

Procedure for	<b>COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS</b>		
<b>Associated Priory policy</b>	Complaints	<b>Number</b>	OP03/ v07
<b>Associated Regulation/Standards</b>	NMS	<b>Number</b>	Standard 18
<b>Unit</b>	Tadley Court	<b>Signature (Author)</b>	
<b>Issue date</b>	10/2018	<b>Review date</b>	10/2020

## 1.0 Philosophy

Tadley Court aims to provide a high standard of education and care in a safe environment.

In order to provide a high standard of education and care for the pupils, Tadley Court is happy to receive and discuss with you any comments, suggestions or complaints you may have.

This policy and procedure applies equally to parents, staff working at Tadley Court and visitors, including placing authorities and those involved indirectly in the education and care of students.

You can make your feelings known, particularly, if they are not about major issues, by posting your comment, complaint or suggestion in the 'suggestion box' in the school reception area. You can do this anonymously if you wish.

The Head Teacher, and Head of Residential and Therapy services will address all issues.

Staff are encouraged to resolve any issues or problems through their line manager, or can approach any other senior member of staff if they prefer. Staff may request a supervision session for this purpose at any time and in the event that the situation is not resolved are encouraged to follow the Grievance Procedure.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Tadley Court policies on:

- Anti-Bullying
- Child Protection

## 1.1 Principles

Tadley Court believes that it is in the best interest of the school, pupils and staff to implement a procedure that will respond promptly and fairly to any worries or concerns.

Comments or complaints will be treated confidentially and will be taken seriously. Anonymous comments and complaints will be treated in the same way.

The procedure that should be followed by parents/carers when wishing to make a comment or complaint has three stages.

### **Stage 1**

#### Local Resolution at Site Level

At this stage the complaint is deemed to be informal. In the first instance parents/carers can contact their child's key worker or class teacher. At this point the key worker/class teacher will discuss any problems or concerns that parents/carers may have, and attempt to resolve any differences that are being experienced. Staff receiving such complaints should note the details on **OP Form 18G**

If the employee to whom the complaint is made is unable to resolve the problem immediately or feels unable to give the assurances that the complainant is looking for, then the Head Teacher or Head of Residential and Therapy services will take responsibility to resolve the complaint, by the next working day, in an informal and conciliatory manner ('next working day' excludes weekends and bank holidays).

Should the Head Teacher or Head of Residential and Therapy services be unable to resolve the matter quickly and to the complainants' satisfaction, they must advise the complainant that their concerns will require further time to investigate fully prior to responding to the issues raised.

In those cases where staff are able to satisfactorily address and resolve a minor concern by the next working day, the complainant should receive a full and positive response with the aim of assuring them that their concerns have been addressed and this should include an expression of regret and/or explanation for the earlier problem. The Head Teacher or Head of Residential and Therapy services will then 'sign off' the complaint, record brief details on the eCompliance Complaint Reporting system (including details of resolution and any lessons learnt). If an **OP Form: 18G** Complaint Record was completed, this should be signed by the complainant and retained as part of the complaint record in order to confirm that they are satisfied with the way in which the complaint was addressed and resolved. A copy of the completed form may be provided to the service user if requested.

Some concerns, be they verbal or written, will be viewed as more serious or complex and it will not be possible to address and resolve these by the next working day.

Staff receiving such a complaint either verbally or in writing (including email) must ensure that the date of receipt by the site/service is recorded and that it is passed immediately to the Head Teacher or Head of Residential and Therapy services for recording and investigation purposes.

Once the Head Teacher or Head of Residential and Therapy services is assured that the complaint can be investigated i.e. it is not deemed 'out of time', (six months from the date something happened, or six months from the date that a service user becomes aware of it) full details of the complaint must be recorded on eCompliance Complaint Reporting system and a note made of the system generated Complaint Reference Number which will be unique to that service/site complaint. An investigating officer must also be assigned.

A case file will be created which will hold all related documentation.

A letter of Acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant by the Head Teacher or Head of Residential and Therapy services , or a delegated member of staff, within 2 working days of the date on which the complaint was received. A copy of this signed letter must be kept on the case file. **OP Letter: 18A** is to be completed and used for this purpose. This letter will offer the complainant the opportunity to meet with the investigating officer to clarify their specific concerns and will state that we aim to respond fully to all complaints within 20 working days of the date of receipt.

If at working day 15, it is clear that the investigation and response will not be completed within the agreed timeframe a further letter will be issued informing the complainant of the reason for the delay and advising on a revised timeframe. OP Letter: 18B is used for this purpose.

A formal and detailed response should be sent to the complainant within the agreed timescale. (**OP Letter 18C**). This letter must be issued by the School Principal, Head Teacher or Head of Care (but may be signed in their absence) and signpost the complainant as to the course of action available to them should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 investigation.

In the event that a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 investigation, they have the right to request that their case be considered at Stage 2 – Internal Review by the Group Complaints Manager. It should be noted, however, that an expression of dissatisfaction will in itself not automatically warrant a review at Stage 2, since it may be more appropriate for the School Principal, Head Teacher or Head of Care to offer a further opportunity for a discussion/meeting in order to attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution.

## **Stage 2**

### Internal Review

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after all attempts to resolve a complaint locally have failed, then they may, within 6 months of the date of the Stage 1 formal response, request that their case be reviewed at Stage 2 of the Priory process. The request must be in writing and forwarded to:

Group Complaints Manager  
Priory Northern Office  
Middleton St George  
Darlington  
Co. Durham DL2 1TS

Requests for a Stage 2 review will be received, acknowledged and managed by the Group Complaints Manager, however, the review will be undertaken by an Executive Director who has had no direct involvement in the handling of the complaint at Stage 1 of the process. The Executive Director will liaise with the Group Complaints Manager on the review findings and both will jointly agree the response.

Should a complainant remain dissatisfied with the Stage 2 decision, they will be advised in the formal response regarding recourse to Stage 3 of the Priory Complaints process; referral to the Independent Complaint Panel.

### **Stage 3**

#### **Independent Complaint Panel**

Should a parent, carer or funding authority be dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation at Stage 1 by the Headteacher and at Stage 2 following review at Executive Director level, the complainant can make a written request for the complaint to be heard by a panel; thereby fulfilling the requirements of Schedule 1 (Part 7) of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 (S.I. 2010 No 1997) (As Amended) – with regards to the arrangements made in the event that a parent, carer or funding authority remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the school's earlier investigation and Executive Director review.

The Panel membership will comprise the following independent experts, all of whom are wholly independent of the management of the school:

- (a) Head of Quality (Education)
- (b) Director of Safety or other nominated specialist
- (c) Operations Director/Regional Manager (out of area)
- (d) Group Complaints Manager
- (e) A suitably qualified and experienced Independent Person

Arrangements will be made for the Panel to meet at a place, time and date that is mutually convenient to both the complainant and Panel members, with details being communicated in writing and with the parents/carers being invited to attend with a representative should they wish.

The Panel will make findings and recommendations, with copies of the findings being sent or given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and will also be made available for inspection on the school premises by a representative of Priory Group as Proprietor.

#### **1.2 Outcome**

A record is kept at the school of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the preliminary level, or proceed to a panel hearing. These records are kept in a confidential file. The records are indexed in the School's Complaints Book, which is kept at the school site, also in a confidential file. The information kept in the Complaints Book and the confidential file is only made available to the inspectors of regulatory bodies, or to the Secretary of State, on request.

#### **1.4 Student Voice Box**

All students have access to the 'Student Voice Box' situated in the lobby near the dining room. Any written note put in here is read and actioned by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator, Head Teacher/ Head of Residential and Therapy services as appropriate.

#### **1.5 Communication tools**

Staff are trained to observe changes in behaviour or mood and identify patterns. The school is also piloting a scheme called: 'Listen up' and 'I'll go first'. These are visual schemes, which can be accessed by a pupil through their key worker or another person they trust. Key workers are asked to make this available to the pupils regularly, or whenever they suspect that something is wrong.

Pupil's feelings are also recorded for Annual Review through a format called "Views of the pupil". This is facilitated by the pupil's teacher and key worker, and is supported by evidence of the pupil in a range of activities.

## 1.6 **Complaints to External Bodies**

Should anyone feel that their complaint has not been dealt with fairly by the Priory Group process, and they have exhausted all of the above processes, then the matter can be brought to the attention of Ofsted. Their contact details are:

Telephone: 0300 123 3153

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Write: Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Priory Group staff members should follow the Group policies on Whistle blowing and Grievances.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation of the policy will be based upon monitoring of

- Pupil views where appropriate;
- Family views;
- Professional judgements;
- Staff views – daily practitioners and seniors;
- Numbers of comments and complaints

The effectiveness of the policy and procedures will be reviewed annually, and the outcomes of monitoring will be used to make recommendation for improvement if necessary.