



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any complaints about the service are handled quickly, effectively and courteously and solutions are implemented which satisfy children/young people, the parent/carer and the setting.

Who is Responsible?

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that all complaints are handled. However, senior staff have been trained in the procedure for handling the initial complaint, but management will investigate and deal with the complaint efficiently and effectively.

Complaints Procedure

In the event of a parent / carer wanting to complain about a member of staff or services offered or incident at Alexander London College please follow the following guidelines:

- Alexander London College accepts that all verbal complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, must be taken seriously.
- Speak to a member of staff or directly to management about the complaint giving as much information as possible.
- Staff are expected to remain polite, courteous, sympathetic and professional to the complainant. They are taught that there is nothing to be gained by adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.
- At all times in responding to the complaint, staff are encouraged to remain calm and respectful.
- Anyone making a complaint should be handled effectively and be seen as an opportunity to evaluate the practice of the setting and improve quality.
- Complaint should be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with the complaints policy for the setting.
- Staff should not, make excuses or blame other staff.
- If it is discussed with a member of staff then they will report the complaint to the supervisor and complete a complaints form immediately. The supervisor will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 24 hours. The complaint will then be investigated and an action plan drawn up to address the issue. The action plan will be discussed with the complainant and agreed. This process will be recorded on the complaint form; all complaints will be resolved within 5 working days of the complaint being made
- If the staff cannot solve the problem immediately, they should offer to get their supervisor to deal with the problem.

- Once made aware of the complaint the supervisor must record the complaint on the complaint form.
- If the parent / carer feel that they are unable to speak to a member of staff, then they can also send their complaint in writing to the supervisor who will acknowledge the complaint within 24 hours and respond to it within 5 working days of receipt of the letter.

Person making the complaint should complete a complaint form and give this to the supervisor. Complaint forms are available in the complaints file at the reception; completed forms will be kept in Supervisors office.

- The supervisor will acknowledge receipt of the complaint form within 24 hours, log the complaint in the complaint log and investigate the matter; at this stage it may be appropriate to contact the parent / carer to gather further information, all correspondence will be recorded with the complaint form.
- All complaints are discussed with all relevant staff, the issue is discussed and corrective action agreed, a date by which the action should be taken is also agreed. This is recorded on the complaint form and then discussed with the parent / carer, this information is also issued in writing.

Investigation of the complaint by the organisation:

- Immediately on receipt of the complaint, the complaints manager will start an investigation and within 14 days should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned.
- If the action has not been taken by the date agreed the supervisor should address the issue and identify why the action has not been taken, this should be recorded in writing and issued to the parent / carer.
- If the issues are too complex for the investigation to be completed within 28 days, the complainant will be informed of any delays.
- Where the complaint cannot be resolved between the parties, an arbitration service will be used. This service and its findings will be final to both parties. The cost of this will be borne by Alexander London College.

Meeting:

- If a meeting is arranged, the complainant will be advised that they may, if so desired, bring a friend, relative or a representative such as an advocate
- At the meeting a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation will be given, in addition to an apology if deemed appropriate (an apology is not necessarily an admission of liability)
- Such a meeting gives the management the opportunity to show the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

Follow-up action:

- After the meeting, or if the complainant does not want a meeting, a written account of the investigation will be sent to the complainant.
- Alexander London College management formally reviews all complaints at least every six months as part of its quality monitoring and improvement procedures to identify the lessons learned.

Vexatious Complainers

Alexander London College takes seriously any comments or complaints regarding its service. However, there are individuals who can be treated as “vexatious complainers” due to the inability of the organisation to meet the outcomes of the complaints, which are never resolved. Vexatious complainers need to be dealt with by the arbitration service, so that the repeated investigations become less of a burden on the organisation, its staff and other children.