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**COMPLAINTS POLICY**

A guide to dealing with complaints effectively at NAPA

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least every two years. NAPA will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Date of last review: 28/11/2023

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**Introduction**NAPA views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person (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 NAPA 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
* Complaints and compliments are discussed as an agenda item at every board meeting

**Definition of a Complaint**A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of NAPA – encompassing our work at our base on Anlaby Road and away from base.  
  
**Where Complaints Come From**Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer or organisation who has a legitimate interest in NAPA, including the general public if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to NAPA’s internal policy on such matters.  
  
**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 Chief Executive of NAPA.

**Publicised Contact Details for Complaints**

A full Complaints Procedure is available to parents, students and members of the public. It is published on the NAPA website here: <https://www.northernacademy.org.uk/napa-complaints-procedure/>

Written complaints may be sent to NAPA at 50 Anlaby Road, Hull, HU1 2PD or by e-mail at napa@northernacademy.org.uk. Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 01482 310690 or in person to any of NAPA’s staff or trustees at the same address as above or at any of our events.

**Receiving Complaints**

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have, such as social media. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

* Write down the facts of the complaint
* Take the complainant’s name, address and telephone number
* Note down the relationship of the complainant to NAPA, e.g. parent, student, member of the public
* Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure which is available on the NAPA website
* 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

A written record will be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with the informal process, formal process, or proceeding to Board level hearing. The records will be retained by the NAPA CEO. A written record will be kept of any actions taken by NAPA as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where an official body conducting an inspection (such as the police or social services requests access to them).

**Resolving Complaints**

**Stage One:**

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. 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 NAPA Chief Executive within five business days.

On receiving the complaint, the Chief Executive records it in the secure complaints Logfile and will decide the best course of action. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this Complaints Procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. 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 justified or not, the reply to the complainant should 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 of Trustee level.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Board of Trustees. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Board 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. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. 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 should 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.

**External Stage:**

As NAPA is a registered charity, the complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charity Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>. The Charity Commission will only get involved with serious complaints including a charity losing lots of money, being used for personal gain or being involved in illegal activity.

**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 a Chair or trustee should not also have the Chair and/or trustee involved as a person leading a Stage Two review.

**Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

**Review**This Complaints Policy will be reviewed every two years and policies and guidance may be added or removed in conjunction with the changes of the business.