

MfA Complaints Policy

In the 20+ years that we have been running Music for Autism (MfA), we have worked in a large number of schools, many of which we continue to visit regularly. We love working with the children and staff and value enormously the warm and collaborative working relationships we have built up with our partner schools. We therefore welcome feedback and suggestions from schools as a way of continuously reviewing and enhancing the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of our work with children and young people.

Policy statement

We have been touched and delighted by the positive feedback that we have had from schools over many years. Equally, if there are ever any issues that you would like to raise with us or complaints about the service that we provide, we urge you to share these with us at the earliest opportunity, so they can be resolved.

Our policy is to:

- Provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint or provide feedback;
- Ensure that we have effective internal processes for dealing with any complaints that we may receive;
- Ensure that all complaints are investigated fully, fairly and in a timely manner and, as far as humanly possible, that they are resolved in a constructive way that helps to improve our service and to maintain positive and cordial working relationships with our partner schools and other service users.

Procedure

- The quickest way to make a complaint is to do so by email, addressed to the Orchestra's General Administrator, Simon Payne (admin@osj.org.uk), or if you prefer in writing to him at the Orchestra's registered address.
- Please note that Simon is also our Safeguarding Officer, so any issues or communications relating to Safeguarding should also be addressed to him directly.
- In the event that Simon Payne is himself the subject of the complaint, we ask that you contact the Chair of the OSJ Board of Trustees directly by email. His contact details are: peter.cousins@osj.org.uk
- Please let us know if you would like us to arrange appropriate support so we can ensure this procedure can be equally accessible to anyone who wishes to use it.
- We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days of receiving it. At the same time will give you an indication of how your complaint will be dealt with and of when we expect to be able to get back to you with a reasoned response.

- We will gather the necessary information to investigate the issue as fully as we can. We may, as part of our investigation, invite you to meet with us so we can understand your concerns more fully.
- We will come back to you with as full and reasoned a response as we can, seeking to address issues of concern head-on and with transparency and goodwill.
- If the complaint relates to, or is deemed to include, a safeguarding element, then the procedures set out in our Safeguarding policy will take precedence and will guide the manner in which we will deal with the complaint.

Appeal

If you are not happy with our reasoned response to your complaint, then you will have the option to appeal. The Orchestra of St John's will nominate an independent arbiter to consider the appeal. This will be someone independent of the management of the Orchestra of St John's who will have considerable professional experience at a senior level. We will let you have the details of the person who will consider your appeal if and when the need arises.

Confidentiality

We will respect your confidentiality. Information about the complaint will usually be shared only with those who need to know in order to help resolve it. There may, however, be occasions when we cannot provide absolute confidentiality. In particular, this may be the case in circumstances where we deem or are given to understand that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm. In these circumstances, our Safeguarding procedures will take precedence over this procedure and relevant information may need to be shared with others concerned with the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. It should be read in conjunction with OSJ's Safeguarding Policy.

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Date: 11 March 2024

Date of next review: 10 March 2025