

Clayton Croft Complaints Resolution Policy – QS-0002

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Complaints Policy

We take great pride in the quality of care provided to children. We are committed to providing high quality, transparent and accessible services to everyone we support at Clayton Croft.

However, we recognise that children, parents, carers, or professionals may, from time to time, have concerns about how they are cared for. Everyone is encouraged to make those concerns known to Clayton Croft staff so that we can collaborate to address them.

If anyone has a complaint, they can expect it to be treated with care and in accordance with this Complaints Resolution Policy and the Complaints Resolution Procedure (QS-0002-001-0423), a copy of which is available on the Clayton Croft website and can be made available on request to Registered Manager.

In respect of concerns and complaints raised:

- We aim to resolve all complaints as quickly as possible.
- We will handle any expression of dissatisfaction with our services which calls for a response as a complaint.
- We will listen to the complaints, treat them seriously, and where appropriate, consider where we can learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service.

Anyone with a complaint can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times. By return, we expect all parents to treat our staff with the same courtesy, respect and fairness.

Scope

This policy applies to children currently resident at Clayton Croft, and children previously resident at Clayton Croft if the complaint was initially raised when the child was still registered at Clayton Croft. Although this policy is made available to children, family members, and professionals before a placement commences, it is not available for use prior to residence.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about Clayton Croft, about a specific incident or about an individual member of staff and/or any matter about which an individual is unhappy and seeks action by the management.

Safeguarding children and young people

If there are safeguarding concerns about a child, or there is a belief that a child may be at risk of serious harm, Clayton Croft will act promptly in accordance with its

Safeguarding Policy. Where a complaint is about the manner in which a safeguarding matter has been handled then that complaint will be addressed through this policy.

Please refer to Clayton Croft's website for more information on our provision for protecting children. Please refer to our Safeguarding Children Policy SO-0189.

Our standards for handling complaints

- We treat all complaints seriously.
- We can support you with any reasonable adjustments, where appropriate, to access this process.
- Any information that you give will be kept confidential (except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, or some other legal authority, requests access to them)
- We will not normally consider anonymous complaints.
- We will respond to your complaint promptly in accordance with the timescales set out in the Complaints Procedure.

How to complain to us

We have a three-stage Complaints Procedure. A copy of this can be found on the Clayton Croft website and can be made available on request to the Registered Manager.

If you have a concern, please raise this directly with the Registered Manager in the first instance. It is hoped that most concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. Where these cannot be resolved, you may raise a formal complaint under Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure.

At each stage it will help us to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible if you can give us as much clarity and detail as possible, including the outcome you are seeking. If we do not have all the details needed to deal with the complaint, we may contact you and ask you for further information.

We may appoint external investigators at any point in the complaints process.

If you require adjustments, for example, if you have English as a second language, please inform us in advance so that we can consider what adjustments can be made e.g. such as help from an interpreter.

How a child can complain

Please refer to Appendix 1 for an easy-read complaints procedure for children.

Children resident at Clayton Croft are supported to share their wishes and feelings through 1:1 keyworker sessions, access to the advocacy of their family members and allocated social worker, and access to independent advocacy if necessary.

Children will be offered regular opportunities to share their wishes and feelings via their preferred communication method. Staff will ensure that children's preferred communication, such as Picture Exchange Communication System, contains vocabulary relating to complaints or concerns to allow them to share this.

The Registered Manager will ensure that no child is subject to any reprisal for making a complaint or raising a concern.

Records and Confidentiality

For all complaints which get to the formal stages (Stages 2 and 3), Clayton Croft will keep a written record. We will record the progress of the complaint and whether they were resolved at the formal stage or proceeded to a Complaints Panel meeting at Stage 3 and any actions taken by Clayton Croft following the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).

We process data in accordance with our Privacy Notice. When dealing with complaints, Clayton Croft (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following information:

- date when the issue was raised;
- name of the individual making the complaint;
- name of the child;
- description of the issue;
- records of all the investigations (if appropriate);
- witness statements (if appropriate);
- name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage;
- copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations);
- notes of the Complaints Panel meeting; and
- the Complaints Panel's written decision.

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in our Privacy Notice, but potentially including information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint.

Clayton Croft will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel meetings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with our Privacy Notice but in most cases for a period of at least seven years after the pupil leaves the School.

Details of the number of formal complaints received by Clayton Croft from the preceding school year are available on request from the Registered Manager.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an

inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, or some other legal authority, requests access to them.

Serial, vexatious, unreasonable or persistent complaints

The decision of the Complaints Panel at Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure is final. If at any level the individual making the complaint attempts to reopen an issue or a closely related issue that has already been dealt with under this complaints procedure, the Director of Assurance and Compliance may write to the individual to inform them that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter closed, that continued correspondence on the same matter is vexatious and that the National Autistic Society will not respond to any further correspondence on this issue or a closely related issue. If the parents write again on the same issue, there will be no obligation on the part of the NAS to respond.

In some cases, we may decide to treat a complaint as vexatious, such as

- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
- insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value

Where we do decide to treat a complaint as vexatious, we will write to tell the individual making the complaint why we believe the complaint falls in that category, what action we are taking and the duration of that action.

We will not normally limit the contact individuals such as family members have with Clayton Croft. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate "unacceptable behaviour" and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening. We define "unreasonable behaviour" as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of an individual's contact with Clayton Croft, such as, if they:

- refuse to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuse to co-operate with the complaint's investigation process
- refuse to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of this policy and the Complaints Procedure

- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with this policy and the Complaints Procedure or with good practice
- introduce trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raise large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insist they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- make unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seek to have them replaced
- change the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly make the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuse to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the School's Complaint Procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seek an unrealistic outcome
- make excessive demands on staff time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- use threats, intimidation or violence
- use abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- knowingly provide falsified information
- publish unacceptable information in a variety of social media or other public forums

Individuals should try to limit their communication with the School that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Director of Assurance and Compliance will discuss any concerns with the individual making the complaint informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Director of Assurance and Compliance will write to the individual making the complaint explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For individuals who continue to excessively contact Clayton Croft causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts. This will be regularly reviewed.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the Clayton Croft site.

Appendix 1 – Easy Read Complaints Guide for Children

COMPLAINTS








 If you are ever unhappy, sad, scared or worried about something at Clayton Croft






 you can tell any member of staff.







 You can use your own complaint form to make a complaint






 You can call Ofsted and tell them.







 You can call the children's commissioner for England and tell her.




 Below are the details

0800 528 0731

OFSTED- 0300 123 4666.

Email address- enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Children's commissioner for England-Rachel De-Souza

0800 528 0731

Help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

