



# ALEXANDRA COLLEGE DUBLIN

## COMPLAINTS (Policy and Procedure)

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| <b>Document Title:</b>   | <b>Complaints</b>  |
| <b>Unique Reference Number:</b>  | <b>011</b>   |
| <b>Document Author:</b>  | <b>Alexandra College Junior School, CB</b>                                 |
| <b>Document Approved:</b>  | <b>Avril Lamplugh</b>  |
| <b>Person(s) responsible for developing, distributing and reviewing Policy</b>                       | <b>Avril Lamplugh</b>  |
| <b>Person responsible for approving Policy</b>   | <b>Board of Management</b>   |
| <b>Method of communication of policies to staff (email / hard copy / induction training)</b>         | <b>Email</b>   |
| <b>Method of communication of policies to parents/guardians (full policies via email, hard copy)</b> | <b>Email</b>   |
| <b>Method of communication of policies to Children in the Service</b>                                | <b>A Child Friendly Version of this policy is available in the Service</b> |
| <b>Date the Document is Effective From:</b>  | <b>October 2019</b>  |
| <b>Scheduled Review Date:</b>  | <b>October 2020</b>  |
| <b>Number of Pages:</b>  | <b>7</b>   |

This policy is developed in accordance with the Child Care Act 1991 [Early Years Services] [Registration of School Age Services] Regulations 2018.

This policy is available and communicated to parents, guardians, staff and relevant stakeholders.

It is also available in child friendly format to school age children in the Service

Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy. Relevant staff have received training on this policy.

**Statement of Intent:**

We are committed to giving careful attention and a courteous, timely response to suggestions, comments or complaints so that we can learn from them and continuously improve our Service. All complaints are dealt with in a confidential manner without fear, favour or prejudice.

The Service has a consistent and unbiased approach used to manage all complaints within the Service.

All complaints are investigated promptly, taken seriously and handled appropriately and sensitively. Complaints are managed and reported in line with the Service's Complaints policies and procedures.

The written record of a complaint is available on the premises for inspection by the Early Years Inspectorate.

**Where a Child in the Service Makes a Complaint or Expresses a Concern to her parent or guardian:**

Where a parent notifies the Service that a child has made a complaint to them or expressed a concern about the Service or a staff member, contractor, unpaid worker, student or volunteer at the Service it is the policy of this Service to treat such notification by a parent/guardian as a complaint and the complaints procedure contained in this policy will immediately come into force.

**Where a Child Makes a Complaint or Expresses a Concern to a Staff Member, Contractor, Unpaid Worker, Student or Volunteer at the Service**

Where a child makes a complaint or expresses a concern to a staff member, contractor, unpaid worker, student or volunteer at the Service about a staff member, contractor, unpaid worker, student or volunteer at the Service, the person to whom the complaint or concern is made must immediately report the matter to the Manager who will contact a child's parents/guardian to arrange to meet with them at the earliest possible opportunity and the Service's complaints procedure will immediately come into force.

**Where a Child is Overheard Making a Complaint or Expressing a Concern to a Peer in the Service:**

Where a child is overheard making a complaint or expressing a concern to a peer in the Service the person hearing the conversation shall immediately report the matter to the Manager, Avril Lamplugh.

The Manager should immediately contact the child's parents/guardian and to arrange to speak with the child in compliance with the Service's Child Safeguarding Statement

- All complaints must be made to the Manager, Avril Lamplugh.
- Where the complaint is made about the Manager and if the complainant feels they cannot refer to the Manager or it is inappropriate to do so the complaint should be referred to the Deputy, Paula Murphy or an outside agency such as Tusla, Pobal or An Garda Síochána depending on the nature of the complaint.
- Complaints will be dealt with in an open and impartial manner.
- The complaint [made verbally] will be documented and remain confidential.
- The complaint will be investigated to assess if the Service has breached our policy and procedures.
- This investigation may be carried out by an independent third party if deemed necessary and appropriate
- Staff may be consulted during the investigation process and are expected to participate in any investigation of a complaint.
- If a complaint is made against a staff member the HR policies may be invoked, including the discipline policy
- Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as quickly and amicably as possible, and to the parents/guardians' satisfaction.
- If agreement cannot be reached informally, the complainant must make a formal complaint in writing to the Manager or other person as noted in this policy above
- The complainant will be sent an acknowledgement that the complaint has been received and told how it will be dealt with, by whom and within a timeframe specified by the Manager or other person and agreed by the complainant. If the complaint is made about the Manager or other person, the Manager or other person can acknowledge receipt of the complaint but may defer to a third party to manage the process

- The Manager or other person/s to whom the complaint has been referred will keep dated records summarising what was said and by whom.
- In the case of a complaint made against a member of staff, the staff member involved will be informed that a formal complaint has been made and given full details.
- The Manager will arrange to meet with the staff member and discuss the lodged complaint.
- The Manager will record and keep an accurate and detailed account of what was discussed.
- The Manager will review the complaint and consider all the relevant information as discussed and a decision will be made and recommendations if necessary.
- If a complaint involves a child protection concern (child abuse, neglect) this is passed to the Designated Liaison Person in the service and a separate reporting procedure will be followed in line with our Child Protection Policy and Children First 2017.
- The Manager will inform all parties involved of the outcome of the complaint made. The Manager reserves the right to extend the timeframe of the investigation and resolution in complex cases. The complainant will be kept informed regarding the progress of their complaint hearing and will never be left more than one week without communication regarding the complaint

### **Appeals:**

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint or a satisfactory resolution is not found within 28 days of the Manager's investigation and report, Management will offer (a) the opportunity to appeal the complaint to an external consultant with experience in dealing with complaints or (b) offer mediation

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the above interventions, they will be advised that the service is closing off the complaint and if appropriate will refer the complainant elsewhere.

- The agency to which a complaint may be referred may include such organisations as Tusla, HSE, DCYA, HSA depending on the nature of the complaint. We will cooperate fully in any investigation carried out by these agencies

- Upon closure of a complaint, the outcome is recorded with details of any recommendations and any changes to practice, policy is recorded
- Complaints will be kept on file for 2 years

### **Child Version of Complaints Policy**

We have a Child-friendly version of the Complaints Policy to help support children if they have a complaint or concern. This policy will be discussed in an age appropriate way with children when they start in our service. Staff will support children if they wish to make a complaint and together with their parents, if appropriate, will be facilitated through the process

### **Management of Unsolicited Information to Tusla:**

The Early Years Inspectorate (EYI) may receive information volunteered by parents, staff or members of the public about our Service This is known as unsolicited information, and it can include comments, complaints or concerns.

- We will cooperate fully if a complaint is referred to another agency and follow our policy in investigating the complaint ourselves
- Unsolicited information which is deemed to fall under the remit of the Regulations is then risk rated by the inspectorate to determine if there is a risk to the health, safety and welfare of child in the service. Again, we will fully cooperate with any review/risk assessment carried out by Tusla
- If the risk to children is assessed as low by Tusla it may not investigate, but our Service will be required to investigate the matter in line with this complaints policy.
- When investigating the complaint, we may need to refer to other policies and procedures or follow our employment/staffing policies and procedures
- If there is an unsolicited complaint, we will act promptly to endeavour to resolve the issue as quickly as possible
- Like all other complaints we will log unsolicited information and retain for inspection for 2 years
- We will keep all parties informed of the progress of a complaint

- We will record each step of the process and keep detailed notes
- We will give the complainant a full explanation in writing of the outcome and the rationale for the decision

*Avril Lamplugh*

- **Signed:**
  - **Date:** Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> 2019
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  - **Name:** Avril Lamplugh
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  - **Name of Person Approving Policy**
- We will always give the option of appeal the decision as outlined in this policy

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:**

**Person responsible for approving the Policy**