

Meadows School

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Complaints & Representation Policy & Procedure

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| Last reviewed on: | March 2018 |
| Date of this policy: | July 2019 |
| Next review by: | June 2020 |

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1. Introduction:

Meadows School is committed to Barnardo's Basis and Values, which provides the framework within which we can engage in giving young people a better start in life.

- We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.
- We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued.
- We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.
- We understand that as a Special School we are working with some of the most vulnerable young people in the UK and therefore have a duty to ensure stringent procedures and training must be in place and available to all staff.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors and are consistent with those of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB).

There are two Complaints Procedures available to students attending Meadows School

- [Barnardo's Complaints & Representations Policy](#)
- **Local Authority Complaints Procedure** – this can be found on your local authorities' website.

2. Aims:

The school aims to ensure both complaints processes are explained to all students during the admission process and copies of the relevant information is provided at the admissions meeting

Meadows School agree with [Barnardo's Complaints & Representations Policy](#) to develop a culture which encourages young people to make their views known and which responds positively to their concerns and complaints, however difficult and painful this may be at times.

We must have a culture, which enables both staff and Barnardo's to learn from complaints to improve practice and policy. Complaints should be seen as a positive, not a negative force within Barnardo's.

3. Definition:

A complaint may be about a service that is being provided, the lack of a service provision, the actions of a member of staff, a third party, another student, by family members, decisions taken by individuals or Barnardo's policy or procedural issues, or a combination of these factors. It may be specific or expressed as a general dissatisfaction.

Normally good practice should resolve, to the student's satisfaction, the queries and grumbles, which are part of the day to day experiences within the school. However, if this is not possible, the student has the right to pursue the issue via the complaints procedure.

4. Main Principles:

The main principles underlying [Barnardo's Complaints & Representations Policy](#) are:

- Complaints should be resolved as close to the point of service delivery and as quickly as possible
- Students must be offered every assistance in resolving their complaints
- Students or family members will not suffer any disadvantage, discrimination or withdrawal of service as a consequence of making a complaint and should be treated with respect and dignity at all times
- Complaints, however trivial they may appear, are very real to the student and must be accorded full and proper attention at all times
- All complaints must be recorded in writing on the appropriate forms and processed according to [Barnardo's Complaints & Representations Policy](#)
- Solutions offered must comply with [Barnardo's Complaints & Representations Policy](#) and any promises of action must be kept

The complaints procedure has two main parts, the Informal Stage and the Formal Stages. Barnardo's try to resolve problems using the informal stage, but if this is unsuccessful the formal stages can be used to ensure the matter is fully investigated and reviewed.

The Formal stage may be used from the outset if desired.

5. Recording:

A complaints log is kept for the Unit and Main School separately. Both are kept in Content Server and copies of relevant documents are stored in the student's FileRoom.

The complaints logs are inspected termly by a Standard 20 visitor.

6. Standard 20 Visitor:

The Standard 20 Visitor is an independent visitor who undertakes unannounced visits to the residential units termly.

The visit provides the young people with an opportunity to speak independently about their life at Meadows.

A detailed report about the visit is sent to all concerned parties including Barnardo's South East and Anglia Regional Office.

A student specific report is produced which is available on the student notice boards in the residential unit.

7. Early Resolution:

It is not intended that all problems that arise in a day to day basis should automatically be elevated to the status of a complaint. A matter, which is promptly resolved to everyone's satisfaction when drawn to the attention of a member of staff, is not something that requires referral to the procedure, although it is recorded.

Efforts to resolve matters will include discussion and reconsideration as well as explanations of decisions made and actions taken. However, attempts at problem solving will not be used by staff to divert an eligible person from lodging a complaint under the statutory procedure.

8. The Informal Stage:

1. The student tells a member of staff that s/he wants to use the complaints procedure to deal with the problem identified **OR** has sent a contact card directly to Barnardo's Complaints Officer at Head Office.
2. When the student decides to use the complaints procedure, Barnardo's offers a choice of advocates (independent if required) to support the person in the complaints procedure **OR** helps the young person arrange to have a friend/relative carer involved.
3. If the use of this advocate fails to sort things out, or if the young person is not happy with the result then the procedure moves to Formal Stage One.

9. Formal Stage 1:

1. The problem has not been resolved through the informal stage.
2. To formally complain the student tells a member of staff or writes to Barnardo's Complaints Officer.
3. Support is available from staff and advocates for the student.
4. Barnardo's appoint an Investigating Officer when they are told the student wants the problem dealt with through the Formal Complaints Procedure.
5. The investigating officer will visit and talk to everyone who is involved, looking at all points of view, including the student's.
6. Barnardo's will appoint an independent person, who is completely independent of Barnardo's to provide an independent view of the complaint and to comment on the way it has been dealt with. The student can contact the independent person or investigating officer at any time – staff or advocates can assist the student in this.
7. When the investigating officer has talked to everyone they will write a report setting out all that has happened and make recommendations as to the best way of solving the problem. They will send this report to Barnardo's Divisional Director. The student can send written comments relating to the complaint. The Director considers all the information received and will discuss this with the independent person before writing a formal response to the complaint. The complaints officer co-ordinates the written information to all interested parties.
8. If the student is not satisfied with the response they take the complaint to Stage Two.

10. Formal Stage 2:

1. If the student is not happy with the result of the investigation and the formal response to the complaint s/he must notify the complaints officer within 28 days and ask for the complaint to be heard by a Review Panel. An advocate or staff member can assist the student in this process.
2. The complaints officer will set up a review panel to go over everything that has happened so far. The panel will have 3 people – 2 from Barnardo's (senior staff who has had nothing to do with the complaint) and the third person will be an independent person who will chair the panel hearing and will be completely independent of Barnardo's.
3. The Review Panel will meet within 28 days of the request. The panel will look at the written information relating to the complaint and will ask the student to attend with his/her advocate or anyone else invited by the student. The Panel will arrange for staff concerned with the complaint to attend.
4. When the Panel has listened to all points of view and read all the written information, the hearing will end. The Panel will consider all the information and make its recommendations within 24 hours of the end of the hearing.
5. The student will receive a copy of the Panel's report, which is sent to Barnardo's Director of Child Care. The Director of Child Care will discuss the panel's report with the chair of the panel – who is the independent person, before writing Barnardo's formal response. The Director's decision is final and it will be sent to all parties, in writing, within 28 days of the review panel making its recommendations.
6. Serious complaints against the school or staff at the school are notified to OFSTED.

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| 11. Contacts: | <p>The Barnardo's South East Region Complaints Officer is:</p> <p>Tina Douglas Barnardo's South East Regional Office Unit 1, Satellite Business Village Fleming Way Crawley West Sussex tina.douglas@barnardos.org.uk Tel: 01293 610660</p> <p>The Barnardo's South East Region Participation and Engagement Officer is:</p> <p>Aida Van Der Pants Barnardo's South East Regional Office Unit 1, Satellite Business Village Fleming Way Crawley West Sussex aida.vanderpant@barnardos.org.uk Tel: 01293 610660</p> <p>Contact details for OFSTED are:</p> <p>National Business Unit, Third Floor, Royal Exchange Buildings St Annes Square Manchester M2 7LA Tel: 0300 1231231 /0844 453 0221</p> |
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| 12. Additional Information | |
| Copies of this policy may be obtained from: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content Server The Main School Office |
| This policy links with the following policies & Documents | <u>Barnardo's Complaints & Representations Policy</u> |
| Relevant statutory guidance, circulars, legislation & other sources of information are: | |
| The lead member of staff is: | Head of Care |
| Definitions and key terms used in this policy: | Content Server: Barnardo's File Saving FileRoom: Barnardo's Service User Recording (SUR) |