

## 1F Complaints Policy

*Reviewed: Senior Management Team, Oct 2017 (Every two years)*

*Ratified by Board of Trustees: TBC - Nov 2017*

*Full Review date: October 2019*

- The Sheiling Ringwood is a responsive organisation guided by a set of core values. We welcome comments and are committed to dealing with complaints fairly and effectively. Whilst we always strive to get it right first time, complaints can be a valuable part of quality improvement. Sheiling Ringwood sets high standards and we want to know if we fall short of achieving them.
- The Sheiling Ringwood will recognise the integrity of each student, parent, representative, vocational worker, employee or member of the public.
- The Sheiling Ringwood will ensure that any person involved in the complaint itself will not be part of the group responsible for its investigation consideration and response.
- We will handle any information received confidentially (information will only be shared with those who need to know), investigate fairly and will provide a clear explanation. If a complaint is upheld, preventative action for the future will be identified.
- We discourage complaints being made anonymously because this makes it difficult to investigate properly and impossible to respond to the person making the complaint. However, we will always consider anonymous complaints, but this is likely to be on a more limited basis than would otherwise be possible.
- We cannot deal with complaints made later than 12 months after the event occurred. In some circumstances, we will consider a complaint outside that time period, if a valid reason can be provided to explain why it was not brought to our attention earlier and, if in our view, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.
- We will not be able to deal with a complaint which is subject to legal proceedings or is judged to be vexatious.
- The correct procedures as laid down in the Complaints Procedure will be followed.
- If the Principal is implicated, the Chair of the Board of Trustees will be involved in the investigation.
- The Sheiling Ringwood expressly forbids any reprisals against individuals who have lodged a complaint.
- Complaints will be documented and logged according to Regulation 39 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 as detailed in the Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations-and the Fundamental Standards April 2015 CQC Guidance about Compliance - Essential Standards of Quality and Safety (Regulation 17: Receiving and Acting on Complaints) of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 and will include a process which tracks the action taken and the outcomes.
- The Principal will annually review the records of complaints to check for the satisfactory operation of the Complaints Procedure and the outcome of all individual cases. The existence of patterns will be noted and acted upon.
- Serious complaints against the Sheiling Ringwood or its staff will be reported to Ofsted and CQC.

- The Sheiling Ringwood Complaints Policy is available on the website and the policies and procedure will be incorporated in the relevant handbooks available to all staff. This policy will be made available in a suitable alternative format to students and staff if required. The Parents Handbook holds a section on Concerns and Complaints specifying the procedure.
- All informal concerns and complaints are logged on a Complaints Log form (Appendix 2) and filed in the Sheiling Ringwood's Complaints Log Book held in a confidential locked cabinet in the Principal's Office.
- The Complaints Log Book will be made accessible for inspectors and to the Registration Authority on request.
- Matters which concern possible or suspected abuse, neglect or other Child Protection and Adult at Risk issues will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Staff Training and induction**

Staff training in complaints procedures will cover the following areas:

- What constitutes a complaint
- When to raise a concern or formal complaint
- What the procedure is for dealing with a formal complaint in The Sheiling Ringwood and how this is recorded
- To whom staff can make a complaint outside of The Sheiling Ringwood
- The procedure to be followed should a complaint not be resolved
- How the student can be assisted in making a complaint

### **Complaints Procedure**

A complaint can be a concern about or dissatisfaction with a service within the Sheiling Ringwood or issues generated by the activities of students, staff, contractors or visitors related to The Sheiling Ringwood. Complaints can be raised by any student, member of staff, parent, placing authority or member of the public.

It is expected that most situations can be resolved on an informal basis. However, if this is not the case, then the formal complaints procedure is as follows:

#### **Stage one:**

All complaints should be directed, in writing if possible, to the Principal. Where the complaint involves the Principal, the complaint should be directed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

A response will be made, also in writing, within five working days of receipt of the complaint. The response will indicate any intended actions and the timescales thereof.

The written response will be sent to:

- The person who made the complaint
- Where appropriate, the person on whose behalf the complaint was made
- Any other person who is otherwise involved or affected

Any consideration of a complaint is separate from any action that may be necessary under The Sheiling Ringwood's Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.

Only those staff directly involved will be informed of the complaint and of any of the actions taken, either during or on completion of the procedure.

#### **Stage two:**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with either the response or the actions taken, they should request, in writing, that the original complaint be reviewed by the Board of Trustees. This request should be made within 20 term working days of receiving the response from the Principal and be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees will set up a review panel consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the previous consideration of the complaint and one of these three people will be independent of the management of The Sheiling Ringwood.

The complainant will be invited to a hearing with the panel, within 20 term working days of receiving the written request, at which time the complaint and the response will be considered in confidence. A complainant can be accompanied by a work colleague, parent or guardian. The panel may decide to uphold the formal response in whole or in part, uphold the original complaint in whole or in part, decide appropriate action to resolve the conflict, and/or recommend changes to The Sheiling Ringwood's systems or procedures to ensure that problems do not recur.

The panel's decision will be notified to all parties concerned within 10 term-time working days after the hearing.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the panel's decision, they can take their complaint for School and School Care matters to:

The National Complaints Team, Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD; email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 123 1231.

For College and College Care matters you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman in the following ways:

By phoning **0300 061 0614**

By texting 'call back', with your name and mobile number, to **0762 481 1595**

Someone will then call you.

By writing to:

**Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH** or you can also visit their website at **[www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)**.

Every student, member of staff, parent or any other person involved, is reminded that they can at any point access the complaints procedures of their placing authority.

### **Complaints from Students**

- The Sheiling Ringwood recognises both the necessity and the challenge of enabling all its students to access a Complaints Process. We will continually endeavor to improve our attempts.
- Pictures and photographs and other forms of augmented communication (sign language, Communicate in Print) will be used to bring awareness of the possibility of making a complaint at appropriate times for those with severe communication difficulties.
- Students can and should complain to any member of staff they feel close to or supported by. This person is duty bound to inform a member of the Sheiling Safeguarding Team.
- Students may wish to complain to an independent advocate or their social worker. This will be enabled by staff and the student supported according to their wishes and needs
- Any complaint from a student will be handled in the manner of the above complaints procedure and be recorded in The Sheiling Ringwood's Complaints Log Book.

- In cases of suspected abuse, the incident should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead - see the Safeguarding, Child Protection and Adult at Risk Policy. The following sheet will be made available to all students at The Sheiling Ringwood together with a symbol version for those who need it.

### To all Children and Students

If you have a concern, or are worried about something which is happening to you, you may need help or need to know where to seek help, you may just want to talk over something which is troubling you. If so:-

Who is available in The Sheiling Ringwood	<p>Key people who are able to help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• your House Coordinator, Deputy or Shift leader</li> <li>• your Teacher</li> <li>• your TA or Support Worker</li> <li>• the Heads of Care for School and College</li> <li>• a peer or friend</li> <li>• The Sheiling Nurse</li> </ul> <p>These people are always available but remember you can speak to any member of staff</p>
	<p><b>Corine van Barneveld</b> is the <b>Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>. Madalina, Heidi and Geoff are the Deputies. They are especially available to help all students:</p> <p>Corine van Barneveld - internal ext 483 or 07848 028532          Madalina Dorobantu - internal ext 450 or 07848 028539          Heidi Rasmussen - internal ext 444 or 07725 041483          Geoff Lively - internal ext 476 or 07718 767214</p> <p>Staff are here to listen and help and will try to do what they can.</p>
Outside The Sheiling Ringwood	<p>Anyone you feel comfortable to talk to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• your parents</li> <li>• your respite carer</li> <li>• your social worker</li> <li>• your friends</li> </ul>
	<p>Other people outside the Sheiling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair of the Board of Trustees who is Jeremy Morris Telephone: through The Sheiling Ringwood reception on 01425 477488</li> <li>• Your Independent Visitor (their address is at Office Reception)</li> </ul>
ChildLine	Displayed on Office notice board – 0800 1111
The Local Authority Complaints Officer	<p>Hilary Butcher, Complaints Manager, Adult &amp; Community Services, Dorset County Council, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XJ          Email: <a href="mailto:h.butcher@dorsetcc.gov.uk">h.butcher@dorsetcc.gov.uk</a>          Tel: 01305 221061          Fax: 01305 224325</p>

### **Dissatisfaction with outcomes**

Where the student or his/her parent or representative is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaints process, The Sheiling Ringwood will support the right of those persons to use the LA complaints procedure.

It is the right of the Student to complain directly to the Complaints Officer in Dorset - the details are listed above.

### **Cause for Concern**

The Sheiling Ringwood Complaints procedure deals effectively with complaints from students, parents, staff and visitors.

On a day-to-day basis, issues may arise that need discussion or explanation. These issues can be with regard to difficulties with a child, attitude of a staff member or simply a misunderstanding between staff.

The Sheiling Ringwood expects of its staff members that they will endeavour to rectify any of these issues informally. If this proves difficult, staff should feel free to use the 'Cause for Concern' form (see Appendix 1) and pass this to the Head of Departments.

The Heads of Care hold a central file for the forms and details of actions taken are recorded. In some cases, the Head of Department may need to pass on details of the concerns to the supervisors of individual staff members to take issues further if this is deemed necessary.



Ref number:

**THE SHEILING RINGWOOD  
CAUSE FOR CONCERN**

<b>REPORTED BY:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
<b>CONCERN:</b> ..... ..... .....	
<b>STUDENTS INVOLVED:</b> .....	
<b>STAFF INVOLVED:</b> .....	
<b>OTHERS PRESENT (STAFF &amp; STUDENT/S):</b> .....	
<b>REPORTED TO:</b> .....	
<b>DO YOU CONSIDER THIS <u>MAY</u> BE A SAFEGUARDING MATTER? IF SO, CONTACT AND PASS TO DSL IMMEDIATELY.</b>	
<b>If not:</b>	
<b>ACTION TAKEN:</b> ..... .....	
<b>NOW PASS CAUSE FOR CONCERN TO: PRINCIPAL</b>	
<b>DATE RECEIVED BY DSL:</b>	<b>TIME:</b>
<b>DO YOU CONSIDER THIS A POTENTIAL SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT? YES / NO</b>	
<b>IF YES, DSL TO FOLLOW SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE &amp; INITIATE APPROPRIATE PAPERWORK</b>	
<b><u>FINAL OUTCOME:</u></b> ..... ..... .....	



## The Sheiling Ringwood Complaint Log form

Complaint from student, parent/guardian/carer, member of staff or other:	
Letter of acknowledgement sent:	Date:
Date:	
Member of staff completing:	
Role of staff:	
What is the exact nature of the complaint?	
Who is going to do something about this?	
What action has been taken?	
Where is the evidence that action has been taken?	
Is the person making the complaint happy with the outcome?	
Was the complaint upheld? Yes	No
If yes, describe action taken:	
Letter sent to end process?	Date: