

Feedback Policy

The Vanier Institute of the Family is a public serving agency committed to accountability and transparency. The Vanier Institute's procedure for acceptance, acknowledgement, handling of, and response to feedback is an important part of its accountability mechanisms.

1. Scope

This policy applies to feedback received by the Vanier Institute from others about our activities, programs, services, staff, or volunteers. It does not apply to feedback received from staff or volunteers, which are addressed in the conflict resolution policy.

2. Definitions

Compliment	A compliment expresses satisfaction about the service or action by the Vanier Institute as an organization or by a staff member or volunteer.
Comment	A comment is a neutral expression about the service or action by the Vanier Institute as an organization or by a staff member or volunteer.
Complaint	A complaint expresses dissatisfaction about the service, action, or lack of action by the Vanier Institute as an organization or by a staff member or volunteer.

3. Policy

General

The Vanier Institute recognizes feedback as an important form of accountability to stakeholders, including the general public. The timeliness and integrity of the Institute's response to feedback is critical to strengthening trust and deepening relationships that are central to fulfilling the Institute's mission (see the Vanier Institute Theory of Change).

The Vanier Institute welcomes all forms of feedback (compliments, comments, and complaints) from the general public. Any feedback will be communicated in a timely manner to relevant staff or volunteers for information, in the case of compliments or comments, or a response, in the case of a complaint. Further, where feedback is received about a specific program, publication, or project of the Institute, it will be shared with the staff member responsible for that work.

Feedback may be provided verbally (by phone or in person) or in writing (by mail or [electronically](#)).

The first recipient of the feedback will acknowledge its receipt and, where relevant, inform the provider of any next steps in response to the receipt of the feedback (e.g. forwarding to relevant staff and projected timeline of response).

Following the initial acknowledgement, the response and further communication with respect to a compliment or comment will be at the discretion of the relevant staff or volunteer.

Complaints

Complaints will be dealt with promptly and resolved or acted on as quickly as possible.

The recipient of a complaint is initially responsible to resolve the complaint or transfer it to a more appropriate respondent, which would generally be the person who has the primary relationship with the complainant or has the specific knowledge that is needed to resolve the problem. If a complaint is transferred, the new respondent will acknowledge to the complainant that they have received the complaint and will act on it.

In communicating to the complainant about the disposition of a complaint, the respondent will inform the complainant of their right to escalate a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the initial response. Escalation will follow the governance hierarchy of the Vanier Institute: program management, Executive Director, Board Chair, full Board of Directors.

A summary report of all complaints received will be provided to the Board of Directors by the Executive Director at least annually.

4. Procedures

Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers must be open to receiving feedback from stakeholders and to be gracious in its receipt. The initial recipient of the feedback will record the contact information (e.g. name and e-mail or phone number) of the person or organization giving feedback.

Complaints received to a non-personal e-mail address (e.g. info@vanierinstitute.ca) will be acknowledged as received from the named, individual e-mail address of the person processing the mailbox.

Where the feedback is not directly relevant to the receiving staff or volunteer, they will identify the most relevant recipient and forward the feedback to that person. If it is not immediately clear who the most relevant recipient is, the feedback should be directed to the Director of Corporate Services and the Executive Director.

Staff will report any complaints received and resolved to the Executive Director so that they can be documented and reported to the Board as required.

Where a complaint cannot be easily resolved, it should be escalated to the Executive Director. If the complaint is about the Executive Director, it will be handled by the Chair of the Board.

Timelines

When receiving a verbal complaint, staff should listen respectfully to understand the complaint. They may attempt to resolve it immediately.

Complaints in writing should be acknowledged within two business days. Staff should attempt to resolve the matter within 10 business days.

Every attempt should be made to resolve escalated complaints within an additional 10 business days so that all complaints are resolved within a month of having been received.

5. Related Policies

- Whistleblower Policy
- Conflict Resolution Policy

6. Website Summary

The Vanier Institute recognizes feedback as an important form of accountability to stakeholders, including the general public. The timeliness and integrity of the Institute’s response to feedback is critical to strengthening trust and deepening relationships that are central to fulfilling the Institute’s mission (see the Vanier Institute Theory of Change).

The Vanier Institute welcomes all forms of feedback (compliments, comments, and complaints). Any feedback will be communicated in a timely manner to relevant staff or volunteers for information, in the case of compliments or comments, or a response, in the case of a complaint. Further, where feedback is received about a specific program, publication, or project of the Institute, it will be shared with the staff member responsible for that work.

If you wish to offer feedback, please submit it through our contact page, e-mail info@vanierinstitute.ca, or leave a message at 613-228-8500.

Complaints will be acknowledged within two business days, and we will attempt to resolve the matter within 10 business days, or within an additional 10 business days if the complaint is escalated.

A summary report of all complaints received will be provided to the Board of Directors by the Executive Director at least annually.

Policy created:	September 2013
Last review:	March 2024
Next review due:	March 2026