



# Complaints Policy

## 1 Purpose

The complaints policy is intended to set out how Oarsome Chance deals with its complaints about administration or education. All members of the Oarsome Chance community should feel able to express their views in the full knowledge that they are dealt with fairly.

We welcome suggestions for improving our work. All concerns or complaints are important to us and are investigated with due urgency and thoroughness.

Whenever a complaint is upheld, every effort is made to rectify the issue and if necessary, action is taken to try to prevent a recurrence of the problem. Oarsome Chance does not investigate anonymous complaints or allegations. If you would like to make a formal complaint, please ensure that it is clearly identified as such in any correspondence with Oarsome Chance.

## 2 Aims

- To provide an accessible and easily understood procedure for complaints
- To encourage parents and social workers from the placing authority, members of the Oarsome Chance community and the public to express their views at the earliest opportunity, through the appropriate channels
- To increase mutual understanding between all parties
- To create an ethos where all are committed to working together for the benefit of all staff, students and service users.

## 3 Confidentiality

Whether a complaint is made informally or formally all parties involved should ensure that every effort is made to respect confidentiality and ensure that all documentation remains confidential to those parties directly involved in the complaint being investigated. Parents/Support Workers/Carers/Social Workers should be assured that making a complaint does not adversely affect the young person.

## **4 How we manage our Concerns and Complaints**

### **4.1 Stage 1: Informal complaint**

The vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight away through direct contact with the member of staff. We aim to resolve any informal complaint within one working day. If the person first contacted cannot deal with the matter immediately they refer to the person with responsibility for the particular issue raised. This person will continue to follow the issue through until it has been fully addressed and the matter is resolved either at a face-to-face meeting or by telephone.

On certain issues relevant staff may decide to deal with the concerns directly at this stage. If the concern relates to the staff member involved the complainant is advised to contact Gill Heron, our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Where no satisfactory solution has been found, complainants are asked whether they wish their concern to be considered further. If so, they are given clear information about how to make a formal complaint as outlined in the complaints policy.

A written record is made by the person dealing with the informal complaint and kept in a file in the office. A copy may be kept in file of a young person if relevant.

### **4.2 Stage 2: Appeal to the Principal**

The complainant makes a written appeal to the Principal detailing the original complaint and reasons why they remain unsatisfied after DSL's investigation. The Principal writes to the complainant to acknowledge receipt within 5 working days. The Principal investigates the complaint by speaking with relevant parties and reviewing documents. The Principal will confer with two or more other Trustees if necessary and will make a decision.

The Principal will write to the complainant to advise them of the outcome and any actions arising.

In the case of a complaint against the DSL or Principal, the final recourse will be to the Chair of Trustees.

A record will be kept of all complaints.

Regardless of whether the complaint is upheld or not, a review of working practices will be held to determine what action needs to be taken to reduce the risk of concerns arising happening in future.

### **4.3 Stage 3: Appeal to the Chair of Trustees**

The complainant makes a written appeal via the Chair of Trustees, detailing the original complaint and reasons why they remain unsatisfied after the Principal's investigation. The Chair of Trustees writes to the complainant to acknowledge receipt within 10 working days.

The Chair of Trustees investigates the complaint by speaking with relevant parties and reviewing documents and will make a decision.

The Chair of Trustees will write to the complainant to advise them of the outcome and any actions arising. This letter will also advise that there is no further recourse to appeal the decision of the Chair of Trustees.

The complainant has the right to be accompanied by a friend or family member at all meetings arising from their complaint.

Please note that complaints which run parallel to legal proceedings may not be investigated until legal proceedings have been completed. The Chair of Trustees will communicate with complainants if the investigation of an official complaint under the complaints policy may prejudice legal proceedings.

Confidential records of all complaints, their investigations and outcomes will be kept at The Boathouse. St Vincent college, Mill lane, Gosport PO12 4QA