

# Fair Ways Education

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

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## Fair Ways Vision, Mission and Values

### Our vision

To build an institution that makes a difference to society and leaves a legacy greater than ourselves and our contributions.

### Our mission

Making a difference through passionate care, support and education.

### Our values

As a charity we measure our wealth by the difference we make, rather than any profit.

We believe that by embodying a culture in which every individual is valued for their own contribution, we can develop them and harness their potential, so that they may achieve great things.

Our values form the heart of the work we do, defined by Fair Ways people, for Fair Ways people. These are the values by which we operate, by which we are governed, and to which we are held accountable.

We therefore expect every individual within the organisation to *play their part*:

<b>P</b> ROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE	<b>A</b> CCEPTING	<b>R</b> EFLECTIVE	<b>T</b> RANSPARENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We do what we say we will</li> <li>· We approach challenges with optimism and enthusiasm</li> <li>· We don't judge, we notice</li> <li>· We put the needs of the service before our own personal gains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We don't give up on people</li> <li>· We value all individuals and are willing to challenge them</li> <li>· We embrace each other's differences as much as our similarities</li> <li>· We accept responsibility for our actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We give feedback, we invite feedback, we listen to feedback</li> <li>· We look inward before we look outward</li> <li>· We learn as much from our mistakes as from our successes</li> <li>· We listen to each other, learn from each other and grow together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We are always willing to explain why</li> <li>· We have the courage to be open and honest</li> <li>· We earn trust through our transparency</li> <li>· We live by our values even when no-one is watching</li> </ul>

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 Fair Ways Education has long prided itself on the quality of the education and care provided for its young people. However, if parents do have a complaint they can expect it to be treated seriously by the schools in accordance with this policy. The schools are required under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 to make the policy known to all parents.

1.2 What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not. Fair Ways could receive complaints from young people within our care, schools, parents, friends, doctors, staff, support workers, social workers, foster carers, other professionals or members of the public. Complaints could be about young people, individual staff members, foster carers, a particular Fair Ways department or the company as a whole.

## **2 Stage 1**

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

2.2 If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son / daughter's tutor. In most cases the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parent's satisfaction. If the tutor cannot resolve the matter it may be necessary for parents to consult the Deputy Head or Head of School.

2.3 Complaints made directly to the Head of School will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff unless she / he deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally. Concerns relating to Child Protection must be referred directly to the Head of School, unless the concerns relate to them, in which case the Deputy Head will consult with the company proprietor.

2.4 The member of staff will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. There will also be a record of whether or not the complaint was resolved at the preliminary stage or whether the complaint proceeded to a panel hearing. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 working days, or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint to the next stage of this procedure.

2.5 All correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential.

### **3 Categories of Complaint**

3.1 **Concerns (Level 1)** - will be discussed by the young person's tutor, social worker (if appropriate), and the member of staff's line manager and normally dealt with by Fair Ways as an in house matter.

3.2 **Complaint (Level 2)** will be discussed with the young person's tutor, social worker, their Manager, and normally by a Fair Ways Manager and Senior Manager.

3.3 **An Allegation (Level 3)** will be discussed by the young person's tutor, social worker, their Manager and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and a Fair Ways Senior Manager and / or Director.

3.4 The LADO is independent of both the child and the teaching staff.

### **4 Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

4.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head of School who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

4.2 In most cases the Head of School will meet with or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, an agreement will be reached at this stage.

4.3 It may be necessary for the Head of School to carry out further investigations. The Head of School will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

4.4 When the Head of School is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head of School will also give reasons for her decision.

4.5 If parents are still not satisfied with the decision they should proceed to the final stage of this procedure.

### **5 Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

5.1 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to one of the Directors of Fair Ways.

- 5.2 The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of 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 school. The Panel members will be appointed by a company director and the Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working days.
- 5.3 If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require further particulars of the complaint or any related matters be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 3 working days prior to the hearing.
- 5.4 The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- 5.5 If possible the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation.
- 5.6 Where further investigation is required the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 working days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents. A copy will be sent to the person complained about where relevant.
- 5.7 Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(1) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.
- 5.8 The complaints policy / procedures and number of complaints will be made available to the Secretary of State and the inspectors by the Head Teacher and Proprietor.

N.B. For the purposes of this document, a "working day" falls between Monday and Friday.

Evaluation will take place on an annual basis.