

Complaints Policy and Procedures

Date approved: January 2018
Review date: September 2021

Introduction

crossteach is a professional Christian charity with a reputable approach. We aim to have a productive and positive relationship with all those with whom we have contact.

'If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.' Romans 12:18

Our experience is that through strong relationships, open communication and honest dialogue the concerns that inevitably arise from time-to-time can be solved quickly. As we work with schools we build in regular opportunities for feedback, and we use all feedback as an opportunity to develop what we do.

If the normal communication channels have been exhausted and the complainant remains dissatisfied then the agreed procedure should be followed by both complainant and **crossteach**. Every complaint is a matter of concern for **crossteach** and will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness.

No matter what is shared, we will continue to do our best for the pupils and schools with whom we work. Concerns will be treated as strictly confidential, the only exception being if a Safeguarding issue is raised, in which case the relevant authorities will be notified as per our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Anonymous complaints will be subject to the normal procedures as they may relate to something serious. The Director or Chair of the Trust will decide whether the gravity of the anonymous complaint justifies investigation.

Nothing in this policy affects an individual's legal rights.

1. Monitoring and Review

Team leaders are responsible for managing any complaints related to the work in their region.

The Director is responsible for maintaining a complaints log, actions taken and outcome, and reporting termly to the trustees.

Written records will be kept of all complaints and their outcomes.

2. The complaints process

I Initial Discussion between complainant and member of **crossteach** staff

crossteach works within schools at the invitation of, and under the monitoring of, school staff. Therefore if a pupil or parent wishes to raise a concern they should discuss the matter with the school using the schools own complaints process.

If a school wishes to raise a concern, either because it has been raised with them by a pupil or parent, or because the school has a concern, in the first instance the relevant teacher should discuss the matter informally with the member of **crossteach** staff with whom the concern has arisen. Though some complaints can be discussed straight away, it can be better for an

appointment to be arranged within one week of the request, so that both parties can sit and talk things through in sufficient detail.

II Initial discussion with Team Leader or Director

If the school feels that the situation has not been adequately resolved, or they consider their concern to be sufficiently serious, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the regional team leader. This appointment should normally be arranged within one week of the request.

The team leader will take the complaint seriously and conduct initial investigations, within two weeks of the appointment. They may wish to consult the Director.

Should a complainant have a complaint involving the team leader s/he should contact the Director. If the complaint involves the Director, the complainant should initially make an informal approach to the Chair of the Trust who will investigate it.

If the outcome is not satisfactory to the complainant they should then lodge a formal complaint, outlined below.

III Formal Stage 1

If a written complaint is received by the Director or a trustee, it should be acknowledged within a week and the complainant told that the matter will be investigated and a response given within a certain time, normally two weeks. Staff will keep notes of any discussions held with those who are expressing concerns or bringing a complaint. Clear written statements will be taken and every statement will be signed and dated.

On receiving a formal complaint, the Director will inform the Chair of the Trust.

The Director will write to the complainant with the outcome of the investigation, with the information that if they are not satisfied they can write to the Chair of the Trust.

IV Formal Stage 2

If the Chair of the Trust receives a written complaint he should consult with the Director before taking any action. It is important to ensure that the informal stages of the procedure have all been exhausted.

The Chair should acknowledge the written complaint within a week of receipt, stating that the matter is being investigated and that he hopes to be able to make a further response within two weeks. The Chair will include at least one other Trustee in the investigation.

After completing the investigation, the Chair of the Trust will prepare a written summary of the findings, write to the complainant saying the investigation has been completed and stating the outcome. The Trustees decision is final.

3. Vexatious or Habitual Complainants

crossteach will endeavour to respond with patience and sympathy to the needs of all complainants. In extremely rare or extreme cases further procedures are needed to communicate with and managing complainants that are considered to be habitual or vexatious. Such complaints can place significant strain on time and resources for staff and trustees, reducing the ability of **crossteach** to carry out its work.

crossteach will always be open to reconciliation with any parties that may have previously fallen into this category. These procedures should only be used in exceptional circumstances

after all reasonable measures have been taken to try to resolve complaints under the usual complaints procedures.

However it is not necessary for a complaint to have completed the normal complaint process before this procedure is invoked. Judgement and discretion must be used in applying the criteria to identify potential habitual or vexatious complainants and in deciding on the appropriate action to be taken in specific cases.

A complainant may be deemed to be habitual or vexatious if previous or current contact shows that they may meet any or all of the following criteria:

- Continuing to pursue the same complaint where the complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted
- changing the substance of a complaint or continually raising new issues. (Care must be taken not to discard new issues which are significantly different from the original complaints. These may need to be addressed as separate complaints.)
- are unwilling to accept a final decision or a chosen course of action
- have, in the course of addressing a complaint, had an excessive number of contacts with staff or trustees placing unreasonable demands on time
- have threatened or used physical violence towards staff at any time or have harassed or been personally abusive or verbally aggressive towards staff dealing with the complaint
- are known to have recorded meetings or face-to-face / telephone conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of other parties involved

Where complainants have been identified as habitual or vexatious, Director and Chair of the Trust will determine what action to take. The complainant will be notified, in writing, of the reasons why he or she has been classified as habitual or vexatious and what action will be taken and of the review procedure. A record must be kept, of the reasons why a complainant has been classified as habitual or vexatious.

In such circumstances the complainant will be notified in writing that the trustees have responded fully to the points raised and has tried to resolve the complaint but there is nothing more to add and continuing contact on the matter will serve no useful purpose. The complainant should be notified that any form of contact, either orally or in writing, in relation to their complaint, or any further complaints relative to the same period of time, or the same or similar issues as an earlier complaint, is at an end, and that further contact received will not be answered.