



Complaints procedures

Reviewed: July 2017



SECTION 1
Policy statement

White Trees Independent School views complaints by young people, their carers or parents, educational staff and other professionals 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 by the educational provision for the children placed in our care.

White Trees Independent School views complaints in three broad categories as follows and seek to take different approaches to dealing them as appropriate.

These are:

- A. Sexual, Physical abuse and Emotional abuse
- B. Day to day matters internal to White Trees Independent School
- C. Complaints regarding education provision

A. Complaints of a Child Protection nature will be dealt with following the dedicated ¹procedure.

B. Complaints concerning a host of day-to-day issues within White Trees Independent School will be dealt with internally via an informal approach as befits any educational provision

1. In any such instances the White Trees Independent School staff on duty or the child's key worker will seek to resolve the matter between the young person(s) and the other party or parties involved (i.e., staff, or young persons, etc).
2. If the young person(s) is/are not satisfied with the outcome, the matter will be referred to the School Manager of White Trees Independent School to try to resolve it. If the young person(s) is/are still not satisfied at this level, then the matter will be referred to an independent person or the young person's social worker to ensure that the matter is resolved satisfactorily.
3. Complaints beyond day-to-day school provision issues will be reported to relevant agencies as required under Regulation 30.
4. White Trees Independent School will consult with the child's social worker to determine when and how parents are informed.
5. 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.
6. Any complaint made against the School Manager will be referred directly to the Chair of the Board of Governors, Emma Barr for Investigation and resolution. If it is not felt appropriate for Emma Barr to deal with the complaint an Independent person will be appointed to proceed.

¹ See SureCare Child Protection Policy for this procedure



7. White Trees Independent School aim to resolve any such complaints immediately, or within 28 days from the day the complaint is lodged.
8. The School Manager of White Trees Independent School will be in regular contact with OFSTED and the placing authorities to monitor complaints and the resolution process.
9. All complaints must be recorded in the Complaints file, indicating: times, dates, names of complainant, resolutions, and or stages of resolution process.
10. The complaints file must be made available to OFSTED and for Regulation 33 inspection and to all independent persons' commissioned to carry out Inspection or Investigations.

C. Complaints regarding educational provision will at all times be referred to the School Manager of White Trees Independent School. Arrangement will be made for young persons making a complaint to speak to their social worker, independent person or to their parents in confidence, if they are unhappy at the educational provision they are receiving.

1. Complaints beyond day-to-day school provision issues will be reported to relevant agencies as required under all relevant legislation with regard to children and to education.
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4. Any complaint made against the School Manager will be referred directly to the Chair of the Board of Governors, Emma Barr for Investigation and resolution. If it is not felt appropriate for Emma Barr to deal with the complaint an Independent person will be appointed to proceed.
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SECTION 2

Access to complaining for the young people

Young People at White Trees Independent School have the right to complain if they are worried or unhappy with the quality of education or any form of treatment by staff or another young person. On admission all young people are given a welcome pack informing them of this right and the complaint procedure.

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



White Trees Independent School will display appropriate telephone numbers to confidential help lines, such as Child Line, The Children's Society and also their Social Workers.

White Trees Independent School have a duty to empower young people to use their right to complain and we will ensure that young people can feel confident enough to bring their complaints to the attention of staff. A dedicated Young Person's complaints form is readily available to Young People who are encouraged and assisted to complete it. A copy of this form is contained in the Young People's White Trees Independent School Handbook. Work done as part of the PSHEE and Citizenship curriculum will support the developing of these skills.

Procedure once a complaint has been received

1. 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 of White Trees Independent School immediately. The staff receiving the complaint should at this time assist the Young Person to complete a complaint form.
2. All complaints will be investigated by the School Manager of White Trees Independent School 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.
3. If the problem cannot be dealt with internally it will be brought to the attention of the young person's family, and/or social worker and/or legal representative and/or their independent referee **within 14 days**.
4. If the problem can be dealt with internally, the young person 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.
5. In some cases, complaints may need serious investigation in which case the young person's key worker or staff member must write a statement of complaint. A copy of the complaint will be placed on the young person's file and a copy given to the young person.
6. If it is a serious investigation, then **within seven days of being notified** the School Manager of White Trees Independent School will inform the young person of what action is being taken.
7. White Trees Independent School will grant unrestricted consent to any relevant agencies authorised to represent a child's interest.
8. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response from [3] above there is then the next level of complaint, in writing and this will be reviewed before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Director, Simon Barr, and will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and including one person who is not directly related to the running of the school. **This Panel will sit within 14 days** of the complainant in writing stating that the proposed resolution from [3] above was not satisfactory.
9. Parents and carers of course reserve the right to inform the borough or OFSTED for further action and they may of course have someone to attend the Panel if this is helpful for them.
10. All complaints will be recorded and action taken in the Complaints File.
11. After exploration and resolution, follow up will be a courtesy call or **visit after a week or less** to



ensure the problem has been successfully resolved.

12. The Panel will make findings and recommendations and stipulate that the complainant, proprietor and School Manager of White Trees Independent School, and where relevant the person complained about, are given a copy of any findings and recommendations.
13. There will be a written record kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.
14. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 163 of the 2002 Act requests access to them.

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

Young People to be made aware of the following:

- OFSTED 03001231231
- CHILDLINE 0800 1111
- WHO CARES TRUST 0207 251 3117
- VOICE (formerly Voice for the child in care) 0808 800 5792

SECTION 3

Complaint by external parties such as parents, carers, professionals, educational staff, care staff

1. Complainants will be received respectfully and sensitively and taken seriously.
2. 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.
3. The School Manager of White Trees Independent School will then be informed if they are not involved already and 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 but certainly **within 14 days**.
4. The School Manager of White Trees Independent School should visit the complainant or at least contact by telephone to give feedback regarding measures taken to resolve the issue within this time.



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In line with all White Trees Independent School Policies, this policy is written with regard to, and covered by, the Children's Act 2010 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.