

**Northfields & District Play Association**

Complaints Procedure Policy

Northfields and District Play Association

Version 1.0

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# Version Control

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# Introduction

Northfield and District Play Association ("The Playbarn") is a safe and engaging environment where young people from 6 - 15 years old can enjoy themselves. There is a focus on; socialising, informal education, fun and engaging physical activities, life skills and inclusivity.

Indoor activities include arts and crafts, a pool table, table tennis and football, cooking and a tuck shop. A separate youth club is on-site for young people aged 10-15 years, and The Playbarn also runs holiday playschemes throughout the year.

We sincerely hope that there should never be the need to complain, but in the unlikely event then any complaints will be dealt with in a friendly, warm, and professional manner.

Beyond complaints, we welcome all feedback on what we are doing, whether it be related to what we are good at or could improve on, who or what is adding value or letting the organisation down, what our service users and stakeholders would like to see more or less of, or general feedback on how we can continuously improve.

This policy aims to provide all stakeholders with a means to make a complaint or provide other feedback and outlines how we manage such information.

# Scope

This policy applies to all stakeholders of The Playbarn.

It is not designed to be used as a means for employees to raise grievances or whistleblowing concerns, and we redirect staff to our relevant policies in such cases. However, it may be used by self-employed staff and job applicants to make a complaint relating to The Playbarn.

Where a complaint relates to a data breach, the relevant GDPR policy should be followed.

This policy is made available to all service users and stakeholders upon request.

# Definitions

A **complaint** is any expression of dissatisfaction which requires a response.

A **complainant** is a person making the complaint, whether on behalf of themselves or another.

The person about whom the complaint is made is referred to as the **subject**.

# Complaints, Our Objectives

Our objective is simply not to have any complaints and maintain complete service user and stakeholder satisfaction; however, in the unlikely event of any issues, we have outlined our complaints procedure below.

We will endeavour to resolve all complaints promptly at no additional cost to the complainant.

There are some areas, however, that we cannot control or be held responsible for:

* Any failures from third parties when due diligence has been undertaken.
* The conflict between parties over whom we have no influence.
* Complaints outside of the scope of The Playbarn to resolve.

If a serious allegation is made, The Playbarn will self-refer to any appropriate bodies/authorities to ensure that such complaints are dealt with, escalated, and investigated transparently and appropriately.

# Roles and Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for the following:

* Responding to complaints and feedback warmly and professionally and offering an apology as required.
* Providing first-line assistance in the event of harm.
* Recording the details of complaints, compliments or general feedback made in person or over the telephone.
* Passing complaints, compliments, and other feedback to the Playbarn Manager promptly.

The Playbarn manager is responsible for the following:

* Reviewing all informal and formal complaints and investigating/managing incidents and concerns as appropriate.
* Passing on compliments to the recognised parties.
* Feeding back where comments, complaints, or suggestions warrant it.
* Providing further support in the event of harm.

The management committee are responsible for the following:

* Managing complaints where the subject is the manager.
* Self-referring to the relevant professional and/or governing body as required.
* Conducting reviews of complaints and feedback and, where necessary, implementing an action plan to prevent a recurrence or shape the service through continuous improvement.

# Policy

## Resolution Timeframes

The facility to agree on a timeframe with the complainant at any formal stage will not be seen as a means of unduly extending the process of responding to complaints but rather as a means of setting a realistic timescale given any circumstances which may arise, such as the timescale of the investigation, the time required to seek third party guidance, and the arranging of a mutually suitable time to conduct the meeting.

## Managing Serious Issues or Incidents

Where a complaint is of a serious nature, and The Playbarn believes that it or one of its staff members has committed a criminal offence or seriously breached policy or procedure, The Playbarn will, as appropriate:

* Follow company policy and/or procedure and best practice to stop or mitigate any harm caused; and
* Seek external professional guidance where appropriate in order to minimise further harm; and
* Take disciplinary action or impose another sanction, as appropriate, against the subject of the complaint; and
* Self-refer to the authorities where required by law.

## Reasonable Adjustments

Any complainant who requires a reasonable adjustment to access this policy or participate in the complaints procedure will be accommodated, where practicable, through the implementation of reasonable adjustments.

This policy may be provided in other, more accessible formats on request.

# Complaints Procedure

Note: At all stages where the manager is the subject of the complaint, it will be managed by the Playbarn Chair.

## Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Complaints may be made in person, over the telephone, by email or in writing.

The receiving staff member must, where appropriate, offer an apology and provide first-line support to the complainant.

Notification of a complaint may be made to any member of staff and will be passed on to the manager in a timely manner for review to learn from any mistakes on our part.

The complaint will be logged and securely filed for record-keeping and future reference.

In most cases, further communication will not be necessary; however, where the manager believes that an informal call, meeting, or other communication is required, they will contact the complainant to ensure that an informal resolution is agreed upon before closing the complaint.

At this stage, the complaint will be considered closed.

## Stage 2 – First Formal Complaint

If we cannot resolve the issue to the complainant’s satisfaction within Stage 1, the complaint will be escalated to a formal resolution stage, where we will request that the complaint be served formally in writing.

On receipt of the complaint, the manager will then proceed to investigate the issue(s) or incident(s) surrounding the complaint.

Complaints relating to a subject in our employment or providing services on our behalf or any serious breach of law, policy, or procedure will, in most circumstances, require a fact-finding interview to ascertain the details surrounding the issue(s) or incident(s).

Following the conclusion of any investigation, the manager will contact the complainant to discuss the matter, seek to explore any resolution proposed by the complainant, and disclose any further evidence found during any subsequent investigations.

Where required, a meeting should be arranged between the complainant and the manager at the earliest mutual convenience.

During any communications, the manager will seek to agree on a satisfactory resolution with the complainant. However, resolutions must be fair, measured, and appropriate, and therefore, any proposed resolutions we consider to be excessive and unbalanced will not be considered.

The objective at this stage is a speedy formal resolution of the complaint.

On the closure of the complaint, any necessary corrective and/or preventative actions will be detailed to ensure that lessons are learnt.

## Stage 3 – Appeal

If we cannot resolve the issue to the complainant’s satisfaction within Stage 2, the complaint will be escalated to a formal appeal stage, where we will request that the appeal be served formally in writing.

Any appeal will follow a similar procedure as at stage 2; however, a senior manager not involved in the initial management will be nominated to act as Chair and hear any appeal.

The appeal chair’s decision is final.

## Stage 4 – Local Resolution Exhausted

If neither Stage 1, 2, nor 3 reach a mutually acceptable resolution, The Playbarn will consider the complaint to be closed as all local resolution has been exhausted.

At this stage, the complainant may wish to explore other routes of making a complaint against the business or its staff through regulatory or governing bodies such as the local authority.

# Providing Other Feedback

To make a comment about our service, let us know how we can improve, or recognise an individual, simply contact any member of The Playbarn staff, email us, or write to us.

All feedback, comments, and compliments given in person or over the telephone will be recorded by our staff and passed to the manager.

If we feel that a comment should be raised as a complaint or handled under another policy, we will write to the complainant and inform them of the alternative route which will be used to deal with their feedback.

All feedback, comments, and compliments will be reviewed and used to shape our service in the future.

We aim to respond to the individual providing feedback within 30 working days when a response is required.

# Monitoring and Reviewing

Northfields Playbarn is committed to ensuring that our policies are effective and up-to-date. To do this, we have a process for regularly monitoring and reviewing them. The management committee is responsible for this process and will review the policies at least once a year or more frequently if needed due to changes in legislation, best practice, or organisational change.

Reviewing our policies includes identifying which ones need to be looked at, gathering input from employees and stakeholders, reviewing the policies, and communicating any updates.

# Appendix 1 – Complaints Form

Name of Complainant: ..........................................................................................................................................................

Address: ..........................................................................................................................................................

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Tel No: .................................... Mobile: .....................................

Email: ............................................................................

Date of complaint: \_ \_ / \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_

Describe in detail the nature of your complaint:

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Give the name of the person you first reported the complaint (if appropriate):

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Describe what actions can be taken to deal effectively with your complaint:

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Describe what measures can be taken to avoid a repeat of your complaint:

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**Office Use Only**

Date Received: \_ \_ / \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ \_ Checked By: ….................................................................

Taken By: ………………………………………………………………… Date: \_ \_ / \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ \_