

Complaints Policy **March 2019**

Complaints Policy

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Introduction

National Youth Ballet is committed to working in a close partnership with parents, guardians and carers. A vital aspect of this partnership is the need for National Youth Ballet to know when you feel that things are not going well. If you have any concerns about please contact an appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. National Youth Ballet takes all such expressions of concern seriously and aims to follow them up courteously and promptly. In any situation things can go wrong, but National Youth Ballet is committed to resolving any difficulties, problems or issues as soon as possible.

Two things tend to make parents reluctant to complain or to express concerns:

1. A fear that National Youth Ballet will not see the issue to be important: please be assured that, if it is important to you, it is important to us.
2. A fear that a concern or complaint may lead to repercussions for the student: under no circumstances will National Youth Ballet discriminate against a student because of expressions of concern or complaints by them or their parents/guardians.

National Youth Ballet is experienced in ensuring that, if other students are involved (e.g. in an allegation of bullying), there are no repercussions from other quarters.

This policy seeks to explain the systems we have put in place to give you confidence in our willingness to listen and in our determination to be open, honest and fair in our dealings with you. It highlights the routes anyone can follow if they feel that something is not right, that their child or ward is fed up, unhappy, being treated unfairly or bullied, or if they have any other concern or complaint.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Make it as easy as possible to voice a concern or submit a complaint.
- Treat each concern or complaint as a constructive expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of National Youth Ballet life and, as such, deserving of a response.
- Treat each concern or complaint seriously, however it is made, whether in person, by telephone or in writing (letter, fax or e-mail).
- Deal with each concern or complaint promptly and politely; where appropriate, this may be by telephone, face-to-face or in writing.
- Respond appropriately, with for example; (i) an explanation, (ii) an apology, if we have made an error, (iii) information on the action we have taken.
- Learn from the concerns and complaints of parents and students.
- Make and keep confidential records of complaints so that they are available for consultation in the future.

Procedure for Raising a Concern or Making a Complaint

Stage 1 – Informal Raising and Resolution of Concerns

Most problems or uncertainties during National Youth Ballet begin life as concerns. We hope that you will feel that such concerns can initially be raised and resolved on an informal basis. You should always feel free to speak in person or by phone to the appropriate member of National Youth Ballet staff. Alternatively, you may wish to write a letter or email. Depending on the nature of the concern please speak to a member of your son or daughter's House Parent team, and/or relevant Artistic Teacher. If the concern is of a more serious nature then please contact the Artistic Director at the National Youth Ballet office.

When a concern is raised, the person who has been spoken or written to, will acknowledge the message and respond to the concern *within five working days of receipt*. Out of season it may not be possible to speak to the necessary staff members. If we are not able to provide a full reply within this time, for instance, because an investigation is necessary, we will keep you informed of what is being done and when you can expect a full reply within no more than ten working days. We will usually respond by telephone to matters raised orally and make a written response to matters raised in writing, unless requested otherwise. Note that working days exclude weekends. If the concern involves an allegation against a member of staff/volunteer, it will be immediately passed to the Artistic Director. Any Safeguarding or Child Protection concern will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Nichola Packham. Once an initial response has been made you will be asked to confirm your satisfaction with this process. If you are not satisfied, you will be asked if you would like a meeting with the appropriate person from National Youth Ballet to see if the problem can be resolved. If you are unable to attend such a meeting or think it is not appropriate, it may be suggested that you raise the matter at the next highest or any further level of National Youth Ballet management.

Stage 2 – Formal Making and Resolution of Complaints

There are a number of reasons why you might wish to make a formal complaint:

- If you feel that the initial expression of concern has not been handled properly by a member of staff/volunteer.
- If a concern has not been resolved within a reasonable period (one not normally exceeding ten working days).
- If a concern has not been resolved in a satisfactory way.
- If you feel that the complaint is more serious than a concern.

Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint should send full written details to National Youth Ballet detailing the nature of the complaint, any relevant documents and full contact details to the National Youth Ballet office. The complaint should be addressed to the Artistic Director and/or the Board of Trustees. It would be very helpful if you could also indicate what you envisage as the desired outcome. The complaint will then be acknowledged *within five working days*. After considering the complaint, the person written to:

- Will, if necessary, consult other colleagues and will decide upon the appropriate course of action to take.
- May ask to meet you for a discussion about the problem, normally within ten working days of receiving the complaint.
- Will conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff/volunteers or students involved.

If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. You will receive a written response to your complaint, giving reasons for the way the complaint has been resolved. In more complex cases it may be necessary for the Artistic Director to appoint a member of the Board of Trustees to carry out further investigations that may delay a resolution. Once National Youth Ballet is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made about how best to resolve the complaint, and you will be informed of the decision in writing within *a further 14 working days*. The letter will also give reasons for the decision.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If you still feel dissatisfied after going through Stage 2, you should contact the Acting Chair

of Trustees, Patricia Castanha at the National Youth Ballet office. The Chair of Trustees will make provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Trustees and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The Chair of Trustees will ensure that one panel member is independent of the management and running of National Youth Ballet. A parent may attend the Panel Hearing and may be accompanied by one other person e.g. a relative or friend. The Chair of Trustees will provide for the Panel to make findings and recommendations. The decision of the Panel is final.

Records and Contacts. Record-Keeping

National Youth Ballet keeps a written record of all concerns and complaints that are raised, whether they are resolved following an informal or formal procedure, or proceed to a Panel Hearing. National Youth Ballet also keeps a record of all action/s taken as a result of concerns and complaints raised, whether or not they are upheld.

This policy was written in March 2019.

Adopted by and behalf of National Youth Ballet.

Review date March 2020.