

**Complaints Policy and Procedure**

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<b>Author/ Checked :</b>	CFL
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## **Complaints Policy**

### **1. Aims**

National Youth Ballet (NYB) encourages an open and honest environment which is essential to the creative process. In line with our values, we are committed to fostering a positive, nurturing, respectful and inclusive environment. There may, however, be occasions where concerns arise. We are committed to dealing with these fairly and objectively and will always put the interests of the child first. This policy explains how to raise a concern and make a complaint.

Complainants will be protected from any discrimination or victimisation after raising a concern or complaint.

### **2. Definitions**

The difference between a concern and a complaint:

- a. a concern may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’;
- b. a complaint may be defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’.

It is in everyone’s interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. National Youth Ballet takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, National Youth Ballet will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure. National Youth Ballet will not normally respond to anonymous complaints. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.

### **3. Guidance**

This policy has been created with reference to the DfE model complaints procedure.

### **4. Scope**

This policy is intended for the use of parents/carers and participants. NYB contributors should refer to the grievance process.

This policy cannot be used to appeal the outcome of an audition. The audition panel's decision is final and NYB will not enter into discussion about audition outcomes.

## **5. Time Scales**

Complaints must be raised within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. Complaints made outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

## **6. Withdrawal of Complaint**

Complainants may withdraw their complaints at any time. This must be confirmed in writing by emailing [info@nationalyouthballet.org](mailto:info@nationalyouthballet.org).

## **7. Procedure for Raising a Concern or Making a Complaint**

### **Stage 1 – Informal Raising and Resolution of Concerns**

- a. Most problems begin life as concerns which can be initially raised and resolved on an informal basis. You should always feel free to speak to the appropriate member of National Youth Ballet staff. Alternatively, you may wish to write a letter or email.
- b. If the concern involves an allegation against a member of staff/contributor, it should be directed to the CEO. If the concern involves the CEO please contact the Creative Director.
- c. Any Safeguarding or Child Protection concern will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- d. When a concern is raised, the recipient of the complaint will acknowledge the message and respond to the concern *within five working days of receipt*. Note that working days exclude weekends.
- e. Owing to the part time nature and temporary nature of workers with NYB it may not be possible to speak to the necessary staff members immediately. 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 ten working days.
- f. We will usually respond by telephone to matters raised orally and make a written response to matters raised in writing, unless requested otherwise.
- g. Once an initial response has been made, complainants will be asked to confirm their satisfaction with this process.
- h. In cases where the outcome is not satisfactory, complainants will be offered a meeting with the appropriate person from National Youth Ballet to see if the problem can be resolved.
- i. If such a meeting is unsuccessful the matter may be escalated within National Youth Ballet.

**8. Stage 2 – Formal Making and Resolution of Complaints**

- a. There are a number of reasons why you might wish to make a formal complaint:
  - i. If you feel that the initial expression of concern has not been handled properly by a member of staff/volunteer;
  - ii. If a concern has not been resolved within a reasonable period (one not normally exceeding ten working days);
  - iii. If a concern has not been resolved in a satisfactory way;
  - iv. If you feel that the complaint is more serious than a concern.
  
- b. Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint should complete the Complaint Form in Appendix A and email this, along with any supporting documentation, to [info@nationalyouthballet.org](mailto:info@nationalyouthballet.org) marked for the attention of the CEO / Creative Director (see 7.b above).
  
- c. The complaint will then be acknowledged *within five working days*.
  
- d. The CEO / Creative Director (whoever is in receipt of the complaint) will undertake an investigation of the issues described in the complaint. During the course of the investigation, the investigator may need to interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish. The investigator will keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.
  
- e. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. A written response will be issued to the complainant, giving reasons for the way the complaint has been resolved.
  
- f. In more complex cases it may be necessary for the CEO / Creative 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 10 working days*. The letter will also give reasons for the decision.

**9. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

If a complainant is unsatisfied following Stage 2 of the process, the following steps may be taken.

- a. The complainant may email the Chair of Trustees to request a panel hearing.
  
- b. 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.

- c. The Chair of Trustees will ensure that one panel member is independent of the management and running of National Youth Ballet.
- d. A parent may attend the Panel Hearing and may be accompanied by one other person e.g. a relative or friend.
- e. The Chair of Trustees and the Panel will make findings and recommendations. The decision of the Panel is final.

**10. 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.

**11. Links with other policies**

Safeguarding Policy  
Staff Grievance Policy  
Whistleblowing Policy

<b>NYB Values</b>	
Safe	We champion healthy and sustainable practice.
Nurturing	We contribute to a mutually positive and nurturing experience.
Respectful	We are respectful of each other, and show this in our interactions with everyone; both online and in person.
Inclusive	We value diversity and proactively seek to create an inclusive environment for all stakeholders.
Communal	We are a community and we grow from our shared experience.
Creative	At our core we are creative and collaborate in our creative process.
Challenging	We challenge perceptions about what ballet is and conventions about who ballet is for.
Sustainable	We acknowledge that there is a climate emergency. We are action-oriented and committed to using our influence, resources, and skills to be a positive force for change.
Exceptional	We work hard to create high quality educational and dance experiences.

**Appendix A:**

**National Youth Ballet Complaint Form**

Please complete and return to [info@nationalyouthballet.org](mailto:info@nationalyouthballet.org) who will acknowledge receipt.

<b>Your name:</b>	
<b>Participant's name (if relevant):</b>	
<b>Your relationship to the participant (if relevant):</b>	
<b>Address:</b>  <b>Postcode:</b>  <b>Day time telephone number:</b>  <b>Evening telephone number:</b>	

**Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken about it with anybody at National Youth Ballet**

**What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?**

<p><b><u>Are you attaching any paperwork?</u></b> <b><u>If so, please give details.</u></b></p>	
<p><b><u>Signature:</u></b></p>  <p><b><u>Date:</u></b></p>	
<p><b><u>Official use</u></b></p>	
<p><b><u>Date acknowledgement sent:</u></b></p>	
<p><b><u>By who</u></b></p>	
<p><b><u>Complaint referred to:</u></b></p>	
<p><b><u>Date:</u></b></p>	