

Pennypit Special Needs Youth Club

Complaints Policy

The club is committed to delivering a quality service to all its members. It aims to take effective action to ensure standards are upheld and welcomes being informed where they have not been satisfactory.

This policy document sets out a procedure for parents and carers to complain about any aspect of the club. Complaints should be made constructively and every effort will be made to resolve them at an early stage. It is in the best interests of all the parents, carers, vulnerable young adults and the club that complaints are dealt with fairly and confidentially.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is anything a parent or carer wishes to call a complaint. This can be about any aspect of the running of the club. As there is no strict definition of what constitutes a complaint, if there is any doubt, the parent or carer will be asked directly if he or she is making a complaint.

Open access

What ever the circumstances, staff or committee members will have a duty to inform parents and carers of their right to complain, including a right to appeal.

- The complaint will be acted upon
- A complaint will always have a response
- No member of staff or committee will be a judge in his/ her own case

Staff and committee members have the assurance that at all stages of the procedure they will be allowed to put their side of the case.

Resolution of the complaint

Complaints will be resolved as quickly as possible as a complaint that is left unresolved for a lengthy period of time can be a source of conflict. Delays will be avoided and times stated for dealing with the complaints will be regarded as a maximum. If delays are unavoidable then the parent or carer will be informed of the delay, the reason for it and the revised timings. It should be remembered, however,

that while responding to a complaint will be a matter of priority, it will not be at the expense of the need for understanding and fairness.

Appeals process

When a complaint is made, all parents and carers will be made aware that there is an appeals process. A parent or carer has the right to appeal if they are unhappy with the outcome of their complaint.

Complaints process

How to make a complaint:

Complaints can be made to group staff or committee members. There are two ways in which they can be made and heard: informally and formally.

Informally

The initial approach by a parent or carer may be on an informal basis. The staff or committee member will listen carefully and after discussing the situation with the parent or carer they should agree whether the matter:

- has been resolved satisfactorily
- should move to the formal complaint process

The staff or committee member will agree the course of action with the parent or carer and carry it out. When an informal approach is adopted the complainant should be kept informed by the relevant staff or committee member.

Formally

If the parent or carer wishes to make use of the formal procedure, then he or she should:

- put the concerns or complaint in writing to Claire Hogg
- receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within ten working days
- request a meeting with the chairperson of the committee
- at the meeting have a friend, partner or representative present
- have a written record of the discussion made and agreed

Most problems should be sorted out at this stage; if not then the appeals process will be followed.

Appeals Process

If the parent or carer is not satisfied that the problem has been resolved, they should contact the same person the original complaint was sent to again in writing. If the parent or carer and club cannot reach agreement, an external mediator, acceptable to both sides, will be invited to listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help clarify the situation.

The mediator will:

- help to define the problem
- review the actions
- suggest further ways which might resolve it
- meet with the club if requested
- keep an agreed written record of any meetings held and the advice given
- keep all discussions confidential

In certain circumstances it will be necessary to involve the local authority (East Lothian Council) if:

- a child appears to be at risk of any kind
- there appears to be a possible breach of registration requirements

In these cases the parents, carers and the group will be informed.

This policy will be available to any person wishing to about Pennypit Special Needs Youth Clubs Protection Guidelines.

All management committee, staff, students and volunteers will have a working knowledge of this policy.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

_____ on _____
Name of Group Date

Signed by: _____

Designation: _____
on behalf of group