The Yellow House

**Complaints Policy**

**Revised by Annette Lander March 2017**

**Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Complaints**

**Aims**

* The Yellow House aims to work in an open and transparent way.
* When complaints are made, we aim to resolve them quickly, honestly, impartially and openly.
* If we have been at fault, we aim to do our best to put matters right as quickly as possible, and to examine our practices to reduce the risk of future cause for complaint.

**We will accept and deal with complaints about:**

* Any aspect of our service provision.
* The actions or behaviour of any of our staff.
* The actions or behaviour of our students while being cared for by our staff.

**We are not able to deal with complaints about:**

* The actions or behaviour of ex-employees.
* The actions or behaviour of our students while not in our care (e.g. while in taxi, etc).
* The actions or behaviour of taxi drivers, escorts or others contracted by local authorities to transport students. (Complaints about school transport contractors will be passed to the appropriate Education Officer).
* The actions or behaviour of parents, families or friends of our students.
* The actions or decisions of placing authorities or their representatives.

**We might expect to receive complaints from:**

* Members of staff, voluntary workers or contractors employed by the organisation.

**Confidentiality**

All documents and correspondence relating to a complaint will be treated as “confidential” and dealt with accordingly. The Yellow House reserves the right to make public statements in response to issues arising from complaints without compromising the confidentially of the individuals involved. The Yellow House will not accept anonymous complaints (except in the case of child protection issues, which will be dealt with under our Child Protection procedure).

Other sources will be dealt with through the policy and procedures.

**Complaints Procedure**

**Stage 1**

Any cause for complaint should initially be communicated verbally (by telephone or in person) or in writing to the Head Teacher. We expect that the majority of complaints can be resolved informally at this stage.

If more information is needed to resolve the complaint, the Head Teacher who has been contacted will investigate the complaint as promptly as possible and communicate the outcome to the person making the complaint **within five working** **days**. If the complaint is against the Head Teacher, it will be passed to the Directors who will investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint informally **within five** **working days** before proceeding to the second (formal) stage of this procedure.

All complaints received and dealt with informally will be recorded in the **Complaints** **Book**, held centrally by the Senior Administrator, with a note as to how the complaint was resolved.

If the person complaining is not satisfied that the Head Teacher has resolved the complaint, they may ask in writing for the matter to be put to the Directors.

**Stage 2**

The Directors will investigate and attempt to resolve any formal complaint passed to them **within fifteen working days**. All complaints passed to the Directors will be responded to in writing, giving details of the outcome of the investigation and the actions proposed.

When a complaint passed to the Directors takes longer than twenty working days to resolve, they will contact the complainant to give the reasons for the delay, keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation, and notify them of the outcomes.

The findings and proposed actions of the Directors will be recorded in the **Complaints Book.**

**Stage 3**

Where a complaint passed to the Directors is not resolved to the satisfaction of the person or body making the complaint, or where a member of staff has un-resolved grievance which they wish to be dealt with as a formal complaint, they can ask in writing for the complaint to be heard by a Complaints Panel. The Panel will be chaired by a Director or an independent person nominated by the Directors. The panel will include at least one other member of the Management Team, and at least one independent person nominated by the Directors.

The complaint will be heard **within 20 working days**. The Complaints Panel will notify the person complaining of the time and date of the hearing at least **five working** **days** in advance. The person complaining may attend the hearing, and may be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative. The Complaints Panel will inform the complainant (and, if appropriate, the person (s) complained about) in respect of their conclusions and any actions they recommend.

A record of the Complaints Panel’s decisions with any recommendations made will be added to the **Complaints Book.**

**Further Steps**

Any person or organisation who is not satisfied through this procedure, or chooses not to use it, has recourse to complaint through statutory and regulatory bodies. These include:

* The placing Education Authority regarding any aspect of service provision.
* Local Social services where complaints centre around the possible abuse of a child.
* Local Environmental Health Officers where the complaint relates to pollution or environmental issues.
* The DfES where the complaint relates to the quality of the education provided or to breaches of the school’s terms of registration.
* The Police, where the complaint relates to a criminal act.