



St Catherine's BRAMLEY

Patron: Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Cornwall

Headmistress: Mrs AM Phillips MA Cantab

FUNDRAISING COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Synopsis

1.1. St Catherine's School Development Office is committed to dealing with all complaints constructively, impartially and effectively. The Development Office will make every effort to ensure that all complaints receive a complete, accurate and timely response.

1.2. This policy covers complaints in regards to our fundraising activities.

2. Why this policy is important

2.1. This policy is in-line with the Development Office's willingness to understand where things may have gone wrong and to prevent things going wrong in the future.

2.2. This policy recognises that the respectful and effective handling of complaints is essential to maintaining and building the good relationships upon which the Development Office depends.

3. What this policy involves

3.1. The Development Office defines a complaint as follows:

"A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about something the Development Office, or someone acting on behalf of the Development Office, has done, whether justified or not."

3.2. This definition embraces any expression of dissatisfaction reported to the Development Office about the experience of its stakeholders – parents former and current, alumnae and friends - its performance, the application of its policies and its campaigns, made by members of the public, individuals and organisations.

3.3. "Criticism" and complaint are not, necessarily, one and the same. For example, objection to a Development Office approach may represent "fair comment". While such comments will always necessitate a respectful and comprehensive response they will not automatically be defined as a "complaint". A criticism will, however, always be accepted as a complaint *if the member of the public defines it as a complaint* and wishes it to be managed under the Complaints Procedure (see Appendix).

3.4. The following issues will always be treated as complaints as they touch upon the Development Office's purpose and values:

- Inappropriate/improper fundraising methods;
- Financial losses/waste;
- The Development Office being deliberately used for significant private advantage;
- Non-compliance with the Development Office own policies/procedures;
- Non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations;

Station Road, Bramley, Guildford, Surrey GU5 0DF | T: 01483 893363 | E: schooloffice@stcatherines.info | www.stcatherines.info

3.5. To manage complaints effectively the Development Office will:

- i. Establish and maintain a complaints procedure that is clear, confidential and easy to use. The procedure and this policy will be publicised in paper and electronic formats (including online) so that complainants know how to contact the Development Office;
- ii. Make available the Development Director's contact details on request;
- iii. Accept complaints made verbally and in writing. In cases of sensitive/serious complaints and/or allegations of professional negligence/impropriety, however, complainants will be encouraged to put their complaint in writing;
- iv. Make every effort to be sensitive to the complainant's background and individual circumstances, for example their gender, first language, sexuality and any disabilities they may have. Under certain circumstances complainants will be advised to seek the support of a friend, relative or trusted advisor;
- v. Apply this policy to all Development Office services/activities, including those delivered via telephone or online;
- vi. Make sure all staff know how to recognise a complaint and how it is to be managed;
- vii. Aim to resolve complaints informally without resorting to formal investigation;
- viii. Always inform the complainant about the outcome of the complaint;
- ix. Maintain a central log of all complaints received by the Development Office. The log will follow the complaint's progress at each stage up to and including its resolution. The log will record how each complaint was resolved including details such as any financial compensation agreed;
- x. Periodically report all complaints to the Headmistress;
- xii. Produce on an annual basis an analysis of all complaints received.

3.6. Where a complaint is made to the Development Office in relation to a supplier, contractor or consultant the right is reserved to refer the complaint and/or the outcome of any investigation to the consultant's or contractor's professional body (where appropriate/relevant).

3.7. Under certain circumstances the Development Office may not respond to a complaint including:

- I. Failure of the complainant to identify themselves and/or provide contact details;
- II. Where the complaint is not about the Development Office; The expression of the complaint is insufficiently clear; The complaint has been sent to us and other organisations as part of a bulk mailing or email;
- III. Wherever possible, however, in the examples above, it will still, in most cases, be appropriate to acknowledge the correspondence, explain why the points made will not/cannot be addressed and how any further communications will be dealt with. Where a complaint is related to the School but not to Development matters it will be sent on to the Headmistress.

3.8. The Development Office will maintain the confidentiality of all personal information and will not disclose it without permission unless legally obliged to do so.

3.9. The Development Office *may* be unable to deal with a complaint effectively if it is accompanied by obscene language; threats; sensitive personal comments (regarding race, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, religion, age, nationality, ethnic origin, marital status, work status, or any other personal characteristic); libel etc.

4. Legal Framework & Guidance

4.1. This Complaints Policy considers all relevant legal requirements, regulations and guidance, including:

- Statutory guidance relevant to the Foundation including the Charity Commission; Information Commissioner Office;
- The standards of the Fundraising Regulator;
- Good Governance: A Code for the Voluntary and Community sector;

Appendix One - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. HOW MAY THE PUBLIC COMPLAIN?

1.1. The published advice available to the public is that complaints in relation to the Development Office activities should be directed to: Pippa Carte, Director of Development 01483 899754, pippa.carte@stcatherines.info

1.2. In addition, if a complainant wishes to direct a complaint to the Headmistress their contact details will be made available on request.

1.3. Although the above is the Development Office *published* advice, any complaint received by a member of staff however received, will be responded to in the same way (see Section 2).

2. HOW WE MANAGE COMPLAINTS

2.1. The Development Office aims to manage complaints quickly, effectively and informally at, or close to, the first point of contact. Although the Development Office publishes advice on how the public can make a complaint (see Section 1) any School member of staff may from time-to-time be the first point of contact for a complaint. If the worker concerned has both the information and authority to resolve matters quickly and effectively they should do so. Otherwise they should forward the complaint to the most appropriate team for resolution.

NB Complainants should not be obliged to submit their complaint again in accordance with paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 as they have already expressed their dissatisfaction.

2.2. Most complaints received by the Development Office are resolved informally either at, or close to, the first point of contact. Occasionally, however, because of the complexity or sensitivity of the matter - or because a satisfactory resolution cannot be agreed - the formal Complaints Procedure described in Sections 3-5 (below) must be followed. In addition, the formal Complaints Procedure will be followed at any stage at the request of the complainant.

2.3. When managing a complaint informally, the worker concerned must maintain a clear distinction between the informal and formal stages of the complaints process and ensure that the complainant is aware that their complaint may be managed formally at their request.

2.4. At any stage of the complaints process managers may become aware that the criteria for reporting a serious incident has been met. A serious incident is any incident which presents a significant risk to the School's pupils, property, work, or reputation, or that either has resulted or could result in a significant loss of funds to the Development Office. Serious incidents must be reported to the Charity Commission in a timely and appropriate way using the separate procedure for this purpose.

2.5. The procedures described in Sections 3-5 sets out the formal process for managing complaints. In addition, complaints made in relation to the Development Office's fundraising activities and complaints made through social media are governed by the following supplementary guidance,

3. STAGE ONE: RESPONSIBLE MANAGER REVIEW

3.1. Complaints to be managed under the formal complaints procedure must be passed to the relevant Responsible Manager within one working day.

3.2. When a Responsible Manager receives a complaint, it must be dealt with quickly and without any unreasonable delay. On receiving the complaint the Responsible manager has a maximum of two working days to formally acknowledge it and reassure the complainant that it is being dealt with.

3.3. Within a maximum of 10 working days of the complaint being received the findings and conclusions of the Responsible Manager must be provided in writing, plus information on how the complainant can submit an appeal if they are unhappy with the outcome.

3.4. It is good practice, at Stage 1 of a complaint, to offer to meet face to face with the complainant wherever practicable (although this may not be possible where the complaint arises within a service delivered online or by telephone). The Development Office will make every effort to be sensitive to the complainant's background and individual circumstances, for example their gender, first language, sexuality and any disabilities they may have. The involvement of a friend, relative or legal advisor of the complainant may be helpful.

3.5. At the start of Stage One, the Responsible Manager must consider whether - because of the nature of the complaint - it should be immediately escalated to Stage Two (usually the First Appeal stage). In such cases, the Responsible Manager will refer the complaint to the Second Responsible Manager who will make the decision.

4. STAGE TWO: APPEAL

4.1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Foundation response under Stage One, then the complainant may ask for the complaint to be taken to Stage Two (the Appeal stage).

4.2. Complainants should be encouraged to put their reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome at Stage One in writing. This is not, however, essential. Similarly, although complainants should register their dissatisfaction within 10 working days from receipt of the Stage One findings, if this timescale is exceeded it will not prevent the appeal from proceeding.

4.3. On receipt of the complainant's request to appeal, the Responsible Manager will escalate the request to the relevant line manager and to the relevant Director within one working day.

4.4. The Director will decide whether there is any basis for appeal and if a further review is required. If he/she accepts that there is a basis he/she will usually delegate the task of considering the appeal to the line manager. If, for reasons of partiality etc., this is considered inappropriate the Director may consider the appeal personally or delegate the task to another manager.

4.5. When deciding to whom the appeal should be delegated the Director must always consider any preferences expressed by the complainant. The Director's decisions and the reasoning behind them must be communicated to the complainant within two working days.

4.6. The line manager (or any other manager to whom the task has been delegated) will complete their investigations within 10 working days of the decision to proceed to Stage Two. If, in exceptional circumstances, this timescale cannot be met, the manager will provide an update to the complainant and agree a revised timescale.

4.7. Following any meeting with the complainant, the manager considering the appeal will reach a conclusion based on what they have heard and after reviewing all the paperwork. The manager's conclusions will form the basis for the decision to either reject the appeal and confirm the original decision, or uphold the appeal and suggest an appropriate course of action.

4.8. The manager's decision must be provided in writing to the complainant within 10 working days of the decision to consider the appeal or any appeal meeting with the complainant). The response will include the findings and conclusions behind the decision, and any action/additional action.

5. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER STAGE TWO IF THE COMPLAINANT REMAINS DISSATISFIED?

5.1. After the School's Development Complaints Procedure has been exhausted, complainants may refer their complaint to the following organisations:

The Charity Commission (England & Wales)

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

The Scottish Charity Regulator

<http://www.oscr.org.uk/charities/raise-a-concern-about-a-charity/complaint-form>

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

<http://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/about-us/making-a-complaint/>

The Fundraising Regulator

<http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk>

The Advertising Standards Authority

<https://www.asa.org.uk>

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Contact: Pippa Carte Development Director, 01483 899754 pippa.carte@stcatherines.info