

Complaints Policy

Merton Music Foundation

Statement

Merton Music Foundation (MMF) is committed to providing the best standard of quality for all stakeholders and takes seriously all concerns raised. This policy aims to ensure a clear process for raising and handling of complaints and is open to everyone who engages with the Foundation, including: parents/guardians, pupils, school staff, strategic and delivery partners, visitors and members of our wider local community.

Principles

- We will handle all complaints in-line with our organisational values and in accordance with this and other related policies / procedures.
- All complaints will be taken seriously and responded to fairly, consistently and within clear time frames.
- We will always seek to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of all parties; however, we recognise that this may not always be possible.
- When handling complaints, we will pay due regard to confidentiality and treat all parties with respect and good will.

How to Raise a Complaint

We expect to resolve any day-to-day difficulties or complaints informally and as quickly as possible. In the first instance we encourage you to raise any complaint directly with the member of staff concerned. The more formal procedure outlined below is intended for use where informal communication has not resolved the problem.

1. Contact Us

Please submit your complaint in writing to: complaints@mmf.org.uk.

If you are unable to contact us by email, you could write to us at: MMF c/o Merton Abbey Primary School, High Path, SW19 2JY or contact us by phone: 020 8640 5446.

2. Tell Us What is Wrong

We ask that you provide a clear description of what your complaint is about, including any relevant details such as times and dates. You are encouraged to also tell us how you would like the issue to be resolved, if you know this.

3. Acknowledging Your Complaint

Your complaint will be logged and brought to the attention of a member of our Leadership Team who will acknowledge receipt within two working days and respond with a proposed resolution and/or next steps within 5 working days.

If You Are Still Unhappy

If you are dissatisfied with the initial response, your complaint could be escalated to Stage 2.

1. Stage 2 Complaint

If you wish to escalate your complaint to Stage 2, please let us know by reply after we have responded to your initial message. We encourage you to communicate why you are unhappy with the proposed resolution so that we can seek to address this.

2. SLT Review

Your complaint will be escalated to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), who will acknowledge receipt within 2 working days.

The SLT member will review your initial complaint, any action taken by MMF staff and any other relevant contextual information. They will consider whether the complainant's questions were answered, whether any injustice or hardship was suffered, and what remedy would be fair and proportionate in the circumstances.

3. Resolution

The SLT member will decide upon any new course of action or proposed resolution and discuss this with you. It might be the case that the original resolution is deemed to be fair and appropriate, in which case this will be communicated to you with a justification.

The SLT member will respond to you within a reasonable time frame, typically no more than 10 working days after the Stage 2 process has begun.

Further Escalation (Stage 3 & Stage 4)

If you are still dissatisfied, you could escalate your complaint to Stage 3 and then Stage 4 of the procedure.

1. Chief Executive's Investigation

At Stage 3, your complaint will be investigated by the Chief Executive. They will review all correspondence and contextual information without bias in line with the principles set out in this policy. Once this review is complete, the Chief Executive will summarise their findings and communicate this with you alongside any proposed further actions to resolve the complaint.

The Chief Executive will respond to you within a reasonable timeframe, typically within 10 working days after the Stage 3 process has begun.

2. Trustees' Final Decision

If following the Chief Executive's investigation, you are still unhappy, your complaint can be escalated to Stage 4. Representatives from the Board of Trustees will review your complaint and all associated context and correspondence. Typically this will be led by the Chair of Trustees, or if not, they will be kept informed throughout the process.

Trustees will consider the complaint in full without bias and in accordance with this policy and make a final decision whether the complaint will be upheld or not and respond to you within a reasonable timeframe, typically within 20 working days after the Stage 4 process has begun.

If the complaint is upheld, appropriate action will be taken. If the complaint is not upheld, reasons for this will be clearly given.

Finding a Resolution

Depending on the nature of the complaint and the outcome of the complaint procedure, it may be appropriate for us to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review our policies in light of the complaint.

Confidentiality

All conversations and correspondence will be treated with discretion. Complainants have the right to know what use will be made of personal information and, accordingly, personal information will only be shared between staff on a 'need to know' basis.

Time Limits on Making a Complaint

Normally, complaints should be made within one month of the event or within one month of the complainant becoming aware of cause to complain.

We understand that in certain instances people may wish to remain anonymous. In such cases we will review the nature of the complaint and decide on follow up action if we feel it is necessary.

Assistance, where possible, will be offered to all parties in a complaint procedure.

MMF's Right to Refuse a Complaint

We have the right to refuse a complaint where the complaint is clearly vexatious, malicious, motivated by racist, sexist, homophobic or other discriminatory attitudes and/or if the complaint threatens or abuses MMF staff or volunteers.

Monitoring of Complaints

We will monitor all complaints in order to notice any trends and ensure the highest quality of service for all stakeholders. Data relating to complaints will be held in accordance with MMF's Data Protection policy and relevant legislation such as the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Extenuating Circumstances

Issues related to child protection or safeguarding, criminal investigations and/or employee grievances must be handled under the relevant MMF policy / procedure. Should this be the case, the complainant will be informed.

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