

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

At BeyondAutism we believe that listening and responding to concerns raised at the earliest opportunity facilitates positive lines of communication. We aim to build open and honest relationships that directly benefit the children and young adults we serve, striving to continuously improve our services.

Sometimes, having been through the informal route, a concern may need more attention. This policy aims to set out an effective means by which complaints concerning BeyondAutism and our services can be heard. The procedure sets out how this will be done.

All complaints are treated confidentially, unless legal obligations require disclosure to the relevant authorities

All members of BeyondAutism Services and the BeyondAutism community are entitled to raise concerns and make complaints. This includes pupils, volunteers, visitors, parents and others with parental responsibility, neighbours and members of the public coming into contact with our organization and services. The information in this policy is to be made available to all of these people or on request. There is a separate Grievance Procedure and Whistleblowing Procedure for use by staff.

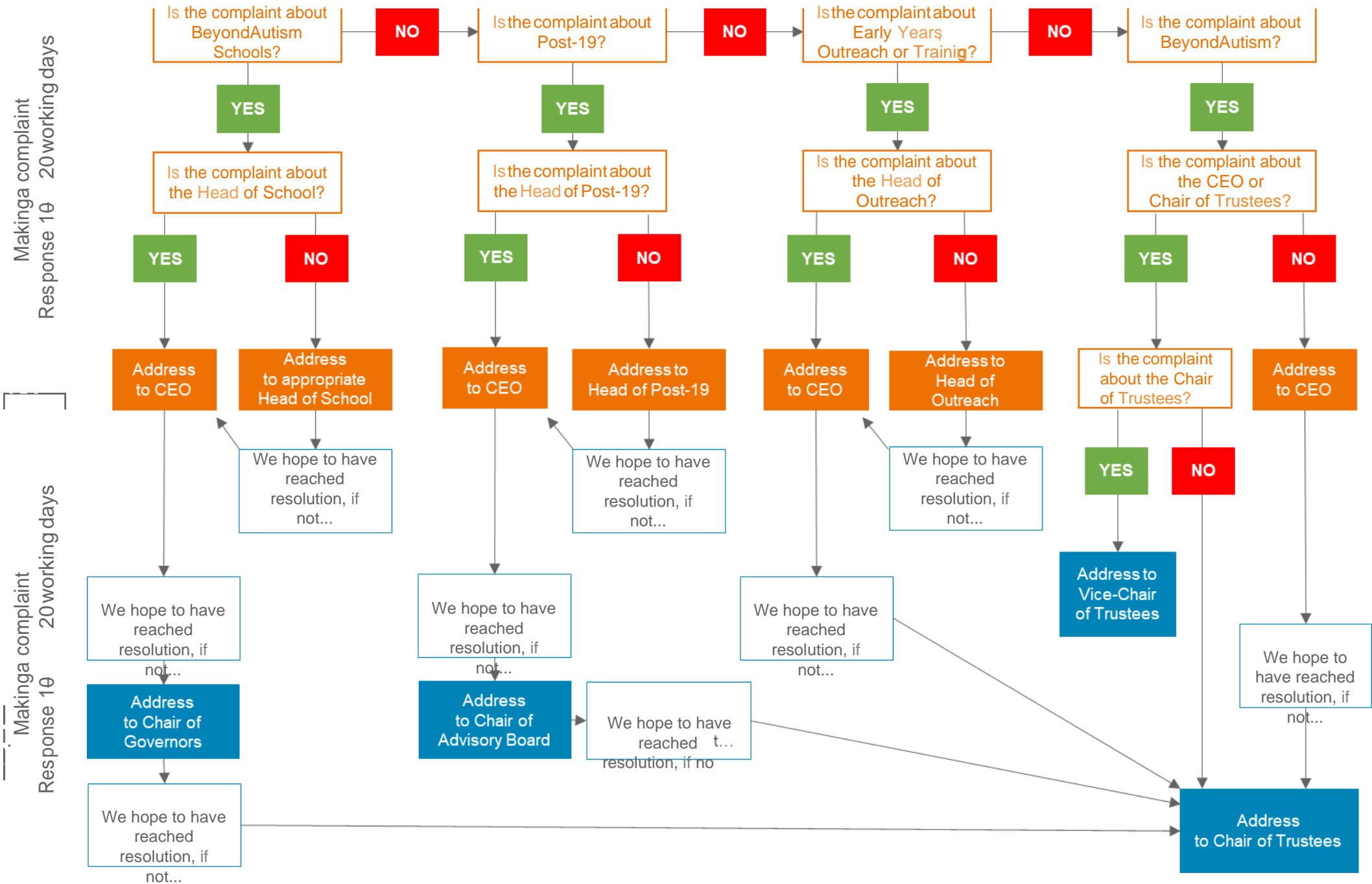
Pupil/Student Voice

We are committed to listening to and hearing the voice of our pupils and students both on an individual basis and as a group. We will take account of their views in every aspect of their education and school life, encouraging self-advocacy, independence and participation in group activity.

Making a complaint

When making a complaint please send it to the person indicated in the flowchart below:

Making a complaint about BeyondAutism, BeyondAutism Schools, Post-19, Early Years or Outreach



Types of complaints

Complaints can be categorised as informal or formal. Informal complaints can be made verbally and resolved verbally, although a written record will be made. Formal complaints should be made in writing and the outcome of the complaint will be notified in writing. Informal complaints may become formal if not resolved.

Complaints file

All complaints relating to BeyondAutism Services are stored in the complaints file which is kept by the Heads of Services.

All other complaints are recorded in the BeyondAutism complaints file.

On receipt of a complaint the “Receiving and handling a complaint” form will be completed (appendix)

Each report in the complaints file may contain some or all of the following information:

- The name of the complainant and their relationship to BeyondAutism Services or BeyondAutism
- The name of the pupil/student involved (if relevant)
- A summary of the complaint
- A summary of facts relevant to the complaint
- The Head of Service or CEO’s comments on the complaint
- Comments by other people whose views are relevant
- Any other document relevant to the complaint
- Any action to be taken as a result of the complaint

Resolving complaints

A complaint is resolved when agreement has been reached with the person making the complaint, this could be agreeing to disagree, or with the outcome of an appeal. There are occasions when a resolution isn’t clear or defined and the complainant may simply cease contact.

Ways of resolving complaints include:

- Explanation
- Advice
- Information
- Discussion
- Apology

Informal complaints

We will aim to resolve the complaint within five working days.

If the complaint is resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, the result will be recorded in the complaints file.

If agreement cannot be reached, we should offer the complainant the opportunity to implement the formal stage of the complaints procedure should they wish.

Formal complaints

Formal complaints should, wherever possible, be acknowledged within one working day of receipt of the complaint. If the person making the complaint is unable to put it in writing, or does not wish to do so, then we should endeavour to do so, sending a copy to the Complainant.

Where the complaint concerns the treatment of a pupil/student the parents should be informed in the event that they were not the complainant(s).

If the complaint includes a safeguarding, child protection, or adults at risk issue, then the organisations safeguarding and child/adult protection policies will be implemented and the police and / or social services will be informed as appropriate. Safeguarding is a priority for BeyondAutism and all of the services the charity provides. We will always prioritise dealing with any safeguarding concerns or allegations and in so doing the complaints procedure may have to run in parallel or be deferred until after those issues have been appropriately dealt with.

All formal complaints will be thoroughly investigated in accordance with this policy.

We aim to resolve complaints within ten working days although in complex cases up to 20 days may be required in order to conduct a proper investigation

When a decision is reached the following will occur:

- The complaint and outcome will be recorded in the complaints file.
- A written response will be sent to the complainant.

The complainant will be informed of their right to appeal against the decision within five working days.

Appeals

The complainant may appeal against a decision taken after a formal complaint. Appeals should be made in writing to the person indicated in the written complaint response.

The person receiving the appeal will convene an appeal panel (which will include at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, of whom one person will be totally independent of BeyondAutism) to consider the complaint within twenty working days. The complainant will be informed that they will have the right to be accompanied to the appeal hearing if they wish.

A written record of the decision made by the appeal panel will be sent to the complainant within five working days of that decision and will be logged in the complaints file.

Fundraising complaints procedure

As an organisation registered with the Fundraising Regulator we are committed to best practice and we take all complaints seriously.

A complaint or a concern about our fundraising should be addressed to:

- Call our Fundraising Team on 020 3031 9705
- Email us at fundraising@beyondautism.org.uk
- Write to us at Fundraising Team, BeyondAutism, 140 Woking Close, London, SW15 5LD

Our fundraising complaints handling procedure

Stage one:

Where a complaint has been made, we will acknowledge receipt within five working days, explain the process that will be followed and when a decision will be made.

We aim to respond to all complaints with a resolution within five working days. There may be times where this isn't possible. If this is the case we will notify the complainant of this and advise of the date by which a response will be received.

Stage two:

If the response is not satisfactory, we will then escalate the complaint to a member of our Senior Management Team. They will lead an investigation and make contact within a specified timeframe.

Stage three:

If the complaint remains unresolved, the complainant can contact the Fundraising Regulator who will independently investigate the complaint. They can be contacted via their website: www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/make-a-complaint/complaints/.

Who else will listen?

BeyondAutism

Charity Commission

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

BeyondAutism Schools

Ofsted

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/complaints-ofsted-about-schools-guidance-for-parents>

BeyondAutism Post-19

Education and Skills Funding Agency

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>

Last review: October 2024

Date of next review: October 2027

Review group: Trustees