

# Soaring Sparrows

## Participant Handbook

We are thrilled to have you as a valued member of our community and look forward to helping you achieve your goals by connecting you with the right services and resources.

This is our Participant Handbook.

You can keep this and reference it in the future if needed.

### **It contains:**

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our Code of Conduct

Our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Our Information Storage and Sharing Policy

Soaring Sparrows Participant Rights and Responsibilities

Our Incident Management Policy

Our Feedback and Complaints Policy

Our Feedback and Complaints Form

Other Helpful Contacts



## **Our Vision, Mission and Values**

### **Our Vision**

To be known for our quality of service and genuine care for people with disabilities and their informal supports.

### **Our Mission and Values**

#### **Value individuals**

Everyone has unique and distinctive worth.

#### **Enable contribution**

Everyone holds an exclusive contribution they can make within their chosen community.

#### **Celebrate growth**

Every step of progress is a reason to celebrate



## Code of Conduct (Simple English)

### Purpose

This policy explains how staff and workers must behave when working with participants. It makes sure services are safe, respectful, and good quality.

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### Who this policy is for

This policy applies to:

- All staff, contractors, students, and volunteers.
  - Anyone representing Soaring Sparrows.
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### Definitions

- **Code of Conduct** = Rules about how to act at work.
  - **NDIS Code of Conduct** = The official rules all NDIS workers must follow.
  - **Participant** = A person who gets supports and services from Soaring Sparrows.
  - **Misconduct** = Doing the wrong thing, like being dishonest, disrespectful, or unsafe.
  - **Conflict of Interest** = When your personal interests could affect your work.
  - **Breach** = Not following the rules in this Code or the law.
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### Our Commitment

Everyone at Soaring Sparrows must:

- Act with respect and honesty
- Provide safe and high-quality services
- Respect participants' rights, privacy, and choices
- Stop and report abuse, neglect, and exploitation

A full catalogue of Soaring Sparrows Policies and Procedures as well as a link to our Feedback and Complaints Form can be found on our website

[www.soaringsparrows.com.au](http://www.soaringsparrows.com.au)

- Keep professional boundaries
  - Follow the law and NDIS rules
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## Responsibilities

- **Managers:** teach and check staff know the Code of Conduct, and act quickly if rules are broken.
  - **Staff and Contractors:** always follow this policy, do training, and report problems.
  - **Participants and Families:** will always be treated with respect and can speak up if standards are not met.
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## How it works

### 1. Training

- All new staff learn about the Code of Conduct at induction.
- Extra training is given to remind staff about expected behaviour.

### 2. Raising Concerns

- Staff must report problems to the Managing Director.
- Participants and families can make a complaint using the Complaints and Feedback Policy.

### 3. When rules are broken

- Staff may get disciplinary action (warnings, training, or termination).
  - Serious problems may be reported to the NDIS Commission or other authorities.
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## Laws and Policies we follow

- NDIS Act
- NDIS Code of Conduct
- NDIS Practice Standards
- Fair Work Act

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- Work Health and Safety laws
  - Soaring Sparrows Complaints, Privacy, Incident, Rights, and Human Rights policies
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## **Review**

We check this policy every year. We may update it sooner if:

- The law or NDIS rules change
- Feedback shows we should improve
- A review or incident shows a problem



# **Privacy and Confidentiality Policy (Simple English)**

## **Purpose**

This policy explains how Soaring Sparrows protects the privacy and confidentiality of participants, staff, and stakeholder information.

It ensures personal and sensitive information is collected, stored, used, and shared according to legal, ethical, and professional standards.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and representatives of Soaring Sparrows who collect, store, use, or share participant information.

## **What Information is Collected**

Information collected and stored may include:

- Personal details (name, date of birth, NDIS number, contact details)
- Health and medical information
- Support needs, goals, and plans
- Case notes, reports, and communication records
- Consent forms and service agreements
- Photographs, videos, or images (only with consent)

## **Why Information is Collected and Shared**

Information is collected and shared to:

- To identify you
- Deliver safe, effective, person-centred support
- Meet NDIS compliance and legal record-keeping obligations
- Coordinate services and advocate for participant needs
- Respond to incidents, risks, or emergencies
- Comply with lawful requests (e.g., subpoenas, safeguarding requirements)

## **How Information is Collected, Stored, and Shared**

A full catalogue of Soaring Sparrows Policies and Procedures as well as a link to our Feedback and Complaints Form can be found on our website

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**Collection:**

- Direct communication with participants and their representatives
- Written documents, forms, and assessments
- Communication with other providers or services (with consent)

**Storage:**

- Secure, password-protected cloud-based systems
- Encrypted electronic records with restricted access
- Paper-based records in locked storage if used

**Sharing:**

- Verbally, in writing, or electronically
- Only with consent or if required by law or duty of care
- Only with authorised individuals or agencies

**Use of Images and Media**

- **Advertising or Marketing:** Participant images or videos will not be used without written consent. Participants can withdraw consent at any time.
- **Service Delivery:** Images may be used to support assessments or funding applications with written consent. Shared only with relevant providers.
- **Images Not Containing Participants:** Photos of equipment, repairs, or home modifications may be shared with providers but are still confidential.

**Digital Dictation**

Sometimes, staff at Soaring Sparrows use **Microsoft Teams dictation** or a similar tool to help write case notes.

- These tools **turn our spoken words into text**.
- These tools **do not save your voice**.
- Staff will **explain** how it works before using it.
- Staff will **ask for your permission** before using dictation.
- You can **say no**, and staff will write notes by hand.
- Notes made from dictation are kept **safe and private** like all other case notes.

## **Participant Consent**

Participants or their decision-makers:

- Are informed about what information is collected and why
- Provide written consent before information is shared externally
- Can withdraw or limit consent at any time (unless legally required)

Consent is documented through:

- Signed Service Agreements
- Consent to Share Information Forms
- Case notes recording verbal consent (if appropriate)

## **Limits to Confidentiality**

Information may be shared without consent if:

- Required by law (court order, subpoena)
- Necessary to prevent or respond to serious threat to life, health, or safety
- Required under child protection or safeguarding laws
- Permitted under South Australia's Information Sharing Guidelines

Participants will be informed when it is safe and appropriate.

## **Responsibilities**

### **All Staff:**

- Protect participant information and maintain confidentiality
- Seek and document consent before sharing information or images
- Report suspected or actual breaches of privacy immediately

### **Team Leaders:**

- Ensure staff comply with this policy
- Provide guidance and training on privacy and confidentiality

### **Director:**

- Ensure compliance with privacy laws and NDIS requirements
- Oversee responses to breaches of privacy or confidentiality

## **Related Legislation**

A full catalogue of Soaring Sparrows Policies and Procedures as well as a link to our Feedback and Complaints Form can be found on our website

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- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)
- NDIS Act 2013
- NDIS Practice Standards (Core Module – Rights & Responsibilities, Governance & Operational Management)
- South Australia Information Sharing Guidelines (ISG)

**Other Relevant Documents**

- Information Sharing and Storage Policy
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Incident Management Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Consent Form

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes to legislation, NDIS requirements, or organisational practice.



## Information Sharing and Storage Policy (Simple English)

### Purpose

This policy explains how we collect, use, store, and share information safely. It makes sure:

- Your personal information is protected.
  - Our services are safe and effective.
  - We follow the law and NDIS rules.
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### Who This Policy Covers

- All staff, contractors, and volunteers
  - Participants using our services
  - Families, carers, and anyone helping with support
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### Key Words

- **Personal Information** – Info about you, like your name, DOB, contact details, health info, or NDIS number.
- **Sensitive Information** – Private info such as health, disability, culture, religion, or sexual orientation.
- **Redacted Material** – Info that has been removed or hidden to protect privacy.
- **Access Request** – Asking to see your information.
- **Correction / Update** – Fixing or updating information to make it correct and complete.
- **Privacy Breach** – Info accessed, used, or shared without permission.
- **Participant / Decision-Maker** – The person receiving services or someone who can make decisions for them.
- **Information Sharing** – Giving info to authorised people for lawful and necessary purposes.

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- **Confidentiality** – Keeping information safe and private.
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## **Policy Statement**

Soaring Sparrows is committed to:

- Protecting all participant and organisational information from misuse, loss, or unauthorised access.
  - Using secure digital and physical systems.
  - Collecting and sharing information only when needed and lawful.
  - Keeping information accurate, complete, and up to date, including updating info when participants tell us it has changed.
  - Making sure participants know how their information is used and can make complaints if privacy is breached.
  - Keeping and disposing of records securely according to NDIS and legal requirements (at least 7 years).
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## **Responsibilities**

### **Director / Privacy Officer**

- Make sure information is handled safely.
- Train staff on privacy and confidentiality.
- Respond to access requests and breaches.

### **Staff / Contractors**

- Use only secure company systems and devices.
- Get consent before sharing information, unless the law allows otherwise.
- Report any privacy breaches immediately.
- Follow offboarding procedures when leaving.

### **Participants / Decision-Makers**

- Give consent for sharing information where appropriate.
- Ask to see or correct information.
- Withdraw consent at any time (unless legally required).

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## **Procedures**

### **1. What Information We Collect**

- Personal details, contact info, emergency contacts
- NDIS plans, service agreements, case notes
- Health and support info, risk assessments
- Behaviour support plans (if applicable)
- Consent forms and communications

### **2. When We Collect Information**

- Intake and onboarding
- During service delivery
- After incidents or events
- When communicating with other providers or family

### **3. Why We Collect and Share**

- To identify participants
- To provide safe, person-centred support
- To meet NDIS and legal obligations
- To respond to risks or incidents
- To comply with lawful requests

### **4. Digital Storage**

- Secure systems with encryption, passwords, and two-factor authentication
- Only authorised devices used for work

### **5. Physical Records**

- Locked storage accessible only to authorised staff
- Digitised as soon as possible
- Shredded or securely destroyed when no longer needed

### **6. Sharing Information**

- Only with consent or when law requires

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- Shared only with authorised people or agencies

## **7. Access and Corrections**

- Participants can request to see their info
- Can request corrections if info is inaccurate or incomplete
- Can make a complaint if privacy is breached
- Info provided in accessible formats if needed

## **8. Staff Leaving**

- Access revoked immediately
- Devices and records returned
- IT systems checked
- Staff reminded of confidentiality obligations

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## **Record Disposal**

- Records kept for at least 7 years (or until a minor participant turns 25)
- Securely shredded or deleted when no longer needed
- Disposal documented and authorised

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## **Related Laws**

- NDIS Act 2013
- NDIS Practice Standards 2018
- Privacy Act 1988
- Work Health & Safety Act 2012 (SA)
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)
- SA Information Sharing Guidelines

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## **Other Documents**

- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Participant Rights and Responsibilities Policy

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- Complaints and Feedback Policy
  - Risk Management Policy
  - NDIS Code of Conduct
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### **Review**

- Every year, or sooner if:
    - Laws or NDIS rules change
    - A privacy breach occurs
    - Feedback suggests improvements
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### **Contact – Privacy Officer/Director**

- Email: [kathryns@soaringsparrows.com.au](mailto:kathryns@soaringsparrows.com.au)
- Phone: 0431 753 950
- Address: 31 Short Rd, Elizabeth SA 5112



## Participant Rights and Responsibilities (Simple English Version)

### Purpose

This policy tells everyone using Soaring Sparrows services about their **rights** and **responsibilities**.

It helps keep services **safe, fair, and respectful**.

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### Who the Policy is For

- People using our services
  - Families, carers, and advocates
  - Staff, contractors, and volunteers
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### Definitions

- **Participant:** Someone who uses our services.
  - **Rights:** Things participants are allowed to have, like safety, respect, and choice.
  - **Responsibilities:** Things participants should do, like treating others with respect and giving correct information.
  - **Advocate:** Someone who helps participants speak up and make choices.
  - **Easy Read:** Simple, clear information that is easy to understand.
  - **Supported Decision-Making:** Helping participants make their own choices.
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### Policy Statement

Soaring Sparrows:

- Respects participants' rights
- Gives clear information about rights and responsibilities
- Supports participants to make choices
- Acts quickly if rights or responsibilities are not followed

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## **Responsibilities**

### **Director/Management**

- Tell participants about their rights and responsibilities
- Train staff
- Check that the policy is working

### **Staff/Contractors**

- Treat participants with respect
- Help participants understand their rights
- Respond to concerns about rights or responsibilities

### **Participants**

- Have the right to safe, respectful services
- Should treat staff and others with respect
- Should give accurate information
- Can raise concerns through the complaints process

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## **Procedures**

### **1. Informing Participants**

- Give a Rights and Responsibilities statement when participants start services
- Provide information in Easy Read if needed

### **2. Supporting Rights**

- Help participants make decisions
- Offer advocacy support

### **3. Responding to Breaches**

- Record and report breaches of rights
- Deal with issues quickly

### **4. Promoting Responsibilities**

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- Remind participants to respect others and property
- Talk with participants respectfully if issues arise

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### **Related Laws**

- NDIS Act 2013
- NDIS Code of Conduct
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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### **Review**

The policy is reviewed every two years, or sooner if:

- Laws change
- Feedback shows changes are needed
- Audits or incidents show gaps





## Incident Management Policy (Simple English)

### Purpose

This policy explains how Soaring Sparrows manages incidents.

We will:

- Act quickly and fairly when incidents happen.
  - Keep participants safe and supported.
  - Meet all NDIS and South Australian legal requirements.
  - Learn from incidents to prevent them in the future.
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### Scope

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, and volunteers at Soaring Sparrows.

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### Policy Statement

We commit to:

- Responding to incidents in a respectful and timely way.
  - Making participant safety our top priority.
  - Following the NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018.
  - Using incidents as opportunities to improve our services.
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### Key Definitions

#### Incident

An event that:

- Causes or could cause harm (physical, emotional, financial, or psychological).
- Is an emergency, such as a hospital admission or mental health crisis.
- Involves abuse, neglect, unlawful contact, exploitation, or unauthorised restrictive practices.

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### Near Miss

An event that could have caused harm but did not. It shows a possible risk that needs attention.

### Reportable Incident

Serious incidents that must be reported to the NDIS Commission. These include:

- Death of a participant
- Serious injury
- Abuse or neglect
- Unlawful sexual or physical contact
- Sexual misconduct
- Use of an unauthorised restrictive practice

## Procedures

### 1. Internal Reporting

- All incidents must be reported to the Manager or Director immediately.
- Verbal notification should be given within 2 hours.
- A written report must be completed in Splose or Microsoft Forms within 24 hours.
- Reports are stored securely.

### 2. External Reporting

Some incidents must also be reported to external agencies:

Agency	When to Report	Timeframe
NDIS Commission	Reportable incidents	Within 24 hrs (initial), follow-up in 5 days
SAPOL (Police)	Suspected criminal acts	As soon as possible
CARL (Child Abuse Report Line)	Suspected child abuse or neglect	As soon as possible
Mental Health Triage (SA Health)	Mental health crises	As soon as possible

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Agency	When to Report	Timeframe
SA Ambulance Service	Serious injury or medical emergencies	As soon as possible
Adult Safeguarding Unit	Suspected abuse of an adult at risk	As soon as possible

The Director or delegated Incident Manager is responsible for completing external reports.

### 3. Investigations

- Start within 2 business days.
- Finish within 10 business days unless more time is needed.
- Led by a Manager or Senior Officer not involved in the incident.
- Process includes: interviews, reviewing notes, finding the cause, and recommending actions.
- Findings are documented in an Incident Investigation Report.

### 4. Participant Support

- Participants involved will be kept safe and supported.
- They will receive clear communication in ways they understand.
- Family, advocates, or nominees may be involved if appropriate.
- Counselling or advocacy services will be offered if needed.
- Participants will be kept updated about what is happening.

### 5. Preventing Future Incidents

- A Corrective and Preventative Action Plan (CAPA) will be developed.
- Staff will receive training or retraining.
- Policies and systems will be reviewed.
- Risks will be identified and managed.
- Learnings (without names) may be shared with staff.

### 6. Recordkeeping

- All incident records will be stored securely for at least 7 years.
- Only authorised staff will have access.

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## Responsibilities

- **All staff:** Report incidents quickly and cooperate with investigations.
  - **Line Managers:** Review reports, lead investigations, support staff and participants.
  - **Director:** Ensure compliance with NDIS and laws, oversee investigations, review data, provide staff training.
  - **Incident Manager (if appointed):** Carry out investigations and liaise with external agencies.
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## Related Laws and Standards

- NDIS Act 2013
  - NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018
  - NDIS Practice Standards – Core Module: Incident Management
  - Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)
  - Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)
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## Review

This policy will be reviewed every year, or earlier if:

- Laws or NDIS requirements change.
- An incident shows the process needs improvement.
- Feedback suggests changes are needed.



## Feedback and Complaints Policy (Simple English)

### Purpose

This policy explains how Soaring Sparrows manages feedback and complaints.

- **Participants have the right to complain about any incident or issue arising from the delivery of Soaring Sparrows services, or in connection with our services.**
  - Participants, families, carers, advocates, staff, and the public can tell us when something is wrong or give suggestions.
  - We follow the **NDIS Code of Conduct** and **Practice Standards**.
  - Complaints help us improve our services.
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### Who this policy applies to

- Participants
  - Families, carers, guardians, advocates
  - Staff, contractors, volunteers
  - Other people who use or are affected by our services
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### Key Words

- **Feedback:** Comments, suggestions, or compliments about services.
- **Complaint:** When someone is unhappy with a service, staff, or organisational practices.
- **Complainant:** The person making a complaint.
- **Advocate:** Someone who helps a participant make a complaint or give feedback.
- **Serious Complaint:** Complaints about abuse, neglect, exploitation, or unsafe supports.
- **Resolution:** How we respond to and solve complaints.

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[www.soaringsparrows.com.au](http://www.soaringsparrows.com.au)

- **External Complaint:** Complaints made to organisations outside Soaring Sparrows, such as the NDIS Commission.
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## **Our Commitment**

Soaring Sparrows will:

- Listen to all feedback and complaints
  - Treat complaints fairly and respectfully
  - Protect anyone who reports concerns from punishment
  - Keep information private where possible
  - Resolve complaints quickly
  - Learn from complaints to improve services
  - Make our complaints process accessible to everyone, including Easy Read, large print, and translated materials
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## **Responsibilities**

### **Director / Management:**

- Implement and maintain a complaints system
- Investigate complaints fairly
- Escalate complaints about the Director to an independent reviewer
- Report trends and improve systems

### **Staff / Contractors:**

- Treat complaints seriously
- Help participants raise complaints
- Report complaints to management promptly

### **Participants / Stakeholders:**

- Can give feedback or complaints
  - Can be involved in resolving complaints
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## **Making a Complaint**

A full catalogue of Soaring Sparrows Policies and Procedures as well as a link to our Feedback and Complaints Form can be found on our website

[www.soaringsparrows.com.au](http://www.soaringsparrows.com.au)



You can complain:

- In person
- By phone: 0431 753 950
- By email: [KathrynS@soaringsparrows.com.au](mailto:KathrynS@soaringsparrows.com.au)
- By completing a Feedback & Complaints Form on our website
- Through a family member, friend, or advocate

Contact:

**Kathryn Soar – Director**

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### **What You Can Complain About**

- Services we provide
  - Staff behaviour
  - Safety or quality of support
  - Respect for your rights, privacy, and dignity
  - Communication or administration issues
  - Any other aspect of our service
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### **What Happens Next**

1. **Acknowledgement:** We will confirm we received your complaint within 2 working days
  2. **Discussion:** We will talk with you and your advocate if needed
  3. **Investigation:** We will look into the complaint fairly and confidentially
  4. **Outcome:** You will be told the result and reasons
  5. **Improvement:** Lessons are added to our Continuous Improvement and Risk Registers
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### **Timeframes**

- Most complaints are resolved within **14 working days**
- If it takes longer, we will update you regularly

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## Confidentiality

- Complaints are recorded in a secure register
  - Only authorised staff can access records
  - Privacy is protected
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## Support

We can help you make a complaint:

- Interpreters
  - Advocates
  - Easy Read, large print, or translated materials
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## External Options

If you are not happy with our response, you can contact:

- **NDIS Commission** – 1800 035 544 | [www.ndiscommission.gov.au](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)
  - **HCSCC SA** – 1800 232 007 | [www.hcscs.sa.gov.au](http://www.hcscs.sa.gov.au)
  - **Disability Advocacy Services (SA)** – (08) 7122 6030 | [www.dacssa.org.au](http://www.dacssa.org.au)
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## Serious Complaints

If your complaint is about abuse, neglect, exploitation, or unsafe supports:

- We will follow the **Incident Management Policy**
  - We will report it to the **NDIS Commission**
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## Review

- This policy is reviewed every **2 years** or sooner if needed



## Feedback and Complaints Form

*We welcome your feedback — compliments, suggestions, and complaints — to help us improve our services.*

*You can complete this form yourself or ask someone you trust to help. You do not have to include your name if you prefer to remain anonymous.*

### 1. Your Details. I am a

- ☐ Soaring Sparrows Participant
- ☐ Family Member/Carer
- ☐ Provider
- ☐ Advocate
- ☐ Soaring Sparrows Staff Member
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Would you like to remain anonymous?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

### 3. What Type of Feedback Are You Providing?

- ☐ Complaint
- ☐ Suggestion
- ☐ Compliment
- ☐ Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. What Is Your Feedback About?

Please provide as much detail as possible, including dates, names (if relevant), and what happened:

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(You may attach extra pages or documents if needed.)

### 5. What Outcome Would You Like?

Let us know what you would like to see happen as a result of your feedback:

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### 6. Do You Need Help Making This Complaint?

- ☐ Yes — I would like assistance from Soaring Sparrows staff – please call 0468445950
- ☐ Yes — I have support from a friend / family member / advocate
- ☐ No — I do not need help

**If someone is helping you, please provide their name and contact details (optional):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

### Need Help or an Advocate?

We can help you contact an independent disability advocate if you wish. Please tick below:

- ☐ Yes, I would like to be referred to an advocate.
- ☐ No, thank you.

### 6. Your Contact Details (Optional)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### How to Submit This Form

You can submit this form by:

Email: [kathryns@soaringsparrows.com.au](mailto:kathryns@soaringsparrows.com.au) or [admin@soaringsparrows.com.au](mailto:admin@soaringsparrows.com.au)

Mail or In Person: 31 Short Rd, Elizabeth SA 5112

Phone: 0468 445 950 (we can complete the form with you)

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**Office Use Only (To be completed by staff)**

Date Received: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Received By:

Acknowledged On: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Action Taken:

☐ Resolved Informally

☐ Investigation Required

☐ Referred to Director

☐ Referred to External Agency

Notes/Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_



## Other Helpful Contacts

### Soaring Sparrows Office

0468 445 950      [admin@soaringsparrows.com.au](mailto:admin@soaringsparrows.com.au)      [www.soaringsparrows.com.au](http://www.soaringsparrows.com.au)

### NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

1800 035 544      TTY 133 677      [www.ndiscommission.gov.au](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)

### Disability Advocacy Services (SA)

- DACSSA:                      (08) 7122 6030      [www.dacssa.org.au](http://www.dacssa.org.au)
- DRAS:                        (08) 8351 9500      [www.dras.com.au](http://www.dras.com.au)
- Family Advocacy:      1800 620 588      [www.family-advocacy.com](http://www.family-advocacy.com)
- National Advocacy Service      [disabilityadvocacy@dss.gov.au](mailto:disabilityadvocacy@dss.gov.au)

### Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC SA)

1800 232 007      [www.hcscs.sa.gov.au](http://www.hcscs.sa.gov.au)

### Lifeline

13 11 14      <https://www.lifeline.org.au>