



Policy & Procedure - Complaints

Last reviewed: 25th Aug 2023

Next review: Aug 2024

Resp Person: Jude Williams, Chief Executive

Purpose

The Literacy Pirates views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person, people or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at The Literacy Pirates knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of The Literacy Pirates.

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in The Literacy Pirates, including children, parents, volunteers, customers of the Ship of Adventures and members of the local community. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use The Literacy Pirates' Discipline and Grievance policies.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Trustees.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as required by the Chief Executive.

Complaints Procedure

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints

Written complaints may be sent to The Literacy Pirates at 138 Kingsland High Street, E8 2NS or by e-mail to admin@literacypirates.org Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 020 3327 1777 by asking to speak to the senior leadership team, complainants will be asked for their name, and contact details.

Not all staff, and not volunteers will be able to receive complaints. This is so that we can ensure we are able to manage all complaints as well as possible, by making sure that a staff member has all the information they need to investigate appropriately.

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person will be recorded. The person who receives a phone or in person complaint will:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to The Literacy Pirates
- Tell the complainant that we have a Complaints Procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about and their line manager. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Chief Executive within one week. On receiving the complaint it will be logged in the complaints Complaint's Log.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints will be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaint's procedure will be attached.

Complainants will receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant will describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Complainants may write to the Chair directly if they have a complaint about the Chief Executive; at our registered address 138 Kingsland High Street, London E8 2NS.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chair of Trustees may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One will be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant will describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.

Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

See also

Policy – Whistleblowing

Policy – Anti-harassment and -bullying