

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR ST GEORGE'S (HANWORTH) YOUTH CLUB

The Club is a Registered Charity 1084708 and referred to in this document as "The Charity".

The members, their siblings, parents, guardians, and guests are referred to as "beneficiaries"

This Policy is to be made available to all who request a copy, and is to be displayed in the Administration area of the Club premises.

1. General Principles

1.1 The Charity seeks to maintain high standards in its provision of all activities, courses, services and facilities to beneficiaries. The Charity has established its beneficiary complaints procedures to deal with legitimate complaints from beneficiaries in a fair, prompt and efficient manner.

1.2 Complaints will be addressed informally or formally through a three-stage process.

Stage I: Formal Resolution of Complaints by a Youth leader.

Stage II: Formal Resolution of Complaints by the Charity Chairman.

Stage III: Complaint Review by the Charity Trustees

1.3 All complaints will be dealt with without recrimination, and no beneficiary will be disadvantaged on account of raising a complaint. Beneficiaries may complain individually or collectively, where appropriate. Complaints will be investigated objectively. However, anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

1.4 Beneficiaries should normally make a complaint within the timeframe specified in each complaint stage. The Charity will only consider complaints outside the timeframe at its absolute discretion and where there is a valid reason for the delay.

1.5 All complaints will be dealt with constructively, and the beneficiary will be informed of the outcome. Where a complaint is upheld, the Charity will make an appropriate response including taking any necessary corrective action. Means of redress include an explanation of actions taken or planned and written or oral apologies. Where the complaint outcome includes an offer for the beneficiary, it should be accepted or declined within 15 working days from the date of the offer.

1.6 All complaints will be dealt with in confidence with the proviso that any person connected with the Charity, whether employed or not, about whom a complaint is made shall be supplied with a copy of the complaint. A beneficiary may be asked to attend an interview with the member of staff investigating their complaint.

1.7 A record of complaints received from beneficiaries and the means of resolution will be kept by the Charity Secretary and reported to the Trustees as part of the Charity's monitoring and quality assurance processes. No information that will identify any individual will be available within the report. Such records to be kept securely.

1.8 A beneficiary may seek advice from an outside source when making a complaint and may be accompanied by another beneficiary or a representative in any meeting that takes place in

connection with a complaint they have lodged. However, under no circumstances may the beneficiary be represented by an external organisation.

1.9 For beneficiaries under the age of 18 additional support may be provided as this applies to most of our membership.

1.10 Beneficiaries bringing complaints in relation to the behaviour of staff may be supported where appropriate in line with the Guidelines on Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour.

1.11 Where a complaint made by a beneficiary is believed to be frivolous, vexatious or motivated by malice, the Charity reserves the right to take disciplinary action against the beneficiary for breach of the Code of Conduct. This will be investigated as a potential breach of Section 3.2. of the Code: Respect other members' basic rights to work and live in a safe, secure environment, free from anxiety, fear, intimidation and harassment.

1.12 The Charity reserves the right to withdraw the beneficiary's complaint if the complainant is not engaging with the complaint investigation process for more than 20 working days when requested.

1.13 Advice on whether the complaints procedure applies and how it operates may be sought from the Charity Secretary or their nominee.

1.14 Where a complaint is upheld, the Charity will reimburse the beneficiary upon production of receipts for incidental expenses (e.g. travel) that have been necessarily incurred by the beneficiary in the resolution of their complaint. If a complaint is not upheld the beneficiary will be informed of the reason(s) for that decision. The Charity may in its discretion reimburse the beneficiary upon production of receipts for incidental expenses necessarily incurred by the beneficiary in putting forward their complaint if satisfied that the complaint was made in good faith.

2. Scope of the Complaints Procedure

2.1 This procedure is designed to deal with complaints arising from:

- i) provision of services described in the Charity's publications
- ii) incorrect or misleading information about services provided by the Charity
- iii) provision of other Charity services described in literature published by the Charity
- iv) inappropriate behaviour of members of staff
- v) inappropriate behaviour of a beneficiary.

2.2 The beneficiary complaints procedure does not cover the following:

- i) any matters relating to skills course content
- ii) disciplinary issues
- iii) admissions requirements (currently none) prior to acceptance as a member/beneficiary of the Charity
- iv) complaints about the Objects of the Charity which condition the provision of services

- v) complaints about the Charity premises unless Health & Safety. Constructive suggestions will be considered

2.3 Where a beneficiary makes a complaint about the behaviour of another beneficiary or about unacceptable behaviour of Charity staff, the Charity Secretary shall consult as appropriate and determine the correct beneficiary or staff procedure or policy to be followed. Where appropriate the complaint will be referred under the staff or beneficiary disciplinary procedures. Such determination shall be final. Beneficiaries should refer to the Guidelines on Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour.

2.4 This procedure applies to all beneficiaries of the Charity

3. Informal resolution of complaints

3.1 Most complaints will normally be resolved informally by an appropriate member of staff.

3.2 The informal complaint may be made orally or in writing, normally within 10 working days of the incident or action from which the complaint arises, or in any event as soon as possible.

3.3 The member of staff to whom the complaint is made will investigate or refer the complaint. A response will be made to the beneficiary via email, normally within 5 working days.

3.4 If the beneficiary is dissatisfied with the outcome of this informal resolution of their complaint, then they should follow stage I, II and III procedures described in the formal complaints procedure below.

3.5 If a beneficiary requires advice or wishes to discuss the matter before making a formal complaint, they should consult their personal skill tutor or the Safeguarding Officer as appropriate

4. Stage I:

4.1 The Stage I complaint should be made in writing, preferably by completing an appropriate form, normally within 10 working days of the incident or action from which the complaint arises, or the outcome of the informal resolution.

The following details must be provided:

a full statement of the complaint

brief details of the steps already taken to resolve the complaint informally

reasons for the beneficiary's dissatisfaction with the attempts to resolve the complaint informally

what remedy the beneficiary is seeking

a copy (not original documents) of any documentary evidence the beneficiary wishes to submit

the beneficiary's name

full contact details for the beneficiary (including preferred method of contact, (e.g. email)

whether the beneficiary has representation and if so whom

The complaint should be addressed to the Charity Secretary:

Charity Secretary, St George's (Hanworth) Youth Club, 9 Sunbury Way, TW13 6XJ

4.2 The Charity Secretary's nominee will determine whether all the necessary information has been provided and may contact the beneficiary requesting additional details and evidence. In all cases, the receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days.

4.3 The Charity Secretary's nominee will forward the complaint to the Chairman of the Charity who will investigate the complaint using the information provided by the beneficiary in their written statement of the complaint. The Charity will send a formal written response to the beneficiary, detailing the investigation, within 10 working days of the full complaint being received by the Charity. The response sent to the beneficiary must be copied to the Charity Secretary and all relevant parties.

4.4 In instances where it has not been possible to resolve the complaint within 10 working days for a legitimate reason, the Chairman investigating the complaint shall write to the beneficiary and inform them of:

the name of the person investigating their complaint

the reason for the delay

the date by which the beneficiary will be notified of the outcome

The letter sent to the beneficiary must be copied to the Charity Secretary and all relevant parties

5. Stage II:

5.1 The Stage II formal complaint should be made in writing by completing an appropriate form, normally within 20 working days of the outcome of the Stage I resolution.

The following details must be provided:

a full statement of the complaint

a copy of Stage I formal complaint and a copy of the Stage I outcome letter.

detailed reasons for the beneficiary's dissatisfaction with the Stage I outcome.

what remedy the beneficiary is seeking

a copy (not original documents) of any documentary evidence the beneficiary wishes to submit

whether the beneficiary has representation and if so whom

The complaint should be addressed to the Charity Secretary as above

5.2 The Chairman or appointed Officer will determine whether all the necessary information has been provided and may contact the beneficiary requesting additional details and evidence. In all cases the Investigation Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days.

5.3 Officer will investigate the complaint using the information provided by the beneficiary with their complaint form. A formal response, detailing the investigation, will be sent to the beneficiary in writing within 25 working days of the full complaint being received by the Charity. The response sent to the beneficiary must be copied to all relevant parties

5.4 In instances where it has not been possible to resolve the complaint within 25 working days for a legitimate reason, the Officer will write to the beneficiary and inform them of:

the name of the person investigating their complaint

the reason for the delay

the date by which the beneficiary will be notified of the outcome

The letter sent to the beneficiary must be copied to the Charity Secretary and all relevant parties

6. Stage III: Complaints Review

6.1 If a beneficiary has reason to believe that their Stage II complaint has not been handled fairly, objectively or in accordance with the procedures described above, they should request a review of their complaint. A Stage III complaint constitutes a review and not a re-investigation of the complaint. The request for a review must state the grounds on which the review is sought and should be accompanied by appropriate documentary evidence.

Valid grounds for the review of the Stage II investigation outcome are as follows:

there were procedural irregularities in the investigation of the complaint;

fresh evidence can be presented which could not reasonably have been made available with submission of the Stage II Form; or

the outcome of the investigation was not reasonable in all the circumstances, in which case the detailed reasons for the beneficiary's dissatisfaction with the Stage II investigation and the outcome should be provided.

6.2 The Stage III Review request should be made in writing by completing an appropriate form, normally within 15 working days of the outcome of the Stage II formal resolution.

The following details must be provided:

a full statement of the complaint including the valid grounds for the review as detailed above.

a copy of Stage II formal complaint and a copy of the Stage II outcome letter.

what remedy the beneficiary is seeking.

a copy (not original documents) of any new documentary evidence that was not available during Stage II complaint investigation

whether the beneficiary has representation and if so whom.

The complaint should be addressed to the Charity Secretary as above

6.3 The Charity Secretary will review the handling of the complaint in the light of the beneficiary's written statement unless he/she was part of the original investigation. In this case, the complaint review will be referred to an appropriate Officer

6.4 The Charity Secretary will provide a written reply sent to the beneficiary within 20 working days of receiving the request for the review.

6.5 In instances where it has not been possible to review the complaint within 20 working days for a legitimate reason, the beneficiary will be informed of the reason for the delay and the date by which they will be notified of the outcome.

7. Referral to outside bodies where appropriate (Police etc)

7.1 The Charity requires the beneficiary to have satisfaction from all appropriate bodies for beneficiary complaints. If the beneficiary remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of their complaint, they may refer their case to any such body.

7.2 Guidance on submitting a complaint to an outsider body shall be made available

7.3 To make such a complaint the beneficiary will require a Completion of Procedures letter.

Where the complaint has not been upheld, the Charity will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically within 28 days from the Review outcome. Where the complaint has been upheld and the Charity has offered some resolution to the beneficiary, the beneficiary may request a Completion of Procedures letter if they do not wish to accept the resolution offered.

The Completion of Procedures letter exhausts the Charity's internal procedures.

7.4 Beneficiaries may also wish to seek advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau in Hounslow

Paul Williamson

Chairman

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