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Complaints Policy

Oaks Rise provides a calm, safe and nurturing environment. However, we know that difficulties sometimes arise and we aim to respond to issues in a fair and timely manner. We hope for direct resolution through open communication between parents / carers, teaching staff, directors and, where appropriate, with the learner.

This document outlines the procedure to follow if more informal discussions are unable to resolve the issue.

1. The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

2. Scope of this policy

This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to the following, as we have separate policies relating to these issues:

- Admissions decisions
- Matters likely to require a Child Protection or broader safeguarding Investigation
- Whistleblowing
- Staff grievance

3. How to raise a concern or make a complaint

Stage 1: Informal complaint or concern procedure

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing (email, letter or complaint form) or by telephone. It may also be made by a third party acting on your behalf, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. If you wish to raise a concern, i.e. seeking reassurance about a particular issue, your first point of contact is usually the Head of Learning. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with that member of staff, please contact another member of staff or an Oaks Rise Director. Similarly, if a member of staff feels unable to deal with a concern, they may refer you to another member of the Oaks Rise team.

If an informal complaint is not resolved within 14 days, then the Formal Complaints Procedure should be followed.



We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Head of Learning or Directors, if appropriate, will determine whether an anonymous complaint warrants an investigation.

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time: We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first opening day after the holiday period.

Stage 2: Formal complaint procedure

If you wish to make a formal complaint, you should follow the stages outlined below. It is helpful for all parties if the complainant could complete the form at the end of this document. However, you may also raise your complaint in person or by telephone, in which case the person you raise the complaint with will record details via the below form.

All complaints should be directed to the Head of Learning (unless named in the complaint) in which please contact any Oaks Rise Director to advise them of your complaint and at least two Directors will then be involved in the process from there on.

- Any official complaint that is referred directly to the Head of Learning will be recorded using the 'formal complaint form' and stored securely.
- The Head of Learning, or (if the Head of Learning is named in the complaint) the contacted Director, will then inform the Board of Directors at the earliest opportunity.
- A written statement of the full nature of the complaint and any relevant evidence will be recorded in the Complaints File.
- The Complaints File will record the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint and will indicate any action to be taken as a result of the complaint.
- Complaints will be investigated as soon as reasonably possible. We aim to undertake an initial review of the complaint, with any supporting evidence, and offer a written response within 14 working days of the formal complaint being received. An in-person discussion will be offered as part of this process. If further investigations are necessary that will exceed this time period, new time limits will be communicated with an explanation for the delay. The aim will always be to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

The Head of Learning or Directors can make the following decisions:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- Recommend changes to the Oaks Rise systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not occur.

In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation



- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review Oaks Rise policies in light of the complaint
- an apology

If you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 you should write to the Oaks Rise within 10 working day from receiving the response.

Stage 3: Unresolved complaints

You will need to explain why you are not satisfied with the response and decide if you would like to take your complaint to a complaints panel.

- If we are unable to resolve the complaint internally, a hearing will be held within 14 days. We will invite an Independent Panel of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters in the complaint to review the circumstances. These people will be independent of the running and management of Oaks Rise. They will be familiar with Oaks Rise and its ethos.
- The parent/carer can also bring an independent party to this panel hearing, or to any interview during the Complaints Procedure. Records of these meetings will be available to all those in attendance.
- The findings of the independent panel will be recorded by Oaks Rise and copies will be made available to the complainant.
- Minutes will be taken of interviews and securely recorded. Both parties will have the opportunity to comment upon the minutes
- If there is an irreparable breakdown in communication such that the complaining party does not feel able to resolve the complaint using the Complaints Procedure, it may be superseded by the legal process.
- At any point in the process, the complainant may contact relevant external institutions. Minutes and records will be made freely available.



Formal Complaint Form

Your Name:

Date:

Title:

Phone Number:

Status (Employee/ Parent / Carer / Other (Specify):

Date of Incident:

Time of Incident:

Location of Incident:

- 1. Please describe the incident in detail (use additional pages if necessary):**
- 2. If there are others who have witnessed the incident, please provide their names and phone numbers below:**
- 3. Is this the first time you have raised this concern about this person/issue?**
- 4. Do you have any suggestions for resolving the complaint? If so, please explain.**
- 5. Do you have any additional information or complaints? If so, please explain.**

Signature:

Print Name: