



COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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Version	1

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy applies to all customer/parents/carers attending one of our Community Activity Groups externally that are ran from Warwick Schools Foundation (Warwick Preparatory School, King's High School, Warwick School, Warwick Junior School, and The Kingsley School).
- 1.2 The Foundation has long prided themselves on the quality of the sports facilities, clubs, holidays clubs, sports camps, and activities. However, if customer/parents/carers do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated in accordance with this Policy and Procedure. Our aim is to have an open organisation, climate, and culture.
- 1.3 This policy encompasses notifications of an actual or perceived problem arising from an event or process under the jurisdiction of the foundation, which causes customer/parents/carers to be concerned or dissatisfied about their child's experience or their own and where they are seeking action by the Foundation. Customer/parents/carers should raise any complaints directly and we reserve the right to modify the procedures in this policy as necessary to address complaints raised by more than one set of customer/parents/carers together.
- 1.4 To assist in a speedy and satisfactory resolution, customer/parents/carers are asked, from the beginning, to clearly state the exact nature of their concern and the remedy sought. It can greatly assist a speedy and satisfactory resolution if the notification is prompt and specific, including examples and factual evidence where this is appropriate and practicable.
- 1.5 A central record will be kept securely of informal complaints, allowing the pattern of concerns and complaints to be monitored regularly by appropriate members of the senior management team.

2.0 Policy

- 2.1 In our Communities Activities, we wish to have an association that listens and can respond in a positive, appropriate, and sympathetic way to any concerns. It is important that all customers using the foundations facilities feel valued and involved with the foundation and can voice their concerns. This is helped where the culture of the organisation is open and where all complaints are received in a positive manner.

2.2 All concerns need to be handled seriously. A gentle expression of concern, or a simple query, may grow into a painful matter if people feel that they have been brushed aside. Equally, issues with the potential to become acutely difficult may dwindle and fade if they are handled well at the initial stage.

3.0 Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Sports Centre: Receptionist, Duty Supervisor.

Swim School: Swim teacher, Receptionist.

Holiday Action: Duty Manager - Leamington, Warwick, Nursery, Action Plus.

Holiday Camps: Sports Camp Co-ordinator, Duty Supervisor, Coach.

Timescale: Complaint normally acknowledged within 2 working days.
Complaint to be dealt with, with a view to a full resolution, normally within 10 working days.

3.1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

3.2 If customer/parents/carers have a complaint, they should contact the Manager/Duty Supervisor/ Sports Camp Co-ordinator of the appropriate department. If he/she is not the appropriate person to deal with the complaint, he/she will pass it to the person who is. If this individual cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Foundation Director of Hospitality and Leisure.

3.3 The aim is to resolve the matter promptly to the customers/parents/carer's satisfaction.

3.4 Complaints made directly to the Foundation Director of Hospitality and Leisure, or the Director of Safeguarding will be referred to the relevant member of staff unless the Foundation Director of Hospitality and Leisure or the Director of Safeguarding deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

3.5 The member of staff in receipt of the complaint/concern will make a written record of it and the date on which it was received and will normally acknowledge it within 2 working days. The foundation will normally deal with the matter within 10 working days of receipt of the notification.

3.6 Where an informal resolution is not achieved, customer/parents/carers may make a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

Contact: Director of Hospitality and Leisure or the Director of Safeguarding

Timescale: Complaint normally acknowledged in writing by Director of Hospitality and Leisure or the Director of Safeguarding within 5 working days
Complaint to be dealt with, with a view to a full resolution, normally within 28 working days.

3.7 If the complaint cannot be resolved at Stage 1 (Informal Resolution), then the customer/parents/carers should put their complaint in an email to the Director of Hospitality

and Leisure or the Director of Safeguarding stating explicitly that, having been through Stage 1 of the procedure, they remain dissatisfied and now wish to make a “formal complaint”.

3.8 In the Formal Complaint, the customer/parents/carers should:

- state the nature of the complaint,
- state the remedy sought, and
- include all relevant information.

Customer/parents/carers should note that the complaint at this stage should not change in scope from that presented at Stage 1. Should any new matters be presented, customer/parents/carers will usually be advised that they will be dealt with under Stage 1.

3.9 A formal complaint should normally be lodged within 7 working days of the date of a verbal or written report to parents under the Stage 1 procedure.

3.10 The Director of Hospitality and Leisure or the Director of Safeguarding will acknowledge in writing receipt of the complaint, normally within 5 working days, and will normally appoint a senior member of staff to investigate the issues raised (“Investigating Officer”).

3.11 The Investigating Officer will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint which will be provided to the Director of Hospitality and Leisure, or the Director of Safeguarding once collated.

3.12 Once the Director of Hospitality and Leisure, or the Director of Safeguarding is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that all the relevant facts have been established, a meeting with the customer/parent/carers will be arranged. At or after that meeting, a decision will be made and the customer/parents/carers will be informed in email, detailing the reasons.

3.13 The foundation will normally deal with a formal complaint within 28 working days of receipt.

3.14 If the customer/parents/carers are still not satisfied with the decision, they may choose to proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3- Panel Hearing

Contact: Bursar, who will call complaints

Timescale: Hearing normally to take place within 28 working days, any documentation will be provided no later than working 5 days before the hearing. Decision normally made within 10 working days.

3.15 If customer/parents/carers seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach resolution at Stages 1 or 2), they will be referred to the Bursar. The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. A Complaints Panel hearing is a review of the decisions taken by the Director of Hospitality and Leisure or the Director of Safeguarding

3.16 Customer/parents/carers should be advised that it is only their Stage 2 complaint which will be considered by the Complaints Panel. The Panel will not consider any new material or areas of complaint at this stage. They will refer any new material or complaint back to the Foundation for investigation under the appropriate earlier stage of this procedure.

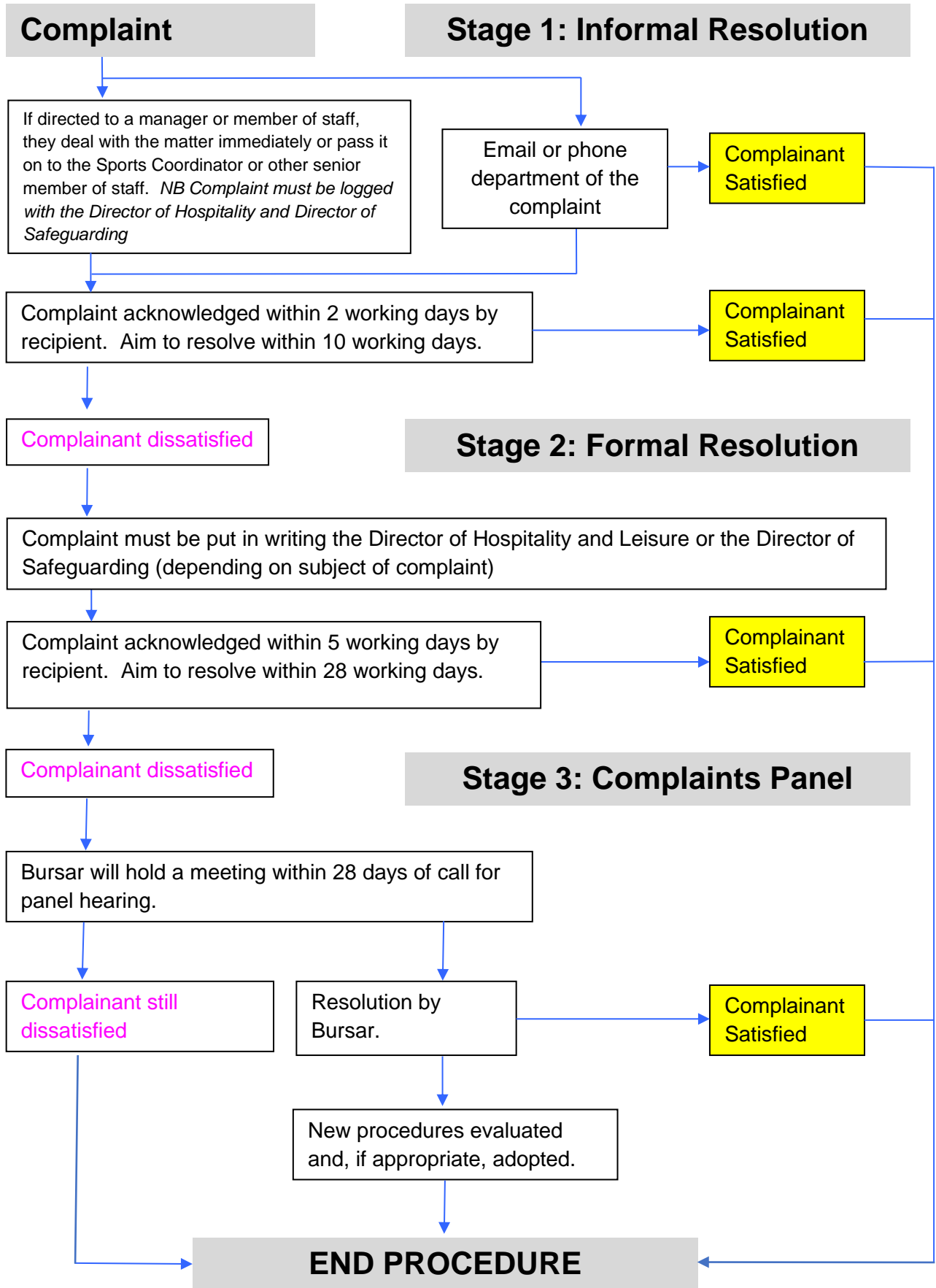
- 3.17 It is not the Complaints Panel's purpose to re-investigate the complaint, but to consider the matters raised by the customer/parents/carers, and the report from the foundation, and to decide whether the determination reached at Stage 2 was reasonable and fair.
- 3.18 The Complaints Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the Foundation. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Bursar. The Governance Manager, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within 28 working days of the complaint being lodged with the Governance Manager.
- 3.19 If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- 3.20 Customer/parents/carers may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person who will be present to provide support and not to participate in the discussions. This may be a relative, or friend. Legal representation will not be appropriate.
- 3.21 A hearing under this procedure is not a legal proceeding, but a private and confidential matter. The Bursar will make a minute of the hearing, but no tape, video or digital recording may be made by any party. No notes, other records or oral statements about any matter discussed or arising from the proceedings shall be made available directly or indirectly to third parties, including the press or other media.
- 3.22 The Panel's aim is to, if possible, resolve the customer/parents/carers complaint as soon as it has met without the need for further investigation, on the understanding that they already have all the necessary information to conclude matters. Occasionally, it may become necessary to adjourn and reconvene the Panel if further information comes to light that alters the key facts of the case.
- 3.23 After due consideration of all facts, they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations as soon as reasonably possible usually within 10 working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it.
- 3.24 The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint was made.
- 3.25 A copy of those findings and recommendations will be kept by the Director of Hospitality and Leisure, or the Director of Safeguarding.

4.0 Record-keeping

- 4.1 Written records of both formal and informal complaints will be kept securely for at least three years, including:
- whether formal complaints were resolved at the preliminary stage or panel hearing stage
 - what action the foundation has taken because of each complaint regardless of whether it was upheld.

4.2 Customer/parents/carers can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

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Appendix 1 Unreasonable complaints

1. We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with us. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening.
2. Where repeated attempts are made by a parent/carer to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy.
3. Unreasonable complaints are taken seriously by the foundation as they put a strain on valuable resources and hinder the progress of proper investigations.
4. We adopt the Department for Education's definition of unreasonable behaviour as that, which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the Foundation, such as if the complainant:
 - Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.
 - Refuses to co-operate with the complaint's investigation process.
 - Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure.
 - Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
 - Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales.
 - Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeks to have them replaced.
 - Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
 - Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed).
 - Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint were the

foundations complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed.

- Seeks an unrealistic outcome.
 - Makes excessive demands on foundation time by frequent, lengthy, and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.
 - Uses threats to intimidate.
 - Uses abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language or violence.
 - Knowingly provides falsified information.
 - Publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.
5. A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if it is manifestly unjustified, inappropriate, or an improper use of formal procedure.
6. In assessing this, the Foundation shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case and the nature of the complaint itself rather than the nature of the complainant. In assessing all the circumstances of the case, the Foundation will consider a range of factors including:
- Whether a complaint has reasonable grounds.
 - The history and context of the complaint (and any evidence where relevant).
 - Whether the time and cost of investigating the complaint is proportionate to the issue(s) complained of.
 - Whether an investigation of the complaint is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation, or distress.
 - Unexplained delay in raising a complaint or issue.
 - If the purpose of the complaint is to obtain an outcome which is unavailable via the complaints procedure, such as a claim for compensation, damages, or a refund of fees paid.
 - Any evidence of a complaint being brought for an improper purpose.
7. Whenever possible, the Director of Hospitality and Leisure, or the Director of Safeguarding will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before dismissing a complaint as unreasonable.

8. If the behaviour continues, the Foundation will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it.
9. For complainants who excessively contact the Foundation causing a significant level of disruption, the Foundation may specify methods of communication and limit number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.
10. Temporary suspensions while under investigation may be necessary, however the Foundation have the right to review this case by case and where appropriate a customer may not be able to use the facilities until the matter is resolved.
11. In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the Foundation will immediately inform the police and communicate its actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the Foundation.