

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Approved Oct 2019

Preamble

Tobias School is committed to providing a quality service for its students, staff, visiting tutors, visitors and members of the general public. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening, responding positively to complaints and putting mistakes right.

In keeping with our overall British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Code of Ethics the following general points apply to all aspects of this policy.

We aim to ensure that:

- We will treat your complaint confidentially, only involving those people who need to have access to documents and/or other information.
- We will operate a fair process ensuring that all views are both heard and acknowledged.
- We will keep you informed about the progress of your complaint, including agreed timescales and, if there is a delay for any reason, we will let you know the reason for that delay.

Informal Approach

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- keep matters low-key;
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. If, however, concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Please Note: A separate procedure exists for an Academic Complaint/Grievance.

Formal Complaint Policy and Procedure

Definition: Tobias School defines a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction (with the School, a member of staff, student, visiting tutor or with a Tobias Trustee) that relates to the School and that requires a formal response.

Purpose: The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and, wherever possible, resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Tobias' responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing setting out how the problem will be dealt with;
- If this is not possible, an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint in writing to the School's attention normally within 2 weeks of the issue arising;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible including any action taken to date;

Confidentiality: Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and the School maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

In the first instance, every reasonable effort should be made to resolve the complaint informally. If you are unable to do so you should write the Tobias School Office. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result and your desired resolution.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 4 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within 15 working days.

Our contact details can be found on the **Contact Us** part of the Tobias Website.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint then you can write to Gillian David, Head of Establishment, and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You can expect an acknowledgement to your request within 4 working days of receipt and a response within 15 working days. If the complaint concerns Gillian David then write to Jane Quail, Tobias Trustee. Her details are available from the office.

Final Stage

If you are not satisfied with the subsequent reply from Tobias' Head of Establishment or Jane Quail you have the option of writing to Helen Scott, Chair of Trustees, stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. Her contact details can be found by contacting the Tobias office. You must do this within 10 days of receiving the written response from the Head of Establishment or Jane Quail.

The Chair of the Trustees (or their nominee) will normally respond within 10 working days to inform you of the action which will be taken to investigate your complaint, and when you can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation.

Note. If your original complaint was against the Chair of the Board of Trustees, then the final stage will be handled by another Trustee.

