greater New Beginnings staff shall ensure clients and/or family members have access to complaint forms. If the client and/or family members need help in filling out the forms, GNB staff shall offer support in completing and submitting the complaint.
3. **Recorded complaints.** At the request and permission of the client and client’s guardian and/or family member, Greater New Beginnings staff may also record a complaint in any medium they wish. Recorded complaints must be reviewed by the Executive Director/Administrator (or as per individual site policy), to determine an appropriate response.

When possible, Greater New Beginnings staff members are encouraged to discuss and resolve commonplace complaints and problems at the program level first. If a client and/or family member still has a complaint after issuing a verbal, written or tape-recorded complaint to a GNB staff member, they should be referred to the Executive Director/Administrator who will work with them to explore and find a solution. After review of the written or taped significant complaint, the Executive Director/Administrator shall meet with the client and/or family members to review the concerns and resolve the issues. In addition, the Executive Director/Administrator must record all complaints in a grievance log, and copies must be sent to the Executive Director/Administrator , either with each complaint or on a monthly basis. Resolution of a serious complaint must be documented in a written report prepared by the program director and sent to involved staff as well as the executive office. The Executive Director/Administrator must also confirm the resolution of a serious complaint with the client, and a copy of the written report must be placed in the client’s chart.

If the client and/or family members do not wish to go through the Executive Director/Administrator or if they are not satisfied with the Executive Director/Administrator’s proposed solution, they may appeal directly to Greater New Beginnings Board of Directors. If needed, a staff person can help them contact the office.

If a complaint is filed with an external party, GNB staff shall offer to participate in the resolution process if desired by the client and/or family member.

Should concerns relating to HIPAA violations, systemic issues or the seriousness of the complaint arise, the program director should consult with the Board of Directors or Quality Assurance Compliance Manager. as appropriate.