



## Complaints procedures – parents/carers

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## Introduction

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.

This policy specifically relates to complaints from parents/carers – the full complaints policy and complaints procedure includes all details relating to complaints from young people, their parents/carers, educational staff, other professionals and members of the public.

**Complaints from parents/carers will at all times be referred to the School Manager of White Trees Independent School. Any complaints relating to the School Manager should be referred directly to Emma Barr (Operations Director for SureCare Residential).**

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.
2. 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's social worker.
3. Any complaint made against the School Manager will be referred directly to the Operations Director, 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.
4. White Trees Independent School aim to resolve any such complaints immediately, or **within 28 days from the day the complaint is lodged.**
5. 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.
6. All complaints must be recorded in the Complaints file, indicating: times, dates, names of complainant, resolutions, and or stages of resolution process.
7. 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.

## **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 brought to the attention of the young



person's social worker and/or legal representative and/or their independent referee **within 14 days**.

4. If the problem can be dealt with internally, the parent/carer can still contact or request that the 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 parent/carer should be asked to write a statement of complaint. A copy of the complaint will be placed on the young persons file and a copy given to the parent/carer.
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 parent/carer 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 parent 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, Emma 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.

**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.**