

Complaints Procedure

1. Purpose

The Walrus Cruise is committed to acting with integrity, fairness and Christian care. We recognise that concerns or complaints may arise and that they should be handled promptly, transparently and proportionately.

This procedure sets out how complaints will be received, considered and resolved, in a way that:

- reflects Christian principles of honesty, humility and reconciliation;
- protects children and young people;
- is fair to all parties;
- supports good governance and learning.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to complaints relating to:

- the conduct of Leaders or others acting on behalf of The Walrus Cruise;
- the running of a Cruise or related activities;
- decisions or actions taken by those leading or organising the charity.

This procedure does not replace the Safeguarding Policy. Any concern that relates to the safety or welfare of a child must be handled under the Safeguarding Policy.

3. Principles

Complaints will be handled in accordance with the following principles:

- concerns should be raised as early as possible;
- matters should be addressed at the lowest appropriate level;
- confidentiality will be respected, subject to safeguarding or legal obligations;
- no one will be treated less favourably for raising a concern in good faith;
- records will be kept appropriately.

4. Informal Resolution

Many concerns can be resolved quickly and amicably through informal discussion.

Where appropriate, a concern should initially be raised with:

- the relevant Leader; or
- another Leader if the concern relates to that individual.

If the concern is resolved informally, no further action is required, although significant issues may be noted for learning purposes.

5. Formal Complaints

A complaint should be treated as formal if:

- it cannot be resolved informally;
- the complainant requests a formal process;
- the matter is serious or repeated.

Formal complaints should be raised in writing and addressed to the Commodore.

Complaints About the Commodore

If the complaint concerns the Commodore, it should be addressed to the Vice Commodore or, if appropriate, another Trustee.

6. Handling a Formal Complaint

The person handling the complaint will:

- acknowledge receipt within a reasonable period;
- consider the nature and seriousness of the complaint;
- gather relevant information;
- speak to those involved as appropriate;
- seek to reach a fair and proportionate outcome.

Where necessary, Trustees may be involved in considering or determining the outcome.

7. Outcomes

Possible outcomes may include:

- explanation or clarification;
- apology or reconciliation;
- changes to practice or procedures;
- additional support or supervision;
- referral to another policy or process.

Where a complaint reveals safeguarding concerns, the Safeguarding Policy will be followed without delay.

8. Record Keeping

Formal complaints and their outcomes will be recorded in a confidential manner.

Records will be retained only for as long as necessary and in line with the Data Protection & Privacy Policy.

9. Review and Learning

Complaints will be reviewed periodically to identify learning points and opportunities for improvement.

Where appropriate, anonymised learning may be shared with Leaders or Trustees.

10. Review of This Procedure

This procedure will be reviewed periodically, and at least every three years, or sooner if required by changes in law, guidance or the charity's activities.

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