



# **Compliments, Worries, Complaints and Appeals Policy**

**(St Elizabeth's School and  
Children's Home)**

Feb 2017

## 1.0 Compliments and Complaints

St Elizabeth's works with hundreds of individuals and organisations each week. We seek to provide the best possible level of services. The feedback we receive from children, parents and guardians shows a high level of satisfaction with the way we work and the services we provide. However, sometimes we do not always handle matters as well as we should and we are always looking at ways to improve upon what we do.

We positively welcome suggestions for improvement and changes so we can stay at the forefront of service provision. If you have a compliment about our service please let us know (contact details are at the end of this leaflet). It is important to know when things are going well so that we can reinforce and build upon such work. It is also important for us to know when things have not gone so well. By encouraging people to make compliments, observations and raise worries or complaints we can find out how to put things right and continue to improve.

## 2.0 What is a Complaint?

**We see a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by us or our staff or contractors where our initial response to the problem has not proven satisfactory.** (Many issues can result from a simple misunderstanding and once explained or clarified need not develop into a complaint).

We do not consider a query or a request for a service, or a problem arising between service users, as a complaint unless you then have reason to complain about the way we are dealing with the situation.

We cannot respond to anonymous complaints but we can use all your comments and feedback to help influence and improve our services.

We cannot deal with complaints that have or are being/or likely to be dealt with by legal proceedings, contractual processes or third parties. Where possible/necessary we will refer you to an appropriate alternative organisation to deal with your complaint.

**Please note we have a simplified procedure for students and pupils who may wish to raise a worry or complaint themselves, see paragraph 6 of this document for more details.**

## 3.0 Worries

Perhaps you are unhappy about something but don't really want to make a complaint, it might be something small, but we still take such feedback seriously. If you want to raise some worry about our service then you can do so without having to make it into a formal complaint. This will help us put things right where necessary and improve your satisfaction with our service. You can raise a worry, verbally or in writing, and we will try and respond to you within the same times we use for formal complaints. Don't worry about raising a worry or complaint, you will not be treated less favourably as a result.

## 4.0 How do I Complain?

Comments and complaints may be received verbally or in writing. You must complain to

us within 3 months of the difficulty arising or event occurring. Contact details for addressing your complaint to St Elizabeth's are shown at the end of this leaflet.

#### **4.1 Stage One – Initial Complaint**

In the first instance try again to reconcile the issue with the member of staff you are dealing with. Make it clear you are unhappy with their response and we will treat the matter as a complaint. A complaint at this stage may be made over the phone or face to face but is best put in writing. We will record and acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days and confirm who is dealing with it:

- If relating to Education contact the Head of School
- If relating to Residential Care contact the Head of Children's Care
- If relating to Medical or Therapy care contact the Clinical Services Manager
- Miscellaneous general concerns can be raised with any of the above three if the usual route would cause undue delay (e.g. because of staff working shifts/being on annual leave etc)
- If at any Stage in the process your complaint is about the person you are dealing with, then you should raise the matter at the next Stage instead.

We would inform Ofsted of any serious complaint in addition to any other notification requirements which may be placed on the School by a placing Local Authority or the DCSF. We will respond in writing within three weeks of receiving your complaint. At any stage in the process we may seek to convene a resolution meeting to deal with the matter informally where appropriate. If we have not completed our investigation within 3 weeks we will write at least every four weeks thereafter to keep you informed of progress.

If the matter is not dealt with in a timely manner nor to your satisfaction then you should let the person involved know that you wish to take the complaint further, to stage two of our procedure.

#### **4.2 Stage Two – if you are still unhappy.....**

If you remain dissatisfied with our response under stage one then your complaint will be referred to the Director of Education. You must complain within one month of receiving the stage one response. At this stage your complaint should be in writing giving reasons for your continuing dissatisfaction. We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of its receipt. We will record your issues as a Stage Two complaint and try to respond within 3 weeks or keep you informed of progress at regular 4 weekly intervals if the investigations take longer.

#### **4.3 Stage Three**

An appeal against a Stage Two decision may be made in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal, to the Chief Executive at St Elizabeth's Centre who will investigate and respond using the same timetables as apply to Stage Two.

#### **4.4 Stage Four - Appeal to School Governors**

Where a complainant remains unhappy with the outcome of stage three you can appeal to the Governors within one month of receipt the Chief Executive's decision. You should give the reasons for your appeal in writing and address your letter to the Chief Executive who will arrange for the Governors to conduct a review of the case

within a reasonable period of time. We will let you know the outcome of their review within 10 days of their considering your appeal.

#### **4.5 Stage Five**

If you have exhausted the Centre's complaints procedure up to and including Stage Four and you remain unhappy with the decision then Ofsted will also look at formal complaints if you are unhappy with our response, (their contact details are at the end of this leaflet). This option is open to you at any stage of our procedure. We will always copy any serious complaints, together with our response, to Ofsted in addition to complying with any other notification requirements placed on the School by the placing Local Authority or DCSF as appropriate. They will often want to know that our own procedures, up to and including Stage Four, have been exhausted before conducting their own enquiries.

#### **5.0 Unreasonable Behaviour or Demands**

In the case of any unacceptable behaviour towards staff; or a complainant putting unreasonable demands on the service to the disadvantage of others; or persistence in repeatedly raising the same issue or multiple issues taking up a disproportionate or unreasonable amount of time and resources, the Chief Executive may decide to restrict complainant contact with the service or with staff. We will notify individual complainants in writing, with reasons, of any such temporary or permanent restrictions.

#### **6.0 Service User Views**

To assist pupils and students in raising worries or complaints we have both a children's version and a pictorial version of how to raise worries or complaints and may facilitate the involvement of an independent external advocate where appropriate. We will also enable children to access the complaints procedure of the placing Local Authority if they so wish. If a young person makes a complaint and is not satisfied with the response a four stage process consistent with this policy will be followed by the Centre.

#### **7.0 Contact Details**

##### **7.1 Complaints to School**

Head of School  
St Elizabeth's School  
Perry Green  
Hertfordshire  
SG10 6EW  
Tel : 01279 844270  
or email: [samantha.steinke-saunderson@stelizabeths.org.uk](mailto:samantha.steinke-saunderson@stelizabeths.org.uk)

##### **Complaints to Ofsted**

Enquiries  
National Business Unit  
Ofsted  
5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Floors  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
Tel : 0300 1234 234  
or email: [enquires@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquires@ofsted.gov.uk)

**Whistle-blowing?** Tel: Ofsted Hotline at 0300 123 3155  
or email: [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)