



Complaints Policy

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COMPLAINT POLICY

White Trees view complaints by students and or their parents as an integral part of the child protection procedure, a way of upholding the principle of children's rights, and also as a measurement for measuring the standard and quality of care and services provided for the children placed in our care.

We view complaints in three broad categories as follows and seek to take different approaches to dealing them.

These are:

1. Sexual, Physical abuse and Emotional abuse
 2. Complaint regarding Education
 3. Day to day matters internal to White Trees Independent Schools
- Complaints of a Child Protection nature will be dealt with following the dedicated procedure.
 - Complaints concerning a host of day-to-day issues within White Trees Schools will be dealt with internally via an informal approach - as may be the case in the home where the student is accommodated.
 - In any such instances (as no.1 above), the staff on duty or the Manager will seek to resolve the matter between the student(s) and the other party or parties involved (i.e., staff, or young persons, etc). If the student(s) is/are not satisfied with the outcome, the matter will be referred to the Director of Childrens Services to try to resolve it. If the student(s) is/are still not satisfied at this level, then the matter will be referred to an independent person or the student's social worker to ensure that the matter is resolved satisfactorily.
 - Complaints regarding education will at all times be referred to the Placing Authorities. Arrangement will be made for young persons making a complaint to speak to their social worker, independent person or to their parents in confidence,
 - Complaints beyond day-to-day schooling issues will be reported to relevant agencies.
 - White Trees will consult with the student's social worker to determine when and how parents are informed.
 - Certain complaints may be referred to the Responsible individual or an independent person for investigation and for resolutions, and that this possibility may be exhausted before referring the matter to an independent person or the child social worker.
 - White Trees aim to resolve any such complaints immediately, or within 28 days from the day the complaint is lodged.



- The School Manager and/or Director of Childrens Services will be in regular contact with OFSTED and the placing authorities to monitor complaints and the resolution process.
- All complaints must be recorded in the Complaints file, indicating: times, dates, names of complainant, resolutions, and or stages of resolution process.
- The complaints file must be made available to OFSTED and for other relevant inspection and to all independent persons' commissioned to carry out Inspection or Investigations.

Access to Complain

Students attending White Trees Independent Schools have the right to complain if they are worried or unhappy with the quality of service or any form of treatment by staff or another student. All students are given a welcome pack informing them of this right and the complaint procedure.

Students will be informed of their rights and of channels to complain without staff knowledge if they wish.

Staff have a duty to empower students to use their right to complain and we will ensure that students can feel confident enough to bring their complaints to the attention of member of staff on duty. A dedicated Student's complaints form is readily available to students who are encouraged and assisted to complete it.

Procedure once a complaint has been received

- If the nature of the complaint is such that it cannot be resolved by staff, it will then be passed on to the School Manager immediately. The staff receiving the complaint should at this time assist the student to complete a complaint form.
- All complaints will be investigated by the School Manager who will speak to those involved to try to establish the facts and if necessary hold mediation to settle the complaint satisfactorily for all involved. De facto child protection complaints should be dealt with according to the Child protection procedures.
- If the problem cannot be dealt with internally it will brought to the attention of the student's family, and/or social worker and/or legal representative and/or their independent referee.
- If the problem can be dealt with internally, the student can still contact or request that their family, and/or social worker and/or legal representative and/or their independent referee be contacted and informed of the problem.
- In some cases, complaints may need serious investigation in which case the staff member must write a statement of complaint. A copy of the complaint will



be placed on the student's file and a copy given to the student.

- Within seven days of being notified the School Manager will inform the student of what action is being taken.
- White Trees will grant unrestricted consent to any relevant agencies authorised to represent a student's interest.

Any student who discloses abuse by any adult or another student must be treated with sensitivity. Child protection procedures should be activated without delay.

Students to be made aware of the following:

“If you are not happy with the decision, that has been made, you can go one stage further and ask for a review of your placement under Section 26 Children Act 1989.”

STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS

THE SCHOOL OFSTED INSPECTOR

SOCIAL WORKER

INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER

Other useful numbers which are displayed in communal areas:

OFSTED	08456404040
CHILDLINE	0800 1111
CHILDLINE IN CARE	0800 898 4444
WHO CARES TRUST	0500 564 570
VOICE OF THE CHILD IN CARE	0808 800 5792

Complaint by Neighbours

- Complainants will be received respectfully and sensitively.
- The complaint will be listened to very carefully and a record made on a complaints form. The staff member receiving the complaint will read back the report to the complainant to clarify that details are accurate and to establish what action they would consider satisfactory. Name, address and telephone number will be taken where possible and the complainant will be asked to sign the complaint form.
- The Director of Childrens Services and/or Director of Operations will then be



informed if they are not involved already and the School Manager will investigate the complaint and if necessary will attend the site of disturbance, evaluate the situation and attempt to reach a satisfactory conclusion as soon as possible.

- The School Manager should visit the complainant or at least contact by telephone to give feedback regarding measures taken to resolve the issue.
- If the complainant remains dissatisfied they reserve the right to inform the borough for further action.
- All complaints will be recorded with action taken in the Complaints File.
- Follow up will be a courtesy call or visit after a week or less to ensure the problem has been successfully resolved.

Complaint by Social Workers and other Professionals

- Complainants will be received respectfully and sensitively by the staff member in the first instance.
- The complainant should be directed to the School Manager initially.
- In the event that the School Manager is not available then the phone number of either the Surecare Director Of Childrens Services or Director of Operations must be given to ensure that the individual is able to speak to someone immediately.
- The complaints procedure will then be followed all instances.