

# IF COMPLAINTS POLICY & OVERVIEW

*Reviewed: Principal/SMT July 2021 (Every 2 years)*

*Ratified by Board: Sept 2021*

*Full Review date: July 2023*

*EDI Assessment: SSET does not currently identify any EDI impact of this policy; should new information come to light, this will be considered at the next review*

## **Introduction**

The Sheiling Ringwood (TSR) is committed to providing a high quality of education and pastoral care for its students.

If anyone (including those with parental responsibility or legal guardians of students), does have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by TSR in accordance with this procedure.

TSR aims to:

- Deal with complaints promptly;
- Resolve a complaint by informal means if possible;
- Ensure that a thorough investigation is carried out; and
- Provide redress where appropriate.

TSR sets high standards and we want to know if we fall short of achieving them. Whilst we always strive to get things right first time, we recognise that complaints can be a valuable part of quality improvement. We will deal with complaints fairly and effectively.

TSR will make this complaints procedure available on its website. It will ensure that anyone who requests it is sent a copy of this document and the details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding academic year will be published on our website also.

We discourage complaints being made anonymously because this makes it difficult to investigate properly and impossible to respond to the person making the complaint. However, we will always consider anonymous complaints, but this is likely to be on a more limited basis than would otherwise be possible.

## **What is a Complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a parent, family member, student, staff member, visitor or member of the public. A complaint may be made about an individual member of staff, a specific department or about TSR as a whole. All complaints will be treated impartially and confidentially. Any individual involved in the complaint will not be responsible for investigating or responding to the complaint.

It is expected that most situations can be resolved on an informal basis.

## Recording Complaints & Grievances

TSR will keep a written record of all complaints and grievances and at what stage of the procedure they are resolved. TSR will keep records of the following information:

- Date when the complaint/grievance was raised
- Names of parent/family member/student/resident/staff member/visitor or member of public
- Description of the complaint/grievance
- Records of all the investigations
- Witness statements
- Name of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Any action taken by TSR as a result of the complaint
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue

We will handle any information received confidentially (information will only be shared with those who need to know).

## Staff induction

Within the staff induction training, the complaints process will cover the following areas:

- What constitutes a complaint
- When to raise an informal and formal complaint
- What the procedure is for dealing with a formal complaint at TSR and how this is recorded
- The procedure to be followed should an informal complaint not be resolved
- How our students can be assisted in making a complaint

## OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS:

<b>PARENTS/ FAMILY MEMBER</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>STAFF MEMBER</b>	<b>VISITOR OR MEMBER OF PUBLIC</b>
Please see:	Read further below	Please see:	Read further below:
1H Complaints Policy (for Parents)	1F Complaints Policy (general)	Grievance Procedure	1F Complaints Policy (general)
Sheiling website		Staff Handbook Sect.14	Sheiling website
<b>Stage 1 Informal complaint</b> – addressed with teacher, house manager or head of department – Appendix 1 shows record log template	Appendix 6 4A Safeguarding Policy: How to raise a concern (Poster - “Feeling worried of concerned?” using Communicate in Print symbols)	<b>Stage 1 Informal complaint</b> - addressed through discussion between staff members or with involvement of line manager/member of the HR team. Appendix 1 shows record log template	<b>Stage 1 Complaint-</b> In writing to Principal
<b>Stage 2 Formal complaint</b> – if unresolved informally, submit in writing to Principal		<b>Stage 2 Formal complaint</b> - in writing to line manager; if this line manager is impacted by your concern, write to HR Manager	<b>Stage 2 Appeal –</b> Involvement of Board of Trustees
<b>Stage 3 Panel hearing –</b> Involvement of Board of Trustees		<b>Stage 3 – Appeal</b> In writing to Principal	

## **FOR VISITORS OR MEMBERS OF PUBLIC**

### **Stage 1 - Complaint**

- 1.1 If a visitor or member of the public has a complaint, they should raise this with the Principal in writing.
- 1.2 The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.
- 1.3 TSR's aim is to complete the first stage of the procedure within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint if the complaint is lodged during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.
- 1.4 If the Principal is implicated, the Chair of the Board of Trustees will be involved in the investigation.

### **Stage 2 – Appeal**

- 2.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on this basis, then the complainant can appeal the decision in writing to Clerk to the Board of Trustees. This request in writing must be made within 5 working days of receipt of the decision regarding the formal complaint, stating the desired outcome and the grounds of the appeal.
- 2.2 The Chair of the Board of Trustees will set up a review panel consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the previous consideration of the complaint and one of these three people will be independent of the management of The Sheiling Ringwood.
- 2.3 The complainant will be invited to a hearing with the panel, within 20 term working days of receiving the written request, at which time the complaint and the response will be considered in confidence.
- 2.4 The panel may decide to uphold the formal response in whole or in part, uphold the original complaint in whole or in part, decide appropriate action to resolve the conflict, and/or recommend changes to The Sheiling Ringwood's systems or procedures to ensure that problems do not recur.
- 2.5 The panel's decision will be notified to all parties concerned within 10 term-time working days after the hearing.
- 2.6 If the complainant is not satisfied with the panel's decision, they can take their complaint for School and School Care matters to:
  - The National Complaints Team, Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD or by email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 123 1231.

For College and College Care matters:

- You can contact the Local Government Ombudsman in the following ways:
  - By phoning **0300 061 0614**
  - By texting 'call back', with your name and mobile number, to **0762 481 1595**
  - Someone will then call you

Or by writing to:

- **Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH** or you can also visit their website at **[www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)**.

## FOR STUDENTS

### Complaints from Students

The Sheiling Ringwood recognises both the necessity and the challenge of enabling all its students to access a Complaints Process. We will continually endeavour to improve our attempts.

Pictures and photographs and other forms of augmented communication (sign language, Communicate in Print) will be used to bring awareness of the possibility of making a complaint at appropriate times for those with severe communication difficulties.

Students can and should complain to any member of staff they feel close to or supported by. This person is duty bound to inform a member of the Sheiling Safeguarding Team.

Students may wish to complain to an independent advocate or their social worker. This will be enabled by staff and the student supported according to their wishes and needs

Any complaint from a student will be handled in the manner of the above complaints procedure and be recorded in The Sheiling Ringwood's Complaints Log Book.

In cases of suspected abuse, the incident should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead - see 4A Safeguarding, Child Protection and Adult at Risk Policy- Appendix 6.

### To all students

If you have a concern, or are worried about something that is happening to you, you may need help or need to know where to seek help or you may just want to talk over something which is troubling you. If so:-

Who is available in The Sheiling Ringwood	Key people who are able to help you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• your House Manager, Deputy or Team Leader</li><li>• your Teacher</li><li>• your TA or Support Worker</li><li>• the Heads of School and College</li><li>• a peer or friend</li><li>• the Sheiling Nurse</li></ul> These people are always available, but remember you can speak to any member of staff.
	<b>Corine van Barneveld</b> is the <b>Designated Safeguarding Lead</b> . Susan, Heidi and Geoff are the Deputies. - See Appendix 6 in the Safeguarding Policy.  Corine van Barneveld - internal ext 2483 or 07848 028532 Susan Harvey - internal ext 2450 or 07848 028539 Heidi Holm-Rasmussen - internal ext 2444 or 07725 041483 Geoff Lively - internal ext 2459 or 07718 767214  Staff are here to listen and help and will try to do what they can.

Outside The Sheiling Ringwood	<p>Anyone you feel comfortable to talk to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• your parents</li> <li>• your respite carer</li> <li>• your social worker</li> <li>• your friends</li> </ul>
Other people outside The Sheiling Ringwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair of the Board of Trustees who is Jeremy Morris Telephone: through The Sheiling Ringwood Reception on 01425 477488</li> <li>• Your Independent Visitor (their address is at Office Reception)</li> </ul>
ChildLine	Displayed on notice boards – Telephone: 0800 1111
Dorset Parent Carer Council	<a href="http://www.dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk/">http://www.dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk/</a> dpcc@dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk

### **Review**

The Principal will monitor the nature and frequency of formal complaints.

This policy will be evaluated by the Board of Trustees in the light of complaints made and their resolution in order to contribute to TSR improvement.



**Informal Complaints Log**

Date	Complainant's name and role	Staff receiving the complaint and role	Details of the complaint and expected/hoped for outcome	Action taken	Is complainant satisfied with the outcome?	Date closed