



External Complaint for Persons Served

Policy Owner(s): Compliance

Effective Date: December 10, 2023

1. Policy Objective

Heartspring has a responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations and shall investigate all external complaints alleging failure to comply with those laws.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Heartspring employees, observers, interns, volunteers, students/clients, parents/guardians, and external stakeholders.

3. Policy Statement

Person(s) served, school districts or other organizations/visitors may formally complain to Heartspring if you:

- Believe anyone is violating the law;
- Believe anyone is violating company policy such as inappropriate conduct;
- Have any unresolved concerns/complaints

Heartspring will investigate all complaints to ensure our students and clients are provided with excellent care and treated with dignity and respect.

3.1 Complaint Filing:

The Complainant should first make an effort to resolve the complaint by speaking to either the staff member involved, his/her immediate supervisor, or an Executive Team Member if deemed necessary by the complainant. Email complaints can be sent to: Complaints@Heartspring.org

3.1.1 Information to Include in the Complaint:

- Date/Time of suspected incident
- Names of students, Heartspring personnel, and any other witnesses
- Location of a suspected incident
- Description of the suspected incident with details of any first-hand knowledge/facts of the event.

3.1.2 Provision of Additional Evidence/Information

- During the investigation process, Heartspring will provide an opportunity to gather evidence and/or additional information supporting the allegations of the complaint. Refusal by the complainant to provide Heartspring with documents or other evidence related to the complainant's allegations, or to otherwise fail to cooperate with the investigation, or obstruct the investigation in any way, may result in dismissal of the complaint due to a lack of supportive evidence.

3.2 Complaint Receipt by Heartspring

- Acknowledgement of the complaint will be provided to the complainant, informing this person that it is currently under review.
- Follow-up information on the outcome should be provided to the complainant in writing to the extent possible and appropriate.

3.3 Rights and Responsibilities

3.3.1 The Complainant

- All reports/complaints/concerns must be made in good faith and for the safety, security, and welfare of the students/clients that Heartspring serves. Therefore, it's the responsibility of the complainant to ensure that all details, facts, and information are true to the best of their recollection.
- It is the right of the complainant to receive assistance and/or advocacy as necessary (and should it be requested) – to file a complaint. The complainant may ask for assistance from the Compliance Department. In this instance, the staff member will act confidentially and will advocate and assist the complainant in filing a complaint without providing any additional opinion on the matter to Heartspring, or the complainant. This staff person will act as a neutral party to the very best of their ability until the incident is resolved.

3.3.2 Heartspring

- Heartspring will act quickly upon receipt of any report/complaint/concern to ensure that proper handling and routing are done efficiently. Complaints will be reviewed within three (3) business days. All formal complaints will be tracked, and relevant paperwork stored.
- Heartspring will thoroughly investigate complaints and impartially determine responsibility and any corrective measures if needed. Heartspring works to resolve each complaint within thirty (30) days after initial receipt. However, depending on the complexity of the issue, the investigation process may take longer.
- Heartspring may provide assistance and/or advocacy to any person served, their parent/guardian, or community member in order to file

a complaint. The complainant may ask for assistance from the Compliance Department. In this instance, the staff member will act confidentially and will advocate and assist the complainant in filing a complaint without providing any additional opinion on the matter to Heartspring, or the complainant. This staff person will act as a neutral party to the very best of their ability until the incident is resolved.

- Heartspring shall ensure that there will be no retaliation against any complainant for reports done in good faith, nor will any investigation procedures/actions result in barriers to accessing or receiving programs and services.

4. Policy Violations

Any employee found to be in violation of this policy will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

5. Definitions

- Complaint—A formal allegation or concern regarding unsatisfactory or unacceptable service being provided by Heartspring or regarding a Heartspring student/client.
- Complainant—A person, group, or company that makes a complaint including legal action.
- Person(s) Served—Clients, students, parents/guardians, and visitors.

6. Forms or Related Policies

- [Abuse and Neglect Reporting](#)
- [Discrimination, Bullying, & Harassment](#)
- [External Complaint Form](#)

7. Applicable Laws/Regulations

- CARF Medical Rehabilitation Standard 1.K.3
- [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 \(HIPAA\)](#)

REVISION RECORD

DATE	VERSION	REVISION DESCRIPTION